Confrontation

Viewpoints on Zionism

ISRAEL AMONG THE NATIONS
REFLECTIONS ON JEWISH STATEHOOD

J. L. TALMON

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Reflections on Jewish Statehood

J. L. Talmon

ONE DOES NOT have to be a committed Zionist to recognize that the establishment of the State of Israel has been the most remarkable and most constructive achievement of the Jewish people as a corporate entity for the last two thousand years, and one of the great feats of universal history. Since this essay is written in anything but a mood of self-congratulation, it is only fair to begin by highlighting the outstanding features, familiar though they be, of this vast and inspiring panorama.

In no time at all, relatively speaking, the Zionist movement succeeded in focusing the interest, the emotions, the passions, and the will of members of widely dispersed and very heterogeneous Jewish communities throughout the world upon what had for very long been nothing more than a mere vision. It was able to set up on a completely voluntary basis a whole network of institutions—a government, a national assembly, an administrative apparatus, and an army—long before Jews had even settled in the territory over which they would ultimately achieve political sovereignty. The movement won the Platonic and sometimes even ardent sympathy of wide sections of Gentile public opinion in many countries, and then, through a masterly exploitation of propitious circumstances in a fluid historical situation, obtained formal pledges of assistance from great powers and recognition of its claims by the highest international bodies. It undertook and triumphantly accomplished the task of building, without resort to force, a national-territorial community out of immigrants who came from different climates, cultural traditions, and economic conditions; it established self-governing towns and villages, agriculture and industry, and local organs of self-defense—all this in the teeth of obstruction of all kinds, culminating in determined British chicanery and armed resistance by the indigenous Arab population. It laid the foundations for a new civilization, based on an artificially revived ancient language, and on an endeavor to throw a bridge across the centuries into the remotest past while also trying out social experiments requiring the most strenuous idealism and avant-garde daring.

Faced at last with the ineluctable necessity of marshaling all the moral and material resources for a national liberation struggle, the Zionist movement was able to organize civil disobedience, underground activity, terrorist and guerrilla operations, while simultaneously conducting an intensive diplomatic campaign on the world stage. It was then called upon to go through the supreme test of fighting the invading armies of half a dozen states. Notwithstanding the permanent armed siege under which the new state has since had to live for all the twenty years of its existence, Israel has remained a genuine and effective democracy, the only one within a radius of thousands of miles, and strong enough to sustain itself in spite of deep internal divisions. Its record in education and culture, without being spectacular, has been quite respectable, and its success in transforming a motley of what could almost be called races into a coherent modern nation has been highly impressive. Finally, there is the incredible feat of arms—the famous victory of June 1967 over four combined Arab armies.

THE HISTORIAN looks to other movements of national liberation for terms of reference and points of comparison. The national aspiration of a normal people struggling for independence turns on a relatively simple issue, aggravated and complicated as it may be by practical circumstances: the expulsion of foreign rulers. In such instances the moral case is so self-evident as to need no proof or elaboration. Not so Zionism. I am not only referring to the obvious fact that the Jews had neither territory nor nationhood in the conventional sense when they embarked on the Zionist venture. I have in mind the moral dilemmas which the very Jewishness of the Zionists could not but make extremely acute. Believers themselves in the right of national self-determination, they could pursue it only at the cost of conflict with Arabs claiming the same simple right. In analogous fashion, though fundamentally anti-imperialist and passionately democratic, the Zionists had no choice but to look for help to imperial-

J. L. TALMON, Professor of Modern History at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, published the first part of this article in "Commentary" (Vol. 45, No. 6) as "Israel Among the Nations" and then expanded it at the request of the Editorial Board of "Dispersion and Unity."

powers. Many a Jewish youth stood bewildered in the cross-fires of those days—between the demands of the religious conscience and those of secular power politics; between messianic nationalism on the one side, and messianic revolutionary universalism on the other.

The failures or sins of which Zionism has been guilty in this respect call—I wish to submit—not for censure alone, but also for compassion as unavoidable tragedies. This sustained, strenuous effort—awe-inspiring in its single-mindedness, astonishing in its global strategies, and often heart-rending in the moral dilemmas it was called upon to confront—was carried out in the midst of the greatest calamity that has ever befallen a people, and brought to fruition on the morrow of the most horrible blood-letting that any group has ever experienced. Dull must be the man, Jew or Gentile, who would fail to respond with a thrill to this most powerful assertion of the will to live in the shadows and the agonies of death; to this triumph of the human spirit over the deepest degradation and wretchedness.

On the strength of a long and close familiarity with the history of national movements, admittedly restricted to Europe, I would venture to claim that Zionism was the richest of them all. In Zionism we find all the salient features of each rolled into one: the aura of ancient myth and the vision of renovation which constituted the unique appeal of the Greek war of independence; the theoretical, not to say metaphysical, elaboration of national ideology in 19th-century Germany; the misssionary idealism of the Italian Risorgimento, coupled with consummate diplomatic skill and finesse; the dogged romantic desperation of the Irish and the Poles; the cultural and literary renaissance of the Slav peoples; the social radicalism of many a national liberation movement in Asia and Africa. The wonderful gallery of great and colorful personalities thrown up by Zionism will stand comparison with any of the finest and ablest national leaders among the nations: Herzl with Mazzini, Weizmann with Cavour or Masaryk, Ben-Gurion with Bismarck or Pilsudski, Jabotinsky with Nehru, Buber with Fichte, Bialik with Mickiewicz and Petofi, Aharon David Gordon with Gandhi. Israel has also exploded many of the most rooted and widely held fallacies about Jews. The great Theodor Mommsen was sure that the Jew lacked all talent for politics, just as Ernest Renan had little hesitation in lending his immense authority as a Semitic scholar to the idea that Jews possessed no aptitude for philosophy, science, and the arts. Which Gentile only half a century ago had any doubt that the Jews could not fight, were all cowards, and knew nothing of military honor? Israel has changed all that to the point where a French shopkeeper last June could express his surprise that Poland could have been so quickly and so completely beaten by the Germans in 1939, "when there were so many Jews in Poland in those days."

ISRAEL HAS BEEN seen as the fulfillment and ultimate denouement of Jewish history, but it has also been seen as the greatest deviation from the course of that history. It may be altogether too metaphysical a pursuit for the scholarly historian to try to define the "true essence," the "authentic spirit," or the "preordained direction" of a millennial history spun over such diverse epochs, civilizations, and regions and to describe developments which do not conform to that "authentic core" as deviations, false starts, perversions, heresies, or *culs de sac*. We all know that these speculations are so often the fuel of political ideologies. All of us are by now also sufficiently dialectical in our thinking to view revolution as both the coming to a climax of the old, and the transmutation of that longstanding reality into an opposite state of affairs.

There is nothing absurd or illegitimate in the view that the establishment of a political and warrior state in some way constitutes a repudiation of a long Jewish tradition. According to this philosophy, pre-exilic Jewish statehood was a tribal phase to be outgrown, and outgrown it was, with the result that the Jews came into their own for the next two thousand years as a strictly religious confraternity, an entirely apolitical civilization. Continuing this trend of thought, one would conclude that Zionism was an assimilationist movement par excellence. Its inspiration was the envious desire to emulate the example of "all the nations," to be like them, and the modes of action to which it resorted were alien to a tradition of nearly two thousand years.

But while it is true that to some extent Jews ended by imitating the Gentiles, it seems no less true that the Gentiles followed in the footsteps of the Jews. It was under Judaic inspiration that the peoples of Europe turned into confraternities of believers in the Middle Ages. They made their way to nationhood in modern times also by largely following the teachings of Judaism. Modern European nationalism was born when educated Europeans began to be ashamed of the title of subject, and came to aspire to the dignity of citizen; at the same time they began to identify themselves first and foremost as members of a nation, and only in the second place as sons of a Church. But before nationalism became conscious of its secular and to a certain degree anti-religious character, there was a period during which militant religious evangelism was spilling over into nationalist pride.

The Jewish example was of considerable importance in that process. The image of the peo-

ple of God fighting God's battles, of the Maccabees defending the true faith, of Elijah smiting the idolatrous heathen and backsliding Israelites —all this inspired the Hussites of Bohemia and Moravia; the Spaniards waging a war against heresy and carrying the cross over the ocean; the Puritans, Cromwell, and John Milton. The idea of having been chosen by God for a special universal mission was taken over from the Jews. Even the essentially secular ingredients of the nationalism of a later day were of Jewish provenance: the myth of past glories, the trauma of failure and defeat, and the dream of a marvelous restoration of ancient greatness through some revolutionary breakthrough, combined, in the case of nationalities oppressed by peoples of a more powerful culture, with anguished loyalty to an indigenous spiritual heritage.

These sentiments became potent and propelling political forces when they were fused into one by the overarching idea of sovereign statehood as the sole guarantee of their effective integration and assertion. In the wake of triumphant nationalist movements all across Europe, this non-Jewish synthesis of Judaic ingredients was thrown back to, and seized upon by, the Jews. Thus the politicization of national Jewish messianism was a consequence of foreign influences—as is clearly shown by the fact that every one of the historic statements of Zionist philosophy came in the form of a response to the victory of some national movement. Rabbi Judah Alkalay wrote his tract advocating Jewish colonization of Palestine under the impact of the Greek war of independence and the emergence of Serbian nationalism. Moses Hess's astonishing little book, *Rome and Jerusalem,* was composed in the heat of general enthusiasm engendered by the unification of Italy. Leo Pinsker's *Autoemancipation* was stimulated not only by the pogroms of 1881, but also by the establishment of the state of Bulgaria. It appeared so logical, indeed so inevitable—first the glory that was Athens is resuscitated, then Rome begins rising from the dead, and now Jerusalem's turn to be redeemed has come.

THERE WAS another and more concrete way in which Zionism was tied to European nationalism. The position of the Jews was made difficult by the latter and, in the countries of greatest Jewish concentration and strongest internal cohesion, untenable. It may be anachronistic to speak of pluralism in pre-19th-century Europe. Still, class differentiation, cultural diversity, regional peculiarities, and religious splits made for some kind of pluralism, and it was away from this that modern nationalism, as an all-embracing creed, was bound to lead. The Jews became a test case of the ambiguity besetting the modern nation-state. There was the conception of the state as the outcome of a social contract among men—atoms emerging from the state of nature and resolving to live together under laws of their own devising, reserving to themselves all the natural liberties and rights, and ceding to the state only what was necessary for the administration of the commonweal and the defense of those very rights. At a very early stage this conception was counterbalanced by the idea of the state as an irreducible organic entity growing out of blood, dispositions, and folkways, myth and destiny, memories and urges, which were supposedly prior to and more decisive than the conscious resolve of abstract individuals to band together for a limited number of purposes. The separate Jewish tradition and communal cohesion, taken for granted in the *Ständestaat,* a society composed of communities, were now challenged by the philosophy which frowned upon group loyalties of any kind as a danger to the individualistic social order.

On the other side, those Jews who out of genuine conviction or out of a readiness to pay the price required for emancipation, gave their enthusiastic adherence to this liberal order, were decried by the upholders of organic nationhood as solvents and germs of disintegration, out to undermine the instinctive certainties passed on in the blood and in the perennial traditions. Liberal individualism, cosmopolitan finance capitalism, laissez-faire economics, socialist doctrine, indeed rationalism as such came to be seen as agents of Jewish decomposition, representing the abstract and the universal, rather than the concrete and the place-bound. Yet the same Jews who were such eager upholders of universalism either could not or were not allowed to give up their group identity, and the universalist values and modes of being they propagated were condemned as instruments of a conspiracy to dominate the world.

For decades Jewish liberals were able to dismiss such teachings with a shrug of the shoulders. They would not stoop to defend themselves against that last residue of medieval superstition and prejudice, the rear-guard action of forces upon which history had already pronounced its verdict of doom. By 1880, however, these ideas were suddenly and simultaneously being espoused by mass movements in a number of countries, sometimes finding highly sophisticated expression in metaphysical theories, but more often in virulent agitation and outbreaks of riot and violence. Many Jewish liberals were shaken to the core. It was not only that they felt menaced personally. Their pride was deeply wounded, and their faith in the rationality of man and the inevitability of progress suffered a terrible blow. Thus Herzl, overwhelmed by the orgy of irrational anti-Semitism occasioned by the Dreyfus Affair in France, argued that Jews must no longer wait for their

salvation upon the eventual triumph of right. Indeed, since the Jews had been cast into the role of an irritant, they would be rendering a great service to the cause of general progress if they evacuated themselves, especially from Eastern Europe. That was even more emphatically the view of Borochov. Both Herzl and Borochov visualized the future Jewish state as having precisely the kind of regime to which the Jewish irritant was proving an obstacle in Europe—to Herzl liberal-social democracy, to Borochov a Marxist utopia emerging out of the healthy class struggle from which the Jewish problem in Europe acted as a distraction. Despair, wounded pride, the wish to assert human dignity—such were, once more, the motives which propelled these men whose personal situation was reasonably comfortable and who had never undergone the Jewish experience as a living and natural one. Their Jewish nationalism was thus re-active, and not a spontaneous reality achieving self-awareness. But the seed sown by these alienated outsiders fell upon the fertile ground of the unbroken Jewish experience in Central and Eastern Europe, which, in the domain of the spiritual, was at that very moment evolving from religious into secular and national self-awareness, and in the political and socio-economic domains was being subjected to strains and stresses of growing intensity.

The historian is fascinated by the interplay of the inevitable and the contingent in human affairs. It is not true that there are no alternatives in history. Yet when he views long chains of events and long periods of time retrospectively from the vantage point of an ultimate denouement, the historian is weighed down by the fatalistic feeling that after all what finally happened had to happen that way and no other. Infinitely painful will the conclusion seem that Jewish history in Eastern Europe, when surveyed from the heights of the second part of the 20th century, appears to have been leading for generations ineluctably to catastrophe. But of course the catastrophe did not have to be Auschwitz; no one in his worst nightmares could ever have envisaged Auschwitz. Yet clear-sighted men like Herzl and Jabotinsky, and in guarded terms Weizmann himself, understood the danger, and when they spoke of an "evacuation" they were bitterly attacked by fellow Jews for implying that there was no room for Jews in countries where they had lived for centuries, sometimes—for instance in Hungary—longer than the "host" nation itself. In fact, the burden of the Bund's implacable opposition to Zionism was the charge that Zionism accepted the arguments of the anti-Semites.

As a consequence of the great expulsions in the late Middle Ages from England, France, Spain, Portugal, Southern Italy, and parts of Germany, the bulk of the Jewish people found themselves in the dawn of the modern era concentrated in the territories between the Oder and the Dnieper. Of course significant things continued to happen to Jews and they continued to pursue important activities outside the Pale as well—in Northern Italy, Holland, Palestine, Turkey. In Germany, especially, Jewish tradition, developing from generation to generation, became the matrix of great battles of ideas from the days of the Enlightenment until well into the 20th century: one need mention only the struggle for emancipation, the grand dialogue between Reform and Tradition, the sustained effort of self-identification through internal and external polemic, and last but not least the great intellectual endeavor, *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Nevertheless, it is no exaggeration to say that in the main the history of the Jewish nation in modern times—before the emergence of a self-sufficient American Jewish community and of the Palestinian Yishuv—was the history of the Pale.

For centuries the territories of the Pale constituted the underdeveloped part of Europe. Primarily agricultural, and feudal for a considerably longer period than Western Europe, the countries of the area had no real middle class. A large and often impoverished, but extremely self-conscious and exclusive gentry faced millions of horribly poor, illiterate, oppressed, and downtrodden serfs. In the middle were the Jews. Even if they had wished to give up their Jewish identity, there was really no one to whom they could assimilate: the nobility was too high, the peasantry too low. So they remained a civilization apart. The three or four empires—the Russian, Austrian, Turkish, and, to a much lesser extent, the German—on the Western fringe of the Pale were all multiracial states. The various tribes were kept apart by social and religious barriers, while the dominant group in each case lacked the cultural force (or, if one prefers, a sufficiently strong bourgeoisie and an adequate urban life) to attract and assimilate the politically weaker nationalities. The various peoples of the area were thus swept up by nationalist passion before they had had the time and the opportunity to develop a middle class. To an even greater degreee than in Germany, nationalism here was deformed by the absence of those virtues, values, and institutions which a flourishing, dominant, and self-assured bourgeoisie has bequeathed to the West: the rule of law, the ethics of reciprocity, respect for the human personality, civilized intercourse—all embodied in municipal self-government, the parliamentary system, and the freedoms of the individual citizen.

Threatened by the higher cultures of the dominant groups, very unsure of themselves and of their own national-cultural heritages, these peo-

ples drew their inspiration not from the social-contract and natural-law philosophies of the West, but from the German ideas of organic *Volkstum* and racial uniqueness. The Jews, whose culture was higher and more ancient, and who in the nature of things were also more attracted by the cultures of the dominant groups and the greater opportunities afforded by those cultures, were bound to appear to the weaker peoples as allies and instruments of their oppressors.

With the decline of feudalism, and the emancipation of the serfs in the Austrian and Russian Empires, the sons of an impoverished gentry together with masses of superfluous peasants flocked from the countryside into the towns. There they found the Jews. Economic rivalry was aggravated by nationalist passion. The newcomers, eager to build a national society with a balanced social structure, saw the Jew as the chief obstacle: an alien, a rival, a threat to national integrity.

Grave as these strains and stresses were before World War I, they assumed the dimensions of acute and unabated crisis between the two Wars. Russian Jewry had in Tsarist times been subjected to discriminatory legislation, administrative chicanery, and waves of government-sponsored pogroms designed to divert the attention of the masses from real social evils. Nevertheless, multiracial empires—not even excluding so entirely chauvinist a one as Tsarist Russia—usually have a dampening effect on nationalist militancy. With the breakup of the old empires in 1918, a succession of nation-states emerged from the ruins. Some had never enjoyed political independence before; some had lost it centuries earlier; others, like Rumania and Hungary, were so enlarged or so diminished as in fact to be reshaped beyond recognition. These new nations were driven by fierce nationalism, the more fanatical, the less self-assured and externally secure they were. Their hereditary foe and traditional oppressor, Russia, had changed from an old-fashioned despot into the standard-bearer of world revolution—a stance calculated to attract not a few of the citizens of the new young states, and to offer Russia a good reason to expand, seemingly not in order to subjugate, but in order to liberate and redeem. Hence the bitter anti-Communism of these states, a sentiment that needed no particular incitement from Western capitalism.

Socially and economically weak, feeling threatened by external danger, and lacking any democratic experience, the new states were driven to make the oppression of minorities into a basic policy. Although the Jews of Poland and Rumania—unlike the Ukrainians, Hungarians, and Germans—had no separatist ambitions, they nonetheless came to bear the brunt and to feel the fury of the neurotic nationalisms of Eastern Europe more than any other minority group. Other minorities lived in certain border areas; the Jews, because they lived almost exclusively in the towns, where they often formed a majority, were ubiquitous. As the commercial class, and "aliens" to boot, they were subjected to punitive taxation. They were considered usurpers, if not parasites, and an impediment to national consolidation: a foreign body when cultivating their own identity; a menace to the purity and integrity of the national creative genius when attempting to participate in the spiritual life of the nation. They were above all regarded as actual or potential Communists, and therefore enemies of the state. In those early days Communism triumphant in the Soviet Union appeared to be carried by the visionary qualities and zeal, the organizing talent and technical expertise of the Jews. That message which fifty years later was to become the gravest menace to Judaism seemed to many at the time—in a development disquietingly reminiscent of the evolution of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity—to be a Jewish message.

And indeed, knowing themselves to be undesirables, conscious of the determination of the government and majority population to make conditions so unbearable to them that they would be forced to emigrate, with economic opportunities constantly shrinking, with no access to government posts, public works, and services, no wonder the Jewish youth of those countries felt that their existence was unreal, transitional, a kind of preparation for some future reality—redemption through Zion or through the coming World Revolution. All this explains why Nazism and Fascism elicited so ready a response in Eastern Europe and how Hitler could find accomplices in that part of the world when he embarked upon his genocidal program against the Jews. In the darkest days of Auschwitz one could read in the underground press of the Polish resistance movement expressions of thanks to "Providence for solving for us a problem in a way which we could never have contemplated."

It was the intensification of the Jewish plight together with the convergent growth of Jewish national consciousness that gave an irresistible impetus to Zionism. Neither of these two factors would have been effective without the other. Plight without ideology would have reduced the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe to a mob of wretched refugees, whereas ideology gave them the dignity of a hard-pressed nation on the march. Yet aspiration alone, without the propulsion of necessity, would hardly have been sufficient. The tragedy lies in this: that when the combined force of the two factors grew into the power that moves mountains, and move them it did, the bearers of that force were no longer there to claim the

sunny uplands. They were dead. The State of Israel arose out of the holocaust, too late for the dead—and perhaps not only for them.

Historic inevitability and historic contingency: catastrophe and statehood were both inevitable and preordained, while the physical annihilation of millions of potential citizens of the Jewish state was an awful contingency, which in turn—as we shall see—became the source of another type of inevitability.

THE JEWISH MOVEMENT of national liberation derived from a thoroughly liberal-humanitarian impulse. It was at the same time driven on by intensely anti-liberal forces. The climate in which it was destined to realize its aspiration was nothing short of apocalyptic. Above all, it was condemned to come into conflict with another national aspiration, which clash—let us have the courage to face the brutal truth—was incapable of resolution in any spirit of democratic liberalism.

It was the misfortune of Zionism to have arrived late, and to have achieved its aim in the nick of time, if not, indeed, again too late. The very close early association with the Russian revolutionary ideology imbued Zionism, especially its left wing, with Mazzinian notions of a united front of all oppressed nationalities struggling for liberation against a common oppressor. Yet by the time Zionism arrived, nationalism everywhere in Europe had developed into a cult of sacred egoism. Zionism expressed and represented a yearning for a home for the oppressed and for those who wished to be themselves—has there ever been a nobler aspiration? Yet the planet had by then been divided, and there were no longer any empty spaces. The home to which Zionism naturally aspired was inhabited by another people, the Arabs, and ruled by a third nation, the Turks. All of mankind's history has been a history of invasion, conquest of nation by nation, deportation of populations or their absorption by others, not to speak of extermination. At the turn of the century such things had become both objectively and subjectively impossible, most of all to Jews. They were destined to become possible and horribly inevitable again half a century later. Herzl saw the Jewish problem as an international problem, as a matter of general concern to all nations. What he would have liked best was an international agreement and international machinery, with money provided by Jews and if possible also by European governments, for the resettlement of Jewish immigrants. There was no escape in practice from an association with some Great Power, which might have been, in this sinful world of ours, suspected of being more mindful of imperial interests than of humanitarian challenges. When Herzl began his rounds in quest for a powerful ally, finding access to Wilhelm II, Joseph Chamberlain, Abdul Hamid and others, imperialism seemed at its zenith. The rule of the white man over all the colored races had seemed a preordained and blessed fulfillment—the more so for the fact that such imperial powers as Great Britain and France represented advanced political regimes and progressive social systems. But white hegemony and European self-assurance received a strong jolt in the form of the resounding victory of Japan over imperial Russia in 1904 (which was also the year of Herzl's death). For the first time in modern history, a colored race had succeeded in defeating one of the great white powers. In retrospect we can see that event as the beginning of the end of Western imperialism. The Japanese victory triggered a series of momentous explosions in Asia and Africa: the Young Turk revolution, the revolution in Persia, a little later the Chinese revolution, the setting up of the Congress Party in India, and the first rumblings of Arab nationalism in the Levant.

Nothing was calculated to please the Zionists more than the spreading of the League of Nations umbrella over the Balfour Declaration and British rule in Palestine. Representing, as it did, an international decision to help the homeless Jews, it seemed to do away with the specter of Jews having to fight, and ultimately to displace, Arabs. Palestine was put under a League of Nations mandate after World War I, and it was in response to the growth of Arab nationalism that Iraq and Syria and the Lebanon found themselves in the same status. The Zionists would say that the latter mandates were established to prepare the local Arabs for independence and the Palestine Mandate to facilitate the upbuilding of the Jewish National Home as promised in the Balfour Declaration: could a fairer and more just procedure be imagined? The Arabs, however, interpreted matters differently: if Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon were entitled to independence, so too were the Palestinian Arabs.

The State of Israel came into being some twenty years later at a time when the process of decolonization was already in full swing (in fact, the withdrawal of the British from Palestine in 1948 was modeled on their withdrawal from India a year earlier). It is more than doubtful whether a few years later the majority necessary for the UN resolution on the partition of Palestine could have been obtained at all. Few, if any, of the new Asian and African states, which were due to be admitted to the UN soon after, and which now maintain friendly relations with Israel, would have been prepared to vote for the establishment of a Jewish State before having had an opportunity to see Israel at work not as a society of colonial planters, but as a society of workers and producers, and to derive benefit from its services and example.

The exit of the white man from Asia and Africa and the arrival of the Jews into that nodal point where the two continents touch is a coincidence with tremendous symbolic overtones. Its significance for Israel is further deepened by the fact that the reemergence of vast ancient civilizations like China, Japan, and India, and the rise of a large number of new nations, are bound to make for a relative decline in the weight of the Jewish ingredient in the sum total of human civilization. The races of Asia and Africa were not brought up on the Bible. They cannot be expected to respond to the magic names of Zion and Jerusalem in the way Bible readers do. They have never been preoccupied or obsessed with the Jewish phenomenon: they have never admired, feared, or persecuted the Jews. Their record is clean of anti-Semitism, but it is also empty of Jews. Hence their proneness to equate Israeli Jews with white intruders.

THE ZIONIST-BRITISH relationship bears the mark of "too little and too late," and of an ambiguity which burdened the Jews with guilt without at the same time granting them the sweets of sin. It is no mean irony that while the Balfour Declaration may have looked like a deal between imperial Britain and the Jews, disguised on Britain's part by high-sounding idealistic formulae, the entire history of the Anglo-Zionist partnership was the history of a sustained effort on England's part to escape the obligations and the logic of that solemn pledge. There has never been agreement on what that pledge really contained. Nor, for that matter, do we really know, in spite of all the innumerable reasons given by or attributed to the British government, why the Balfour Declaration was even issued—as Christopher Sykes, the son of Sir Mark Sykes, one of the architects of British policies in the Middle East during World War I, points out in his highly perceptive *Crossroads to Israel*. The late British Empire was acquired, it is said, in a fit of absent-mindedness; so, too, the Balfour Declaration seems to have been issued by a group of men who did not know what they were doing.

The statesmen of 1917 may have been confused, inattentive, muddled, idealistic, or shrewd; they may have been moved by humanitarian sentiment, by strategic considerations, by the wish to gain the sympathy of American Jewry for the Allied war effort, or to wean the Russian Jews away from Bolshevism, by the desire, finally, to cut the French out of Palestine. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to know. But certainly no one gave precise thought to the ways in which the Balfour Declaration should be implemented. And in any case, contrary to popular belief, surprisingly little attention seems to have been paid to the idea of turning Palestine into a bastion for Suez.

Very soon after 1917 and throughout the thirty years of British administration that followed, there was little disagreement among the British, least of all among the men called upon to implement the Mandate in Whitehall and in Palestine, that the association with Zionism was at best a terrible embarrassment and liability. Few, even among those who supported Zionism—or, more accurately, among those who from time to time could be alerted by the Zionists to prevent another attempt at whittling away the provisions of the Balfour Declaration—did so out of a sense of conviction or a disposition to give a helping hand to something good and desirable. Instead they acted out of a sense of obligation to a pledged word, in a resigned attempt to make the best of a bad job. Lloyd George seems to have been speaking for most of his colleagues when, in 1919, he tried to still objections to Zionism with the confident assertion that Britain's age-long experience of empire would enable her to take on all parties concerned—Jews, Arabs, Christians, the Pope, and the Caliph—and (he did not use the expression, though he implied it) muddle through somehow. Why should the Arabs, who were about to get so much, when for centuries under the Turks they had had nothing, "begrudge the Jews that little notch?" And, indeed, who were the Arabs? Before 1914, they had hardly impinged upon the consciousness of Europe, except perhaps as another native population with colorful nomadic Bedouins, etc., etc.

One man saw the dilemma clearly, and that was Balfour himself:

> The contradiction between the letter of the Covenant and the policy of the Allies is even more flagrant in the case of the independent nation of Palestine than in that of the independent nation of Syria. For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country. . . . The four great powers are committed to Zionism, and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder importance than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.

With all this, Balfour was most reluctant for Britain to assume the mandate, and very anxious to hand it over to the United States. England was tired and disillusioned in the wake of the bloodiest of wars the world had seen till then; the imperial urge and the sense of mission were by then too enfeebled for her to take up the kind of challenge Balfour may have had in mind: to plan and execute with the cooperation of Jews and various international agencies a scheme of

colonization and settlement within a fixed number of years. It may well be that had such an approach been seriously attempted, the Arabs, dazed and weak as they still were, would have been placed before a *fait accompli* without any injury to their economic interests. They might then have accepted the accomplished fact, and the long drawn-out agony would have been avoided. But all this is plausible only within the theoretical sphere. As a matter of historical fact, such Keynesian methods as Five Year programs, Marshall plans, Four Point proposals, etc., were still beyond the ken of most people in the West. The British administration in Palestine had not been intended and was not equipped for such undertakings. Its greatest ambition was to keep the peace somehow and to get the essential services running, harassed as it was by the opposing claims of the Jews—impatient, arrogant, intent on forging ahead—and the Arabs—sulky, riotous, and aggrieved.

WAS THE Arab-Jewish conflict inevitable? Can one put one's finger on sins of commission or omission, on points of no return, and say that had this or that happened or not happened, been done or not done, things would have taken a radically different course? The more I ponder these questions, the more confirmed I become in the grim conclusion that although in detail, in style and tone, the Jews might have acted more wisely or more tactfully, it would not have made much difference in the final analysis. The same cannot be said about the Arabs. On very many occasions they could, by making concessions, have arrested or very significantly slowed down the growth of the Jewish National Home so as to prevent its transformation into a Jewish State. By adopting an attitude of absolute and total intransigence, they reduced the Yishuv's alternatives either to giving up Zionism or to carrying out its program to the full extent in the teeth of Arab opposition. Since no give and take was possible, since even such modest forms of Zionism as a measure of immigration and settlement encountered maximum resistance, there seemed no choice but to aim at maximum strength. God had hardened the heart of Pharaoh.

The Arab policy of total and uncompromising denial of any Jewish right to a National Home was punctuated by outbreaks of violence and riot, like those in 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1936. Consistent, proud, and heroic as action of this kind may have appeared to them, it was disastrous to their best political interests. So too was their refusal to participate in the Legislative Council which the British planned to set up in the early 20's, and which might have given the Arabs leverage they did not otherwise possess. If, similarly, the Arabs had been ready to discuss the partition plan proposed by the Peel Commission in 1938 after the Jews had accepted it, they might have succeeded in bringing about its failure (because it was not really workable); they would then have been in a position to claim a political and moral victory. Finally, had they agreed to let the 100,000 Jewish refugees into the country in 1945-46, the Jewish State might never have come into being. In the words of Abba Eban, the Jewish case would have lost its urgency. Had the Arabs not resisted the setting up of Israel in armed combat, there would have been no Arab refugee problem and the territory of the Jewish state would have been much smaller, perhaps too small and with too many Arabs living in it to make it viable.

The stage was thus set for an apocalyptic tragedy, both in the diaspora and in Palestine. Yet few people saw it coming, and fewer still were ready for it when it came. With the hindsight knowledge of what was to follow, the Zionist believer is visited not merely by a feeling of anguish, but also by a sense of embarrassment and shame that up to the days of Hitler those millions of Jews who were soon to perish, and who no doubt had in their majority been seized by the Zionist mystique, should have done so little to settle and build up their National Home for the first fifteen years of the Mandate. There were years in the late 20's when the number of emigrants leaving Palestine was larger than the number of arrivals. What kept the Jews of Poland, of Rumania, of Hungary from boarding every ship and raft in one huge exodus to the Promised Land? I cannot resist the temptation to quote a passage from Friedrich Engels, although I have already done so on another occasion: "History is about the most cruel of all goddesses, and she leads her triumphal car over heaps of corpses, not only in war, but also in 'peaceful' economic development. And we men and women are unfortunately so stupid that we never pluck up the courage for real progress unless urged to it by sufferings that seem almost out of proportion."

In the absence of a sense of irresistible urgency, deeply ingrained liberal modes of thought held the Jews back from facing up squarely to the implacable fact of irreconcilable conflict. Progressives are always unwilling and frequently even unable to understand that some conflicts can be resolved only by force. Thus it was that many Labor Zionists and others on the Zionist Left could deny any real conflict of interest between Jews and Arabs, and could put all the blame on feudal effendis or religious fanaticism. The Arabs, according to this view, had nothing to fear and much to gain from Jewish settlement. Some in the Zionist movement had visions of a bi-national state. The more starry-eyed even dreamed of acting as the midwife of socialist transformation to the stagnant semi-feudal, ritualistic societies of the

Middle East—not through conquest, but by good precept. The Jews were completely sincere when they claimed that they had no intention of unsettling a single Arab. They had not come to take the place of the Arabs, but to create new opportunities, reclaim the desert and the marshes, and settle alongside the Arabs.

After seven years of relative peace, the turn of the decade witnessed the dreadful massacres of 1929, caused ostensibly by an absurd dispute over rights to the Wailing Wall, but in fact by the specter of a worldwide Jewish plot—the setting up of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, in which large non-Zionist bodies and very eminent non-Zionist Jews were to join the Zionists. The pogroms were followed by committees of investigation whose reports recommended the virtual abandonment of the Jewish National Home policy. This recommendation was embraced with alacrity by the Colonial Secretary in the Labour Government, Lord Passfield, better known as the famous Fabian theoretician Sidney Webb, and his wife, the still better known Beatrice Webb, both prophets of socialism and progressivism, enjoying immense prestige as unrivaled experts in the social sciences. That they should have adopted an attitude of contemptuous hostility to Zionism was particularly galling to the liberal and left-wing elements of the Zionist movement. Not even the letter Ramsay MacDonald subsequently sent to Weizmann, rescinding in effect all steps taken by Passfield, could really heal the wound.

In Europe, too, the Jews continued to think and behave as though they were still living in the liberal age, which is why the events set into motion by Hitler's assumption of power on January 31, 1933 came as so great a shock. Jews were used to pogroms, to discriminatory legislation, to insults and physical violence, to anti-Semitic theories and slander. But it was utterly unthinkable to them that the government of a great country, and one of the most civilized nations in the world, would—150 years after the Declaration of the Rights of Man—abolish Jewish equality by a stroke of the pen, and do it with an air of defiance and victory. The theory of catastrophic Zionism suddenly seemed vindicated and was soon to be confirmed in a way which even the gloomiest prophets could never have imagined. The whole of Jewish history began to appear as one long preparation for doom in the diaspora and redemption in the Land of Israel. The messianic movements of the past were no longer seen as marginal episodes, but as the highlights of Jewish history, the great spasms, premature revolutionary outbreaks leading to the Great Revolution. Emigration to Palestine was growing in momentum, raising hopes that the Jews might become a majority within a generation. Embarrassing questions which had earlier been dodged as idly theoretical now began to press for answer. What would or should happen at the moment when the Jews came in sight of their goal, needing only one final push? Would the Arabs and the British look on, or would they make a supreme effort to call a halt, and if so what should the Jews do in response?

The Arabs did indeed make a supreme effort to call a halt. April 1936 saw the beginning of riots and a general strike, which were to swell into a prolonged armed uprising. So strong were the liberal and pacific instincts of the Yishuv that even at that late date the leadership was able to proclaim and for a long time maintain a policy of no retaliation. But the Arab revolt drove home to the Zionists the depth and intensity of the clash, and the difficulties, perhaps the impossibility, of winning through the slow organic growth envisaged by Weizmann—one more cow, one more goat, one more acre. This is why so many, probably the majority, seized upon the solution proposed by the Royal Commission on Palestine presided over by Lord Peel—partition of the Holy Land into Jewish and Arab states. Some saw partition as the only way out of the deadlock; others had vague ulterior motives: let us consolidate what we can, bring in as many immigrants as possible, and then let us see what further opportunities history may occasion.

In any case, the Peel Commission lent a new respectability to the idea of a sovereign Jewish state in the eyes of the Jews themselves—and this at a moment when they were being given increasingly stronger reasons to think themselves persecuted by one half of the world and abandoned by the other. For the world was now divided into countries which wanted to get rid of the Jews, and countries which did not want to let them in. Contrary to the expectations of many, the Nazi regime did not relent after driving the Jews out of all public positions. It continued to persecute the Jews with a brutality that culminated in the November 1938 pogroms. Hitler imposed anti-Jewish legislation upon Italy, the rump of Czechoslovakia, and other countries under his tutelage or influence. Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda was also making inroads in the West where there was no country without a growing Fascist movement. The Western democracies seemed paralyzed in the face of Nazism, unable to resist.

Wooed at one time as a community of vast influence and accepted then as an ally of incalculable promise, the Jews had shrunk to the status of hunted animals and unwanted refugees—a circumstance to which the fiasco of the international conference on refugees at Evian bore gruesome testimony. And as their needs grew more desperate, the power of the Jews continued to

decline. This decline was both a cause and a result of the rise of Arab nationalism and the formal abandonment by the British of the Jewish National Home policy in the famous White Paper of 1939-40, with the virtual stoppage of Jewish immigration and land purchase in Palestine.

Humiliated, betrayed, forsaken, the Jews were left almost entirely defenseless before Hitler's genocidal campaign. The world had never before witnessed anything like this campaign. It was not a wave of pogroms by an inflamed mob, not excesses committed by drunken soldiers, not the horrors of revolution or civil war. A whole people was surrendered to assassins with the sole stipulation that every member of it, every man, woman, and child, healthy or sick, normal or paralyzed, should be put to death, individually or collectively, by the bullet of a thug or in especially built human abattoirs, after being starved, tortured, flushed out from every hiding place and brought to the factories of death from the remotest corner of Hitler's empire. The Allies were far away, and claimed to have only one obligation—to hasten the day of general victory. There was no judge to appeal to for redress, no government to turn to for protection, no neighbor to ask for succor, no God to pray to for mercy.

Despair to the point of madness gripped the Yishuv. The gates of the Jewish National Home remained shut and sealed, while desperate fugitives drowned at its very shores. By degrees the resolve hardened and thickened that there must be one place in the world where Jews could be masters of their own fate, where they would not have to rely on others from whom in any case they could expect neither help nor justice, and where if they had to perish they would go down fighting to the last man and not like sheep led to the slaughterhouse. The State of Israel assumed the dimensions of the great reparation for an untold wrong, the only way of asserting the Jewish right and the Jewish will to live, and as the only instrument and guarantee of corporate survival.

THE STORY of the final breakthrough to Jewish statehood was a great epic. Against the background and under the impact of an apocalyptic catastrophe, in the shadows of a veritably Dantean hell, the despair of the Yishuv transformed itself into the kind of divine and creative madness which not only stills all fear and hesitation, but also makes for clarity of vision in a landscape bathed in a lurid, distorting light. The climate changed visibly. Situations and actions considered only yesterday unthinkable, impossible, crazy, began to appear possible, logical, natural, desirable, imperative: fantastic risks, violence, sabotage, terror, war. Only a short while before, a community cherishing law and order, the decencies of life, civilized intercourse, had recoiled from Jabotinsky's teachings of blood and mud as the setting for the struggle for national independence, and had felt horrified by the slogan of his more extreme followers: "In blood and fire Judea fell, out of blood and fire she will arise." Of course, only a minority became terrorists. But the vast majority no longer had the conviction or the heart to oppose them.

It is idle to argue which factor was more decisive to the final outcome. The terror brought urgency, drama, and myth. But of course it would have been unavailing if not for the towns and villages, the economy and the institutions which slow and arduous toil had patiently and lovingly built up. In that respect both Weizmann and Jabotinsky stand vindicated. Yet even these two factors together do not tell the whole story of the breakthrough. There was the irresistible pressure of the survivors in the former concentration camps in Germany and Austria, their numbers swelling daily with the arrival of fugitives from Eastern Europe; there were the ships carrying illegal immigrants and intercepted by the British on approaching the shores of Palestine; there was the half horrified and half guilty sympathy of world opinion, finding expression in active assistance from official quarters; there was the diplomatic offensive in the capitals of the world, especially in the United States, where the Jewish community was propelled by the feeling that but for the grace of God they too might have ended in Auschwitz, and the passionate conviction that the memory of the dead martyrs and their own power imposed upon them a historic responsibility which they dared not shirk.

The methods had changed radically; the focal point of the struggle had shifted from London to Palestine; and inevitably, indeed one might say symbolically, the rudder was taken over from the hands of Weizmann by Ben-Gurion. The Jewish people have never had a more impressive and persuasive apostle unto the Gentiles than Weizmann. In the gravity and charm of his bearing and deeply furrowed countenance, he epitomized both the sufferings and the majesty of an ancient and unique people. Few men of the Gentile elite could resist the magic of that peculiar mixture of prophetic idealism and ironic skepticism, profound moral seriousness and addiction to facts, felicity of phrase and metaphor and contempt for rhetoric and pose, intense sensitivity to others and the self-sufficiency of a powerful and idiosyncratic personality. But Weizmann belonged to the pre-1914 age. He could appeal to the reason and enlightened self-interest of cultivated persons; he could tap buried sentiments of compassion and love; he could stir visions. But he could not electrify or intoxicate crowds. He abhorred the tricks

of the rabble-rousers, and the world of the irrational was entirely beyond his ken. Lawlessness, violence, terror were to him not only morally reprehensible and utterly at odds with the Jewish spirit, they were squalid and repulsive as well.

But if the subhuman was alien to him, so were the superhuman resources of heroic madness and despair. Subject to fits of depression and paralyzing lethargy, he longed to get away from the thick of things into the quiet of laboratory and study. He loved his people with unequaled depth and tenderness, yet how harsh and biting he could be toward his fellow Jews. Wholly identified with the cause, he would nonetheless never give up his private world.

Weizmann's political orientation was entirely Britain-centered. It derived from his great faith in, and admiration for, British character and institutions, and rested upon his proven ability to influence upper-class British statesmen of a romantic cast of mind. Once the British had made up their minds that the association with Zionism must be terminated, Weizmann's usefulness was at an end. He simply had no alternative policy: neither another great power to lean on (for America would not assume direct and complete responsibility) nor a different strategy for dealing with Britain. When a British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, warned the survivors of Auschwitz not to push themselves to the head of the queue, and sneeringly attributed American support for Zionist demands to an unwillingness to take in more Jews, Weizmann could find no words to answer him.

Weizmann was, to borrow Isaiah Berlin's epithet, the great exilarch who led his people back to the Promised Land, and he will always be remembered as the architect of the Jewish National Home. But it is Ben-Gurion's name that will forever remain associated with the final breakthrough to statehood. In speaking of Ben-Gurion, I can only repeat an evaluation I ventured some eight years ago that he will take his place among the half-dozen most decisive figures in Jewish history. So completely identified has Ben-Gurion been with the Yishuv from the moment he landed as a youth of eighteen at Jaffa from the small Polish town of Plonsk, that every facet and period in his life is indistinguishable from some aspect or phase in the history of the Yishuv itself: agricultural laborer; Socialist-Zionist publicist; trade-union organizer; soldier in the Haganah and the Jewish Legion during World War I; Mapai leader and General Secretary of the Histadrut; member of the Zionist Executive and Chairman of the Jewish Agency; Prime Minister; and, finally, retired elder statesman who would not retire and would refuse the self-chosen role of a Cincinnatus in the desert, the virulent head of an opposition party, the lonely old man left behind by momentous events and even by his own party, the pathetic stillborn child of his declining years.

BEN-GURION HAS no loyalties other than Zion. A supremely political being who has shown himself to possess uncanny intuition in most concrete situations, he is also a great visionary whose vision transcends the here and now, expanding into past and future. To be sure he is a *"grand et terrible simplificateur,"* for whom two thousand years of diaspora history might just as well be erased from the record, and who denies the title of Zionist to anyone who does not settle in Israel. But in that crucial moment when men no less good than he grew hesitant and lost their nerve, his unclouded clarity of vision, his unerring instinct, his ability to make decisions made the providential difference. Having identified himself so wholly with the cause, he was able to fight for it with relentless ferocity and a ruthless disregard of those who took another view or wavered and vacillated. His faith was infectious, his resolve inspired confidence, his passionate words swept crowds: statehood as the goal, a national uprising as the method. It was now or never, for no such situation as the one created on the cessation of hostilities in 1945 would ever return, and in the desperate tug of war between Jew and Arab, with the British ranged behind the latter, any faltering meant for the Jews being hurled into the abyss.

Ben-Gurion as national leader was the architect of this policy, holding in his hands the reins and the levers of power, and if not initiating all actions, at least sufficiently in control to prevent actions like those of the Irgun and the Stern group from undoing his own efforts; yet it was still given to Weizmann to play his own inimitable role even after all the bridges with Britain had been blown up. It is enough to recall the appearance of the great old diplomat before the United Nations Commission on Palestine and his contacts with Truman which issued in the assigning of the Negev to Israel and the immediate recognition of the new state by Washington. These services were performed in the now-or-never spirit of Ben-Gurion's own absolute resolve that there must be no retreat into Trusteeship schemes as suggested by the Americans, and no weakening before Arab threats and neutral pressures.

The State of Israel came into being within the borders of 1949 as a result of an armed uprising, an international enactment, and a victorious war. When we look more closely, we discover here the very pattern followed by many national liberation movements in history. Except during the postwar period in black Africa, no new nation has even been formed nor has any old enslaved people ever won independence without undergo-

ing an ordeal of fire—in the first phase, rebellion, and in the last, war. It would seem that only through struggle, suffering, and violence is a people held to have proved that it deserves to be recognized as a nation, and even then, after it has compelled recognition, the rising nation almost invariably has to continue its fight for safer frontiers, as was shown most strikingly in the 1820's by the Greeks, the first oppressed nation to win independence in modern times, and by the Italians a few decades later. The international concert steps in after the facts have already been established by the rebel nation, very often in an attempt to stem the tide and, by acknowledging accomplished facts, to prevent further facts from being established. Almost invariably the rising nation has to continue its fight for real security. A ruling power is no more prepared to yield and efface itself without a struggle than is a ruling class. The Greeks, the Italians, the Germans, the Poles have all gone on fixing the borders of their country with the sword, in disregard of formulae and definitions laid down by international agreements.

But the war between the Yishuv and the invading Arab armies that broke out upon the establishment of the State of Israel can also be seen as a part of a more immediate pattern—as the belated spasm of the tremendous convulsion which had racked the world for the preceding six years and more. The flight of the Arab refugees thus appears as an episode in the enormous migration of populations, with millions driven and driving others across Europe and the vast expanses of Asia and Africa—the largest such migration for many centuries, and of which the Jews were the most helpless victims. So airily detached a view of millions of cases of individual tragedy and personal suffering may sound inhumanly harsh. But the historian has no answer to the question of why, in the great conflicts of nations and classes, innocent people suffer and uninvolved persons are wronged.

"QU'ELLE ETAIT BELLE *la République sous l'Empire*"—was the saying in the early days of the Third Republic in France. "Beautiful was the Revolution under the Tsars," must have come the echo a century later in Soviet Russia. Might we with equal justice say how wonderful the Jewish state was under the Mandate?

The dream and the reality, the myth and the facts: the Revolution, liberation, independence, victory are the myths which lift men out of and above themselves, upon which they focus all their passions and energies. The vision must be made supernaturally glorious, for otherwise men would be unable to summon the necessary resources to suffer, struggle, and die. Since reality cannot possibly come up to these expectations, disenchantment is inevitable. Once the single-minded concentration on the all-embracing goal is relaxed, men return to their selfish petty concerns, and all the problems and difficulties which had been brushed aside or forgotten in the great emergency reassert themselves with a vengeance. Poverty, endemic civil war, bitter social strife, assassination, backwardness in every sphere were the answer to the dreams of Greeks and enthusiastic philhellenes about a renaissance of the most gifted, eternally youthful, and miraculously creative nation. The visions and transports of the Italian Risorgimento, actually badly bruised by repeated humiliating failures on the field of battle, were followed by the dispiriting pettiness and meanness of political life, against the background of the huge Southern cesspool. A blanket of obscurantism and provincialism descended upon the Ireland of the great rebels and the meteoric writers. Poland between the two wars was a sad comment upon the fate of the messianic nationalism of its poets and prophets. Bismarck's Reich was the most powerful nation in the world, but it was drunk with the arrogance of power and squeezed dry of that idealism and those flights of the spirit which in earlier days won the admiration of the world. And what a swampy place present-day India appears to be. But a much more disquieting reflection forces itself upon the contemplative historian. Is it an accident that those countries in which missionary universalist idealism found its loftiest expressions at an earlier age—Italy, Germany, and Russia—eventually became the seats of the most perverse regimes—Fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism?

To these examples, Israel represents a heartening contrast, an illustration if not of complete fulfillment, then certainly not of irretrievable failure. If Israel has by no means escaped an erosion of vision and promise, it has at least so far been saved from perversion.

I spoke earlier of nationalism as marking the primacy of national consciousness over religious self-identification. But nationalism, like revolutionary socialism, is also a secular religion. Independence and statehood were not conceived by the aspiring as a utilitarian instrument for satisfying mundane needs or gratifying the urge for power and the ambition for a spectacular place in the sun. Nationalism generally involved a sense of mission, which postulated dedicated service to a universal ideal—of liberty, of the spirit, of ethical rebirth. The hankering after lost glories, coupled with tribal self-idealization, made the believers feel that they were about to recover their true being, the pure, authentic self which bondage, disunity, and evil influences had buried and caked with filth. The restoration of independence was to be the preordained hour

for a totally new start: the redeemed nation would turn its back upon the mistakes, errors, and routine selfishness of the older nations, and would guide itself entirely by the light of reason and justice. At the same time it would maintain the brotherhood steeled in battle, and bring into their own the pristine qualities of the race.

The more so, as usual, the Jews. Simple gratification of individual needs and group desires could never become the declared aim of a Jewish state. Imbued from the beginning of their history as a people with the idea that they must accept a particularly heavy yoke of responsibility because they were charged with the mission of serving as a light unto the nations, the Jews were incapable of finding meaning in a life strictly devoted to the here and now and lacking any transcendental significance. For so long aliens to the normal rivalry for political power, moreover, the Jews had entirely lost any understanding of the urge itself. Hence the distrust and indeed contempt for coercion, militarism, and even the virtues of the warrior.

They fed upon each other, the hatred for the squalor and degradation of the ghetto, and the dream of restoring the rustic simplicities and heroic glory of Biblical times. The air of late 19th-century Russia was thick with populist notions and scorn for the overripe rotten West, and in Germany enthusiastic youth was abandoning itself to the revitalizing magic of nature. Not a few Jewish intellectuals became quite hypnotized by openly or obliquely anti-Semitic theories which depicted the Jew as the representative and germ carrier of cosmopolitan rootlessness, modern alienation, the type of analytical sophistication which kills spontaneity and authenticity of instinct and feeling, and of course as the only begetter of oppressive capitalism, sordid money-making, hypocritical cunning, and urban degeneration. To all this the Zionist ideal of a communal return to the soil constituted an answer. As for those young Russian Zionists who responded with fervor to the socialist challenge, they had to answer the charge of fellow revolutionaries that by trying to take themselves out of Russia and going to Palestine, they were deserting the World Revolution. The deeper, then, became the resolve of the Socialist Zionists to build a model society in their national home.

Political needs thus seemed to coincide with utopian demands. After all, settlement in Palestine was never a commercial proposition. Not only was there precious little profit in it for the individual. The reclamation of the land, the creation of a society of toilers, and the collectivist methods were all necessary to achieve independent nationhood and a balanced social structure, and obviate the danger of becoming a planters' economy in a country with plentiful cheap labor.

THIS IDEALISTIC social endeavor is sure to remain the most distinctive, most original, and most precious aspect of the Zionist effort in Palestine. Other nations have won signal victories on the battlefield; heroism and martyrdom have been the marks of many a national movement of liberation. But that ferment of social ideas, that intensity of feeling, that sustained dedication to a chosen way of life, that wealth of experiments (the Kibbutz, the Moshav, the Histadrut) in the field of social organization —all this is probably without precedent, especially when we consider the exiguous number of men and the paucity of assets with which everything had to work itself out.

An egalitarian puritanical society emerged, combining in a fine blend the virtues of individual self-reliance and an enthusiastic readiness to join in cooperative endeavor. This has been the main secret of every success scored by the Yishuv—in agriculture, in the struggle for survival and growth, and finally in armed combat. Indeed, nothing has contributed more to the repeated victories over the Arabs, who, owing to Oriental traditions and the heavy hand of Turkish despotism, have lacked both sets of qualities.

Such, then, was the religion of the young Zionists in Eastern and Central Europe. The ideals, the achievements, the myth of Labor Zionism were all of their making. It may be doubted whether these ideals could have been maintained in a modern technological state for any length of time. What is quite certain is that the holocaust destroyed the cadres of potential immigrants required for their continued realization. Hitler lost the war, and no doubt Hitler hastened the establishment of the State of Israel. But Hitler also won a far-reaching victory in depriving Israel of the most precious reservoir of manpower and moral strength to be found in the Jewish world.

For decades before the emergence of the state, arguments had been raging in the Zionist camp on the issue of selective *vs.* indiscriminate immigration. Those who dreamed of a utopian society naturally favored the former, while those who were weighed down by the predicament of the diaspora and were in haste to achieve statehood clamored for the latter. But the holocaust robbed the debate of all meaning, turning Israel from a country of choice primarily into a place of refuge.

First to be brought in were the survivors of the Nazi massacres in the DP camps and in Eastern Europe; then came the Oriental Jews from the Middle East and North Africa, partly under duress as refugees, partly in response to an inner urge and Zionist inducement. Neither of the two types of new immigrant had much training, aptitude, or taste for the utopian collectivist endeavor. Having led a hunted existence in the years of the war, or having experienced Communist regi-

mentation, the survivors of the Hitler period wanted above all to enjoy the blessings of privacy and security. As for the Oriental Jews, they had not for the most part gone through the mill of socialist teaching. Besides, the family and clan of the patriarchal tradition were still a living reality to those who came from tribal societies and bronze-age civilizations. Romantic, Rousseauist-Tolstoyan slogans of "back to the land," the philosophy which glorified the university graduate who exchanged his pen or scalpel for a spade or a hammer, became irrelevant when the country was suddenly swamped with hundreds of thousands of newcomers who could handle nothing else but a spade, and when rapid industrialization and modern organization put a premium on high technical training and university education. An extremely egalitarian society, based on voluntary teamwork, changed almost overnight into a managerial society, split into those who manage and those who are managed. And the split was along social, cultural, almost racial lines: Westerners versus Asio-Africans.

The Oriental Jews represent an ancient civilization with a dignity and loyalties of its own, invisible as those may sometimes be to the superficial and impatient outsider. But these are not the values of a modern technological society. Responsible Israelis, anxiously aware of the problem, have made intensive efforts, especially in the field of education, to narrow the gap between Westerner and Oriental. But facts of life are very stubborn, and even the best intentioned and best thought-out programs take a long time to bear fruit, whereas in the modern world, and especially in Israel, time is in very short supply.

Confronted with all these difficulties, Israel has in at least two vital matters been blessed with good fortune. There has been no serious, certainly no effective, attempt on the part of the Oriental Jews to organize themselves into a separate political party. Any such attempt would have been fraught with grave dangers from demagogues and rabble-rousers. As it is, incidents of riot in the course of twenty years can be counted on the fingers of one hand, in spite of housing and unemployment problems. It must also be added that the existing political powers, preponderantly of European origin, have displayed an admirable sense of responsibility. (This includes the opposition party Herut, which finds itself in the anomalous situation of having a Polish leadership and a largely Oriental, particularly Yemenite, following.) The second stroke of good fortune has been the fact that there is no religious militancy among the Oriental Jews, for an alliance between the militant Orthodox of West and East would have imposed an unbearable strain on Israeli society. Traditional and observant though they tend to be, the Oriental Jews are not motivated by any proselytizing urge, and when left free to practice their own brand of Judaism, they do not care what others do. Nor do those of their young who, under the impact of detribalization, drop out, feel any need to fight the faith they have abandoned.

THE INEVITABLE transformation of the pioneers of yesterday into the managers of today has brought into sharp relief the antinomies which arise when a great faith, heroic memories, and a beautiful myth are carried over into the context of a changed reality. The more sincere and firm the idealism of the past, the greater the danger of hypocrisy and even reactionary attitudes in the present. There is the natural unwillingness to see that what was service yesterday is today power, that what was then sacrifice has now become privilege, that what was voluntary confraternity has become coercive hierarchy.

The political parties in Israel are a good example of how this corrosive process works. The parties have every right to look back with pride upon their past. They came into being long before the establishment of the state, not as loose congeries of men becoming active on the eve of an election in order to line up voters behind a given candidate, but as tightly knit confraternities pledged to a strenuous way of life: some were virtually monastic orders. Zionism encouraged a multiplicity of such confraternities in the belief that the Jewish National Home stood to gain from ardent competition among them. Thus the Zionist parties (not, incidentally, unlike the Socialist parties in Germany and Eastern Europe), each embodying a *Weltanschauung* and a system of ethics of its own, evolved whole networks of cultural, social, economic, and educational institutions—in short, they assumed the character of self-sufficient societies. Upon the establishment of statehood, the Israeli political parties were not only fully organized and well provided for, but fully armed. Mapai controlled the Hagana, Ahdut Avoda had very close links with the Palmach, the Irgun was the army of Herut, and Mizrahi could always summon the hosts of the Lord. The parties thus took over the state to such an extent that it became possible to say with a good deal of truth that Israel was a country where the parties owned the voters rather than the other way around.

In the days of the mandate, immigration certificates were distributed according to the so-called party key—that is, in proportion to the numbers of enrolled members. The party key continues to be consulted today in the division of spoils and jobs. Proportional representation is the inevitable accompaniment, cause, and result of such a philosophy and such a practice. This in turn

makes coalition government an unavoidable necessity. Together, proportional representation and the coalition system work to encourage the parties not to bury but to emphasize and even invent political differences. Coalitions are precarious, majorities are weak, and the power of blackmail possessed by small splinter groups considerable. No wonder that Ben-Gurion, who had experienced a full measure of political bazaar haggling, became a bitter enemy of proportional representation and a preacher—to no avail—of the virtues of the majoritarian-regional system.

This state of affairs is calculated to enhance the power of the party machines, to favor the higher age groups, to discourage nonconformism. It is not surprising that the Knesset should have probably the highest age average of any parliament in the world, especially in the left-wing parties, and that a politician who has passed fifty should count himself and be counted by others as among the young revolutionaries. The same state of affairs also explains the dearth of original political thinking in present-day Israel when compared with the daring and originality displayed in the great debates of old.

Following the Six-Day War, the three socialist parties—Mapai, Ahdut Avoda, and Rafi fused into a United Labor Party. On the face of it, this is a promising development. On the other hand, it raises the specter of the perpetuation of this governing party in power, since it threatens to rule out for a long time the emergence of an effective alternative in the form of a middle-class party. Rafi came into existence as a force pledged to fight the corruption that comes from holding power for too long, to replace outworn clichés with critical thinking, and nostalgia with modern empirical methods. It remains to be seen whether the Rafi component will prove able to revitalize the united party or will lose its combative urge in the comfortable embrace of the mother.

THE EROSION of aspiring idealism as it comes into possession of power is most strikingly illustrated by the kibbutz. This most original and most impressive achievement of Zionism has exhibited very little creative energy in the last twenty years, while maintaing a very strong hold on the life of the country. Although the kibbutz movement comprises only about 4 per cent of the population of Israel, roughly half the Ministers, probably a third of the Knesset, and a very large number of generals, ambassadors, directors of government departments and public agencies are at least nominal members of a kibbutz. One hastens to add that a quarter of the soldiers, and especially officers, who fell in the last war were sons of the kibbutz. If ever there was a ruling elite, and moreover one not based upon wealth, this is it. It was only natural for the state to tap the finest human material in the country for the most responsible and exacting tasks, but in doing so the state skimmed off the cream of the kibbutz population, leaving the less dynamic elements to carry on.

The state has diminished the functions and status of the kibbutz in many other ways as well. The kibbutz movement made an incalculable contribution to the struggle for independence, but as though to confirm Hegelian dialectics, it was thrown thereafter if not onto the rubbish heap of history, certainly onto the margin of events. Unequipped for the task, and for ideological reasons reluctant to open its gates to all and sundry, it played no part in the great effort of the ingathering of exiles. Besides, the post-1948 immigrants showed little eagerness to knock at its doors, and the few new recruits from among Israeli youth could hardly compensate for the exodus of so many old members into the society at large. The glamor of the kibbutz was being stolen by other institutions—army, state, civil service, science and technology, all of which were crying out for highly trained personnel and claiming the ablest and best.

No longer in the center of the stage, almost forgotten and rendered irrelevant, in spite and partly because of the success of its leading cadres, the kibbutz sank into a malaise. Many began to wonder whether after all the kibbutz was not a transitional phenomenon rather than a form of life with a permanent role to play, apart from serving as a home and refuge for those whom it suited.

ON A BROADER canvas the problem of the kibbutz in the State of Israel epitomizes the problem of the State of Israel within contemporary world Jewry. The exhaustion of the sources of *aliyah* in the countries from which the Jews needed and wished to get away on the one hand, and on the other, the lack of any appreciable immigration from the countries where the Jews have a choice, constitute Israel's gravest and in every way most decisive problem. Although little was said openly at the time, nothing shook the Yishuv more than the fact that when a classical Herzlian situation arose in Algeria, with a whole community moving out of a land inhabited by Jews for two millennia and more, most of the Jews preferred to settle in France instead of joining their anxiously waiting brethren in the Jewish state. Zionist philosophy had depicted the creation of the state and the ingathering of exiles as the climax of Jewish history, the great watershed, the great fulfillment. As it became clear that Western Jews had no intention of moving, Zionism began to appear in the eyes of many as only an episode, an aspect of modern Jewish history, not its final vindication—in the last analysis, the solution to a temporary problem of a part of the Jewish people overtaken by an extraordinarily

horrible calamity. Israel, then, was a refuge but not *the* Jewish National Home, heir to the Jewish civilization of the Pale but not the medium for the energies and peculiarities of the millions of Jews all over the world. Zionism on its face had called for the "normalization" of the Jew, but it could never bring that about. An abnormal people, the Jews are driven. Strive they must, justify themselves in their own eyes and in the eyes of others they must. They are unable to take reality as it is for granted. They are hypnotized, now as always, by the idea of ultimate meaning, final denouement.

When the fact that no more Jews were to be expected began to sink in, the feeling of having reached an impasse, of facing a *cul de sac*, took hold of the Yishuv. Relations with the Arab states were at an unbreakable deadlock. The economic situation was grave. The number of emigrants leaving the country was growing, among them young men born and bred in Israel. Most Israelis were seized by panic at the reports of the fast advancing assimilation of American Jewry. One could hear voices predicting that in two generations no Jews would be left outside Israel, not even in Russia.

No longer the vanguard of the Jewish people and its spearhead, the Yishuv was now experiencing the cold winds of isolation: a ghetto hemmed in by implacable enemies, pledged to drown it in streams of blood. What was it all worth? For whom were they toiling? The self-questioning mood was giving rise to a general crisis of identity. Was there any such thing as a distinctive Jewish culture worth preserving? And would Israel ever be able to create anything in that sphere that would have so strong an appeal as to wean highly sophisticated Jews in the advanced countries away from assimilation?

Young Israelis would react with impatient scorn to the old Zionist slogans, treating them as cant and humbug. At one end of the spectrum, the Canaanites preached dissociation from diaspora Jewry and its traditions, a loving communion with the facts and values growing out of the soil and landscape, a return to pre-Judaic realities, and an attempt to fuse with the non-Jewish inhabitants of the area into a single old-new race. At the other end, there were calls for a repudiation of secularism and a return to an observant mode of Jewish life as the only way of staving off complete assimilation and eventual apostasy.

This spreading malaise joined with traumatic memories of Munich and Auschwitz to make the diplomatic crisis triggered by Nasser's closing of the Straits of Tiran in the spring of 1967 look like proof of a paralyzing loss of nerve. The government was fumbling and stumbling. Israeli emmissaries were knocking at the doors of the chancelleries of the Great Powers for help which would clearly never come. The enemy seemed to hold the initiative and to be defiantly and systematically tightening the rope around the neck of Israel.

THE FANTASTIC victory that came so unexpectedly in June violently propelled the Yishuv into a diametrically opposite mood. All at once Zionism became immensely meaningful again. But meaningful in what sense? By Israel having obtained the longed for goal of peace on the basis of a genuine recognition by its neighbours as a natural and integrated component of the area? Or by having conquered all of the promised territory and imposed its presence with superior force on an unreconciled foe?

The former was the prevailing mood in the early days after the war. People did not think of "reaping the fruits of victory." They wanted to believe that "this time the Arabs have learned their lesson" — that they cannot destroy Israel. "I do not want any Arab territory" — I was told in a private conversation two-three days after the victory by the late Prime Minister, Mr. Levi Eshkol. He was happy that "at last we have something we can bargain with," meaning conquered territory for peace.

There is likely to be much argument in the future between historians whether Israel was to blame for not coming forward on the morrow of its triumph with a bold, imaginative and magnanimous offer, instead of waiting for the famous telephone call from Cairo (and Amman), or whether the Arabs deserved condemnation for closing all the avenues of a give and take through the Khartum Conference resolution, which repeated all the traditional litany of grievances and reiterated with additional vigour all the vows and bans of never, never.

One is constantly told by Israeli Ministers that the Government has passed on innumerable messages to the other side, with sufficiently clear hints for its imagination to grasp that a favourable bargain could be got. Much the same is being said by Hussein and to some extent even by Nasser. Unfortunately, what one side considers as the absolute minimum for its security and honour is seen by the other as a pistol held at its head. There is then also the obsessive conviction that diplomacy consisted of bazaar haggling, and what is a far reaching concession from our point of view becomes to the adversary at once a point of departure for asking for more. The Israelis insist on the bitter experience of Arab hostility, the Arabs decry Israeli effective and victorious expansionism. In its paranoiac self-centredness neither side gives any thought to the fact that if you seriously mean to start negotiations you have first to think what would be acceptable and what was not acceptable to the other side. Since that is not done by either side, both are able to repeat with good conscience that there was no one to talk to on the other side and no one to whom you may give up anything.

In the event, every impediment which stood in the way to any form of reconciliation before 1967 expanded into an immovable blockage, and both sides, each in

its own way, succumbed to what appears to be an incurable neurosis.

Nasser may not have actually planned the June war. He may have just glided into it, egged on by the recklessness of the newly established pro-Soviet regime in Syria and the success of each consecutive step in undoing the results of the 1956 Suez war, accompanied as these were by the growing pressure of his Russian and Egyptian collaborators who proclaimed Israel's reaction to Syrian provocations to be preparations for an U.S.-Israel collusion à la 1956, and then, when the crisis mounted, interpreted Israel's initial hesitations as a paralysis of will, and a corroboration of the exaggerated Soviet reports about the demoralization in Israeli society. Did not Heikal triumphantly proclaim that the Arabs had Israel in their net already? And so by the end of May 1967 the great day of reckoning seemed to have arrived.

For decades the Arabs had been obsessed by memories of past glories and prophecies of future greatness, mocked at by the injury and the shame of having had an alien and despised race injected into the nerve centre of their promised pan-Arab empire, between its Asian and African halves, just at a time when the Imperialist powers had started their great retreat from their colonial possessions in Asia and Africa. To ease their feelings of humiliation the Arabs would attribute all the Zionist successes — Jewish settlement, the victories of 1948 and 1956 — to the machinations of Western imperialism. Israel as the agent or spearhead of the Great Powers became thus the peg to hang upon all the frustrations encountered by the Arab peoples in their anxious and jealous effort to skip centuries of social, economic and cultural development, and catch up with the well-established and self-assured western old timers. The effect had been to make them almost incapable of setting their minds to anything else, or of seeing anything on its own merits and unrelated to the central grievance. Everything had, as it were, to be suspended until that wrong could be redressed.

To make a virtue out of a vice, the Arabs developed the vision of an extreme misfortune turned into the lever of an ultimate fulfilment: in the course of preparing for the joint total confrontation with Israel, the Arabs would create the sinews of their future empire, and the victory over Israel would almost automatically — as in the case of Italy in 1859/61 and Germany 1870/71 — ensue in a pan-Arab empire, an Arab nation, one and indivisible, which had also incidentally achieved its social revolution by wresting the rich oil fields from the feudal sheiks and turned them into the rightful inheritance of the nation as such.

It is easy to imagine the shock of the 1967 defeat, which not only destroyed all these calculations and schemes, but also underscored the humiliation by the fact that Israel's victory was this time manifestly single handed, and unlike the 1956 Suez (or Sinai) campaign could hardly be attributed to Imperialist aid.

The anti-Israel obsession gave rise to a kind of systematic Manichean metaphysic, the focus of an entire philosophy of history, with the Jew as the devil incarnate from the days of patriarch Abraham himself till his assumption of the role of the lynchpin of an American-Imperialist-Zionist world-plot against the Arab world, the Socialist Commonwealth and all colonial peoples.

By an unspeakably tragic irony the Zionism of Jewish exiles marching to the tune of "Oh, if I forget thee, Jerusalem", not only created an Arab Zionism, propelled by a similar sense of exile and dream of a return to that very Jerusalem, but imparted the mad obsession with a world-wide Jewish conspiracy to the Islamic world, which, however contemptuous of, and unfriendly to Jews, had in the past not known that essentially Christian neurotic preoccupation with Jewish deicide and the Protocols of Zion, from the dire results of which the Jews sought refuge in Palestine.

NOTHING HIGHLIGHTS so much the intractable character of the conflict than the fact that what to the Jews appears a condition sine qua non as well as the crowning achievement is to the Arabs something utterly unthinkable — the ultimate humiliation: to sit down and negotiate a peace in a direct give and take. To the Israeli Ministers, most of them persons of sound common sense, and warm humanity, although in some cases afflicted by a good ideal of self-righteous incomprehension of the Arab cause, such an outcome seems so logical and natural. But there is more to it. Deep down in the Jewish soul there is consciously or unconsciously, a tremendous anxiety to do away with that which had plagued their existence for two thousand years in the diaspora — the lack of simple,unreserved recognition of their right to exist as of right, and not on sufferance. Was not the essence of Zionism the deep longing to be a nation unto the nations in the family of nations? Nothing could therefore be more galling and frustrating than the fact that Israel was the only State in the world to which its neighbours refused the very right to exist, and whose frontiers were hermetically closed even when they were not ablaze. For ultimately all turns upon this point: the presence or absence of a readiness to recognize the State of Israel, which amounts to saying — the will for peace or the will for war. If the former were there and convincingly demonstrated, questions of borders, refugee settlement, guarantees against the guerilla activities, would become secondary and likely to fall easily into their place. If the latter were paramount, then there would be only one categorical imperative "kill him before he kills you": strategic borders become then all-important, readmission of refugees is tantamount to the introduction of a Trojan horse, even the signing of some sort of document on non-belligerency by the Arab Governments only a ruse for gaining a breathing spell for another round, in preparation for which the guerillas would be encouraged to conduct softening-up operations deep into the neighbourhood of Tel-Aviv, indeed, if possible, into its very heart.

THE OTHER DAY I fathomed something of the depths of Arab neurosis. A group of prominent Arabs and Jewish intellectuals who had been meeting together at fairly frequent intervals, were discussing for the ninth time "the problem" in an atmosphere of accentuated mutual courtesy and in the common conviction that History had decreed that we have to live together or we shall perish together, meaning — I hasten to add — by living "together" not a bi-national State but separate Jewish and Arab States, so as to enable each people to express itself freely as God has created it — a distinct entity — without any wish for, or opportunity of, patronizing the other, and with no reason to fear being swamped by the numbers or the superior competence of the other side. A Hebrew University professor put a direct question to our Arab interlocutors: did any one of them know a single example in history of victors withdrawing before the vanquished had even begun to sue for peace, let alone vow day in day out that they would never make peace, never recognize the victor's very right to exist, never meet him in order to negotiate face to face but would continue to labour with no respite for his destruction and annihilation.

"Surely you also know very well that had your leaders shown the slightest inclination to sit down with us and talk, the Jews would have been falling over each other in a stampede to meet you and you would have got out of them gains which you could never obtain on the battlefield". Turning to the soldier among the Arabs present, a former high officer in the British and at a later date in two Arab armies, and altogether an attractive and warm person, the Israeli scholar exclaimed "and you for one after all know that the Arabs are in no position to defeat Israel for a very long time". The man to whom these words were addressed, usually highly articulate and eloquent, sat quite speechless and his countenance showed signs of deep distress. He murmured something about honour, glory, history. He had been plainly touched on the raw. There came to my mind a recent article by Heikal in which in a pathetic cri de coeur he exclaimed that once the Arabs had succeeded in inflicting a single defeat upon Israel and in killing 10—15—20,000 Jews, their self-respect would be regained and — he hinted — it might then become possible for them to meet the Jews face to face. It seemed like the case of the impotent who had tried and tried so many times in vain and is obsessed with the dream of that breakthrough, after which he will be able to look men and women straight into their eyes. That the breakthrough was sure to come the Arabs have the Crusaders as proof. Admittedly, it took two hundred years for the Arabs to finish off the Crusaders' Kingdom. Well, had it not taken the Jews two thousand years to come back to the Holy Land?

THERE IS GROUND to fear that a not dissimilar type of impotence is in the process of paralyzing Israel. The Arab predicament stems from resentment and rage, steeped in a sense of failure. The Jewish complex grows from a mixture of fear and distrust, on the one hand, and a feeling of power on the other. There is a deep-seated longing for peace in Israel, and there can be no doubt that were the Jews to discern some opening, a narrow chink in the Arab wall of obduracy, the great majority of them would leap forward to meet the Arabs more than half way. The grave psychological impediments which continue to pile up may prove, however, strong enough to stultify that urge, or a least to prevent the Israelis from detecting that longed-for "opening", if it should appear, and certainly prevent them from going out in search of it, or taking any initiative to attempt finding such an opening.

That process started as soon as the Arabs closed themselves into a cage with their Khartum resolutions. The spirit of generous euphoria began at once to give way to fear and distrust and to a hardening of arteries in Israel. If the Arabs were absolutely resolved on a war of annihilation, surely — it was said — it would be criminal negligence not to maintain the utmost precautions, to stick to the present frontiers, which allow us to strike at Cairo or Damascus within seconds almost, while the Egyptian planes can reach Tel-Aviv in no less than a quarter of an hour. Who can in such circumstances give up the Jordan ditch and allow the Jordanian border to be re-established at 12–15 kms from Tel-Aviv? People began to recall the lessons of history, how every Arab "no" resulted in greater gains than had been hoped for from an Arab "yes". Time was on our side, no matter what pressures the U.S. may exercise — they cannot be too strong, since we are, after all, the only safe ally of America in this area, its bastion against Soviet encroachment into the Indian Ocean, and we have never asked U.S. soldiers to fight for us. One must not be scared by threats and abuse coming from Moscow, for the Russians will not send an expeditionary force against us. Nor should we be unduly upset by unpleasantness from the U.N. Security Council, which is surely dominated by our enemies and is at the same time impotent. The unrest in the occupied territories was easily manageable and the shellings on the Canal, or the forays of guerillas, were incapable of even making a dent in Israeli armour. Our pilots enjoyed the shooting down of Migs like pigeons and our armour units the forays deep into Egyptian territory. All that was needed were strong nerves. The usual argument which the Israeli hawk would bring out to "demolish" the pleadings of the doves, would be "Trust the Arabs to help us out in the end".

As time went on more and more people became receptive to the romantic pseudo-religious mysticism of the various fire-eating and Bible-quoting Prophets of manifest destiny, who compare the Zionist endeavour to a Revolution which must unfold to its last consequence. And when one speaks of Revolution in such a context, one feels absolved in advance from blame for resorting to "revolutionary methods." It is written

in the Book of History that Israel will be restored to the fullness of his inheritance. That inheritance belonged to all generations past, present and future. And the present generation which had been singled out by the Almighty as trustee and executive had no right to give away what belonged to all the generations. The Arabs owned fourteen States, while Israel was to the Jews the poor man's "ewe lamb". The Balfour Declaration and the Mandate had recognized the rights of the Palestinian Arabs as individuals, ut not as a sovereign national entity. Sovereignty over ne Holy Land was reserved for the Jews alone. Those Palestinian Arabs who, in spite of the Israeli resolve to guarantee them their human and civil rights and to grant them equality, preferred to live in an Arab State, were welcome to emigrate, and should perhaps be encouraged to do so.

Would not such a policy constitute an insurmountable obstacle to peace with the Arab Countries? This objection the new militants would counter by saying that the Arabs would agree to peace or rather give up war only if they became absolutely convinced that they had no hope of breaking the resolve of Israel. Since any sign of weakness only confirmed them in their intransigence, Israel was bound not to yield an inch. Some extremists have gone even further than this asserting that peace might not be desirable for Israel at all, and pointing in support of their view to the bracing effect wars have had on the nation, its pride, and its sense of unity.

There is something pathetic, at once touching and repellent, in the desperate quest of the mystical maximalists for means and ways to meet the awful, supremely ironical, contingency of the Jews of Greater Israel being swamped in no time by the higher birth rate of the Arab minority, in other words in their effort to make good the irreparable catastrophe of Auschwitz. Thus one of the oldest of the new militants exclaims in prophetic ecstasy: "Two million new immigrants in two years!" Where from? He and his like refuse to recognize any fundamental difference between the closely knit and self-sufficient Jewish communities of former Poland and Rumania and those of Western countries, foremost of which is American Jewry.

Somewhat exaggerating the significance of the wave of anxious solidarity which swept world Jewry in the days of May and June 1967, when Israel seemed to face its supreme, and what then appeared as an Auschwitz-like ordeal, they would attribute to an ethnic group in a pluralistic society yearnings for an untrammelled national existence that an older generation of East European Jews went to Palestine to seek. If not from North America, then the millions of recruits will come from the Soviet Union seething with anti-Semitism or from South America, menaced by Castroism and Che Guevarism. Without voicing such sentiments openly, some hawkish mystics are almost on the lookout for anti-Semitism — such as the Negro anti-Jewish sentiment — if egged on by fear of persecution, diaspora Jews will emigrate to Israel. Some set their hopes upon a change of heart among the Jewish hippies and members of the New Left. Who knows? Their surplus of idealism, when frustrated, could still be channelled into Chalutsic resolve! A poet of the romantically nationalist persuasion, but doubtful of the possibility of enticing many Jews to immigrate, launched a delirious "appeal to the Gentiles" — Norwegians, Dutchmen, Danes, Mexicans, Frenchmen and Italians: "Let us tell them: come and partake of the wonderful adventure of building Eretz-Israel... We will share everything with them. We will give them our pretty daughters for their wives and their dark or light skinned women will find men here worthy of the name. We will make it easy for them to convert to Judaism, and those who will not wish to convert can live here as a sympathetic minority of Christians and atheists, tied to us in heart and soul, as citizens".

The arguments about the danger of a Rhodesian situation developing in a Israel divided into two so utterly different societies are brushed aside by the hawks: their opponents were men of small faith in their doubts about the ability of Israel to cope with any problem: and moreover were propagating slanders by insinuating that Israel will not know how to treat fairly and justly the strangers within its gates.

Apocalyptically-minded super-hawks are to be found on both sides. Those on the Arab side are determined to provoke Israel to expand till it bursts, till it is choked with Arab population, saddled with such insoluble problems and so harassed by guerillas and sabotage that it is goaded into resorting to savage repression and irrational squandering of strength to the horror of the whole world.

There are some Jewish superhawks on the lunatic fringe who also pray for an apocalypse, which will somehow make the Arabs vanish into the thin air through mass flight and leave Israel safe and happy for ever after, behind the Jordan river, or who knows — the Syrian desert, turned into a Chinese wall. The dovish argument about world opinion the hawks would dismiss as pusillanimous and dishonourable. The Jews owed nothing to the world (as if Zionism could ever have taken off the ground without public sympathy). Did the world do anything about Auschwitz or about the situation prevailing in the days preceding the Six Day War?

Any concession on Israel's right of sovereignty over the whole of Palestine was tantamount to an admission that Zionism had always been wrong.

On a less exalted and more mundane plane, the more sober politicians argue quite plausibly that if peace is very distant, since Hussein cannot try to make peace for fear of the terrorists and Nasser would not make it for the fear of losing his leadership of the Arab world, Israel cannot impotently leave things in suspense. You cannot stand still: you either go forward or move backward. Fortified outposts must be established, and they have to be flanked by settlements and supplied with safe and easy lines of communication — the Golan heights, strategic

areas in Sinai, in the mountains on the West bank and in the Jordan Valley. Even those who while insisting on strongpoints, disclaim the wish to annex Arab populations in substantial numbers, go on arguing that one cannot leave two economies to go their separate and very different ways. The state of uncertainty about their future — some go one further — prevented moderate Arabs from collaborating with the Israeli authorities, while it encouraged the extremists to assist in or condone the acts of the saboteurs and terrorists. From this there is little distance to the conclusion that annexation would redound to the good of the Arabs themselves and even help in resettling the refugees. And should by some miracle the Arabs agree to negotiate at some future date, nothing would prevent us from pulling back from the outposts in exchange for a real peace — say the moderates; what we will have annexed and integrated into Israel will remain ours — is the hope of the hawks. Accomplished facts create laws, theories of international law do not establish facts.

THIS DIVIDED MOOD — between the yearning for peace and profound distrust of the Arabs, consequently disbelief in peace, and the hankering sense of obligation towards the "potential" citizens of Israel in the diaspora — becomes the source of so much that is equivocal, inconsistent, and is likely to appear hypocritical or even cynical. in the eyes of outsiders. Although the official Israeli policy is still direct negotiations with all options open, increasingly more frequent and louder are Ministerial statements about this or that point — usually territorial — not being negotiable, until you even hear that it was better to hold Sharm-el-Sheikh, the God forsaken desert around the exit to the Red Sea without peace. than to get peace without Sharm-el-Sheikh.

The division in the Cabinet are deep and are openly voiced. But since the need for a real decision is made to look very distant by Arab intransigeance, the protagonists are only too glad to postpone the hour of decision so as not to wreck the National Coalition. The latter imperceptibly turns from a means into an end, and indeed a pretext to take no initiative in the pursuit of peace. And so even moderate spokesmen are compelled to eschew the word "withdrawal", but to speak of "new disposition of forces", and to avoid as much as possible any reference to the U.N. Security Council's Resolution.

This mixture of hubris and fear is all pervading in Israel. One hears people say in the same breath, "we can reach Cairo within hours; we may be destroyed within half an hour if the Arab tanks break through the narrow neck of pre-June 1967 Israel north of Tel-Aviv". This ambivalence may be taken to epitomize the general human condition since the introduction of atomic weapons, but it brings into still sharper relief the baffling ambiguity of the Jewish situation through the ages. The steep and rapid fall from blinding splendour to bottomless misery has been such a constant feature in Jewish history. This makes for obsessive over-anxiety and overreaction, and to a neurotic determination to make the worst fears come true. One of the most discussed issues in Israel has been, for instance, the question of recognizing the West Bank Arabs as a Palestinian Arab entity, with a view of establishing an autonomous Arab State there. Some see in such a plan a way of frightening Hussein into entering into negotiations, others an end in itself and a first unilateral step towards an overall settlement with the Arab world. Strong reasons for and against such a policy have been adduced on practical grounds. There is indeed much justified doubt whether such a statelet would be viable at all. There is then the argument that it would in fact be either an Israeli protectorate or a springboard for militant Arab irredentism. With El-Fatah staking out the claim to speak for the undivided Palestinian nation, opposing any kind of arrangement with Israel, and vowing total destruction of the Jewish State, some Israeli leaders have lately caught fright at the idea of acknowledging even in theory the existence of such a national entity as the West Bank Arabs, lest this offers the enemy an opportunity to proclaim that the whole and undivided Palestine was the patrimony of the indivisible Palestine Arab nation; as if the fanatical terrorist groups were really in need of additional arguments. Some Israeli leaders have become entangled in pernicious and self-defeating theoretical disquisitions intended to show that the Palestine Arabs were not a a nation. They are oblivious to both. How ill-befitting such theorising sounds in the mouth of a people which had fought so hard to be recognized as a nation, and to the fact that to deny a group the dignity of a nation was the surest way of establishing it as a militant one. Sterile in itself though such theorizing may be, the wounds it leaves are deep. More immediately it means shelving any plan of an Israeli initiative in setting up a Palestine Arab entity as at least of taking a tentative step.

THE ISRAELI ATTITUDE to the Four Powers Conference is rooted in this complex of fear, distrust and sense of power. The Israeli Government stubbornly maintains its position that by constituting themselves into a kind of Areopagus the Big Powers are lending implicit approval to the Arab refusal to treat with Israel. They invite as it were the Arabs to demonstrate through the intensification of terror and warming up of the frontiers, that they would never negotiate, and that the situation is so explosive that the Powers must curb Israel. This vehement rejection of the Four Powers' intervention by Israel may at least partly be motivated by the understandable, clear or dim wish of the victor to be left alone with the vanquished. It is, however, the Munich trauma that is at the bottom of Israeli intransigeance, or at least the not unjustified fear that the Great Powers may just patch up some hasty and precarious cease-fire, in order to be able to show that they have achieved something, but will in fact leave all the embers burning, and through inattention or weariness, secure to Soviet

Russia a legal standing for perpetrating trouble for both Israel and the U.S.A. Israel is strong and determined enough to defy all the Powers — the official policy claims.

If the Arab press seizes upon every hawkish declaration as conclusive proof that Israel does not want peace but desires expansion, the Israeli papers, on their part, select the most blood-curdling proclamations of Arab guerilla leaders to show that nothing can be done with the Arabs. Both sides leave out the mitigating "ifs" and "buts" of the official spokesmen, or treat the more moderate statements of the other side as a cunning ruse, or just pitfalls and traps.

In brief, with so many good reasons, justifications and pretexts on both sides for doing nothing to bring peace closer, the idea that force was the sole arbiter is growing into an axiom, partial rights and wrongs having become almost irrelevant. But, as Namier said "the dead festering past cannot be eliminated by violent action any more than an obsession can be cured by beating the patient." If anything has been proved by the fifty years' conflict, it is precisely that it is just not true that the adversary "understands only the language of force". Instead of bringing him to his knees, despair goads him on to more desperate acts of resistance or aggression. When he has nothing to lose, he can risk everything, because he risks nothing. This has been shown again and again by both Jews and Arabs, not to speak of Vietnam, Algeria and in so many other cases. It would be amusing if it were not so painful to hear Jews expatiating on the special and different mentality of "our" Arabs in the way anti-semites have not so long ago been philosophizing about the innate and unalterable, usually mean, characteristics of the Jews.

Should full scale hostilities be resumed, there is little doubt that the Israeli troops could seize Damascus, enter Cairo, and conquer Amman in no time. But what next? Could they stay there? And even if they could, what would be the point of it? Is there any certainty that a fourth Jewish victory will at last have driven home "the lesson" to the Arabs? Few people in Israel nourish any illusion by now that in a year or two an utterly exhausted or defeated Arab world would under new "peace loving" regimes come out for peace. Israel may be able to win and win, and go on winning till its last breath, thereby demonstrating the truth of Hegel's aphorism about the "impotence of victory". After every victory we would face more difficult, more complicated problems. For as Nietzsche has put it there are victories which are more difficult to bear than defeat. This ghastly realization is breeding a quite fatalistic mood: we are doomed to live for ever in a state of siege; a conclusion which comes perilously close to a denial of the most cherished dream and deepest raison d'être of Zionism — a safe home, and to an admission that we have exchanged a ghetto of pariahs for "a ghetto of victors" — this conjures up the vision of a Gotter dammerung — a nightmare utterly abhorrent to Jewish tradition.

Should this state of war between Jews and Arabs, which has lasted already 50 years continue for another 50 years and who knows what type of weapons will be introduced into the area in the midst of a world changing with kaleidoscopic speed all the time, and what forces may still intervene in this region — there will be no victors and no vanquished, but mutual general destruction. Those Arabs capable of thinking lucidly, and from time to time one meets such persons, realize fully that Israel cannot be destroyed, and even if that were possible, the Arab countries themselves would be shattered beyond repair before they could succeed in striking a death blow at Israel, so that the victorious survivors would celebrate their triumph on ruins and ashes. Nor could Israel bring a suicidally determined Arab world to its knees, without incurring in the process mortal, material and moral damage and having all the values which had in the past won it the sympathies of the best of mankind completely eroded, with all the "established facts" going up in smoke and the image of oppressor attached to its name in the minds of countless millions in Asia, Africa and elsewhere.

There is thus only one alternative to the nightmare of reciprocal destruction, and it is that of reciprocal recognition. The very claim to the totality of Israel's inheritance goes much to justify the claim to the entirety of Palestine as an Arab land. Much as one may inveigh against the Arabs begrudging the Jews that little notch, while having themselves so much, the argument sounds specious in a world in which no country, no more than any individual, has divested itself of a part of its territory, its coal or oil to make good the wants of its close or distant neighbours. Jews have been able to exist and prosper only where reciprocity was obtained. Where an exclusive claim based on superior power of supposedly higher right has prevailed, Jews have always been the first victims.

Of course, any discussion of reciprocity must take into account the fact that while the aim of the Israelis, even the extreme annexationist minority, is security, the Arabs have indicated all to frequently their determination to wipe Israel off the map, and no one can blame a people, who had experienced Auschwitz, for not treating threats of annihilation as rhetoric or metaphor.

But the preoccupation with security, however natural and justifiable, so often becomes a self-defeating obsession. Which state in the world has ever enjoyed absolute security, and particularly now in the age of nuclear, chemical and biological warfare? The axiom of the eternity of Arab hatred and active hostility is suicidal: if these cannot be stilled, then every new defeat at the hands of Israel will exacerbate them still further, and little reliance should be placed on sophisticated weaponry out-balancing superior numbers of an eternally inferior enemy. The desperate anxiety not to allow Jordanian rule to return to Kalkilya for fear of guerillas in the neighbourhood of Tel-Aviv may — by preventing any settlement — help the most uncompromising extremists in their effort to sweep

away all the moderate particularistic forces in the Arab world and to unite it, with the blessing and active help of Maoist China.

There are so many lessons in the history of victorious nations, just out of mortal peril, anxiously and desperately determined to obtain foolproof guarantees against aggression which they feared would be renewed in ten, twenty or fifty years. Through the search for the best they lost the chance of obtaining the good, and brought upon themselves much sooner than feared calamities much greater than those they wanted to ward off from future generations. One is reminded of the frantic efforts of French statesmen and generals after 1918 to obtain guarantees against German militarism, as well as of the insensate, and very soon regretted perorations of British statesmen on squeezing the German lemon till the pips burst. Marshal Foch failed to obtain the "natural frontier" of the river Rhine and the allies got no reparations in the end. But they helped to conjure up Hitler. Many people who hurled abuse upon Lord Landsdowne for his famous letter to the Daily Telegraph pleading for a negotiated give-and-take peace with Germany in 1917, came afterwards to muse ruefully how much better a place the world, and their own country would have been, had the advice of the former Foreign Secretary been heeded; in all probability it would have been a world without Mussolini and Hitler and without Stalin.

THE ISRAELI ARMY has shown itself so many times more than a match for all the combined Arab forces that one is taken aback by the fears that if this or that is given up or not made secure, Israel is signing its own death warrant. Furthermore, should Arab hostility never relent, but continue to mount, and with it its military ability, what frontiers will ultimately be of any avail? And what kind of security could there be for a country with such a large and determinedly hostile minority within its frontiers, in those wide ditches and high mountains — in an age of bitter national strife all over the world and in the age of jets and missiles! So any measure of real security is in the disposition of the protagonist. In other words diminishing his grievance and urge for revenge. And as to the obligation towards the potential Jewish settlers in Israel, could one really justify the certainty of continued actual warfare, with all the present suffering and unknown disasters in store, for the sake of a hypothetical need for refuge, which might arise if God forbid the world is again plunged into the barbarism of the thirties', and forties', a state of affairs which would in all probability spell universal destruction. Had we not clamoured for immigrants from Soviet Russia before any one dreamt of wider frontiers?

The quest for therapeutic means to replace force hangs upon the anguished hope that there is on both sides a fundamental disposition in favour of peace, though terribly inhibited and handicapped by neurotic impediments and overstrained susceptibilities. Which means that nothing should be done that might provoke or hurt these, and everything to enable the buried better self to assert itself gently. One clutches at the hope that sufficient and sufficiently influential people in Egypt and in the other Arab countries realise the utter futility and dangerous consequences of a renewed war; that they have become aware of the fact that if the present state of war is continued the dream of restored Arab glory, with the common cause of Palestine as the cement and lever of pan-Arab nationalism, will reach a sad consummation with the appearance of Soviet advisers in every Government office and Soviet technicians in every Arab factory, and in every Army unit, difficult though it be to imagine two races and civilizations less congenial to each other than Communist Russia and the Moslem Arabs.

One should perhaps try to remind the Arab intellectuals of historical parallels. In the XVIth and XVIIth century Spain was bled white, went bankrupt and sank into torpor and impotence at the end of eighty years of war against Holland. Catholic-Monarchic Spain could not bring itself to recognize or to treat, except for cease-fire arrangements, with heretics and rebels and usurpers of parts of its Empire, assigned to it, after all, by the Pope himself in 1496. In the end the proud Spaniards were compelled to sign in 1648 a Treaty with a Holland which had in the meantime grown from a handful of desperate rebels and fugitives into a world Empire, the first financial power in the world, and culturally the most advanced country in Europe.

What misfortunes has the burning but constantly frustrated desire of the Italians to show themselves, to demonstrate martial qualities and win resounding victories brought upon that so wonderfully gifted, sophisticated and generous nation? The Italians seem to have at last learned their lesson and cured themselves. Both nations, the Arabs and the Israelis would do well to take to heart the resigned words of wisdom spoken by a thinker who has grown white in the quest of justice, passing through the whole spectrum of ideas: "past injustice cannot be made good. The sufferings endured by earlier generations, obtain no redress".

THE ARABS cannot get a "just" peace, and the Jews are unable to obtain a "total" and "true" peace. All that can be hoped for at present is the stemming of the tide in the hope of its gradual ebbing away. The hope that the Arabs will come cap in hand to sue Israel for peace is no longer cherished even by those who had till not long ago believed—or still believe — that time was working in our favour, and laid store on accomplished facts. Were even a directly negotiated and formally signed Peace Treaty attainable — the Israelis themselves say — the Arab leaders who will have put their signature to it would be assassinated the next day, and the Arab Ministers would in any case, like the Germans in 1919 sign it only under duress and with mental reservations and hostile resolve in their heart. By refusing to have anything less than that, and thus perpetuating and perhaps intensifying the present tensions to a boiling point, may we not — to say it once

more — be helping the guerilla organizations which however insignificant their military achievements have been, have nevertheless raised a flag, created a myth, and become a focal point for the hopes and the activities of the young and done incalculable harm to the image of Israel in the world!

Any arrangement with the Arab Governments at this hour even one short of a treaty negotiated face to face and signed amidst handshakes in the blaze of television lights, would implicitly be based upon the one common interest of all sides concerned, Israel, the Arab Governments, the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. in preventing the contingency of a total triumph of the extremists in the Arab world and the incursion of China into the area. But the sands are running out fast. The chance may be lost for that detente and de-escalation, which a common interest not so much in positive peace as in the avoidance of further dangerous complications may bring about, in an unacknowledged way leading to factual cooperation, notwithstanding the continued incantations about the unforgotten wrongs suffered and eternal rights possessed by the Arab people. These would then be more of an emotional release, a safety valve, than a token of unshakable resolve for direct action here and now. It is today highly unpopular in Israel to recall that such a situation has existed between Israel and Egypt for some ten years after Suez, when the Israel-Egypt border was indeed quiet. Admittedly it did not prevent the 1967 explosion. But where is the proof that this must happen again? And have we not shown a supreme ability to meet such a contingency? Why despair of the genius of the Israeli army in the future?

There are no more pressing, and in the long run more decisive imperatives,than these two — the checking of the growth of the guerillas, and the resettlement of the refugees through concerted action, internationally supported and financed. Success on these two issues would take the sting out of the terrible imbroglio, and enable the sides to slide slowly into peace, should the hope of first establishing the formal peace as a prelude to the particular remedies prove vain.

Of course, if Israel be prepared publicly to proclaim its readiness to forego territorial expansion and to go to such lengths to save the susceptibilities and irrational obsessions of the Arabs, it is surely entitled to expect the Arabs to offer similar alleviations to the Israeli deep seated fears and passions, like the unity of Jerusalem (with some autonomous status for the Arab community in it), some modifications of frontiers, especially as far as the Golan Heights are concerned the right to hold on to strong-points if not forever at least for some years as guarantees, till the need for them has become superfluous in the eyes of all, demilitarization of Sinai and the West Bank, a U.N. force under the auspices of the Security Council, and of course, total freedom of passage through the straits.

If stemming the tide and diffusion be the aim, should we not take another look at the Four or Two Powers Conference on the Middle East, and instead of savagely looking at it as a conspiracy, perhaps try to utilize it to make it easier for the other side to come forward with a minimum loss of face?

THERE ARE LIBERALS in Israel who though aware of the immense difficulties and pitfalls of an imposed settlement, endeavour not to lose their sense of proportion. They recall that hardly ever has such an intractable conflict as the Israel—Arab imbroglio been resolved without the Great Powers in concert, intervening and laying down the law. Their intellectual integrity is rather offended — when they think of the treatment of Palestine Arabs in the past — by the incantations of of some Israeli Ministers about the right of the parties directly concerned to determine their own affairs, without the tutelage of outside powers — "the Middle East is no one's protectorate". They do not expect the powers to become angels, foregoing their own interests, or eunuchs impotent to defend them, but set their hopes on the mutually contradictory interests of the Powers cancelling themselves out into some reasonable compromise.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL came into being in 1948 through Soviet—American agreements; the Suez crisis was resolved in 1956-57 because the two superpowers wanted it to be. It is said that in the early days of Israel, Ben-Gurion would instruct a diplomat going abroad to "do everything possible to please the Americans and nothing to displease the Russians". That balance could not be maintained for long. Soviet support for partition in 1947-48 was an isolated episode. Although it was greeted with jubilation by Zionist left-wingers, to whom consistent Soviet hostility had been a source of deep chagrin, the motive of the Russians, as it soon became unmistakably clear, had been no change of heart in regard to Zionism. Nor can any such change be expected so long as the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. are locked in rivalry.

It is impossible under any circumstances for Israel to adopt an anti-American attitude or even to defy American wishes for any length of time in a vital matter. The reasons are too obvious to need elaboration. This is well known to the Russians, and from it they draw extreme conclusions. Russia is surrounded by American bases, and it is very important for her to have allies and friends and bases behind the American bases — in other words, in Syria, Egypt, Iraq. The Russians think in quantities, and thus conclude that even if Israel could be weaned away from America, the strategic value of the large Arab territories, not to mention the oil they contain, makes the Arab world a much more worthwhile ally. The Soviets ask themselves also the simple question: who pays for it? He who pays has the say. Since totalitarian regimes would never allow, in fact could not even conceive, that a group of their own citizens might advocate a foreign policy which differs from or is not dictated by the government, they are bound to conclude that through the intermediary of American Jewry, Israel is of course an American puppet and agent.

There are other considerations behind Russian policy as well. Insofar as it has been stirring up Jewish sentiment among the Russian Jews, making this "undigestible" group still more difficult to digest, Israel is resented by the Soviet government as a nuisance and an irritant. The social achievements of the Israeli Labor movement, far from impressing the Bolsheviks, evoke contemptuous hostility: how dare a tiny country like Israel presume to build socialism better than Russia itself! Similarly the demand to permit emigration from Russia to Israel must appear as an anti-Soviet device, implying as it does a vote of no confidence in the achievements and nature of the regime. In a Socialist regime everyone must feel happy or he is a reactionary and counterrevolutionary.

Thus, while not motivated by conventionally anti-Semitic convictions and aims, the Soviet Union is almost objectively, to use its own language, led to adopt policies which, given the murderous hostility of the Arabs and the role of Israel in the post-holocaust period of Jewish history, amount to a definite threat to the survival of the Jewish people.

Particularly horrifying is the Soviet—Arab sponsorship of an updated version of the Protocols of Zion: the Zionist-American-Imperialist world plot, operating not only against Arabs, Asians, and Africans, but also against all the socialist regimes, causing economic difficulties, student unrest, Catholic intransigence. We have travelled a long way from the revolutionary universalism of Marx which recognized neither Jew nor Greek nor Gentile, but only workers and capitalists.

And yet, there is a glimmer of hope that the spectre of China and the inexorable compulsions of modern technology and warfare may still work to bring about a Russo—American agreement to resolve the Arab—Israel conflict, once the Vietnam imbroglio is out of the way. As a very great power, Russia finds it extremely difficult to do nothing for the Arabs beyond replacing the arms they have lost, and to take Israeli defiance lying down. At the same time there can be no doubt that the Soviet Union will never risk a nuclear war over the Middle-East, any more than the United States will. Thus the spectre of China, the difficulties with its East-European satelites, the grave economic strains at home, and the unpopularity of the Middle Eastern involvement in Russia may after long travail induce her to agree to a face-saving formula for a Middle Eastern settlement.

Understandable as their anxieties are, the Israelis would do well to pause and reflect whether it be in the long-term interest of Israel to be irreversibly tied up with America in the way South Vietnam, South Korea or Western Germany are. It is not only a question of the image of Israel in the eyes of the world, especially the the Afro-Asian nations, with whom Israel must live and trade in amity. A Great Power finds it easier to change allies or abandon clients than a small isolated State to win new protectors, to mention only the *volte face* in the attitude of France. The Israelis would be well advised not to bank too much on the "special relationship" between Israel and the U.S. Nothing would be more dangerous for them than to act on the assumption that they have America in their pocket. The Suez War had shown that they did not even have American Jewry in their pocket. The only hope of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East lies in an American-Soviet agreement, and not in the preponderance of Israeli armies backed by the Sixth Fleet.

FOR THE ISRAELI LIBERAL to be able to come out against the rising tide of anxious and militant intransigeance and press his case with any effectiveness, the condition, sine qua non, is that there be Arab leaders who wish in their hearts to be more gently or more forcefully cajoled. Without some clear and convincing proof that the Israeli liberals would be powerless Don Quixotes. Worse, they would be decried as fainthearted defeatists, capitulationists, traitors. They would inevitably be reduced to watching fatalistically and impotently the great cruel ironies working themselves out in a seemingly inexorable manner: Heroic exertions and astonishing talents of a hard-pressed nation, with a deep yearning for peace and justice, beating in vain against an unattainable goal, and suffering horrible bloodshed in the process; a society which started off with so much socialist idealism and constructive resolve becoming reduced to the position of a beleaguered city, wasting its substance on arms and the best years of the flower of its youth on destruction; a freedom-loving society doomed to engage in the squalid business of spying, policing, suppressing, putting school girls behind bars, blowing up houses for failure to inform; a rational people swept by morbid passions and neurotic obsessions; a nation whose deepest desire has been to escape the fate of being not an end in itself, but a function of the existence of others, a problem, a liability, an impediment, an undesirable presence, compelled to treat a neighbouring people in that very manner; a people of refugees confronted by hundreds of thousands of human beings overtaken by that very fate; a barrel of powder — which all the Powers are most anxious to prevent from exploding — catching fire through some "untoward" Sarajewo accident. Some console themselves with the hope that there is a Hegelian List der Vermunft hidden in all that, and that like Holland, we have mentioned before, the nation would come out greater and better from this ordeal. The XXth century experiences are bound to have an inhibiting effect on such expectations. Yet one does not dare not to reflect from time to time that most problems are in fact never solved. They are survived, outlived, bypassed, slowly shaken off out of weariness, driven out by more ûrgent and more pressing ones. "It is", writes R.H. Tawney in one of his purple passages, "the tragedy of a world where man must walk by sight that the discovery of the reconciling formula is always left to the future generations, in which passion has cooled into curiosity, and the agonies of peoples have become the exercise in the schools. The devil who builds bridges does not span such chasms till much that is precious has vanished down for ever"