

ZIONISM

National

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By Jacob Tsur

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Jacob Tsur is one of the first diplomats of Israel and a leader of the Zionist movement. Born in 1906, he settled in Jerusalem in 1921 and, after graduating from secondary school there, studied sociology and literature at the University of Florence and at the Sorbonne in Paris.

From 1929, when he returned to Palestine, until Israel's War of Independence, he was Director of the Information Department of the Jewish National Fund in Jerusalem. During this period, he was sent on numerous missions in Europe on behalf of the Fund and of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, which, on the re-establishment of the State of Israel, became the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

In December 1948, he went to Latin America as the first Israel diplomat in the sub-continent. From 1949 to 1953, he was Minister Plenipotentiary in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Paraguay. Today he is President of the Israel-Ibero-American Central Institute of Cultural Relations.

From 1953 to 1959, he was accredited to France as Ambassador of Israel. Upon his return to Israel, following a short period as Director-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, he was elected Chairman of the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization and of the Jewish National Fund, a post which he still holds.

Mr. Tsur has published two books which appeared in Hebrew and French; one of them, "Sunrise in Zion", relating his experience in pre-State Palestine, was translated into English and published by Allan and Unwin, London.

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INTRODUCTION

Zionism is the movement of national liberation of the Jewish people. It is a natural, consequential and indivisible part of the great historical process of the emancipation of nations, which had its beginnings in the first half of the nineteenth century with the national revolutions in the Balkans, and culminated in the successful self-determination of almost all of Asia and Africa after the Second World War. The rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948 — after a stubborn fight waged by three trail-blazing generations of pioneers, first in the ideological domain alone, and then in the practical spheres of production and defence, marked the climax of the movement. The Zionist idea has heartened the Jewish masses in their darkest hours; today, a political fact and factor deep in international consciousness and appraisal, and not as concept or philosophy alone but in its indestructible embodiment in a Third Jewish Commonwealth re-established in the Land of Israel, it stirs thousands of Jewish communities scattered East and West throughout the world, and the rising youth above all, to espouse its theory and pursue its practice in the great tasks of re-making the Homeland and its society.

From its inception, Zionism has been a mass movement of the oppressed Jewish people — an offshoot of the penetrating egalitarian doctrine heralded by the French Revolution which proclaimed the Rights of Man, vowing itself to the equality of the rights of the individual and of nations, and ushering in the freedom of all people.

With Jewry, the struggle for national emancipation was no doubt a reflex, in a way, of anti-Semitic persecution and of the instinctive urge and need for normalcy and liberty. But, at the same time, it is intimately linked with every national movement that found its

chief source of strength in retrospect upon a glorious past and in the ambition to renew a resplendent history.

Born, then, in the hour that saw the birth of European nationalism, Zionism, the modern re-incarnation of an age-old Jewish idea of renaissance, adopted the teachings of that national movement and its ideologies, along with the democratic ideas which characterized its development and forms. But, transcending its European exemplars, Zionism was the heir to a profound sense of its own historical continuity. If its growth was determined by the difficult political reality of modern Europe, its roots drew sustenance from annals that were illustrious not because of a lingering memory of military triumphs or of lost empires, but because of the living precept of an unforgettable civilization. Without the vitality of biblical tradition, Israel would never have seen the light of day again.

Israel, however, is also the outcome of a conflict, of a true revolution, which is almost without precedent in the chronicles of Man. The first duty of the leaders of Zionism was to unite and direct a vast scattering, a far-flung dispersion of oppressed men and women, who — in a world which encouraged the establishment of particularities — saw themselves abused and ostracized because of their specific particularity, as if, in their case only, it were a sin. Yet they seemed incapable of giving conscious expression to their right to a free and independent life.

The principal purpose of the next stage was, therefore, to crystallize a coordinated line of action aimed at realizing the movement's ideals. And all this without the tools and adjuncts which, in other instances, geographical concentration could provide. Then came re-settlement of a largely barren and underpopulated morsel of territory by a handful of pioneers who gave themselves totally to the infinite labour of rebuilding their people's core and centre, hand in hand with fellow-Jews who were already safeguarding the unbroken presence of the nation in its Land. And now came the crucial moment: a movement that combined hope of personal salvation with dreams of messianic redemption began magnetically to draw hundreds of thousands of Jews away from

countries of less and less hospitality to find abiding homes in this Promised Land. In this last development, strong enough now to stand the ultimate trial of independence, Israel was forced to arm itself and do battle for survival.

Zionism, as the ideological basis of this striving, is paramountly positive. It seeks neither to antagonize nor to harm. Its sole purpose, from the outset, has been to reconstruct the national existence and civilization of the Jews, to perpetuate their physical being and their spiritual values.

Its story is unlike that of other national movements, just as the historic destiny of the People of the Book has also, and always, been of a different sort. Its course is unique in mankind's history. To describe its episodes in full would demand a work of many volumes. The following pages do not presume to present more than some general aspects of its evolution, from the dawning of the idea until the re-emergence of the State of Israel.

A UNIQUE COURSE

Who are the Jews?

Many of the world's finest intellects have discussed this question over the centuries, trying to determine whether all that binds the Jews together is their religion — the same that gave birth successively to Christianity and Islam and is the prototype of all monotheistic faiths—, or whether they form a nation, a people. In that little tract of the Middle East, which has gone under the name of Palestine, or the Land of Israel, the Jews knew their Golden Age, in a period which endured, more or less, sixteen hundred years: from the thirteenth century BCE to the end of the fourth century of the Common Era. Jerusalem was the flourishing capital of the Jewish nation when Paris was an embryo Lutetia and London a tiny cluster of huts, not yet inhabited by even Angles or Saxons. Jewish civilization was contemporary with that of ancient Greece and long anteceded the proud days of Rome.

The ancient world had witnessed the magnificence of many mighty peoples and of powerful empires — the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Persian — which, one after the other, ruled the peopled hemisphere. Of all this imperial splendour no vestige is left, save the ruins of their masonry and the legacy of their inscriptions.

Not a few civilizations disappeared without a trace — the Hittites, the Amorites and others, whose biblical presence in the Middle East has only recently been confirmed through the findings of archaeologists. They had their own culture, written language, religious rites, administrative systems; yet they vanished completely from the earth. The one and only regional civilization which held fast is the Jewish. The one and only people that can today read and understand, exactly as it did two thousand years ago, the masterpiece of its authorship are the Jews. That masterpiece is the Bible,

or, more precisely, what is generally called the Old Testament — a work uniquely of the spirit and the *mores* of Israel. It is of profound significance that, in the country which bears the name of Israel, and which regained its independence in 1948, school-children are able to scan and construe the words of the Book as if it were modern literature.

This Land of Israel was, in those days, a kingdom of unassuming size, centred upon the hills of Judaea and Samaria, between the sources of the Jordan River, the town of Beersheba and the Negev desert. Even at the zeniths of its grandeur, it never had more than one or two million inhabitants. Independent though it was, it was often at the mercy of forceful near-by empires: Egypt, Babylon and Assyria, Persia and Greece, which successively held sway in this part of the world. Eventually, Judaea suffered the fate of all the kingdoms of antiquity, large or little: after heroic days of resistance against crushing odds, it yielded to the legions of Rome under Titus. This happened in the seventy-first year of the Common Era: Jerusalem fell and was laid waste.

As was their custom with every nation that they conquered, the Romans dispersed a multitude of Jews throughout the Empire. Many found refuge in the countries of the Hellenistic world, where their forefathers had founded large and wealthy communities. But — and it is well to get rid of any such misconception at once — Judaea was not emptied of anything like all its Jews by any means, either then or ever: dispersal notwithstanding, and despite the Temple's wreckage, Jews in numbers dwelt on in the Land. The centuries that followed turned it into a cockpit of conquerors — Byzantine, Persian, Crusader, Arab and Turk — spreading fire and destruction. Still the faithful remnant of Jewry clung to its birth-place. And, not as others in similar case, Jews survived also in their dispersion, by virtue of the unbreakable bonds of a common civilization and a solidarity of creed, which kept them alive and united.

The Jewish people, passionately and profoundly attached to its ancestral faith and its spiritual heritage, made of these its armour of defence and survival, preserving its ways of life, its laws,

its creativity. The singular aspect of Jewish history is precisely this blend of national and religious elements. There are Protestant Christians in America and Catholic Christians in Holland. There are Catholic Swiss and Protestant Swiss. There are Arabic-speaking Muslims and Persian-speaking Muslims. But for the vast majority of Jews and in all ages, religion and nationhood are identical: indeed, up to the end of the eighteenth century and even beyond it, they were so for virtually all of Jewry.

Judaism has seldom been professed by other peoples. Throughout its exile, the Jewish people has been a persecuted minority. It never held the reins of governance in any of the lands of its shifting abode. Jewish tradition, as it is, frowns upon proselytism, but it is only natural that very few were ever attracted to a belief that would automatically put them within a group despised and outside the tolerated pale.

For century after century, the Jews tarried in global diffusion, drifting from country to country, victimized by hatred, persecution and pogroms. In every country of reluctant settlement, they would re-instate their Jewish forms of living, in fealty always to their ancestral traditions, to the memory of their past, to their ethical laws and to their language. When independence was interrupted, Hebrew, the speech of Israel's civilization, went out of daily use in the Homeland. In banishment, the Jews learned to employ many different tongues, but Hebrew, if no longer spoken, was ever-present in their reading and writing, and it was traditionally taught to their children from infancy.

Jewish history is not unrelieved darkness and shadow: we recall the period of peaceful and productive co-existence with Muslim neighbours in Spain from the ninth to the fourteenth century, with Christian neighbours in Southern Europe at the beginning of the Middle Ages. But these were exceptions. Not seldom, Jews might be more erudite, more enlightened than the peoples among which they sojourned and could claim much higher cultural standards. But at all times and in all places, they were the weakest, the most defenceless minority. A great Jewish thinker described his people as 'the ghost wandering through history' — somewhat resembling

its hosts yet invariably different from them. Men instinctively suspect strange and alien communities and, when divergent ethnic groups live together, the feebler is made the scapegoat in troublous times. Man ever seeks someone not as strong as himself to vent his fury on, and avenge his defeats, someone unhappier, more miserable, less equipped for self-protection.

That is why the entire period of the Middle Ages, which was an epoch of suffering for mankind, and all the European calamities — epidemics, religious wars, famine and havoc — became, for the Jews, an endless sequence of onslaught and oppression. There were monstrous pogroms and holocausts, and whole communities forced to flee across border after border, seeking despairingly to build their lives anew. In an age when religion ruled life, Jewry, with its last drop of blood, defended the faith of its forefathers, and death never forsook it.

The obverse of the coin was that Jews were not admitted to the ranks of the Gentiles. The Franks made Jewish life wretched in Gaul; then the Provençals were the oppressors; and centuries afterwards, the Germans and the Poles. But no victimization, no wandering, could daunt or discomfit the Jews: again and again, they set doggedly about restoring their communities. In every episode of the Jewish saga, there always were centres of spiritual inspiration. On the morrow of the end of the kingdom of Israel, Babylonia — the Iraq of today — was one; next Persia was. After the Muslim conquest of the Iberian peninsula, Spain and Portugal became the focus of that spirit. Driven thence, in the year that witnessed the discovery of the New World, the Jews trekked to Provence, and on to Champagne, and on to the Rhine Valley. Tormented in the German principalities and expelled once more, they journeyed further eastward, in the fifteenth century, to the general vicinity of a young and still barbaric kingdom, Poland, on the edge of the Western world of that day. This was their staging-post to Russia, and so it was that, as the nineteenth-century chronicles of Zionism open, we find the larger part of the Jewish people lodged in Eastern Europe — in Poland, Russia and Austro-Hungary. The nineteenth century itself was nearing its close.

THE GHETTO AND THE EMANCIPATION

Before discussion of the re-birth of the national movement of the Jewish people, it is proper to treat of a factor that played a vital role in exilic Jewry.

During the Middle Ages, and until the eve of modern times, the ghetto was that district of a town or city, in Europe or the East, where Jews were concentrated. This segregation was thrust upon the Jews by Governments and Popes, by kings and princes, by councils of free cities — the word 'ghetto' itself had its origin in Venice — in the Christian and Muslim world alike. The Jews were restricted in residence to a shut-in section of the mediaeval town — such enclaves still exist today in Iran and in Morocco — and might go out only on strictly commercial or professional errands.

At the same time, over the centuries, this enforced ostracism proved to be an essential safeguard and shield of the particular forms of Jewish life. In mediaeval society, made up as it was of heterogeneous groups, with corporations of artisans and aristocracy, with guilds of citizens and workers, each keeping to its rigidly distinct existence, the Jews were not only an ethnic group apart, but a class apart as well. So, in spite of all the tribulations, the ghetto survived, and even took on an intenser vitality. Within it, the Jews lived in a society of their own, sundered from their neighbours. They held by their own costumes and customs, they obeyed their own laws, which, within the community, were overriding. They preserved their educational system, they established schools where Hebrew was taught. Their Rabbis imparted the *Torah*, the Holy Law, their courts pronounced judgment by that sacred canon. By force of circumstance, the ghetto became a sort of State within the State, externally inflicted, as it were, but governed, by the free will of its inhabitants, from within.

A special facet of Jewish life of those days — which lasted almost until the French Revolution — is its almost exclusively urban character. Jews were forcibly confined to the towns. Never and nowhere, throughout the Middle Ages, were they allowed to buy land, or even to work it. In a society where eight or even nine out of every ten Gentiles were rural folk, the Jews were condemned to be town-dwellers. The handful who did live in the countryside were not farmers or farm-hands, but belonged to hamlets which supplied the rural population with the necessary services.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, after persecution and pogrom had taken their toll, there were but two or three million Jews in the world: most of them in Europe, but there were also Jews in the Middle East and the rest of the Ottoman Empire and in the Balkan peninsula — in greater part settled there since the fifteenth-century expulsion from Portugal and Spain. There were, as well, communities in North Africa — Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia — that went back to even before the Muslim conquest; their existence was precarious at best, but their individual life, their faith and their spiritual bond with the Homeland of tradition — the re-built Jerusalem of their dreams — were at no time jeopardized.

If we are to understand the social aspect of the Jewish people aright, we must take account of a second major distinction between Zionism and other national movements. Nowadays, a fundamental problem of new nations — in Latin America as well as in Asia and in Africa — is the formation of a middle class, for agricultural workers constitute the bulk of their populations. The Jews, however, when their national movement was born, found themselves exclusively a middle and intellectual class: their physical links with the soil had snapped, there was, for the time being, no agrarian infrastructure. This abnormal stratification made them overly dependent upon their surroundings, and gave rise in them to the idea of a return to the plough, to the village and the farm, all within the impulse of homecoming.

A day broke at last when the right of the Jews to liberty and equality was proclaimed. It is not fortuitous that the same man who stood forth in defence of the rights of the Negro was also the

first to assert the equality of the Jew: the Abbé Grégoire, humanist and spokesman of the French Revolution, in his memorable speech of 1791, declared that all men were equal and demanded for all citizens, regardless of race or religion, a parity of rights as of duties. The emancipation of the Jews was a harvest of the French Revolution. Following its inaugural victory in France, the nineteenth-century demand for human equality had its way, also, in Great Britain, in Germany and in Austria. Some of the most famous and brilliant Christian minds supported Jewish urgings for the abolition of the ghetto, the undoing of restrictive laws and the grant of full civil status to the Jews no less than to every other citizen.

This emancipation, extending to all the countries of Western Europe, coincided with the industrial revolution that transformed our world. With the establishment of the first industrial enterprises, the first railways and steamships, the Jews, long versed in commerce, banking and bookkeeping, and now free and equal in citizenship, threw themselves into the vortex of embryo industrialization. Within a generation or two, the ghetto of Western Europe was but an annalistic memory.

Not so, however, in that part of the European world where so many Jews lived: the Russian Empire, including Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. There, even at the end of the nineteenth century, millions were still tenanted in their several ghettos — or, one might go so far as to say, in one great ghetto. The larger cities were denied to them, they were suffered only in a well-defined Pale, in the south-western part of the Empire. Yet even under that regime of prejudice, which made of the Jews second-class citizens, there was a tiny sprinkling of sophisticated Jews who, contriving to acquire a Russian culture and education, longed for a life beyond the spiritual isolation of the ghetto and strove to assimilate themselves, in everything, to Russian society.

On the other hand, the process of assimilation was swift wherever the Jews now enjoyed full civil rights. It starts with the desire to be equal, to live a life free from discrimination among the rest of the people. Then, learning begins and, with it, acceptance and emulation of all the characteristics and customs of the ruling

element. Out of this ambition to be the equals of other citizens, Jews often ended by abandoning their own faith and taking to the credo that prevailed. Rapidly, therefore, robust and ancient communities decayed and disintegrated. French and Italian Jewry, as well as the Austrian and German congregations, dwindled in numbers and lost their recognizable Jewishness.

The will-o'-the-wisp of assimilation haunted the Jewish literature of the sixties, which, particularly in Russia, were years of renewal. Great Jewish writers, journalists and scientists pleaded for a Jewish share in Russian arts, letters, politics and the press — at a time when, in France, Italy and elsewhere, Jews had already attained some of the highest rankings in the State: members of Government, authors and financiers. The world seemed to be moving purposefully toward an era of brotherly love and freedom for all men. It seemed as though the only obstacle that the Jews had still to surmount was successful assimilation. But they were to be cruelly awakened from this dream of a new paradise of equality on earth. The entire course of Jewish history was to be drastically diverted.

THE POGROMS AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The vision of a world dedicated to untroubled advancement, of a humanity instinct with virtue, honour and meaning, was typical of the nineteenth century. The Jews believed in it with all the ardour and messianic fire of an eternally persecuted people, indomitably hopeful in its prayers. So the catastrophe, when it came, had the direst consequences: it was a terrible, an unexpected, blow. In 1881, the first of a long series of pogroms was perpetrated in Russia. The word — only too readily borrowed by other languages — has come to stand for the slaughter of defenceless Jews, whether by spontaneous mob-violence or coldbloodedly organized by the Czarist Government. Rioters fell upon Jewish quarters, murdered women and children, destroyed homes. It did not happen sporadically, or in isolated instances, but in hundreds of towns and all over the Empire. The Government did not lift a finger to stop the outrages. On the contrary, when the horror slackened, it enforced the existing anti-Semitic laws with harsher vigour and more totality.

Jews of the enlightened class, which meant those who had learned the Russian language and adopted Russian ways and thought themselves as good as any Russian, saw themselves adrift among their shattered dreams. 'Whither now?' asked the writers, the publicists, the scientists. 'If, in this century of enlightenment, Jews can be robbed and killed for no reason save that they are Jews, what hope is there now for us in Europe?' The period has bequeathed us a rich heritage of poetry, essays and novels, all asking the same incandescent question: 'Why?' And while the upper class vainly sought historical and social explanations, the reaction of the Jewish masses, naked prey to misery and anguish, was compulsive and instinctive: hundreds of thousands began to flee from Russia.

But again — whither? It was only natural that most should turn to new lands which were as yet sparsely settled and were anxious to attract newcomers, like North and South America. Still, there were a few idealists for whom this solution — just flight from reality — was not enough. These were students in the main: they had done their utmost to enter, to belong to, Russian society, and felt all the more poignantly the viciousness and the stigma of the pogroms. They tried to analyze the dark reasons for such sudden outbreaks, and to come to logical conclusions. 'Why are we persecuted? Why can we not find peace in a country where we have lived so long?' And at that moment of history, an answer was found by a nucleus of young thinkers who, for all that they had absorbed of European civilization and made it fully theirs, still kept in their innermost hearts a profound consciousness of their Judaism. This was it: 'Because we have lost what all other peoples possess: a territory that we can call our own. Because in no single land do we govern our own destiny, independent of the will of others.'

Thus did the modern concept of Jewish nationalism dawn. The Jews are a nation and, like all normal nations, need a home, a space of land of which they can say: 'This, at last, is ours.' And what could that be if not the land which had seen the birth and burgeoning of their own civilization — the Land of Israel?

Palestine was then a thinly populated province of the Ottoman Empire, sadly neglected and backward. There were — there had always been down the centuries — Jewish communities in Jerusalem, in Safad, in Tiberias, in Hebron, the four holy cities of Jewish tradition, but often of aged folk, drawn to the Holy Land by promptings of piety, come to pray and to die, to be buried there, rather than to live and work. But the ideal of the young dreamers of Russia was to renew their Homeland on ancestral soil, the soil that was indivisibly, indissolubly, part and parcel of the traditions of Jewry.

This fervid, self-generating, identification with historic origins has marked Jewish religious practices down the agonizing centuries of exile. Devout Jews, as individuals or in groups, did all in their power to make their way to the Holy Land. From the Middle Ages

messianic movements aprang up again and again, expressive of the yearning and resolve to re-establish the centre of Jewish life in the Land of the Bible.

Exile did not wither the remembrance or the performance of the ancient customs and ceremonies. Like all nations of farmers, the Hebrews of old, well knowing the vagaries of the climate of the Levant, the forbidding hills and the thirsty Negev, would pray, in set daily litany, all through the months from October of one year to April of the next, that the Almighty bring back the wind and let the rains descend, and, for the rest of the twelvemonth, it was the nocturnal dew that they entreated of Him. Sublimely oblivious of the weathers and the seasons of their dispersion, the expatriated Jews, as century followed century, intoned those same immemorial prayers, however out of calendar and out of meteorology they were. And this rite persisted, regardless of the climates of their countries of residence — in Russia, in America, in Australia: it did not matter when the rain fell around them — the Jews everywhere went on praying for it as if they were — in body as they surely were in hope and spirit — in the Land of Israel.

The observant Jew prays thrice each day, imploring God to let him come back to Jerusalem Restored. Year after year, during the Passover festival, the prayer ends with the words: 'Next year — in Jerusalem!' Far as he is from the Land of his Fathers, the Jew has a preponderant feeling of evocation of it — the Jordan River, the Sharon Valley, above all else Jerusalem. The Land of Israel has always been for him the focus of his life, the embodiment of his millennial aspirations. Jerusalem is assuredly a destination of brief pilgrimage for countless Christians and Muslims, but for the Jews it is eternally the setting and symbol of his nationhood in a Zion not transient but transcendental.

That is why, when that little band of young Russian Jews felt the conviction that the national awakening was a fact which must be reckoned with, and that, inescapably, it was the duty and the right of the Jewish people to claim a territory of its own, the only choice that they saw before them was Palestine.

THE FIRST PIONEERS

As has so often happened in national movements, it was a small minority that embarked on the epic adventure. The larger numbers followed the migratory currents to the New World, forming the kernel of what is today the powerful Jewish community of the United States, with its five and a half million members. Others settled in Argentina, some in Belgium, in France. Millions would not court the perils of departure and stayed in Russia. Only a tiny fraction chose Palestine, vanguard of a movement called 'Hovevei Zion' — Lovers of Zion, of the symbolic hill whereon King David set his dwelling in Jerusalem.

To one that reads the tales of those times, the resourcefulness of these stripling pioneers is astounding — these young men and women who had no inkling of the hardships awaiting them. Stubbornly they trod the new path, lonely and forgotten by their kin, misunderstood and penniless. In the first group, which arrived in Palestine in 1882, were thirteen boys and a girl; soon, a score or so of high-school and university students joined them, and they felt strong enough to parley with the Turkish Government for the right to settle for good. All this, while they still lacked even a rudimentary subsistence. A member of the first group writes in his diary that at one time they found themselves in Istanbul utterly without funds — or, more exactly, with the sum of ten francs between them. And since some were smokers, a night-long discussion ensued to decide whether the precious hoard should be spent on bread or on tobacco. The smokers won the day — or, rather, the night! — and everybody went without food. It was in such circumstances that the youthful standard-bearers of Return boldly asked the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire for rights of settlement in Palestine.

This first microscopic tide of immigration had all the characteri-

stics that would eventually signalize the Jewish national movement as a whole. For the first-comers, for their successors, the return to Israel meant, primarily, a return to the soil. They had no least knowledge of husbandry; they had never tilled a field in Russia, and, in any case, the farming of a northern land like Russia was quite unlike that of Palestine.

Nevertheless, with almost no delay, they set about founding the first villages: Rishon LeZion, today a busy township a few miles to the southeast of Tel Aviv, then just a stretch of sand-dunes, and Gedera were among them. They were preceded in 1878 by a modest beginning of regeneration by Jews long resident in Palestine: Petach Tikva in the coastal plain and Rosh Pina in Galilee were founded by young 'theologians' from the Old City of Jerusalem and by young pietists of Safad. But after two or three years, the enterprise appeared to be foundering. The villages could not make ends meet. The settlers, it seemed, could not match the rewarding resolution of their sturdier predecessors. Money was chronically short. The less valiant left the country, the distraught and despairing were many.

Poverty was the sign-manual of that epoch of Zionism. Well-to-do Jews did not join the movement. But at the eleventh hour, when the fabric woven by adolescent zeal seemed in danger of being rent asunder, a Jewish philanthropist, blessed with a profound understanding, compassionate yet far-sighted, of the Jewish effort in Palestine, stepped into the breach. Recognizing the splendid virtues of the embryonic undertaking, Baron Edmond de Rothschild of Paris took the first villages under his wing; he saved them from certain dissolution and pledged himself to found others. But this idealistic plan might well have taken on the character of a colonial type of economy. The farmers were inclined to follow a familiar contemporary pattern: to be administrators in aloofness and let the real work be done by hired labour. It took many years of growth and development for the Jewish national movement to reinforce and perpetuate its first principles — Return to Zion and a going back to the soil of Zion — by a third and revolutionary doctrine. The philosophers of the movement soon became aware

that it was not enough to bring Jews home to the Land: the conversion of the Jews into a normal nation, with a sound society and an independent economy, presupposed the making of a class of industrious labourers. Each chapter in the history of the new Israel is, therefore, a narrative of how Jews who had been trained in the finest European universities, office and professional personnel and merchants, quitted their former vocations and became peasants and workers again in their Homeland. Men totally alien to manual toil went to work at a ridiculously low wage as stevedores, building roads, draining swamps, planting dunes, terracing hill-sides, handling lathes, mixing concrete — and all sharing a single aim: to ensure a wholesome life of gainful activity for generations yet to come.

The movement underwent many vicissitudes between 1882 and 1896. At first, it won favour and a following only in Eastern Europe. But then — and once again anti-Semitism was the agent — it was transformed into an all-embracing creed of the masses of the Jewish people. Virulent rancour against the Jews exploded in the very cradle of their emancipation — in France.

THEODOR HERZL AND THE BIRTH OF POLITICAL ZIONISM

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Republic of France was rocked by an outburst of racial hatred, which split its society into contending camps, and the Dreyfus Affair was the dynamite.

Alfred Dreyfus was the only Jew on the General Staff of the French Army. In military circles, a quiet policy of discrimination against Jews was the fashion, and he had not advanced beyond the rank of Captain. The discovery of treasonable correspondence led to his indictment and trial for espionage, though no proof of his guilt was ever established. But the truth, in the context and spirit of the day, was immaterial: Dreyfus was convicted because he was a Jew. The populace of France reacted stormily: the Jew Dreyfus is a traitor, hence all Jews are traitors. The press joined in the witch-hunt, charging Jews with the filthiest of crimes, and mobs swept through the streets of Paris, crying: 'Death to the Jews!'

A young and brilliant Jewish journalist, Theodor Herzl, was then in Paris as correspondent of a famous Austrian daily. For him, they were days of soul-searching, of self-revelation. He saw the maddened crowds, felt the impact of their ravening hatred. He had come from a free and emancipated Vienna; he could not have foreseen that within five decades that liberal city would spawn Adolf Hitler. The incredible conflagration of anti-Semitism in France sufficed to end all of Herzl's illusions. Overnight, he sensed an identity with his despised and denigrated brethren. He knew nothing of Jewish nationalists before him or of the myriads of Russian Jews already vowed to the restoration of Zion. Independently, individually, he, too, saw the only light.

He locked himself in his hotel room, and, after a few weeks of frantic writing, published a small pamphlet entitled 'The Jewish State'. In it, he proclaimed two fundamental verities: that a Jewish

State was an indispensable prerequisite for the solution of the Jewish problem, and that the problem could not be solved by outside aid; the Jews, he wrote, would achieve their independence only through their own efforts. He preached the formation of a multitudinous popular movement, aimed at securing international recognition of the right of the Jews to their own State.

The pamphlet provoked a tremendous stir. The ideas in it seemed so extravagant — particularly coming from Theodor Herzl, at that time on the crest of his literary career — that some of his friends doubted his sanity. The wealthier and more influential Jews, the rabbis and the elders of the great communities of the West, ridiculed and shunned him. But the woebegone Jewries of Eastern Europe responded to his call. In 1897, Herzl could inaugurate the first Zionist Congress in Basle and divulge to the world that the Jews aspired to establish an independent State in the Land of their forefathers. This was the birth of modern Zionism — the movement of the Return to Zion.

It is illuminating to re-read the memoirs and letters of the first pioneers of Palestine. These records of men who had given up comfort and sophistication to live and labour in a distant and derelict land are pervaded by an optimism of expectancy. Yet few perceived the imminence of the new era of fulfilment. Their daily exertions kept their minds serenely focussed upon the present. They were like ants — so preoccupied with their unremitting, sacrificial tasks that they are unaware of the hill that they are slowly but surely building.

Development would be speedier once the world recognized this strange process that was going on in a far-away, half-forgotten corner of the earth. The political problem of the future of the Jews had to be presented openly and uncompromisingly to the international public. To Herzl, and to political Zionism, we owe the success of this presentation. It demanded a vast amount of courage in 1897, in those days of liberal euphoria, to articulate and plead such an idea.

Herzl did not invent Zionism. There had been many before him. But he was the first to make it manifest to the world, to cast off

its shrouds and open the way to argument of the real causes of anti-Semitism. His challenge was to solve a problem for which the West felt deepest shame and, in the end, it was his triumph that, in a people that had too long been an inert victim of wanton history, he engendered a sentiment of national dignity, a collective will and a goodly measure of self-confidence.

In the chronicles of Israel, political Zionism marks the change from passivity to action. It also marks the beginnings of a conscious national movement, destined, paradoxically enough, to be furthered to victorious conclusion by the grim cataclysms of our century.

Herzl's diplomatic exercises began with failure. The ambiguous answers given to his emissaries by the Turkish Sultan, the non-committal words spoken to him in Palestine by the German Kaiser, riding by on his white charger, of 'the need for water and shade in this country', the vain attempts to treat with the Czar of All the Russias — everything showed that the dream of a Jewish State was not taken seriously by this trio of monarchs. But the idea had been given public expression. Statesmen at last took cognizance of the exigent millions of Jews. And Jewry had its leader.

So it was that, at the end of the First World War, a people which, a brief interval earlier, was unknown as a national entity could, with other emergent nations, put forward a claim that its entitlement to the newly proclaimed rights of all peoples to self-government and independence be internationally recognized.

Thus, Zionism gave political and practical body to what, till then, had been but an abstract notion; it was the origin and main-spring of nearly all that Jews accomplished in Palestine before the State was constitutionally re-established. Herzl died, disillusioned and unfulfilled, seven years after the first Zionist Congress: he had spent his energies, his eloquence, his own fortune, on an unwearying campaign to win the Great Powers over to his fiery purpose. In this great personal performance, luck was not with him, but it was not wholly unavailing, and the movement lived on, mastering difficulty after difficulty, to prove itself a decisive factor in Jewish life and in global politics, and, not less, a summons to the conscience of mankind. The diplomats of Europe could no

longer scout Jewish torment or dismiss it as the unavoidable upshot of an insoluble problem. There was a solution for that problem: the question now was how to bring about the conditions necessary to yield it. The Zionist Organization, which Herzl had founded, undertook the practical work in Palestine and forged its basic instruments: a bank, and a fund to buy land for the farmers who would come. Zionism was on the march towards constructive and political achievement.

THE SECOND ALIYA

The rapid progress of the Zionist movement in Palestine coincided with the onset of a new wave of homecoming, known as the 'Second Aliya' (following the First, of the Lovers of Zion, the Hovevei Zion), which lasted from 1904 until 1914. Many of the settlers whom it brought with it would be the great ones of Israel re-born: Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, the second President of the State, David Ben-Gurion, its first Prime Minister, and Levi Eshkol, its third, were of their number.

They were youngsters hardly out of their teens, reared in the atmosphere of the first Russian Revolution, but disenchanted. Not a few had been genuine revolutionaries in the mood of their generation, but, when the 1905 Revolution collapsed so dismally, it was the Jews who were once more picked to be the scapegoats. Again pogroms, again bloody massacre, and Jews in forlorn flight to the borders. It was only too plain that not even the triumph of democracy would alter the fundamental inescapability of Russian anti-Semitism, and, as the only conceivable answer to the age-long riddle, these young people espoused Zionism.

In Palestine, without ado or repining, they gave themselves to the plough and the soil. To them we owe the underlying tenets of Israel's society, and the first was that Man should live by the fruits of his own labours, not exploit his fellows. The work was hard and, in the conditions prevailing, virtually impossible of accomplishment by individual effort. The young pioneers accordingly coalesced in compact, self-contained groups based on the principle of co-operation.

The logical outcome was, in 1909, the founding of the first kibbutz. This form of rural living is primarily an expression of the need for mutual help, for keeping together in a harsh and exacting environment. It also means the practical and purposeful execution

of the ideals of equality, of personal freedom, of self-dedication — ideals inherited from Zionist ideology as well as from Tolstoyan thought.

A second principle which left an enduring imprint on the archives of Israel was the organization of self-defence. When the pioneers arrived, Palestine was under Turkish rule, but the Sublime Porte paid little or no heed to the security of the outlying province. Entire regions were under the virtual control of nomads and bandits. Thefts of crop and of livestock were a commonplace, as was the practice to pay the brigands a protection tax, which swelled the coffers of the Beduin sheikhs. The self-reliant young Jews would have none of this situation. They had left behind them for ever the persecutions of Muscovy and would not budge from the resolve to uphold their independence — independence, alike, of the ineptitude of the local administration and of the expensive 'good-will' of piratical chieftains. To form Jewish units for self-defence was their first self-set duty. In Galilee, a group called 'Hashomer' (The Watchman) came into being. The members bought a few rifles and less modern weapons and a posse of Arab mounts — and offered their policing and security services to the Jewish villages. It was the first, daring step in a long, historic evolution, to climax in the emergence of the Israel Defence Forces of today. Thus was the irreversible doctrine decreed: never again would the Yishuv, the Jews of the Holy Land, be dependent upon others, it would defend itself with its own hands.

In the First World War, it seemed only natural that a Jewish Legion should be recruited, to fight under General Allenby's command for the liberation of Palestine itself. And when, in February of 1920, the dozen villagers of Tel Hai, in Galilee, made a heroic stand against the onslaught of Arab bands many times their number, by their own deaths ensuring the northern border, the wheel of history was already spinning. The example, there, of Trumpeldor, who had lost his arm in the Russo-Japanese war, was to fire the imagination, and be the heroic model, of all succeeding pioneers and defenders of Israel. The fighting quality of the young warriors was soon tested in one bitter ordeal after another.

1920 saw the first outbreak of Arab violence; it was stopped by a hastily-assembled contingent of Jewish defenders. In 1921, trouble started in Jaffa, and Tel Aviv was preserved by the men of the Jewish Legion, who came to protect it — without permission of their British officers. In 1929, the Hagana — an underground defence organization — entered the lists against Arab bands that were frantically and ferociously assailing lonely Jewish villages. In 1936, Arab attacks on the Yishuv took on country-wide proportions and claimed a heavy toll in lives. The Mandatory's measures to restrain and repress them were indifferent and ineffectual. But there was vigorous resistance by well-trained — if primitively equipped — and gallant fighters, whose ranks could count upon the deployment of every able-bodied Jew in the country.

In the Second World War, more than 25,000 Jewish volunteers enlisted in the Allied ranks, and the Hagana could thereafter reorganize its forms and its combat strength, so that, when the hour of statehood struck, it was a true people's army, ready for the ultimate trial. The Yishuv was beset at that point by enemies within Palestine and without, Palestinian Arabs and the regular forces of the neighbouring Arab States, which had threatened to overrun the Jewish community and wipe out its day-old Commonwealth. But at the start of Israel's War of Independence, the Hagana was no longer a smattering of enthusiasts armed with antiquated guns; it was the fully mobilized phalanx of a small nation — every fit citizen, man and woman, age counting little, tried in many an earlier battle and merged now under a single command. Two dissident formations, Irgun Tsvai Leumi, the National Military Organization, and Lohamei Herut Israel, the Fighters for Israel's Freedom, which committed themselves to acts of terror and sabotage against the Mandatory, had no negligible part in the eventual breakdown of the British Administration.

But there was another, and potent, factor of Jewish unification: the Hebrew language. The newcomers in the interval between the two World Wars came from many and widely disparate lands, and had partially or completely adopted their variant speech. Hebrew, as a spoken vernacular, had gone out of usage soon after the start

of the Second Exile, in the first century of the Common Era. The Jews of Eastern Europe spoke Yiddish, based largely on Middle German dialects; the Jews of the Ottoman Empire spoke Ladino, the Spanish of the fifteenth century; Persian Jews had a local dialect, and Arabic, Polish, Russian and German were in widespread use. How was this linguistic pluralism to be wrought into a single, unified society?

It was less complicated than it seemed at first sight. Unlike Latin, Hebrew had never been altogether abandoned. Hundreds of thousands of Jews still said their daily prayers in Hebrew. The literary development of Hebrew had never been interrupted. Jewish poets had versified in Hebrew, philosophers and Bible commentators wrote in it, so that it became richer, more variegated, better suited to modern needs and interpretations.

The first works of modern Jewish literature from the end of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth were in Hebrew, the first Jewish daily of our times was in Hebrew. Rabbis, men of affairs and scientists in different countries corresponded in Hebrew. What now had to be done was to make it an everyday means of communication.

This was the mission of the by now legendary Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a young Russian student who settled in Jerusalem at the end of the 'eighties. With zealot and indomitable fervour, he set about transforming Hebrew into a normal mother-tongue, by using it, and no other medium, for every mundane purpose. An eclectic company of teachers and writers rallied eagerly to his standard: these, in their unpretentious class-rooms, by their modest publications, were the tutors of the rising generation in the matter-of-fact employment of what has become the chief formative of the cultural synthesis and solidarity of the Jews of Israel.

The Second Aliya unequivocally confirmed the victory of Hebrew. By the eve of the First World War, the battle had been won and Hebrew was the vernacular of youth. Primary and secondary schools taught their entire syllabus in Hebrew, and soon the accents of the Bible were being echoed, without rival, throughout the nascent society of the Land of Israel.

NEW TIMES

By the First World War, a number of Jewish villages had been founded, a twentieth-century Jewish city was born and the Yishuv had expanded gradually to a count of a hundred thousand souls.

Notwithstanding the turbulences of the times and the hesitations of much of the Diaspora — for many influential Jews still considered Zionism an impractical fantasy — the community in Palestine was becoming stronger and more confident. Small though its numbers were, it had demonstrated to the Jews of the world and to sceptics of whatever denomination that it was capable — and worthy — of carrying out the great national enterprise that it had undertaken: its men and women had become workers and farmers, they had assumed responsibility for their own defence, they had a common language, they disciplined themselves voluntarily. They were, in truth, on the way to self-determination.

The Yishuv lived through frightening hours in the First World War. It had set all its hopes upon the extinction of an Ottoman Empire which, in its expiring years, had turned against it and menaced with ruin everything that it had built with such immense pains. All the Jews of the coastal plain, including Tel Aviv, which then numbered five thousand inhabitants, were expelled to the interior, and the men of prominence banished far afield. Famine stalked the Land.

In the meantime, the Zionist leaders were appealing to the Governments of the Allies to grant the wishes of the Jewish people after a victorious conclusion of the campaign against Turkey.

It was the realistic conception of Weizmann, who led the Zionist movement through the crucial years, that yielded a true understanding of the fact — already vaguely felt by Herzl's genius — that the re-establishment of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine was bound

up with geopolitical considerations, with the clashes of interest among the world Powers, which often shape the destiny of nations.

The question of the Orient had preoccupied European diplomacy since the turn of the nineteenth century. The Ottoman Empire was drawing its last breaths, and the continent was making ready to dissect the corpse. In particular, Great Britain, France and Russia busied themselves with the Asiatic assets of the moribund state, that kaleidoscope of peoples and creeds. From time immemorial, the French had been the traditional protectors of the Catholics of Palestine and the Maronites of the Lebanon. The Russians were the natural shield of the Orthodox Church and the Greek sects. Even before the Crimean War, the British had striven to enlist the sympathies of the pious and impoverished Jewish community of Jerusalem; the redoubtable Palmerston gave plain instructions on the subject to his first consul in the Holy City.

When the moment came to apportion the Turkish Middle East between France and Britain, the Jewish presence in Palestine gave Whitehall a golden opportunity, all the more so since the agony of Jews in Eastern Europe could no longer be dissimulated. In Palestine, the Yishuv had become, if not yet mighty in numbers, an energetic and propellant nucleus, creator already of highly successful agricultural reclamation and resettlement, and contributor of a substantial corps of volunteers for the British Army.

Against this background, we may analytically view the Balfour Declaration the first imprimatur of international recognition of Zionism. What were the determinant motives of the British Government? Was it honest sympathy for the People of the Book in the main, or did colder calculations sway it, of winning over Jewish public opinion in the world to the Allied cause? No certain answer can be offered, and the question now is academic.

What is beyond doubt is that it was a day of recognizing the rights of all peoples to self-determination and that the operative strength and workmanlike organization of Palestine's Jews did something to tip the scales. What is no less factual is that the destiny of Palestine — and of the Middle East — was inseparable from the Jewish presence in it, however much the politics and policy

of the Graet Powers, Britain among them, might veer and shift.

Dr. Chaim Weizmann, an eminent scientist who was one day to be the first President of the State of Israel, guided the negotiations with the British Cabinet which culminated in its public affirmation of the legitimacy of Jewish aspirations. On 2 November 1917, His Majesty's Government published the message that was to carry for ever the name of its Foreign Secretary, Arthur James Balfour, attesting the historical links of the Jews with Palestine and their right to establish a national home in it.

It is Great Britain's merit that it was the first Power to acclaim and attest that bond. It was a recognition that stirred a myriad of messianic hopes. Rumours of thousands of immigrants on their way to Palestine, even the list of members of a Jewish Government of Palestine, electrified the Jewry of a Russia that was then in the throes of civil war.

When the First World War was over, and Turkey had been worsted, the League of Nations entrusted Great Britain with the Mandate for Palestine, and one of its provisions called for facilitation of Jewish immigration and settlement. This was, then, the effective, operative, authentication by the ruling Powers of the world of the judgment which the Balfour Declaration had pronounced — Return of the Jews to their Land, to Zion, in nationhood, as of historic right, and not on sufferance. It seemed, at that wonderful moment, that an epoch of glory had dawned for the Jewish people and would endure. But the high expectancy was soon to be dashed. Not that immigrants were lacking: undone by war and revolution, Russian Jewry had been gravely shaken, and hundreds upon hundreds of its number, turning their backs for ever on the tragedy left behind, made their tortuous way to Palestine across the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, or over the Caucasus Mountains and the Turkish and Syrian frontiers. But the British Administration, benevolent at first, quickly changed its course. Jewish entry was severely circumscribed and restricted. Arab entry was neither controlled nor conditioned: in effect Palestine became a country of Arab immigration as well — and considerable at that. The years of the Mandate, from 1920 to 1948, were for the Jews a

race against time, speedily to lay the foundations of independence, to absorb a new population, to establish new villages, with the Mandatory doing everything in its power to handicap, if not arrest, the process, in a biased design to gain favour in Arab eyes.

It was, therefore, a short-lived idyll of Jews and British. The warmth generated by the Balfour Declaration was followed by an at first almost imperceptible, then a rapid, cooling off. Under the influence of Lawrence's romanticism, the Arabs became Britain's dominant interest in the Middle East. Whitehall and Downing Street had never given up the dream of a united Arab kingdom, stretching from the Tigris to the Nile, from Mesopotamia's plains to the vast deserts of the Arabian peninsula — a peaceful, docile domain where British law would rule. The Jewish national home, too hastily proclaimed — they seemed to feel in retrospect — in stress of war and its tribulations, was now a thorn in Britain's side. It was deemed vital to halt, at whatever cost, too dynamic a growth of the Yishuv which might stultify the plan of an Arab union. British High Commissioners, sometimes hesitant and circumspect, frankly inimical, played their part.

The intractable hostility of the Arab national movements to Zionism had its origin then. In the early days of Zionism, its leaders never envisaged the possibility of Arab antagonism. Zionism, as a national movement, preceded by some decades the emergence of Arab nationalism. The Arab population of Palestine was sparse and still of feudal character. The problem at that time was not the local inhabitants but the Turkish Government.

The awakening of the Arab peoples was, however, apparent in the First World War. With the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, independent Arab States came into being. The ideals of the Jews did not necessarily run counter to Arab national aspirations, for Palestine was but minuscule in the immense territories where Arabs dwelt. But, for the Jews, it was the only place on earth where they could hope to re-build their nationhood. A contractual, high-level manifestation of those first understanding Arab attitudes towards Zionism, its pacific, co-existential aims and its 'belongingness' in Palestine was an agreement concluded in Paris on 3 January

1919 between Emir Feisal, chief Arab delegate to the Peace Conference, and Dr. Weizmann: in it, the Balfour Declaration was endorsed and Palestine recognized by the signatories as a separate Jewish State, with which the then imminent Arab State would maintain diplomatic relations.

There might, in these bright circumstances, have been accord between Jews and Arabs, had it not been for the meddling of the West which, for its own purposes of political suzerainty, fanned the swift fanaticism of the Arabs. Yet, for a long time, it was only urban Palestine Arabs that preached a virulent anti-Zionism. The neighbouring Muslim States displayed little interest, and were only embroiled in the Second World War by the Great Powers and by British policy.

Extreme Arab nationalism and the unhelpful neutrality — or worse — of the British Administration thereafter threatened more than once to paralyze Jewish effort. Progress became less easy from day to day. It was too late, however, to stop the Yishuv's efflorescence. Its testing years had endowed the community with a capacity to resist which obdurately overcame every obstacle. It reacted to assault like all healthy organisms do: it evolved its own, and adequate, means of defence, of striking back.

'White Paper' followed 'White Paper', propounding further restrictions on aliya, further limitation of rural settlement, in violation of the letter and spirit of the Mandate. Fiscal ordinance and, indeed, the entire mode of government favoured the Arab sector, so that the Jews were driven to establish their own services in all spheres — security, economy, education and health. The Jews set their faces against official restraints. The less friendly the Administration, the more solid and cohesive the Yishuv became. Immigration bans were met, at first, with open criticism in Parliament and among a British public opinion now gradually growing more sympathetic to Zionism. The League of Nations and the Western capitals were beginning to show similar benevolence, which came to take on an overriding decisiveness in the crucial post-war period. And, in Palestine itself, a new society was being born, enriched by the continuous accession of Eastern and Central

European Jews and of newcomers from Muslim lands — a society which had little in common either with its geographical neighbours or with the ghettos of Europe or the mellahs of the East from which they had returned.

THE TRAGIC THREAT

'Suffering', Herzl used to say, 'is like the steam of an engine: if it compresses, it can propel the locomotive.' Still, the founder of Zionism could never have foreseen the burden of tragedy and of suffering that European Jewry was fated to bear. Nevertheless, the national energy that was freed as the end-product of it is integral to the historical process which led to the rebirth of the State of Israel. Conceived at the outset as an experiment, by an idealistic segment of Jewry resolved to safeguard an imperilled national civilization, the Jewish society of Palestine took up the great challenge of furnishing sanctuary for the survivors of the European Holocaust.

The liberal era was dead and buried, and with it the dream faded of Jewish integration in a new Europe. The mass of Jewry found itself caught in the juggernaut wheels of social convulsions that changed the face of Europe. It was the victim of national revolutions preached by liberalist visionaries who saw them as heralding a new era of freedom and justice. Upon the ruins of totalitarian empires, new tyrannies arose, inflamed and drunk with recent power. New nations, in debt for newly found independence either to cruel conflict or international circumstance, were over-anxious to rid themselves of all elements alien to their nationalisms and, it goes without saying, vented their most vicious spite upon the hapless Jewish minorities in their midst.

The Czarist regime had fallen. The Jews of Russia, so long and so savagely the scapegoats of that mediaeval despotism, were buoyed up by roseate hopes. The expiring decades of Czardom had been for them the most excruciating: the first revolutionary rising of 1905 had been quenched with Jewish blood; at the beginning of the First World War, hundreds of thousands of Jews were driven

from their homes in the southern and western regions of Russia and crowded into the interior. Then came the Communist Revolution and civil war. And in the south, notably in the Ukraine, the unbridled mania of the mobs was once again let loose upon them. Every passing army, every band of irregulars, took a hand in the barbaric sport: the Red Army murdered for the sake of the Revolution and to settle old scores with Czarist oppression; the White Russians tortured women and children in a holy war against Communism; the anarchists put Jews to death as symbols of the bourgeoisie; the champions of the monarchy charged them with Bolshevism. Yet the alleged might of a 'Jewish' Bolshevism was preached and credited outside Russia's borders, and was to be fiendishly exploited in Hitler's Reich. Young Communist Russia professed the principle of equality of citizen rights; but the Jews, who did not, as a rule, belong to the proletariat, were the first victims of the new social order. The title of Jews to a cultural life of their own was rejected. All Jewish efforts at autonomous thought and expression were systematically stifled, though other national minorities were conceded theirs. Long before the Iron Curtain fell upon Europe, a total and tragic severance had parted Russian Jewry from its brethren — a severance of such seeming finality that there is still no sign of its ending.

Things were hardly better elsewhere in Eastern Europe. In Rumania, anti-Semitism became a favourite tool of internal politics. In Hungary — notwithstanding the inroads of assimilation — persecution and restriction were almost uninterrupted until a new order came into being at the end of the Second World War. In Poland, with the largest Jewish community of Europe, its members before long faced a pitiless economic warfare waged against them by the middle classes, encouraged and supported by successive Governments. At first, newly independent Poland had followed a policy of enlightened liberalism, and cultural freedom and electoral rights were vouchsafed to the Jews. But soon, emboldened by the indifference of international opinion, the Government modified its attitude: the 'numerus clausus' was introduced in universities; Jewish merchants and artisans were subjected to harsh controls, yet

other avenues of livelihood were virtually barred to them. Polish Jewry found itself on the brink of economic ruin, and, withal, there were frequent outbursts of anti-Semitic harassment.

The outlook was not very different in the Baltic States — Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, carved out of the dismemberment of the Czarist Empire. Short of intellectuals, technicians and experienced merchants, they started off by invoking the vigour and skill of their Jews, allowing them, in requital, to establish their own schools and certain autonomous representative organs. But this was a brief interlude. Soon the Jews, like their co-religionists in Poland, were fighting and losing an economic battle. Every vestige of their rights of autonomy vanished, and dormant anti-Semitism explosively came to awakening when the Nazi hordes overran Eastern Europe: the Jewry of the Baltic States was methodically slaughtered, with the zealous aid of only too many of the populace.

Europe was on the threshold of upheaval. Sterile and quarrelsome nationalisms spat at one another in the East. In Germany, a new element was coming to the fore, which, to feed its dreams of world supremacy, made the racist theory the most lethal weapon in its arsenal of politics. Official anti-Semitism, the endemic plague of the tottering States of Eastern Europe, now brazenly leapt the borders of the 'progressive' world and poisoned the birthplace of Lessing and of Mendelssohn. Hatred of the Jew was naturalized in the West. It became a fit subject of political discussion, not only in all of Europe, but also beyond. During the Second World War, it sank to its most revolting, inhuman, nadir in a planned, cold-blooded mass-murder of one whole third of the Jews on earth. Fifty years earlier, the eternal question had been asked: Whither? Now, in tribulation more hideous by far, it was asked again.

All the doors were shut. The countries of Europe — where, before 1914, one might cross all frontiers with an identity card of sorts — had been sealed into air-tight compartments. To make matters worse, drastic immigration laws made the United States all but inaccessible, and nearly all of the rest of the New World soon followed the northern example.

Since 1882, millions of Jews had settled in the United States, to

form the largest Jewish community of all time. In 1890, the plan of Baron Hirsch brought about a Jewish farming settlement in Argentina, and from it, in due course, Jewish communities sprang up in the other Latin-American States.

The migrations that followed the First World War multiplied the communities in South Africa, Canada and Australia, and strengthened those of Western Europe, which — if perhaps economically robust — had been enfeebled otherwise by the erosion of assimilation.

The darkling shadow of anti-Semitism, the tragedy of East European Jewry, the spectre of a new and horrifying Crusade, shocked Jews all over the world into a desperation of solidarity and tighter unity. Rescue could brook no further delay. The communion of destiny, the clamant need of a national existence, which the partisans of assimilation had so vehemently disavowed a few years back, were now recognized and espoused by millions of Jews. For countless Jews of Eastern Europe, Zionism was not only the immemorial aspiration to restored nationhood. It had also become the sole salvation, the only way to retain a human dignity that was being trampled remorselessly underfoot by a wicked — or, at best, an indifferent — civilization.

No Jewry, in those crucial days, could, of itself, play a meaningful political part. None, of itself, could protect its co-religionists in Europe against destruction. True, the bigger communities of the West and of the New World possessed some political influence, and could make their views felt through public opinion. But this was no more than a palliative, and its ultimate ineffectuality was emphasized by the general show of international timidity and impotence, of which Munich was to be a symbol.

The hands of the Yishuv were tied as well. The Mandatory, its ears mostly attuned to Arab complaints, and agitated by the speedy advancement of the young Jewish society, kept the gates of Palestine locked to aliya. But there was a radical difference now. This was the only country where Jews felt that they could demand their rights, not entreat them. It was the only country where, even if they were not yet independent, they felt themselves masters of their

own fate. Elsewhere, Governments might — and did — discourage the entry of Jews: in Palestine, a Yishuv that had shaken off the shackles of so much prejudice and worse was insisting upon it. The Yishuv was a veritable palimpsest of the heart-breaking history of European Jewry's persecutions and pangs. The pogroms, from Kishinev onwards, the aftermath of the failure of the first Russian Revolution, led to the Second Aliya. The Russian civil war and the pogroms in the Ukraine led in 1919 to the Third Aliya, the last great influx of immigrants into Palestine from Russia. The fiscal policy of Grabsky's Government in Poland led to the first movement of the Fourth Aliya in 1926. The advent of Hitlerism in 1933 brought to Palestine scores of thousands of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, and, with that invaluable leaven, the economy of the Yishuv underwent a swift and far-reaching transformation.

Every aliya, almost instantaneously absorbed by the Yishuv and enhancing it, was preceded — and organized — by pioneer elements for whom aliya had been not only a geographical transfer but, even more so, a spiritual and ideological revolution and rebirth. These young men and women had burnt their bridges behind them. They set themselves, with no backward turning, to the making of a new society, always and profoundly mindful of their identification with brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, still bitterly battling for dear life.

With the looming of the Second World War, Palestine was the lodestone of universal Jewish aspirations, the only island of hope and redemption in a storm-tossed and drowning world. One and indivisible in its ideals, qualified for independence, constantly testing its prowess in an unrelenting tug-of-war with Arab enmity and the corrosive policies of the Mandatory Government, and clearly conscious of its mission as the sole warranty of Jewry's survival, the Yishuv — now counting half a million Jews — did not waver or compromise. The way for its tormented kin to return home must not be blocked. Impatiently, the Jews of Palestine awaited the moment to gird themselves for the final encounter.

NAZI RULE IN EUROPE — AND THE HOLOCAUST

Reality never transcended the prophecy of doom so far and so agonizingly as did its portrayal in the analysis that Zionism contributed to modern political thought. Herzl had forecast a resurgence of anti-Semitism, but even his seer's insight could not conceive the monstrous proportions which it would develop.

The captains of the new European States, devoured by a fanatical nationalism and baffled by the social problems of their own peoples, found, as again and again in the past, a convenient whipping-boy in the Jew. Germany, considered during the greater part of the nineteenth century among the most illustrious of nations, a standard-bearer of liberalism, gave mis-shapen birth to the vilest doctrine that mankind had ever known: the racist theory of Hitler, which openly preached the unquestioned primacy of the so-called Aryan — or German — race and the annihilation of all others. And when, early in the Second World War, after his conquest of Austria and Czechoslovakia, Hitler occupied Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, parts of Rumania, Greece, Bulgaria and Southern Russia, he held in his paranoiac clutch nearly eight million Jews. In the years that followed, six million of them were done to merciless death by him.

Six million men, women and children. It was a carnage more terrible by far than the worst massacres of the Middle Ages. Then, however shamefully hounded, Jews might save at least their lives by embracing the Cross. In the twentieth century, there was no such refuge. Every Jew was victim of the Nazi inquisitors even if his forebears had long since left the faith. Opinions and religious beliefs were of no import; Jews were doomed by race and heritage. The records of the Eichmann trial, which took place many years afterwards in Jerusalem, tell gruesomely enough, particularly in

the prosecutor's opening address to the court, of how six million men, women and children were blotted out with blue-printed finality.

Thus, after a last, lost, uprising, four hundred thousand Jews perished in Warsaw, Kovno, Vilna and hundreds of other towns and villages were drenched in Jewish blood. Ancient Jewish communities in Eastern and Central Europe were totally destroyed. In the infamous extermination camps, a whole people met a brutal end, a people that was heir to age-old traditions of resplendent culture and civilization, to incomparable treasures of literary and scholastic achievement, a people of colleges and seminaries, of rich Jews and poor Jews, of Jews who followed Socialism and of Jews who did not.

The rising sun of peace lit up only the wreckage of a world. And Great Britain, misusing its Mandate, redoubled its efforts to deny the haven of Palestine to the luckless remnant of refugees from Hitler's hell. Obsessively intent on staving Jewish development, it promulgated new laws and limitations day after day, forbidding the purchase of land by Jews and the founding of new villages. Many of the farmsteads that dot the map of Israel so profusely today were set up in deepest secret, at the dead of night, to circumvent interference by the Mandatory Police. Again and again, hundreds of Jews would carry tools and materials to the chosen sites after dark, assemble hutments, mark out the acres, fence in the periphery — and the next morning the Police would discover a new Jewish habitation in the middle of the desert, with its panoply of fortifications and watchtower, and settlers in it who behaved for all the world as if they had been living there for years.

Meanwhile, despairingly contemptuous of the consequences, those Jews who could fled the Nazi domain and crowded into ramshackle and unseaworthy little ships, in prayerful hope — for what other hope had they? — to make the longed-for landfall in Palestine. And as soon as the war was over, men, women and children by the tens of thousands challenged the British Navy and its heartless blockade in a dramatic bid for repatriation. One venture was made world-famous by the novel 'Exodus' and the film taken from it.

A vessel bearing that name did exist: it freighted more than two thousand Jews in flight from German concentration camps, seeking safety and dignity in their Homeland. Clinging inflexibly to a policy that was devoid of the least spark of compassion, the British forced 'Exodus' and its tragic cargo of innocent souls to sail back to that same Germany, so recently a purgatory and a shambles of Jewry. For three months, the world followed the heroic but hopeless wanderings of the 'Exodus' refugees, who protested, but all in vain, against the stark injustice and cruelty of it all.

INDEPENDENCE AND THE INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

Nothing that the Mandatory or the Arabs of Palestine could do availed to repress the forward determination and achievement of the Yishuv — not drastic sanctions, not circumscription of aliya or settlement, not an unfair and unfeeling naval embargo upon the victims of Nazidom. The confrontation was plainly imminent between the Mandatory and a Yishuv that, now, at the finish of the Second World War, with a total exceeding six hundred thousand souls, could no longer be discounted numerically. Moreover, it was parliamentary and democratic in organization, communally solid and socially progressive, in its economy stabilized and expanding, politically articulate, competent and forthright, and, para-militarily and self-defensively, not to be trifled with.

Israel thus led the way in Asia in rebelling against colonial mastery. It had only its own indomitable will. Its armed protection was the small and under-equipped underground Hagana. It fought against two fronts: the Mandatory and the surrounding Arab States. The fight was bitter and costly in Jewish lives. Victory was the reward of total Yishuv involvement. In the last anguished phases, from Europe's V-Day in the summer of 1945 to the conclusion of armistice agreements with the routed Arab invaders in the spring of 1949, the 'secret weapon' of the Yishuv was the conscience and conviction that it, alone and ultimately, was the guardian and must be the saviour of a desolate and downtrodden Jewry.

The War of Independence was the logical end of a long historical process. European events, as we have sought to show, were of no less bearing on the re-establishment of the Jewish State than the political conflicts of the Middle East itself. After the battle of El Alamein, Palestine had nothing to fear from the Nazi-Fascist forces in North Africa. Its Jews had fought spiritedly in a war

which, for the first time in modern history, saw Jewry entire in the same fighting ranks. The Jews were resolved to play their full part — and indeed they played it — in overthrowing an enemy whose avowed aim was ruthlessly to destroy them and their nationhood.

At first, the British Government was unwilling to recognize the national Jewish character of the Palestinian volunteers, and only single, indistinguishable, units and companies, even battalions, were formed and deployed in and with the Allied contingents. Soon, however, a distinct Jewish Brigade, proudly displaying its Jewish national insignia, was authorized. It was attached to the British Eighth Army, and advanced with it through the battles of the North African desert, restoring fraternal contact with the rescued Jewish communities of Libya and Tunisia. Crossing the Mediterranean, the Brigade experienced the awful actuality of refugee camps congested with pitiful survivors of Hitler's Holocaust. What more natural than that the men of the Brigade should be burningly eager to transport these stricken co-religionists straight and safe to the Palestine where they had themselves found sanctuary at long last? But Britain was adamant in refusal and so, in a liberated Europe, hundreds of thousands of displaced Jews lingered wretchedly in Austria and in Germany. Ship after ship, without a single immigration certificate between them, steamed out of port illicitly and made for Palestine. The Mandatory mobilized its navy to hold them off. The Yishuv rose as one man to thwart the blockade at whatever cost. The war of 'illegal' aliya had begun.

The Yishuv took this new hurdle in its stride, not without heartening stimulus from the proud chronicles of many a heroic insurrection by Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe. Grief and mourning, as the unspeakable dimensions of Nazi murderousness and barbarity came to light, indignation and bitterness provoked by the incredible indifference and apathy of the civilized world: these were the mingled feelings of a heavy-hearted but resolute Yishuv.

The Jews were alone, terribly alone. They could count only upon their own staunchness, their own will, their own strength. The Great Powers, the young United Nations, could either mitigate

or exacerbate the outcome, not decide it. The Yishuv's capacity for resistance would be decisive. And it was: Great Britain announced that it would withdraw from Palestine. The Arabs had observed a 'friendly' neutrality towards the Mandatory till then. They were content to bide their time until, with the British troops out of the way, they could launch an all-out assault upon the Yishuv, with victory — or so they were persuaded — as the certain issue.

The Hagana at once became a people's army, turning its limited armaments to the best advantage, organizing its own ordnance at emergency speed in makeshift subterranean workshops. It felt that the counsel of wisdom was to hold back most of its forces for the inescapable clash with the Arabs. Dissident combat groups, which had, in effect, declared their own war on the British, pursued a different course. But for all, Hagana, Irgun Tsvai Leumi and Lohamei Herut Israel, it was an identic fight of resistance and liberation, in the same national spirit, for the same incontrovertible ends.

Rights of free entry and of land purchase — these were the central demands of the Jews. Had the British accepted the advice of the Anglo-American Commission that was sent to Palestine with their consent, and granted a hundred thousand certificates, at least a temporary truce might have been arranged. But the Government in Whitehall could not divorce itself from its policy of Arab appeasement. The emergent States of the Middle East were more and more difficult to manage, more and more constantly convulsed by internecine outbreaks. But they had one thing in common, and that was unreasoning, irreconcilable, hatred for the Jews of Palestine. The Arab League, whose creation had been encouraged by Britain, was meant to help in cementing the union of the Arab world, in the futile expectation that it would thereafter act as Middle East watchdog of the British Commonwealth against the rivalry of the United States, France and the Soviet Union.

Willy-nilly, Great Britain was constrained to bring the issue — it was in premonition of open Jewish revolt — before the United Nations. There, after a long and thorough investigation by a

Special Commission, the General Assembly, on 29 November 1947, passed a Resolution calling for the partition of Palestine and the establishment, in its western part, of a Jewish State. Arab defiance, and United Nations impotence in enforcement, must surely have meant abortion of the Resolution in its entirety, had not the Yishuv taken up arms to defend its precious, new-born freedom and sovereignty against aggression and invasion by the neighbouring Arab States. This was the beginning of Israel's War of Independence in 1948.

No doubt, things in Palestine must have gone far beyond endurance for Britain to take the problem to the United Nations. Perhaps it secretly hoped that Cold War antagonisms would balk a solution and that it would thus be left in charge with a free hand to inflict its own terms.

In the event, that notion — if, indeed, it was ever entertained — had no success. The most astute and experienced politicians were dumbfounded: the Soviet Union, Zionism's traditional enemy, unexpectedly sided with the Jews in one of its spectacular and unpredictable somersaults, to which the world was gradually to get accustomed. The twin victors of the Second World War — the United States and the Soviet Union — endorsed the partition plan and the establishment of the Jewish State recommended by the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine. Thus, stirred by a concern which for a space even blanketed distractions of the Cold War, East and West joined hands against the chilly disinterest of Britain and the intractable negotiations of the Arab States.

The promptings of the United States were plain. Washington had to consider an influential Jewish community, and the ever stronger pressures of American public opinion. Americans, on the whole, saw the re-emergence of an independent Jewish State in the Jewish Homeland as righteous requital for a people still weeping for the obliteration of a third of its members in the Nazi gehenna. The problem was, first and foremost, one of hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, homeless, hapless and hopeless. For most of them, any answer save Return to Zion was anathema.

Besides, British policy was not too popular in the United States,

and the obduracy with which a sprinkling of men and women had dared to defy a great empire won the admiration and sympathy of a nation sprung from a sturdy and assertive Anglo-Saxon puritanism.

The motivation of the Soviet Union was more complex. Communism had always been alive to the evolution of Arab nationalism, and had at one time supported the Mufti of Jerusalem, who, during the Second World War, turned to Berlin and the Axis. Moscow regarded Zionism as a movement of Jewish bourgeoisie, and impugned it as serving the ends of British imperialism in the Middle East. If it had linked itself with the Arabs on 29 November 1947, the Soviet Union might well have voted down the United States, its only serious competitor for global hegemony. But it did not. If its ballot was for partition, very probably considerations of political realism had swayed it in the final analysis. The Kremlin must have understood that to reject partition would mean perpetuating British administration in Palestine. Balancing pros and cons, it could not but be convinced that Jewish resistance was the only element to write 'finis' to the British presence in the Middle East. The Palestine Arabs were too divided among themselves to offer a common and effective anti-British front. The protection of a turbulent Jewish minority in an Arab-dominated State would have provided the Mandatory with an excellent pretext for holding on to control. And the primary and paramount objective of Soviet policy in the Middle East at that time was to end British authority in Palestine.

The idea of a Jewish State — only yesterday a vague dream, if not a butt of derision — now awakened interest and goodwill the world over. The resistance movements of Europe, and especially of France, saw in the struggle of the Jewish community in Palestine an image of their own fight against overwhelming odds. The Latin-American Republics relived the stirring days of their own emancipation from Spanish colonialism. And so, on 29 November 1947, after many doubts, the partition plan presented to the General Assembly by the Special Commission, envisioning the re-birth of a Jewish State in Palestine, was adopted by more than the two-thirds majority which it required.

It would be a mistake to infer that the Jewish State was brought into being by that voting. The decision of the General Assembly hardly did more than confirm an impending, if not an already existing, reality. The uncontrollable urgency of the Jewish problem in Europe, but even more, perhaps, the sterling mettle and capacity of the Yishuv, made the decision inevitable. As the British Government did of itself in the Balfour Declaration thirty years earlier, earning the swift approval of the League of Nations, now a new comity of the nations, in victorious, unappealable authority, gave legal recognition to extant facts and proven performance on 29 November 1947. For, not as States fashioned after warfare out of political interests and impulses, Israel is, all else apart, the product of its own purposeful strivings.

As subsequent developments showed, there was every indication that the decision would be but ink on paper. Nothing had been provided — whether funds or soldiery — to carry it out. Britain hastened to record a flat refusal to implement it, declaring itself 'strictly neutral'. Indeed, the mounting indifference, and, worse, the obstructiveness of the Administration, brought Palestine to the brink of total chaos.

With that encouragement, the Palestinian Arabs, reinforced by irregulars from the North and the South, and openly aided by the Arab Legion of Transjordan, which was conveniently stationed in Palestine as part of the British garrison, fell savagely upon the Jewish inhabitants. From sabotage and murder, ambush of traffic and cowardly attacks on outlying villages, the Arab onslaught soon turned the whole country into a bloody battlefield.

The Hagana went into action, and, simultaneously, in secret meetings at the offices of the Jewish Agency, Jewish leaders worked out the details of the administration which would speedily replace the expiring Mandatory system. Ammunition to fend off multiplying and more ferocious Arab assaults ran short, but morale was as high as ever. The unconquerable will and the inspiring charisma of David Ben-Gurion galvanized the Yishuv and set the seal on its victory at the end. The eclectic group of leaders, who were to become the members of the Provisional Government, was single-

minedly engaged, each in a diplomatic or military assignment of highest priority. Intensively trained for combat, the youth of infant Israel were the backbone of a national army, which fought with the daring and desperation of a people defending its last trenches. It took many, and not always successful, engagements to break the offensive of the Palestinian Arabs. But the tables were finally turned. The fledgling Israel Defence Forces, battling for life, home and liberty, mastered Tiberias, Haifa and Jaffa. Shipments of arms began to arrive. Thousands of Arabs, in response to the incitement and the exhortations of the Arab League and its promises of rapid success, decamped — for a few days, as they perhaps thought — to Lebanon, to Syria, to Transjordan. Their self-appointed leaders had been the first to go.

On 14 May 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed. The Cassandra-warnings of many of the world's diplomats, presaging — either in honest conviction or as sinister tactics — quick and dreadful calamity for the new Republic, were left splendidly unheeded. As the last British soldiers quit the quaysides of Haifa, Jewish administration supplanted the Mandatory Power. In every Jewish town, Jewish constables controlled the traffic, Israel postage stamps were on sale, the courts were functioning normally, the members of Israel's Government were working at their desks. It had been a smooth and streamlined transfer of authority.

That same night, the President of the United States recognized the Provisional Government of Israel *de facto*. The following day, the Soviet Union granted it recognition *de jure*, soon followed by Uruguay and Guatemala.

Simultaneously, the forces of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Iraq invaded Israel on three fronts. And now the aggressors cajoled or coerced the Arab inhabitants 'momentarily' to abandon the territory of Israel and so clear the way for their advancing columns: triumphant return within the briefest interval was pledged them. Thus, the Arab refugee problem came into being — a problem that has been burked and bedevilled over the years, and is still burked and bedevilled today, by relentless

manoeuvrings of the Arab States in blatant obstruction of every effort to allow it to find its natural solution.

The units of the embryo Defence Forces of Israel, led by veteran officers of the Hagana, armed with a few imported weapons and with home-made Sten-guns, stood ready. The War of Independence lasted — with intermittent truces — until the beginning of 1949. The invaders were beaten back everywhere, and, on the Island of Rhodes, under United Nations auspices, armistice agreements were signed between Israel and the Arab States.

So was written a great chapter in the history of the Third Jewish Commonwealth, a chapter whose every syllable is vibrant with a proud and loving memory.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISRAEL'S SOCIETY

With the proclamation of the State, Israel entered a new era of development and one of dizzying speed. Independence placed in Israel's hands the keys to its gates: already in the midst of warfare, it found itself welcoming the entry of hundreds of thousands of homeless but now joyously homecoming Jews. In twenty years, the population has risen nearly fourfold, and the State has undergone that process of lightning growth and omnidirectional development which is, perhaps, its salient economic and social characteristic.

Of the present Jewish census of Israel, roughly speaking, more than two-fifths are Israel-born, something less than one-third are of European provenance and something less than one-third come from Asia and Africa. Communities have made their way to Israel in their wholeness—for example, the Jews of the Yemen and of Aden in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. The Yemenite Jews, for long centuries cut off from the rest of Jewry and subjected to the basest indignities, are today fully integrated in Israel life and society. The same is true of the great majority of the Jews of Syria, Iraq and Libya, and of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco; all these were brought securely to Israel in the first years of independence. Of the dreadful, inhuman persecutions to which the lingering communities of most of those Arab lands are today the tragic victims the enlightened world is only too conscious, although its abhorrence of this barbaric Arab mediaevalism is still unprojected in effective intervention or redress.

At the end of the Second World War, some three hundred thousand Jews were huddled in refugee camps in Europe, in the main in Germany. Others, who had tried their luck in 'illegal' transports which had been intercepted by the British navy, were in

internment camps in Cyprus and on the Island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean. Sovereign Israel flung wide its portals to them all, and before long a thousand were arriving day in, day out. It called for a herculean effort by a tiny and impoverished Land, on the very morrow of a stern struggle for its own existence.

Aliya went on — it is going on today — from Europe and from Africa, from wherever the plight of Jews is precarious, but also from lands where Jews can and do dwell in freedom and comfort.

The more than two and a half million Jews of Israel faithfully mirror the historic process known as the 'Ingathering of the Exiles', which has assembled, in the Jewish Homeland, Jews from a hundred domiciles and of manifold origins, all inspired by the one wish and will to rebuild the Land, and their own lives, and to unify the scattered elements of an old-new nation.

But who channelled this tremendous flood of humanity? Who helped to absorb and integrate it? Was it conceivable that the six hundred thousand Jews living in Palestine before the State was proclaimed could undertake — without outside aid — the organization and the financing of aliya and settlement and, in the same breath, ensure the regular safe-keeping of long and difficult borders, lay the foundation for a national economy and reconstruct a territory ravaged by protracted war?

There can be only one reply. It was the Zionist movement, architect and agent of the national emancipation of Jewry until the State was reborn, that now undertook the seemingly superhuman task of organizing the multitudinous Ingathering of the Exiles, installing often unprepared and bewildered myriads in a Land not yet wholly ready and, for the accomplishment of all this, marshalling the reserves of the whole Diaspora.

With all the demographic enlargement of its first twenty years, Israel today holds only one in every six Jews in the world. Of the thirteen million, some two and a half million are in Israel, five and a half million in the United States, eight hundred and fifty thousand in Latin America, seven hundred thousand in Western Europe — most of them in France, as many in Britain and the Commonwealth, and three million, sundered from the rest, are to be found

in the Soviet Union. Israel has a special centrality in Jewish life; it is the core of creativity of modern Jewish thought and culture. The Zionist movement, with federations and societies throughout the West, supports and fosters Jewish education, it encourages the diffusion of Jewish cultural values and the heritages of Judaism, and strengthens the bonds between the Diaspora and its spiritual heart. From the ranks of the movement, young men and women born in freedom and in an atmosphere of affluence cast their venturesome lot with the makers of a new society in Israel: idealism is their spur, a practical part in this historic enterprise is their ambition. They, no less, make a contribution of cultures and democratic traditions to the tessellated pattern of forms and elements that are, in one, ancient and modern.

The Zionist movement works through two parallel bodies. One is the World Zionist Organization, with its Executive in Jerusalem; the Executive is elected by the Zionist Congress, which meets every four years, and whereat all Jewish communities are represented.

The second is the Jewish Agency, charged with the actual doing of Zionism's tasks, not least aliya, settlement and the absorption of newcomers, but, very much also, clearance and reclamation of the soil, the founding of villages, the building and apportionment of homes for each successive aliya, and its cultural integration. A newcomer's needs are thus cared for by the Agency from the day of his arrival until he becomes part and parcel of the Third Jewish Commonwealth.

ISRAEL'S THREE WARS

The major achievement of the Jewish national movement of renaissance was that, by peaceful reconstruction of Land and of People, it made possible a mass return of Jews to their ancestral Home. The right of every nation to a life of independence, and the millennial links that bind Jews to the Bible's source: these are the twin ideals and incentives that fired the imagination and generated the selflessness of the men and women who eagerly gave their lives that Israel might arise again. The thinkers and writers who, in their creativity, laid the ideological foundation of the modern Zionist movement, always thought of their mission in terms of tranquil resettlement, a great metamorphosis of social patterns, a reclamation of the wilderness and a development of economic resources by manual toil and the lever of modern scientific and technological methods. It was their fervent and honest hope that the Arabs of Palestine, in sheer, enlightened self-interest, would partner them in this undertaking and, by that partnership, assure for themselves, and for all the peoples of the region, a future in which the two sister-races would live and work alongside one another in progress and prosperity.

Peace with Israel's neighbours was ever in the forefront of Zionist thinking, always the Yishuv's dominant aim, as the Weizmann-Feisal pact of 1919 bore witness. Once more, the aspiration finds firm and explicit expression in Israel's Declaration of Independence, a document written in the bloodiest hours of a re-born nation's fight to live on:

'Even amidst the violent attacks launched against us for months past, we call upon the sons of the Arab people dwelling in Israel to keep the peace and to play their part in building the State on

the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its institutions, provisional and permanent.

‘We extend the hand of peace and good-neighbourliness to all the States around us and to their peoples, and we call upon them to cooperate in mutual helpfulness with the independent Jewish nation in its Land. The State of Israel is prepared to make its contribution in a concerted effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.’

Yet, as things turned out, in the course of the first twenty years of its new being, Israel has been forced to involve itself in three major campaigns to stem the belligerent aggression of the Arab States. For, since 29 November 1947, they have endlessly and openly advertised their determination not only to undo Israel’s independence but physically to destroy its inhabitants. ‘To throw the Jews into the sea’ came to be the popular slogan of Arab politics, their choicest means of inflaming the passions of their followers. From the moment that it drew its first breath, Israel had to take up arms to survive.

The plan of the United Nations for the partition of Palestine assigned to the Jewish State a narrow strip of territory with borders awkward and difficult to defend. Nevertheless, the Jews had accepted the international verdict, in the hope and expectation that a corresponding Arab acceptance of it would establish at least minimal conditions for a reasonable development of Jewish national life, however constricted its geography and bounds.

The Palestine Arabs, however, aided and egged on by the neighbouring Arab States, seized the opportunity offered by a local chaos that resulted from the indifference or impotence of the United Nations and Britain, and hurled themselves against the day-old Jewish State. The armies of five Arab States and contingents from two more, equipped with modern arms — tanks, artillery, war-planes — in most up-to-date battle formations and under the command of an officer corps drilled in European military academies, celebrated the end of the British Mandate by invading Israel from North, East and South. There faced them a Yishuv that had been prevented by the Mandatory from preparing itself publicly and

properly for the shock. To offset its fewness, and its inadequacy in weapons, all that it possessed was a sure knowledge that this was the last card to play, that it must win at whatever price, for the alternative — in the unblushing words of the then Secretary-General of the Arab League, Azzam Pasha of Egypt — was to be 'a massacre such as humanity has not known since the Mongol invasions'.

By the grace of Providence, the War of Independence, the War of Liberation, ended, impossible odds notwithstanding, with the rout of the invaders. Israel was, by victory, sovereign of a territory which, though exiguous in area, still permitted an irreducible minimum of conditions for defence and development. Confounded now, the Arab Governments were not reluctant to discuss an armistice, and Egypt was the first to send a delegation to the Island of Rhodes, followed by Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. There, between February and July 1949, armistice agreements were signed between Israel and each of its four Arab neighbours. In that way, demarcation lines were set which — if honoured — could make for a modicum of stability in the Middle East in the coming decades. In specific terms, the agreements foreshadowed an early conclusion of definitive treaties of peace.

It quickly became clear, however, that the Arab States had no intention of moving towards peace, formal or otherwise. Incitement against Israel persisted, and infiltration into Israel's territory began to mount. To defend its soil and its citizens, the Defence Forces of Israel countered with action against the enemy's military positions. The proliferating succession of Arab border militancy, taking heavy toll of life and limb, doing untold damage to property, came to be a routine in which Israel's every daily duty was done. Nor did recurring domestic restiveness in many of the Arab States augur any brighter or nearer prospects of peace. Israel's statesmen lost no occasion of affirming their readiness to talk peace with those States collectively, or with each alone. The only Arab rejoinders were protestations of hostility, invectives of irrational, unreasoning hatred. And, all the time, uneasy borders and escalating terrorism.

In 1954, Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser came to full power in Cairo. With malignant acumen, the new dictator was quick to

exploit its anti-Israel resentments as a lever to attain leadership for Egypt — under his personal suzerainty, of course — of the Arab world. In September 1955, he entered into a transaction with the Soviet Union, by way of Czechoslovakia, for the procurement of astronomic stocks of sophisticated weaponry: this signposted the involvement of the Middle East in the perilous orbit of the Cold War between the Soviet and the Western blocs. It was also the beginning of a galloping arms race between the Arab States, backed and provisioned by Moscow, and an Israel desperately intent on possessing enough 'hardware' itself to maintain the regional equilibrium which, it hoped, would discourage Arab aggression. Washington and London were not willing to sell — at market prices — to Israel. In the Communist bloc, Egypt and Syria could get everything against token payment or for no payment at all. It was France that finally agreed to sell the arms and the planes without which Israel could have been hideously vulnerable.

As Egypt's combatant strength grew, so was its venom in action against Israel intensified. Nasser blockaded the Gulf of Eilat, that is, the Straits of Tiran, and barred the way through the Suez Canal to Israel vessels. Sabotage and wrecking and murder were the endless agony of Israel's borders, a wanton wickedness of bands of fedayun, of commando terrorists organized, trained and armed by the Egyptian regular forces and infiltrating into Israel from the Gaza Strip or from Jordan, Syria or Lebanon. Collision could no longer be avoided.

In the summer and autumn of 1956, Nasser passed the point of no return. After nationalizing the Suez Canal in July of that year, he signed war pacts with Jordan and Syria, explicitly aimed against Israel, and began to mass troops and armour in the Sinai desert, on Israel's southwestern border. Fedayun inroads were stepped up.

On 29 October, the Israel Defence Forces struck back. Thrusting determinedly into the Gaza Strip and the desert beyond, they destroyed the fedayun bases, pushed the Egyptian troops in the Sinai peninsula back to the Suez Canal, and at Sharm el-Sheikh over-ran the Egyptian gun batteries that, for years, had stopped

Israel's maritime trade through an international waterway into and out of Eilat.

It was at this stage that British and French units, reacting to Nasser's arbitrary sequestration of the Suez Canal, occupied the Canal Zone, in an unsuccessful attempt to reinstate the Canal's international character. This Franco-British intervention, however, detracted not one iota from the historical truth that the Sinai campaign was conducted exclusively by Israel's own and unallied soldiers, sailors and airmen.

The strictures of the United States and the Soviet Union, in this instance making common cause, and the peremptory bidding of the United Nations combined to constrain Israel to withdraw from the Sinai peninsula and from the Gaza Strip. But assurances were authoritatively given, at the time, through diplomatic channels and in the United Nations, that Israel's essential security would be safeguarded, and passage through the Straits of Tiran guaranteed by a United Nations Emergency Force that was despatched to replace the Israeli presence in the Gaza Strip and at Sharm el-Sheikh. And, indeed, the instant improvement was that infiltration from the Gaza Strip was halted and that merchant ships of all flags could sail through the Straits of Tiran without let or hindrance. But, as he himself admitted in 1967, Nasser was only using the United Nations Emergency Force as a screen behind which to make his preparations for the out-and-out onslaught on Israel. When he felt that he was ready to wage that victorious war, he told the Force to quit — and it did.

More and more, 1965 had ushered in an extra violence and volume of terrorist activity. Killers and saboteurs, mainly from across the Syrian border, stole into Israel, and Syrian artillery, in emplacements on the Golan Heights looking down on defenceless farmsteads in the valley below, fiercely bombarded the villagers and their womenfolk and children, night and day. In May 1967, in rapid succession, Nasser deployed heavy concentrations of troops and armour into Sinai, evicted the United Nations Emergency Force from the Egyptian-Israeli border and from Sharm el-Sheikh, signed 'defensive' pacts with Syria, Jordan and Iraq, and bolted the

Straits of Tiran once more against Israel shipping. Where the peace-keeping contingent of the United Nations had bivouacked, Egypt's gun-muzzles now bristled again.

The Government of Israel exerted itself to uphold its rights by every possible diplomatic means and avoid war. But international responses were faint and fearful. Cairo's accents took on a deadlier menace from day to day. Nasser thundered his purpose to wipe out Israel. Blood-curdling threats issued from Radio Damascus and Radio Amman. With confident unanimity, all the Arab States declared themselves at war with Israel. Once more Israel stood alone, against a total Arab encirclement.

That is how the so-called Six-Day War broke out. It ended, among other things, in the pulverizing of the Egyptian army and air force. Till the very last moment, Israel had warned King Hussein, through the trustiest of envoys, that, if it were not attacked by Jordan, it would not, for its part, strike across the line. But, with Iraqi help, Jordan suddenly opened a vicious artillery barrage against the new city of Jerusalem west of the Walls. Syria, sensing a cheap triumph, entered the lists in the north. Battling on three fronts, Israel's citizen army crushed its adversaries, freed and reunified Jerusalem after an interruption of twenty years, recovered areas illegally held by Jordan on the West Bank of the River, swept the Syrian gunners off the Golan Heights, and stood firm on the East Bank of the Suez Canal.

For the third time in the space of two decades, the little David had overcome Goliath. Yet, as in the hour of its re-birth, Israel's major concern is that a true and enduring peace shall reign in the Middle East. It is determined to defend its irrevocable and irreversible right to national existence and sovereignty, its privilege to develop and prosper its territory and all that dwell in it. It is as powerfully determined to work towards achievement of amity and co-existence with its neighbours. Israel harbours no feelings of hatred against them. Israel is consumed by no spirit of revenge. It looks forward to peace, not backward to bloodshed.

CONCLUSION

If the first stimuli for the renaissance of Jewish nationalism were generated in now long-distant tremors that shook Jewish society, the tale of the events which had their apogee in the re-birth of Israel as an independent and sovereign Republic spans no more than seventy years. The planet of our sires and grand-sires, the planet of 1880, betrayed no slightest sign, even to the most lynx-eyed watcher, of happenings that were to convulse it within two brief generations. In seventy short years, civilization swept from the Age of Steam to the Atomic Age, and Jewry trod a path which it had taken other peoples weary aeons to travel.

The 19th century Jewish observer might discern the portents of what, in the issue, emancipation in the West should bring about: the ghettos of Eastern Europe, incongruous relics of a dim past, seemed to be on the point of extinction as — which could possibly be the reason — their Jews blended more and more with the host-peoples around them. The growing congregations of the New World were in their childhood, and, at best, ranked only as provincial projections of European Judaism. Jerusalem was the Holy City, immortalized in prayer by all, but as yet the dwelling-place of comparatively few, pious seekers of salvation and repose. But, let us add at once, from the middle of the nineteenth century Jews were the largest single community in Jerusalem. From the end of the nineteenth century, a majority of the citizens of Jerusalem were Jews, and Jews have been a clear majority of its population ever since—it is history in re-enactment. Europe was still the hub of the world, and there was every reason to be persuaded that liberalism, enthroned in a final vindication of the equality of all men, could promise the Jews an end, once for all, to their tribulations. To all intents and purposes, the Jewish problem was solved. The

day of universal obliteration of frontiers was nearing. Any attempt to manufacture new particularisms was foredoomed to failure. Or so it seemed. But history, in this regard, pursued a different course. Looking back from the perspective of the second half of the twentieth century, we may detect the hidden causes of that swing of the historical compass.

The Jewish State might conceivably have been restored a hundred years before: Napoleon had given passing thought to it. But none can doubt the inevitability of its re-birth in our century: the very disintegration of the ghettos gave rise to certain forces which — at first all unawares — were transformed into instruments that shaped new means and ways of sustaining the spirit and legacy of Jewish civilization, and the upsurge of European nationalisms gave them fresh, compulsive content. The seismic changes in Europe's economy and society, the aftermaths of two World Wars, meant a swift worsening of an already parlous Jewish plight. Palestine was the prophylaxis against a disaster that threatened Jewry's European soul and centre.

Israel, as it is now, reflects, in large measure, the vexations and vicissitudes of that vanished European Jewry, its torrential energy and tempestuous dedication. The type and character of Israel, its resistant vigour, have been produced by the conditions and environment in which it sprang. The trends and tendencies of its social evolution, even the obstacles that it had to surmount in its endeavours to implant itself ineradicably in the unyielding earth of an underdeveloped region — all these are unmistakably delineated on the countenance of the new State. And the national movement which helped to bring it into abiding existence will be immortalized on the tablets of History as among the most fruitful and constructive impulses of modern political thought.