

The Arab World and

Israel

by Ahmad El Kodsy and Eli Lobel

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U.S. \$6.00

U.K. 54s.

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The two essays in this volume offer a unique analysis of the social conflicts of the Middle East. Although both authors treat the subject from a Marxist point of view, their vantage points are very different, since one writer is Egyptian and the other an Israeli living in France.

"Nationalism and Class Struggles in the Arab World" presents in concise form a historical analysis of the development of the Arab world, the "semi-arid borderland that stretches like a belt across the Old World, from the Atlantic to Monsoon Asia." In a brilliant summary of a thousand years of development, Kodsy traces the special features of economy and nation that form the background of present-day struggles. He analyzes the process whereby imperialism conquered the region and integrated the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, and the Maghreb into the world capitalist system. He follows this with a country-by-country description of the social and nationalist struggles throughout the region in the period since the First World War, and concludes with a detailed discussion of the effect of Israeli expansionist power upon the currents and movements within the Arab states.

The second essay, "Palestine and the Jews," is the work of a Jewish economist, a citizen of the state of Israel living in France. Eli Lobel concerns himself chiefly with the relations between the Palestinian people and the Jews. In order to pro-

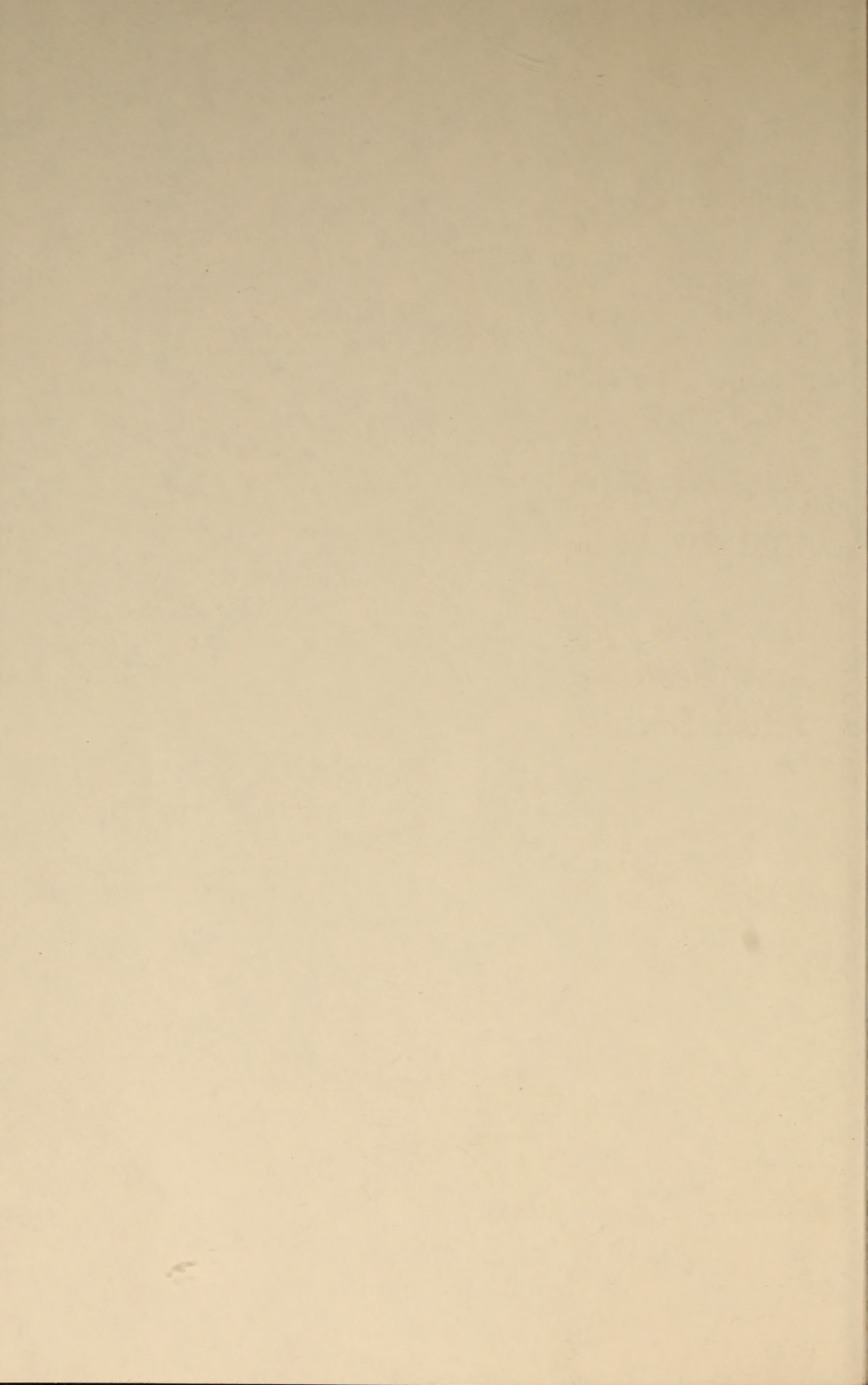
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Two essays by
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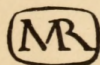
New York and London



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**Two essays by
Ahmad El Kodsy
and Eli Lobel**

**Translated by
Brian Pearce and
Alfred Ehrenfeld**



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"Nationalism and Class Struggles in the Arab World" first
appeared as the July/August 1970 issue of *Monthly Review*,
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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 70-129571

First Printing

Monthly Review Press

116 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011

33/37 Moreland Street, London, E.C. 1, England

Manufactured in the United States of America

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Publisher's Note

The first essay in this volume, "Nationalism and Class Struggles in the Arab World," was written in the spring of 1970 and published as a special double number of *Monthly Review* magazine, July/August 1970. The second essay, "Palestine and the Jews," was completed in February 1969, as an introduction to Sabri Jiryis' book, *The Arabs in Israel*, and published in France in the spring of that year. It appears here in revised form.

Nationalism and Class Struggles in the Arab World

by Ahmad El Kodsy

There can be no doubt that Arab opinion is extremely sensitive to everything that happens in Palestine. How could it be otherwise? From the Atlantic shores of Morocco to the Persian Gulf, from the Mediterranean to the middle of the Sahara and the Upper Nile, more than eighty million people speak what is essentially the same language, listen to the same broadcasts, read the same books, and see the same films. What is more, they have all been oppressed by the same European imperialism during our own time. When, however, any one of these people is asked what his nationality is, nobody, or hardly anybody, will answer spontaneously "Arab." Instead, he will say "Moroccan," "Egyptian," "Yemeni," or something else. Do these people constitute a single "nation," the Arab nation, as the ideologists of present-day Arab nationalism have suggested, even if this nation is said to be only "in formation"? Or do they make up fifteen nations which are different though related, as orthodox Communism has long claimed? Is their feeling for Palestine merely sentimental, or is it based on consciousness, whether clear or confused, of a living political solidarity resulting from the role played by imperialism and Israel?

The question of the nation in the Arab world is not a matter of dogma, either bourgeois or "Marxist," nor an "unimportant" question serving to conceal the fundamental prob-

lems, which are those of winning freedom from imperialist exploitation. The framework within which the class struggle goes on is a national framework, and the oppression to which the peoples of this region are subject is not only "economic" but also national.

It has become habitual to identify the fact of nationality with one rather special expression of this fact, namely, that which has emerged from the history of Europe, where there has been the gradual formation of nation-states that are relatively homogeneous, administratively and politically centralized, and unified economically through the development of capitalism. The bourgeoisie played, in the historical constitution of these nations, the decisive role of unifier, ruling class, and generator of ideology. Stalin's definition of the five conditions for the existence of a nation¹ provides a perfect summary of this historical experience.

Once, however, we leave the field of European history, we discover that the concepts on which Stalin's theory of the nation was based are no longer adequate to reality. This theory assumes that the nation is a social phenomenon produced by capitalism, or more precisely by national capitalism, since it is the national bourgeoisie that lays the foundation of the nation. There are thus, according to this theory, no nations outside the center of the world capitalist system, outside the regions where the bourgeois revolution has established the national authority of the local bourgeoisie. Elsewhere there are no nations, or at least no fully developed ones. What, then, are we to call those social realities of the pre-capitalist world where an old tradition of state unity coincides with a real linguistic and cultural unity? Egypt, with its thousands of years of history, has always been united so far as language and culture are concerned, and also, except in brief periods of decadence, united politically. If it is not a (bourgeois) nation, it is certainly not a mere heterogeneous and inorganic conglomeration of "peoples." Moreover, even regions which were not previously or-

1. This definition rested on the features of a stable community and a common language, territory, economic life, and national culture.

ganized into unified and centralized states and which lacked cultural and linguistic unity, have been more or less thoroughly unified as a consequence of their integration into the international capitalist system as colonies or semi-independent subject countries. Even though this unification was not carried out by a national bourgeoisie, it is none the less an important social fact.

How is the "Arab world" structured and defined, from this point of view? It extends over several thousand kilometers, in the semi-arid borderland that stretches like a belt across the Old World, from the Atlantic to Monsoon Asia. It occupies a precise, clearly delimited zone within this region, cut off from Europe by the Mediterranean, from Black Africa by the Sahara, from the Turkish and Persian worlds by the mountainous massifs of the Taurus, Kurdistan, and Western Iran. It is not identical with the Islamic world, which, broadly speaking, occupies the whole of this semi-arid belt, and is divided between four groups of peoples: the Arabs, the Turks, the Persians, and the Indo-Afghans. This Islamic world has overflowed the semi-arid belt only to a very marginal extent, in the direction of Monsoon Asia (Bengal, Indonesia) and, in comparatively recent times, into certain parts of Black Africa. It is not the case, either, that the Arab world is to be identified with some ethnographic phenomenon, for Arabization has mixed together in this region a variety of peoples of differing origin and racial composition. The Arab world constituted a relatively centralized political entity only during a very short period of its history—two centuries. Further, at that time (the age of the Omayyads and the first Abbasids, between 750 and 950 A.D.), linguistic unification was very much less advanced than it is today. The Arab world then broke up into relatively stable regional political entities which were not brought together again (and even then only very superficially) until they were subjected to the Ottoman yoke, that is, to a foreign ruler.

Is the Arab world, then, merely a group of peoples who speak "related" languages? If this were really so, only the languages *spoken* by the Arabs would evolve in the direction of increasing differentiation, just as the Romance languages

evolved from a common Latin basis, to become French, Italian, Spanish, and so on. But, in fact, the evolution of the languages of the Arabs has taken the opposite direction: the "literary" language is not tending to become a dead language, like Latin, but, on the contrary, is becoming the language spoken by the Arab world as a whole. This is a highly important fact in relation to the prospects for the evolution of this part of the world, something that it would be a mistake to underestimate. It is thus within this complex and evolving "national" framework that the class struggle and the anti-imperialist liberation struggle are going forward in the Arab countries; and it is in this over-all setting that the "Palestine question" must be placed. It is in this "national" setting that the actual social formations of the Arab world are located and the class struggle is going on.

Now, it is precisely as regards their pre-colonial social formations that the Arab countries do not constitute a homogeneous whole. The picture, widely accepted not only among many foreigners but also among too many Arab Marxists, of an Arab world which is *rural* and *feudal*, is one of those commonplaces without any scientific basis which arises from an oversimplified kind of Marxism. In reality, the Arab world was very different from the Europe of the Middle Ages. Within this Arab world, moreover, one can still distinguish, today as always, three zones that differ widely from each other in social structure and in political and economic organization: the Arab East (in Arabic called *Al Mashraq*) embracing Arabia, Syria (meaning the present-day states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel), and Iraq; the countries of the Nile (Egypt and the Sudan); and the Arab West (called in Arabic *Al Maghreb*), stretching from Libya to the Atlantic and including the present-day states of Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Mauritania. In this group, Egypt alone, which divides the Arab world in two, has always been and still is a *peasant* civilization (I do not say a feudal one), whereas the social formations of the Mashraq and of the Maghreb alike have not been, essentially, formations based on the cultivators of the soil. In this semi-arid zone, agricultural activity continues to be very precarious, a fact which is too often forgotten. Except in

Egypt, therefore, the surplus that can be taken from the cultivators remains, broadly speaking, very meager. The techniques of agricultural production are necessarily backward, the productivity of agricultural labor very slight, the standard of living of the agricultural community very close to subsistence level, and so the forms of social organization of this community are inevitably characterized by primitive collectivism. There is no adequate basis for a surplus to be extracted such as would make possible a "feudal" class structure or even a brilliant civilization.

And yet—and this is the source of many of the confusions that exist about the Arab world—the Mashraq (especially, but also the Maghreb as well, though to a lesser degree) has been the seat of civilizations that were brilliant, wealthy, and moreover extremely *urban* in character. How could this "miracle" have occurred? How are we to explain this apparent "anomaly" that rich Egypt, the only large and authentic agricultural oasis in this arid zone, has always been a peasant country, relatively little urbanized until our own time, even in the great periods of its ancient civilization, whereas the Mashraq, which has some equally brilliant periods in its no less ancient history, has always been an area of great cities? What are the consequences—to be felt even in our day—of this "anomaly," so far as the conditions of the class struggle are concerned?

In fact there is nothing mysterious about it, if we try to understand the Arab world not in isolation but in its real context, as a great zone of passage, a sort of turntable, between the major areas of civilization in the Old World. This semi-arid zone, inevitably poor as regards agriculture, divides the Old World like a belt, as I have already pointed out, and thereby it separates three areas of civilization based on agriculture: Europe, Black Africa, and Monsoon Asia. The Arab zone has therefore always fulfilled a commercial function, bringing into contact, through its role as the only middleman, agricultural communities that had no direct awareness of each other. The social formations on the basis of which its own civilizations were erected were always commercial in character. By

this I mean that the essential surplus on which its great towns lived did not come from exploitation of the area's own rural inhabitants (except, of course, to a subordinate extent), but from the profits of the long-distance trading activity which its monopoly role as intermediary ensured to it—that is, an income derived, in the last analysis, from the surplus extracted by the ruling classes of the other civilizations (the ones linked together by the Arab world) from their own peasantries.

This pattern of a "trading" society has been characteristic of the Mashraq right down to our own time, to the war of 1914-1918. Subsequently, the integration of this region of the Arab world into the imperialist sphere (something that had begun only very superficially in the Ottoman period) was to bring about decisive changes in the class structure of Iraq, but only minor changes in Syria and Palestine. When we analyze the behavior of the "bourgeoisie" of the Arab East toward the imperialists (British and French, and later American) and toward the "Palestine problem," we must keep in mind the nature of these societies and the ways in which they were integrated into the world capitalist systems, for these phenomena are still of decisive significance today for understanding many aspects of the political life of the region. At the other end of the Arab world, in the Maghreb, this pattern of society was typical of the region until its colonization by France. This colonization, however, which began earlier and went deeper than that to which the Mashraq was subjected, was to bring decisive changes to the Maghreb of today. Between the two regions, Egypt was to continue to constitute the absolute exception of a tributary peasant society integrated into the world capitalist system in a way that was not merely different but was infinitely firmer.

Islam was born in Arabia, in the desert, among a population of long-distance nomads who were organized to carry on large-scale trade between the Eastern Roman Empire and Persia on the one hand, and South Arabia, Ethiopia, and India on the other. It was the profits obtained from this trade that made possible the existence of the urban merchant republics

of the Hejaz.² The domination wielded by these towns over small rural oasis areas, which they exploited on a semi-serf basis, was not at all the main source of income for the ruling merchant classes. As for the pastoral subsistence economy of the nomads, this existed side by side with the commercial activity, for which it supplied men and animals, but contributed no surplus to it. The desert civilization thus presupposed the civilizations of the Roman East and the Monsoon countries, which it linked together. If, for one reason or another, the surplus that fed the springs of the long-distance trading activity dried up, or if the trade-routes changed, the desert would die. This happened many times in the course of history, and on each occasion the men of the desert endeavored to survive by becoming conquerors. Islam offers an example of such a movement, as has been shown by Maxime Rodinson in his analysis of the historical conditions of the region in the seventh century A.D.³

The first region of the "civilized world" to be conquered by the Arabs was the Fertile Crescent (the countries of Syria and Iraq, along the northern edge of the Arabian Desert). There the Arabs were in familiar territory, for the societies of the Ancient East had been very largely commercial communities of the same type as their own. There were, to be sure, some peasants in this semi-arid zone, whereas there were practically none to the south of it. They were mountain peasants, clinging to the hillsides of the Lebanon, the Jebel Ansariya, the Taurus, and Kurdistan, where there was sufficient rainfall to ensure their wretched existence. These rural areas were poor, however, too poor to provide the surplus needed for a brilliant civilization. For this reason they had remained "primitive," organized in village communities, and relatively isolated, defending their independence very jealously and very effectively. Civilization had arisen there in two exceptional zones—Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean coast. Mesopotamia had seen

2. Formerly a country in Western Arabia, along the Red Sea, now part of Saudi Arabia.

3. Maxime Rodinson, *Mahomet*, 2nd ed., Editions de Seuil, Paris, 1968.

the development of the first genuine agricultural civilization, thanks to the exceptional natural conditions provided by the Tigris and the Euphrates. Here a civilization similar to that of Egypt had been created, based on the surplus levied by the cities from the neighboring countryside. Like all agricultural civilizations situated at the edge of the desert, it lived under the constant threat of destruction by the barbarians. It was indeed to be destroyed by them, definitively after the Turco-Mongol invasions of the tenth and eleventh centuries, to arise again only after 1918, under the aegis of the Pax Britannica. To the West, beside the Mediterranean Sea, since the agricultural miracle was not possible, the coastal states of Phoenicia and Syria were never anything but states that drew their revenues from long-distance trade, by ship or caravan. The Arabs who had come out of the desert thus found themselves quite at home there and, by establishing their new capital, that of the Omayyads, at Damascus, they shifted northward the trading civilization of Medina. Having thus recovered control of the lines of communication they could again draw profit from large-scale trade and in this way revive their civilization.

The unity of the Fertile Crescent was not to be really broken until after the First World War. But it was a unity in diversity—a diversity, however, that was never truly “cultural” and still less ethnic. The mixture of peoples goes back so far in this region that it is useless to try to contrast one people with another on so fragile a basis. What is characteristic of a zone of civilization like this, the essence of which is its commercial function, putting in touch with each other the zones which it separates, is that it is dialectically unifying *and* dismembering. Unifying, because it causes men to move around ceaselessly, so that customs and religions are passed on, and a travellers’ *lingua franca* becomes the predominant speech. Dismembering, because it is based on competition between rival merchant cities.

The detailed course of events is not the main thing here: what is significant is the imposition or the absence of a single formal political authority. If this authority is strong it will set limits to the competition between the merchant cities, and

often will ensure the pre-eminence of the capital city. Of this order was the state of the Omayyads, centered on Damascus, and then that of the Abbasids, centered on Baghdad. In order to guarantee its authority, the state was obliged to maintain an army of mercenaries, which was easily recruited from among the neighboring nomads. As for the peasants, they endeavored to remain isolated in their mountains, and fell seriously into semi-serf dependence on landowners, who were always townsmen and absentees (merchants, courtiers, etc.), only in the areas near the towns, or, by way of exception, in Lower Iraq, which was organized into commercial, slave-worked plantations of the "Roman" type. During twelve centuries the Fertile Crescent was thus at once united and divided. During these twelve centuries, between 700 and 1900, it knew some brilliant periods and other periods of decadence, depending on the fate of the trade circuits that joined Byzantium and Western Europe to India and China.

The Fertile Crescent was rapidly Arabized. It had always been accustomed to one *lingua franca* or another. Already, as a Christian region on the eve of the Islamic invasion, it was linguistically united through the triumph of Aramaic. Being itself a Semitic language, Aramaic could give way to Arabic without much difficulty. The linguistic unity of the region has been practically complete for centuries, if we do not indulge in a false "purism," treating as different languages ways of speech that differ only in accent and in a few popular expressions. It is a very pure form of Arabic, moreover, that is spoken in this region, and from Jerusalem to the borders of Turkey the same accent, called the "Syrian" accent, is characteristic. Palestine is a fragment of this Mashraq, nothing more. The feeling that the peoples of this region have of belonging to the same cultural entity is a very strong one.

The profound cultural unity of the Mashraq does not imply the absence of diversity, as between the various cities and the various little rural worlds. The country areas are here, indeed, as they have been for twelve centuries, isolated one from another and of little weight economically or politically. To the imperial authority striving to subject them they oppose resistance

both armed and religious. This is why the only really rural parts of the Mashraq are all "dissenting" areas from the religious standpoint: the mountains of Lebanon, divided between Maronite Christians and Moslems of the Shi'a sect; the Jebel Ansariya, home of the Alaouites (Alawiyyin), and the Jebel Druse, in Syria; and Lower Iraq, with its Shi'ite population. The Shi'a heresy, which divided the Moslem world very early on, found favorable soil in the free communities of the mountains. It developed in these conditions a much freer, more critical, and even egalitarian spirit than that of the "official" Sunni doctrine. This is likewise why it was the ideology of the peasant slaves who revolted in Lower Iraq (the Qarmathian rebellion).

We cannot speak of "feudalism" here; the idea that the Arab East is feudal does not correspond to reality in the least. "Semi-feudal" forms developed, in periods when large-scale trade was in decline, in the flat country areas which the townsmen could dominate more easily and which they thus used to make up, by tribute extorted from the peasants, their loss of income from long-distance trade. The plains of the Bekaa, of Palestine, Homs, Hama, and Central Iraq were in this way sometimes brought under control by greedy landowners, especially during the Ottoman period (from 1500 onward) which was a long period of commercial decline. Much later, starting in the 1930s, the modern-style exploitation of agricultural areas, made possible by irrigation works, was to spread wider the zone occupied by latifundia. I shall come back later to this phenomenon.

What is essential here, however, is not the country but the town. Huge cities arose, which appeared to be of monstrous size when trade began to decline; cities that were among the most populous in Antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and in modern times before the capitalist period, were much more important than the cities of the West. Aleppo, Damascus, Baghdad, Basra, Antioch, and others, had hundreds of thousands of inhabitants. In their best periods they embraced the majority of the population of the region, which exceeded five million inhabitants, a larger number than it was to contain at the beginning of the twen-

tieth century. These were cities that were always centers of courts and merchants, with a crowd of craftsmen and clerks around them. They were *merchant* cities, like those of Italy which echoed them in the medieval West, or like those of the Hanseatic League. The accumulation of wealth in money in these cities expressed the brilliance of their civilization. But this accumulation did not lead to capitalism, precisely because the country districts, isolated as they were, had not been made "feudal," and therefore the processes of proletarianization, essential for the rise of capitalism, could not occur. Retaining thus their mercantile but not capitalist character, the cities of the Mashraq formed a group of little worlds competing with each other; the outlet for their very advanced craft production were the distant markets to which their merchants traveled. The cultural unity of this dominant urban world was certainly very pronounced: these cities were the centers of Arabo-Islamic culture, the citadels of Sunni orthodoxy.

At the other extremity of the Arab world, in the Maghreb, exactly the same structures were to be found. There, nomads and cultivators had struggled since time immemorial for possession of a narrow strip of territory squeezed between the sea, the mountains, and the great desert. The Pax Romana, by setting up a series of fortified posts all along the *limes*, the imperial frontier, had advanced farther to the south, the zone of the Berber cultivators, encroaching upon the lands over which roamed the nomads and semi-nomads who were also Berbers. Already before the coming of the Arabs, the decline of the Roman Empire had enabled the nomads to encroach in their turn upon the cultivated land. When the Arabs arrived, they encountered the same resistance among the cultivators that others had experienced before them. But the Arabs were not particularly interested in subjecting the cultivators. They skirted the mountain massifs, the places of refuge of the cultivators, and established *cities*. These, as in the East, could not have survived and prospered if they had not found in large-scale, long-distance trade the resources that were denied them by the difficulty of extracting surplus from the cultivators.

The search for income from trade led the Arabs farther and farther afield, across the Mediterranean, and across the Sahara too. Toward the south they encountered the Berber nomads who clearly had the same interest as themselves, that of becoming the caravan-merchants of a flourishing commerce. Hence these Berber nomads became, to a large extent, Arabized much more thoroughly and more quickly than was the case with the peasants, who had little interest in the *urban* civilization of the Arabs. Ibn Khaldun, that amazing scientific mind, in whom we must assuredly see the founder of the social sciences, gave a perfect analysis of the nature of these social formations of the "medieval" Maghreb. With an intelligence and an exactitude that might be envied by many historians and sociologists of the Arab world of today—both bourgeois and also, alas, even Marxist ones—he analyzes these formations as being based not on a surplus levied from the peasants of the region but on the profits of large-scale trade. It was in this way that all the great states of the Maghreb were founded upon the trade in gold, the gold in question coming from West Africa. For centuries, down to the discovery of America, West Africa was indeed the chief supplier of the yellow metal to all the western part of the Old World—to the Roman Empire and to medieval Europe, to the Ancient East and to the Arab world. The trade in gold nourished, to the north of the Sahara, the states of the Almoravides, the Almohades, and others, and, to the south of the great desert, the states of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and others. The structures of these social formations were so alike that Ibn Khaldun—and the Arab travellers of the time, such as Ibn Batuta—correctly assimilated them all to the same pattern.

The alliance between the cities and the nomads, together with the exclusion of the peasantry from the civilized state, are characteristic features of the civilization of the Maghreb, as of that of the Fertile Crescent. Ideologists of the French colonization of the Maghreb sought to explain these features in terms of the conflict between races—Berbers (peasants) and Arabs (nomads)—and to account for the decline of the Maghreb by the ravages of the Arab nomads, who had destroyed agricul-

ture and the works that made it possible. Similar "explanations" have been given in relation to the Arab East, where decline was also ascribed to the devastation wrought by nomads. However, this argument will not do, for the brilliant ages of Arab civilization, in the East as in the Maghreb, were not marked by great achievements in the agricultural field but by the prosperity of trade and the cities, and often, in connection with the prosperity of trade, by the rule of great nomadic tribes, to the detriment of the peasantry, who never counted for much in either of these regions.

Decline came to the Maghreb with the shifting of the trade routes. As these were displaced from West to East, we note a shift in the centers of civilization, both to the north of the Sahara, and to the south, from west to east. Thus, in the earliest period there were the states of Morocco in the north and Ghana and Mali in the south; later, the gold routes shifted toward Tunis, and later still toward Egypt, while the south saw the flowering of the Songhay and Hausa states. And in the Maghreb the peasant redoubts upheld their autonomy by clinging to the Berber language and culture, just as in the Arab East the peasants, having been Arabized so far as language was concerned, sought to maintain their autonomy through religious dissidence.

Egypt's history was quite different. This country was always, both before and after its Arabization, a land of *peasants*. This fabulous oasis of very great fertility supports one of the oldest peoples in the world. A huge surplus could be tapped by the ruling classes from this peasant people, thus providing the basis for civilization. State centralization imposed itself here, early and in an extreme form, both for "natural" reasons (the need to organize large-scale irrigation works) and in order to protect the Egyptian oasis against the danger from the nomads. In order to survive, Egypt has always tried to live retired within itself, relying on numbers to beat back the onslaughts of the nomads. When Egypt conquered territory outside the Nile Valley, this was done in order to better defend its peasant civilization by installing garrisons in the heart of the lands of

the nomads and semi-nomads—to the east in Sinai and Syria, to the west in Libya. In Egypt, however, there were never, until the Hellenistic period, really great trading cities. The capitals of the Pharaohs were set up in the midst of the fields, in the densely populated countryside.

The very type of the "traditional" social formation in Egypt was thus constituted on foundations that were very different from those of the Mashraq and the Maghreb. The peasant redoubts of both of the latter were autonomous, not much integrated into civilization, and with a very low level of development of the productive forces. They also remained to a large extent organized in village communities. The Egyptian peasantry left that stage behind them over four thousand years ago! The Egyptian formation was not of the type in which the towns and the merchants are predominant, but of the rural type, with a tribute-paying peasantry. This tribute-paying formation, in which the peasants are not oppressed in "groups" retaining the relative autonomy of their village community, but "individually," in small family units, thus evolves on its own toward a form of genuine feudalism. The latter, resembling the feudalism of China, to which Egypt offers most analogies, and which I would prefer to call a developed tribute-paying formation, differs from the feudalism of the West only in its state centralization, the ruling class which levies the surplus being strongly organized in a state.

After Alexander's invasion, Egypt became a province forming part of empires based on large-scale trade: this was its situation in the Hellenistic world, then in the Byzantine world, and eventually in the Arab world. During the brilliant periods of these empires, when long-distance trade was flourishing, Egypt experienced mercantile urban civilization. But this civilization, and this is very typical, remained something "foreign," established in cities of courts and merchants which did not really become Egyptianized until the long-distance trade by which they lived began to decline. Such was Alexandria in the Greek period, Fostat, and later Cairo, in the Arab period. The world of rural Egypt remained outside all that. So far as it was concerned, the only change was that the surplus it had paid

to the national ruling class around the Pharaoh was now paid to foreign courts.

Nevertheless, Egypt became Arabized in the matter of language. This happened belatedly, however, just when the trading empire of the Arabs was beginning to lose its *raison d'être*. The country had then to turn in upon itself once more, and the Arab ruling classes had to Egyptianize themselves, taking more "interest" in the peasants. The latter adopted Islam, though this happened slowly, and the Arabic language, also slowly (several centuries had to pass before the Coptic language disappeared). In becoming Arabized, however, the Egyptian people kept a very firm sense of their distinctness. They never called themselves "Arabs," a word that remained for them synonymous with "barbarians," but always "Egyptians." And Egypt has retained its originality, not on the linguistic plane—the spoken Arabic of Egypt differs little from that of the Mashraq, except in accent—but on that of culture and values, which in Egypt are peasant values.

Southward from Egypt, the Sudan belongs both to Black Africa and to the Arab world. In its northern part, nomadic Arab tribes who came from the East, from the shores of the Red Sea and not from Egypt, and who evidently intermarried with the black natives of the area, established a civilization of nomadic stockbreeders. In addition, these nomads, who not only became Moslems but also adopted the Arabic language, functioned as trading middlemen between Egypt and the lands to the south. The central regions of the Sudan, however, retained their traditional agrarian civilization, based on the village clan community common to all Black Africa. By way of exception, these black people adopted the Arabic language, though elsewhere, in West Africa, similar groups merely adopted Islam without becoming Arabized. This Arabization was doubtless due to the prolonged and thorough ascendancy exercised by the Arab nomads of the north over these communities. Later, in the nineteenth century, the Egyptian conquests, from the time of Mehemet Ali (1810-1848) to that of the Khedives who succeeded him, and down to the British occupation (1882) and the revolt led by the Mahdi (1882-1898) superimposed

upon this ascendancy the domination of the Egyptian military bureaucracy. Here, however, the subject Arabized black peasants retained down to our own day their autonomous village organization, long since forgotten in Egypt. Only very much later, in certain areas of colonial exploitation, during the British period, especially in the Gezireh, was a real agrarian capitalism created, to the benefit of the nomad chieftains to whom the colonial power granted the lands brought under cultivation by irrigation works, the peasants being proletarianized in this region. Altogether it was a process similar to what went on in Iraq in the same period (the period of the British Mandate), giving rise to an agrarian economy which was modern (capitalist) and alien to tradition, both African and Arab.

The southern part of the Arabian peninsula is made up of a group of social formations which truly belong to the Arab tradition. Agriculture never played a decisive part in the development of civilization here: except on the heights of the Yemen, where the monsoon rains enabled a peasant community to exist, even if under rather arduous conditions, civilization in this area was urban and mercantile. The maritime "empire" of Muscat and Zanzibar provides the very pattern of it: a trading state, urban and drawing its revenues from its role as intermediary between the Mediterranean world, the eastern shores of Black Africa, and India. Encircled by nomads in the service of the maritime traders, the peasants of the Yemen, like those of the Fertile Crescent, safeguarded a limited degree of autonomy by taking refuge in religious dissidence: like the Alaouites in Syria they are Shi'ites.

This, then, is the Arab world: basically a commercial grouping, with Egypt as the only great "peasant" exception. In this world the ruling class is urban, made up of court officials, merchants, religious leaders, and around them that little world of craftsmen and petty clerks which is typical of Eastern cities. The ruling class is the cement that binds the whole grouping together: everywhere it shares the same language and the same profoundly Islamic culture, which, moreover, is orthodox

(Sunni). This class is highly mobile, being able to move from Tangier to Damascus without ceasing in the slightest to feel at home. It is this class that has created "Arab Civilization." Its prosperity is bound up with that of long-distance trade. The latter is the basis of its alliance with the nomadic tribes, its caravan escorts. This explains the isolation of the agricultural areas, which retain personalities of their own, either linguistic (Berber) or religious (Shi'a), but play no important part in the civilization of the Arab world. Except in Egypt the peasantry enters little into the system, and is subjected only episodically and slightly to the levying of tribute. This Arab world is thus both diverse and profoundly unified—by its ruling class. It is not to be compared to feudal Europe of the Middle Ages, which was thoroughly "peasant" in character. This is doubtless why Europe was to evolve toward the formation of separate nations, for the ruling classes of Europe, living as they did on the surplus taken from peasant communities, were bound to emphasize the diversity of the peoples of Europe. In contrast to this, in the Arab world, because the peasants did not play this role, unity was preserved. For the same reason, however, Arab civilization was a fragile affair. It was enough for trade to fall off for the states to perish, along with the cities on which they were based, and for the wretchedness of a world of poverty-stricken nomads and of small isolated peasant communities, also very poor, to present a picture of decay. This is what actually happened when the trade routes between Europe, the Far East, and Black Africa no longer ran across the Arab world, when the Atlantic sailors learned to go around it.

In this brittle grouping Egypt alone remained "eternal." Here, the very high density of population and the peasant character of the country favored unity: it is possible to speak of an *Egyptian nation* at every stage of history, but hard to speak of an *Arab nation* in the same sense of the word.

At the dawn of imperialist aggression, in the nineteenth century, the decline of trade had deprived the Arab world of its former *real unity*. It now appeared as a mere heterogeneous conglomeration, subject, moreover, to a foreign power, that

of the Ottoman Turks. Imperialism was both to divide this world and to revive its unity.

The limits of the Arab civilization coincided with those of the mercantile formations allied with the nomads. When they penetrated peasant countries, the Arabs failed to set their mark on the peoples concerned, except in Egypt, that isolated oasis. This explains their failure in Spain, as in Iran and beyond. The Arab merchant class in Spain remained urban, amid a Christian countryside. When they were driven out of Spain, the Arabs left only monuments behind them. (In the same way the Turks failed in the Balkans.) Reducing the Arab world to a "feudal world" similar to medieval Europe has given rise to serious mistakes, both in politics and in analysis of the national phenomenon in this part of the globe which was destined to be subjected, from the nineteenth century onward, to imperialist exploitation.

The Arab world felt very early the reality of the danger from European imperialism. As early as the sixteenth century and the age of mercantilism, European merchants obtained from the Ottoman state the trading privileges conferred on them by the "Capitulations." The Arab merchant class was already defeated; Europe had won the battle. The next three centuries were a prolonged slumber during which the East was unaware of what was happening in the West. For the commercial development of mercantilist Europe had its corollary in the decline of the mercantile world of the Arabs. The Arab cities wilted, and the country districts became dominant, with all their heterogeneity; and the very centers where the decay of the Eastern world might have been pondered ceased to exist. The awakening, a rough one, came at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with Bonaparte's Egyptian campaign.

The long effort of resistance made by the Arab world was to culminate in defeat, and dates can be given for this defeat: 1882 in the case of Egypt, the period 1880-1914 in the Maghreb, 1919 in the Arab East. Then came the second period of Arab revival, the period of the anti-imperialist struggle, which is not yet over. All through this century of history,

two characteristic features appeared and developed everywhere in the Arab world, with a greater or lesser degree of clarity or of delay in appearance in different parts of it. First, the revival was marked by the rise of a new class, the modern petty bourgeoisie of the towns, brought into being by the very process of integration of the Arab world into the imperialist sphere. This petty bourgeoisie took over from the old ruling classes which were rapidly collapsing, and even from the new bourgeois classes engendered by integration into the world capitalist system.

In our own day the petty bourgeoisie has tended to become everywhere the chief transmission belt for domination by foreign capital, even though sometimes under the sign of "socialism." I will offer an explanation of this phenomenon of fundamental importance, which has escaped the attention of Arab Marxists until very recent times, and also of its significance as regards the future prospects for the anti-imperialist struggle and the class struggle. Secondly, this revival expressed itself in a growing sense of *Arab unity*. Since the Arab world had never, except in Egypt, been a peasant world, the revival could not base itself on genuine national-peasant cultures; it therefore fell to the bourgeoisie of the towns to revive the former unity of the Arabs in language and culture. Where, as in Egypt, the revival could base itself on national-peasant unity, there was a delay in the appearance of the sense of Arab unity, with, instead, a revival of Egyptian national feeling.

Egypt was the first province of the Arab world to react against the threat from without. This was no accident, just as it was no accident that this priority in reaction was to strengthen Egypt's sense of national distinctness, all the way, it can be said, down to 1948. It was the danger from Israel that awakened Egypt, making her realize that her fate was bound up with that of the whole Arab world, from which she could no longer hold aloof. The Arab East, however, did not really wake up until very late, at the time when imperialism installed itself in the heart of the region by creating the state of Israel. From the start, therefore, the anti-imperialist struggle here was identified with the struggle against Zionism, the special form assumed by

European colonization in this region. The Maghreb, geographically remote, and colonized moreover by another power, France, was not to wake up to the problems of Arab unity (and even then only in a very embryonic way) until 1967. Gradually, the Palestine problem became the pivot of the "Arab question," the test of capacity for the various social classes that aspired to lead the anti-imperialist national movement. It was on this test that there came to grief both the comprador-latifundia-owning-bourgeois generation and the "socialist" petty bourgeoisie, so that the Arab world is gradually being forced to abandon its bourgeois and petty bourgeois illusions and grasp that only the *real* socialist revolution, that of the proletarianized masses, can carry out the task of liberation from imperialism.

The Arab "renaissance" of the nineteenth century (the *Nahda*) was centered mainly in Egypt and Syria. In Egypt there had already been in the eighteenth century, with Ali Bey, a first attempt at modernizing the Egyptian state, something that required its emancipation from the Ottoman yoke. The circumstances following the adventure of Bonaparte's armies led to a second attempt being made, by Mehemet Ali Pasha. The Egyptian ruling class—their foreign origin (Turkish, Albanian, Circassian) mattered little in this connection—was the Pasha's military bureaucracy which, by means of the state, levied tribute from the peasantry. The latter were not greatly differentiated, being made up of families of small holders. Their surplus was used by the Egyptian state to finance modernization in the form of irrigation works and the establishment of a national army and of industry. The Anglo-Turkish alliance in 1840 dealt a counter-blow to this attempt at modernization. Europe, hastening to the rescue of the Ottoman Sultan whose armies had been beaten by the Egyptian Pasha's forces, compelled Mehemet Ali to submit to the Capitulations, thus putting an end to the effort to develop industry. The Pasha's successors, from 1848 to 1882, gave up this independent policy, in the hope (in the case of the Khedive Ismail) of Europeanizing and modernizing Egypt with the aid of European capital, integrating the country into the world market (by developing the growing of cotton), and appealing to the financial houses of Europe to

find the capital for this outward-oriented development. This was the setting in which the ruling class of Egypt was to undergo a change of structure, taking possession of the land (with the help of the state, which was of course controlled by them) and transforming themselves from a mandarin-type bureaucracy into a class of latifundia-owners. This did not mean "feudalists," as has too often been said, but agrarian capitalists, whose prosperity depended on their integration into the world market. The ruling class having thus made Egypt over into a "cotton plantation" for Lancashire, the stage was set for the act of betrayal. When the British threat to Egypt's independence materialized, the Egyptian ruling class quickly agreed to submit, on being guaranteed the maintenance of its privileges. It was well repaid by the British and became the biggest beneficiary of the opening up of the Nile Valley.

The urban Third Estate, made up of clerks and craftsmen, vestiges of the mercantile world of former times, with their rural equivalent, the village notables, reacted in a different way. As the heirs of the traditional culture they felt the danger of colonialism as the destroyer of the values of Arab and Egyptian civilization. They also experienced very soon the harmful effects of competition by imported goods. Rejecting European domination for these reasons, disappointed in the Khedive and the Turco-Circassian aristocracy, they were brought to rethink seriously the problem of national survival. It was this Third Estate that began the "renaissance" in Egypt from 1860 onward. As Hassan Riad observes, however, the attempt nevertheless ended in defeat, despite its impressive aspects: revival of the language, remarkable adaptation of the language to the needs of cultural and technical renewal, awakening of the critical spirit. Riad remarks:

In face of the [imperialist] danger . . . the aristocrats had thrown over all the country's traditions, through selfish interest and also owing to their Turkish origin, without, however, really assimilating European culture. The Third Estate clung desperately to tradition in order to safeguard their personality. At one and the same time the power of the foreigners threatened them, fascinated them, and led them to examine their country's traditions

with a critical eye. In the brief interval that history allowed them between the moment when the danger from without was felt (1840) and the moment when it materialized in the occupation of Egypt (1882), the thinkers of the Third Estate failed to overcome this contradiction between their will to defend their personality and their will to catch up on their backwardness. . . . Eventually they found themselves in a dead end, the empty assertion of their personality, which was gradually to lead to that neurotic loyalty to tradition which paralyzes movement.⁴

Syria provided the second pole of the nineteenth-century Arab revival. Syria's traditional orientation toward the Mediterranean explains the country's early awareness of the imperialist danger. Held fast in the Ottoman grip, however, the economy of the countries of the Mashraq was terribly stagnant in those days: away from the trade routes of former times and also from the new colonial development to which Egypt was exposed, with the expansion of cotton-growing, the Syrian towns were without their brilliant elites of an earlier age. As in Egypt, therefore, the "renaissance" was fostered by the semi-popular elements of the Third Estate (craftsmen, clerks, religious leaders).

The Egypto-Syrian Nahda thus failed to formulate a coherent and effective program for the social changes that were needed in order to resist imperialist aggression. It was nonetheless a decisive moment in the shaping of modern Arab feeling, for it renewed that circulation of ideas between the "provinces" of the Arab world, and it remodeled the language on a uniform basis, while adapting it to the common requirements of modernization—thus, in short, giving new life to the principal instrument of Arab unity.

After the defeat of the Nahda came a dark period which was marked by self-absorption on the part of each separate province and which lasted, broadly speaking, until the Second World War. This was the *belle époque* of triumphant imperialism. It was also that of the failure of the bourgeois nationalist

4. Hassan Riad, *L'Égypte nassérienne*, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1964, p. 197.

movement that had withdrawn into the separate provinces of the Arab world. Finally, this was the period when the Zionists installed themselves in Palestine.

The political history of Egypt in this period was analyzed for the first time in our terms in Riad's book.⁵ I am here following the essential thread of his account.

The military defeat suffered by Arabia in 1882 marked the end of the hopes that had been placed in the Nahda. The Third Estate was swept away, first politically and then economically. "The generation of petty officials, narrow-minded and submissive, who were their successors quickly accepted foreign rule and took refuge in rejection of the values of the modern world, in an opposition that was reactionary and that involved no risks." At the same time, in the setting of colonial development, an Egyptian bourgeoisie was formed, at first merely agrarian but later partly agrarian and partly mercantile, and even industrial. The highly concentrated aristocracy of large-scale capitalist landowners ventured after 1919 into commercial and industrial undertakings, with the formation of the Misr group in association with foreign capital, that of the Levantine bourgeoisie of Egypt (Greeks, Europeanized Jews, Europeanized Eastern Christians, and so on), and also British, French, and Belgian big capital. This class became the ruling class of Egypt, the transmission belt for imperialist domination right down to 1952. As Riad writes:

After the miscarriage of the nineteenth-century renaissance, Egyptian society stopped thinking. The aristocracy, and the bourgeoisie which emerged from it, were thenceforth satisfied with a European veneer, and the petty bourgeoisie with café chatter. There was practically no proletariat, and the deprived masses of the people, increasingly numerous, were dehumanized, reduced to the daily striving for the piastre that would enable them to go on living. . . . All the conditions were thus present in colonial Egypt for the forming, by reaction to them, so to speak, of an intelligentsia, that is, of a group of men in search of the truth, beyond the limits of a crude society into which they could not integrate themselves, even materially, because of its inadequate development. . . . This is the setting in which we must see the

5. *Ibid.*

first Egyptian nationalist party, that of Mustafa Kamil and Mohammed Farid, the history of which extends from 1900 to the First World War. Established by men who belonged to the first generation of the intelligentsia . . . this first nationalist party cannot be regarded as the party of the Egyptian bourgeoisie: the Egyptian big bourgeoisie of that time was a bourgeoisified aristocracy reconciled to the foreign yoke. Nor was it the party of the "rural bourgeoisie" . . . which had its own organization, the Umma party, jealously conservative on ideological and social questions and a faithful supporter of the efficient British administration—which shows that already at that time the middle classes of the countryside felt solidarity with the aristocracy in face of the danger represented by the growing masses of landless peasants. . . . It was nevertheless a bourgeois party in the quite precise sense that its modern ideology was derived from the European bourgeois tradition. . . . Despite the wretched state of Egyptian society, the apathy of the impoverished masses, the instability of the petty bourgeoisie, the reactionary attitude of the rural middle classes, and the open treason of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie which had emerged from it, the nationalist party's call found many echoes. In critical moments the party became the nation, whose potentialities it symbolized. . . . But the history of the nationalist party was to be a brief one. . . . At the very moment when the entire nation rose up, in 1919, it vanished from the scene, yielding place to a party that represented more accurately the Egyptian society of that time: the Wafd.⁶

This Wafd, whose history is the history of Egypt between 1919 and 1952, was not the party of the Egyptian bourgeoisie either. That bourgeoisie continued to be basically pro-King and pro-British. The inconsistency of the Wafd was to be on the scale of that of the petty bourgeoisie:

This is why the Wafd showed itself in the end to be as conservative, where the main problems were concerned, as the parties of the monarchy, and why it never gave any thought, for example, to land reform. This is why the British were never deceived by its nationalist demagoguery. . . . The Wafd never contemplated for a moment Egypt's ceasing to be a client-state of Great Britain. . . . Doubtless the British side in the negotiations showed cleverness in exploiting the existence of a monarchy ready to accept frankly the foreign presence in Egypt so as not to have to make more than the minimum of concessions to the Wafd,

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 200-03.

even purely formal ones. When, however, a serious danger really threatened the entire edifice of British power, Britain quickly found a basis for compromise. This happened in 1936 and in 1942, in face of the Fascist menace. . . . (The Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936 was to govern for twenty years the interests reserved by Britain in Egypt. The negotiating of it, which had dragged on since 1924, was suddenly speeded up by the threat to Egypt from Italy, which had installed itself the year before in Ethiopia.) . . . The successive concessions made by Britain, along with the rapid development of light industry between 1920 and 1945 . . . facilitated compromise. . . . Thanks to this cohesion the system continued to function in spite of crises: for 25 years the alternation between Wafdist parliaments and royal dictatorships was adequate to ensure the survival of both the foreign interests and those of the aristocracy. . . . The breathless pace of economic development—that is, ultimately, the galloping increase in the numbers of the deprived masses, which eventually made up 40 percent of the urban and 80 percent of the rural population—with the impoverishment of the middle strata, on the one hand, and the appearance of communism on the political scene and the crisis of the colonial system in Asia, on the other, were responsible for the clashes of the second postwar period. The phase of harmonious economic development within the framework of the colonial system and the succession of compromises with Britain came to an end.⁷

Throughout this long period of Egypt's provincial turning-inward upon herself, during which imperialist domination was not fundamentally challenged but only criticized for the forms it took, and arrangements were being sought whereby it could be made "bearable," national feeling was strictly Egyptian. There was no attempt to set Egypt's anti-imperialist struggle in the wider context of the Arab world. True, the Palestinian revolt in 1936 called forth some echoes in Egypt, especially among the masses of the people, where there was a feeling that the region as a whole was oppressed by the same imperialism, with Zionism seen as the agent of this imperialism. This feeling remained, however, diffused among the masses, who had no party or organization of their own through which to express themselves. The movements that found expression were those of the collaborating bourgeoisie and of the erratic and unstable

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-11.

petty bourgeois. These, moreover, were no longer rooted in the history of Egypt, for they were products of colonialism. This rootlessness was clearly voiced by Taha Husayn when he declared that Egypt owes nothing to the East, being the child of Greece and of Europe. Hassan Riad speaks of

a superficial Westernism under which lies henceforth a real cultural vacuum. An easy position in which to give oneself satisfaction very cheaply: since we have never been "Orientals" we have always been the equals of the "Westerners," from whom we have nothing to learn: this corresponds to the "good manners" of the aristocracy. . . . A failure symbolized by the "self-criticism" of Taha Husayn, who, twenty years later, went over to praising the "Arabist" traditionalism of the new regime. . . .⁸

This same provincialism was characteristic of the political life of the Mashraq during this period. Here, however, because the imperialists divided the region artificially between the British and French mandates, and because the installation of the Zionists offered a direct threat to the life of the region, the national reaction was more *unitary* and *Arab* in character.

Ottoman rule over the Fertile Crescent preserved the unity of this region down to a very late date: 1919. True, this rule did not form an effective safeguard against imperialist penetration, for the entire Ottoman Empire had been in a condition of underdevelopment and indirect colonial subjection ever since the Capitulations had given unequal privileges to European capital and European goods. The destruction of maritime Syria, which occurred as far back as the Crusades, had given the Europeans (especially the Italian cities) pre-eminence in the seaborne trade of the Mediterranean area. The opening up of the routes across the Atlantic and around the Cape had deprived the Fertile Crescent of its former active commercial role. From the nineteenth century onward, however, the development of European capitalism hastened the process of degradation of the Arab East. The ruin of the crafts in Syria dates from the first half of the nineteenth century, and resulted from the influx of British cotton goods. Later, the

8. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

penetration of European finance capital was to take place by way of the Ottoman state debt. This debt absorbed, in 1874, four fifths of the Ottoman government revenues. In order to meet these exactions, Istanbul intensified its exaction of tribute from the subject territories: at the end of the nineteenth century over 80 percent of the revenue collected in the Vilayets of Syria and Mesopotamia was paid to the central government as tribute, only 20 percent being thus devoted to the expenses of the local administration. To this was added direct penetration by European capital. Before 1919, however, this did not amount to much: a few industrial enterprises in Syria, the management of the railways and the ports, and the establishment of some public services (electricity, water supply). The big schemes were still in the planning stage (the Berlin-Baghdad railway, the exploitation of oil in the Mosul region) when the First World War broke out.

The integration of the Fertile Crescent into the world capitalist system thus took place much later than that of Egypt or the Maghreb. In fact, it did not begin on a large scale until the period of the mandates, and it has gone on down to the present. In Syria this integration remained very slight until the second postwar period, for the very fundamental reason that the possibilities of developing commercial agriculture are extremely limited by the poor agricultural resources of this region. Nothing comparable to the transformation of Egypt into a cotton plantation for Lancashire seemed possible here, at least until the 1950s. After that, the Gezireh (the semi-arid steppe situated between the Tigris and the Euphrates, which until then had been occupied only by nomad herdsmen) began to be opened up. This piece of colonial development was carried out by the Syrian town bourgeoisie, using modern capitalist methods: tractors, a small wage-earning labor force, large tracts of land leased from the state or from the nomad chieftains. It was to make possible a tremendous growth in agricultural exports: cotton, wheat, and barley. It was typical that this region, empty of peasants, should be the part of Syria where agricultural development occurred. Elsewhere, in the traditionally rural West, progress was hindered by the social

organization of the peasantry. For Syria, having lost her former trading role, had undergone a real process of social regression over a period of several centuries. The country's population had fallen from about five million in the best periods of the past (Antiquity and the Abbasid Caliphate) to less than one-and-a-half million on the eve of the First World War. However, this population was still highly urban in character: in 1913 the towns held a third of the country's inhabitants, the nomads accounted for a quarter, and the agricultural districts had hardly 40 percent. These proportions, so different from those of peasant Egypt, bear witness to the commercial origin of the social formations of Syria. What could these Syrian towns live by? Their trading role was thenceforth almost trivial, since they served only the Mesopotamian and Arabian hinterland. The ruining of the crafts through competition by European imports aggravated the crisis. It was then that, in order to survive, the *urban* ruling classes of Syria "feudalized" themselves, that is, endeavored to obtain from the peasants of western Syria the surplus that they could no longer obtain from trade. Rizkalla Hilan shows clearly that the formation of the latifundia goes back to the nineteenth century, when the mercantile bourgeoisie which had lost its function began to turn toward the countryside. Between the two world wars, within the framework of the mandate, this feudalization process speeded up, thanks to the "French peace" which made it possible to subject the peasants who until then had been able to resist oppression. Since the path of industrialization was practically closed by the domination of French capital, the urban bourgeoisie had no other outlet. After Syria became independent, it got its second wind by establishing light industries (textiles, food-processing) and by the agricultural conquest of the Gezireh: "The growth of agriculture was a victory for the townsmen," as Hilan correctly says.⁹ Only after 1955 did this process draw to a close, losing momentum and compelling Syria to take a new road, that of state capitalism.

9. Rizkalla Hilan, *Culture et développement en Syrie et dans les pays retardés*, Anthropos, Paris, 1969, p. 192.

We see very well, in the case of Syria, how, between 1920 and 1955, integration into the world capitalist system enabled the local bourgeoisie to develop, and how this integration shaped a national bourgeoisie of the client, dependent type. It is thus easier to understand why, with its bourgeoisie satisfied in this way, Syria, which had been the lively center of Arabism in 1919, could doze for thirty-five years in a condition of dull provincialism.

The same thing happened in Iraq. The British established themselves there in 1920, in a semi-desert region even lacking any towns worthy of the name: there was nothing comparable to Syria, even in its decadent state. However, the natural potentialities of the country were great. The British set about reviving an agricultural life that had disappeared centuries ago: the irrigation works undertaken in the period of the Mandate were to play a decisive part in forming a new agrarian bourgeoisie, owners of latifundia. The British distributed 90 percent of the land to a thousand sheikhs, the chieftains of semi-nomadic tribes. The oilfields developed by the Iraq Petroleum Company were to do the rest, giving a facile "prosperity" to the Iraqi state. This process of development thus created an Iraq that had not existed before. Accordingly, one can understand how and why it was that Iraq, which had been nationalist, Pan-Arabist, and turbulent in 1920, became until 1958 a loyal client-state of Great Britain, slumbering like Syria in dull provincialism.

In this way the 1920s saw a real change in the Mashraq—a regression from unitary Arab nationalism to provincialism.

The urban world of the Fertile Crescent, however wretched it had been at the end of the Ottoman period, had been resolutely nationalist and in favor of Arab unity. In face of the imperialist threat it had long been pro-Ottoman, its "nationalism" wavering between "Moslem nationalism" in an "Ottoman" or an "Arab" form. Disappointed by the inadequacy of the Ottoman reforms (especially the Tanzimat of 1839), and still further disappointed when the Young Turk reform movement firmly took the road, after 1908, of Turkish nationalism, with even an anti-religious aspect, the Arab townspeople of the

region turned toward Arab nationalism. Thus it came about that the Syrian Jamil Mardam Bey and the Iraqi Hamdy al Pashashi founded Al Fatat (the "Young Arab" movement) on the eve of the 1914 war, and Arab officers in the Ottoman army organized themselves in the secret society Al Ahd (including Nuri al Saïd, the future henchman of the British in Iraq for forty years).

The Arab nationalists then looked around for the external alliance that would enable them to free themselves from the Ottoman yoke. It is well known how British diplomacy was able to make use of Arab nationalism and to cheat it. The Sherif of Mecca, Hussein, rose in revolt against the Turks in 1916, proclaiming himself "King of the Arabs"; and his son the Emir Faisal was proclaimed constitutional king of independent Greater Syria (Syria and Palestine) in 1919 by the Syrian National Congress assembled in Damascus by the leaders of urban Arab nationalism. However, the diplomacy of the great powers had other intentions: the secret Franco-British agreements, called the Sykes-Picot agreements, had already partitioned the region between British and French colonies. The Arabs' disappointment was immense, and the subjection of Arab nationalism to the demands of the triumphant imperialisms was a painful business. Several years were needed for the re-establishment of order by the armies of occupation. The British divided the Arab nationalist movement by buying over its weakest element, the desert chieftains whom the urban bourgeoisie had thought it necessary to call in as their "Kings," thus reviving the traditional alliance between the trading towns and the nomads, the central alliance which was characteristic of the Arab societies, as we have seen. The "desert grandees," the Hashemite family, accepted the partition and were rewarded by being made kinglets of the British Mandates: Faisal I was given Iraq, while his brother Abdullah got Transjordan.

The drift into provincialism followed. In Iraq it was made easier by the potential wealth of the country and its development, as well as by the intelligent policy followed by the British. In Syria matters proved more difficult.

The reign of Faisal I in Iraq (1921-1933) saw the end

of the Arab nationalism of the Ottoman period. The three "parties" that shared between them the seats in Parliament and the positions in the government (the National Party, the People's Party, and the Party of Progress) were merely cliques of satisfied notables, who had benefited from the distribution of land brought under development. Thus Britain was able in 1930 to sign an unequal treaty with Iraq, granting her a semblance of independence as from 1932 while in reality making a client-state of her. If Iraq was unstable thereafter, this was only so in appearance, at the level of changing alliances between governmental cliques, for down to 1958 the twofold status quo—social (the ascendancy of the new latifundia-owning class) and external (Iraq's position as a client-state)—was not questioned by any regime. The instability of the 1930s was largely due to the queer character of King Ghazi I (1933-1939), a contrast to his father's firmness. However, these years saw the formation of the first new generation of the Arab nationalist opposition. The intellectual grouping of the Ahali club was not "the party of the bourgeoisie," any more than the Wafd was in Egypt; for in Iraq, as in Egypt, the bourgeoisie was wholly collaborationist. It was merely a rather isolated group of the "intelligentsia" type. But from this group there emerged the principal political forces of the future. The predominant tendency in these circles, the socialistic populism of Kamel el Jaderji, organized itself into a party (the National Democratic Party) in 1943. This party was to be called upon to play a determining role after 1958, in Abdel Karim Kassem's time. Further to the left, Abdel Fattah Ibrahim organized the National Unionist Party, more resolutely Pan-Arab in outlook. Still further to the left, the radical elements in the group formed the Iraqi Communist Party during the Second World War. Other elements from it originated the Futuwwa tendency, which came together in 1939 around Sami Shawkat and Sadiq Shonshol: this was the remote ancestor of the Baath party which was to reign over Iraq after the fall of Kassem. Before the war, however, these groups did not play a role comparable to that of the Wafd in Egypt, doubtless simply because the new latifundia-owning bourgeoisie of Iraq were broadly satis-

fied with the benefits allowed them by British colonialism.

The *coups d'état* that were so frequent in Iraq between 1936 and 1941 should not give rise to any illusions. The first of them, organized by General Bakr Sidqi in 1936, gave power to the "reformer" Hikmat Sulaiman whose background was the Ahali group. That Hikmat Sulaiman was not the representative of the Iraqi bourgeoisie is plainly to be seen from the fact that, under pressure *from the right* from this bourgeoisie, he gave up his left-wing Ahali friends, thus facilitating his own removal from power and the murder of General Sidqi in 1937. Actually, Hikmat Sulaiman, an admirer of Ataturk, thought in terms of carrying out "reforms" from above, without touching the privileges of the new latifundia-owning class. Hence the mediocrity of his "reforms," which were confined to the abstract sphere of "improvements in administration." The extent to which Hikmat Sulaiman could be alienated, because he did not represent any consistent class in Iraqi society, can be judged by his crazy policy of diverting Iraq from the path of Arab solidarity. The Pact of Saadabad, signed in 1937 with Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan, and actually aimed against the Kurds, came at a very bad moment—that of the Arab rising in Palestine!

Just as undistinguished were the governments that emerged from the "pro-Nazi" *coups d'état* of 1937 to 1941, culminating in that of Rashid Ali el Ghaylani in April 1941. Here again all that was involved was a paltry quarrel within the ruling class, some cliques thinking that the Axis powers might let them have more crumbs than they were getting from the British. The regent Abdullah (who held that position from 1939 to 1953), the faithful Nuri al Said, and finally in April 1941 the British military, quickly disposed of these second-rate plotters.

Iraq's provincial withdrawal into itself was accompanied by much verbal demagoguery on "Pan-Arab" themes by the Hashemite monarchy. It was indeed very easy for the kinglets of Baghdad to play at being the Abbasid Caliph (without the Abbasids' power) and to contrast the "achievements" of Hashemite Iraq, its formal independence, with the status of Syria

and Palestine, under mandatory rule, or with that of Egypt. Nothing came of this farce of Pan-Arabism, however. When Iraqi volunteers, led by Fawzi Kaukji, went to help the rebellious Palestinians in 1936, the Hashemite monarchy contented itself with receiving in Baghdad that questionable personage the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el Husseini, and calling to membership in the government the no less questionable Rashid Ali.

Matters continued like this until 1958. True, the regent Abdullah, and subsequently King Faisal II (1953-1958), along with their faithful Nuri al Said, came into conflict more and more sharply with the Iraqi people. This happened first in 1948 when they tried to impose upon their country a renewal of the British protectorate, an effort which miscarried (the draft Treaty of Portsmouth); a second time in 1952 when the Iraq Petroleum Company's concession was reviewed; and a third time in 1955, when they subjected Iraq to membership in the anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact. It was not the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie with whom they clashed, however, but the Iraqi people. The treachery of the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie compelled the patriotic intellectuals of the Ahali group from the very start, in the 1930s, to move leftward toward Marxism or populism, if they were not to be quite helpless and end up objectively as traitors to the struggle, as happened to Hikmat Sulaiman. Who were the "people" to whom these patriotic intellectuals had to try to appeal? They were the oil workers of Mosul and Kirkuk and the port workers of Basra; the little urban world of craftsmen and office workers, petty officials, and small traders, i.e., the petty bourgeoisie; and the peasants and nomads. With the people of the towns they soon recorded success. The Communist Party of Iraq, prematurely born of this drift to the left by the Ahali group, was to hesitate—right down to 1958 and even later—between two political lines, a proletarian one and a petty bourgeois one. Taking the former of these lines did not at all mean ignoring the objective of national liberation (liberation of Iraq, and of *all* the Arab East, one being impossible without the other, and so of necessity a Pan-Arab policy in this anti-imperialist sense),

but merely appreciating that in the conditions of the East in the given epoch this task could not be carried out by the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie, but only under the ideological leadership of the proletariat, by the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses of town and country. Under the leadership of Yusuf Salman Yusuf ("Fahd," murdered by the King's police in 1949), the Communist Party of Iraq soon opted for this revolutionary line, which resulted in comparatively big successes among the proletarian masses of the towns and in the departure of right-wing elements from its ranks. In 1943 the Party split, and a right-wing faction was formed by Daud Sayegh. Much the same thing happened on two later occasions, during the difficult years 1949-1955 which followed the murder of the revolutionary leaders, and after 1958 under Kassem's regime.

The populists had their main success among the petty bourgeois masses, to an even greater extent than the right-wing Communists. The Populist left wing inspired the National Democratic Party of Jaderji and the groups that flirted with the right-wing Communists: the National Union of Abdel Fattah Ibrahim, the "Partisans of Peace" led by Aziz Sherif during the 1950s, and so on. But there was also a Populist right wing which was frightened by the threat constituted by the revolutionary dynamism of the Communists who were not right wing. These right-wing Populists were descended from the Futuwwa movement of the prewar period, and had supported the pro-Nazi regime of Rashid Ali. In 1949 they reorganized themselves as the *Islah* (Reform) group, and in 1950 they merged with the National Socialist Party of Salih Jabr, and drew close to the Pan-Arab and anti-Hashemite *Al Istiqlal* (Independence) group inspired by Rashid Ali's followers. This was the origin of the Baath party of Iraq, a right-wing Baath.

The peasant masses, however, were practically outside of all this political activity right down to 1958, but not because the left-wing parties had forgotten them. The Communists proclaimed the need for agrarian reform, and so did the Populist Left. The government of Hikmat Sulaiman made a timid proposal on the matter, then withdrew it, and fell under the blows of the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie. But the rural masses

remained out of reach of the activity of both Populists and Communists. They were terribly divided by religious and national differences, and thereby kept under the control of their local ruling classes. The non-Arab Kurdish north, including a fifth of the population of Iraq, are organized in peasant clans. The *national* oppression suffered by the Kurds kept them loyal to their traditional chieftains and caused them to rebel on three occasions against the Iraqi state: in 1927 under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmed Barzani, in 1945 at the time when the ephemeral Kurdish republic was set up in Iran, and from 1959 onward under the leadership of Mullah Mustafa Barzani. The Communists and the Populist Left respected the legitimate aspirations of the Kurdish people, but the Populist Right of the Istiqlal and Baath parties always took a Pan-Arab, anti-Kurdish line, so playing into the hands of imperialism and the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie.

The center and south of the country were divided between three Arab groups of almost equal importance: the Sunni peasants of central Iraq, the Shi'a peasants of the south, and the nomads of the desert area, among whom there were both Sunnites and Shi'ites. The latifundia-owning bourgeoisie, which had developed out of the traditional chieftainry of the nomads (the sheikhs who had benefited from the British development of the country), Sunnite and Shi'ite alike, were able for a long time to exploit this situation successfully so as to prevent Communism from gaining a foothold among the proletarian masses of the countryside.

For this reason the National Front, which was formed in 1956-1957 and was responsible for the *coup d'état* of 1958, remained an urban movement bringing together the Istiqlal, the Baath, the National Democratic Party, and the Communist Party. The intelligentsia and the townspeople who were organized in the Front were resolutely anti-imperialist, and they therefore realized that Iraq must be brought out of its provincial isolation, since the struggle waged in Syria against French imperialism, in Palestine against Zionism, and in Egypt against the British occupation of the Canal Zone (notably in 1951, when the Treaty of 1936 was repudiated) linked up

with their own fight against Britain, the oil interests, and their local hangers-on, the Hashemite monarchy and the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie. The revolt of the Palestinian people in 1936, the installation of the Zionists and the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Zionist-imperialist aggression against Egypt in 1956, each provided essential factors in popular outbreaks in Iraq and each helped develop awareness that freedom for the Arab East demands a joint struggle by all its peoples. It is in this sense that *popular Pan-Arab consciousness* was to enable Iraq to emerge from the provincial self-containment into which its pro-Hashemite latifundia-owning bourgeoisie had sunk it.

French imperialism had a much harder task in Syria than faced the British in Iraq. In Syria there was neither oil nor potentialities for agricultural development comparable to what existed in Iraq, making it possible to rally the bourgeoisie around the mandatory regime. The Syrian bourgeoisie was, moreover, much more lively at the end of the Ottoman period than that of Iraq, to such an extent that it set the tone of the region, giving Syria its Levantine character, open to influences from the Mediterranean and so from the West. Under these conditions French imperialism had nothing more to offer the bourgeoisie of its Syrian cities than the indifferent "outlet" provided by intensified exploitation of the peasants of the western parts of the country. For lack of anything better, French imperialism tried to play another undistinguished card: use of religious differences among the people. Finally, Syria felt even more keenly than Iraq about the establishment of the Zionists in Palestine, for Syria and Palestine had always formed a single region of the Arab East. Continuity between them was complete, circulation had never been hindered, and the bourgeoisie of Jerusalem, Damascus, Haifa, and Beirut often belonged to the same families. The region was partitioned artificially in 1919 between France and Britain, and its southern section, Palestine, turned over to the Zionists in accordance with the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The Syrian people felt this alienation of Arab territory intimately, almost as much as the people of Palestine itself.

France had difficulty imposing her authority over Syria and Lebanon: the Druse revolt prolonged a state of military insecurity right down to 1926. The Arab national movement, organized since 1921 in a Syria-Palestine Committee set up in Geneva, was transformed into a party, which became the National Bloc, grouping together all the big families of the Syrian cities of Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, and Hama: Shukri al Quwatly, Nazim Qudsi, Faiz al Khuri, etc. In the 1928 elections this National Bloc was victorious. Since it continued to stand for independence, France could not negotiate with it in the way the British had done in Iraq. The national assembly was dissolved in 1930, and the rigged elections of 1932 failed to provide France with an *interlocuteur valable*. The Popular Front of 1936 seemed for a moment to offer hope of negotiations, but the draft treaties with Syria and Lebanon that had been prepared were rejected by France after two years of discussion. The Syrians were inflexible on the matter of unity between Syria and Lebanon, while France, finding in Lebanon more substantial elements disposed to be friendly to her than were to be found in Syria, insisted on dealing separately with the two states.

The historical diversity of Syria has its roots in the history of olden times, both Arab and Ottoman, as we have seen. The region is divided between isolated agricultural communities, dissident in religion though all Arabic in culture and language, on the one hand (in Lebanon the Maronite Christians and the Moslems divided between Sunni and Shi'a beliefs, and in Syria the Alaouites and the Sunnite peasants around Homs and Hama), and, on the other, nomads and semi-nomads. In Lebanon the two parties of the Levantine bourgeoisie, the Unionist Party of Emile Eddé and the Constitutionalist Party of Bishara el Khuri, were both cliques supporting the French thesis of Lebanese "independence" as a client-state of France. The only group favoring a pro-Syrian and Pan-Arab policy, the Syrian National Party of Antoun Sadda, remained very weak, since it was unwilling to break with the bourgeoisie, and on the eve of the Second World War resorted to a pro-fascist attitude, organizing itself in Phalanges. These

were later to generate some more conscious tendencies that took part in the formation of the Syrian Baath party.

Despite the failure of France's policy in Syria, a drift toward provincialism took place gradually, as time went by, helped by the petty advantages given by France to the Syrian bourgeoisie, which, like that of Iraq, became a class of latifundia-owners. However, the awakening of the Syrian town population and their access to the outside world facilitated the early appearance of a Communist Party. As early as 1930 the leading group which still directs the fate of Communism in this region was in position: Khaled Bagdash in Syria, Nicolas Shawi, Mustafa el Aris, Farjalla al Helu, Antun Thabit in Lebanon. This leadership was never to go beyond the right-wing line of support for the bourgeoisie of the National Bloc, as is shown by its program, which speaks only of independence and *social justice* (!) without even putting forward a program for real agrarian reform, for fear of antagonizing the bourgeoisie.

The fall of France in 1940 created the conditions for eliminating French imperialism from this region. The British occupation (1941-1945) looked with a sympathetic eye upon the anti-French demonstrations of 1943 and 1945, which in the circumstances offered no threat to the newly arrived imperialist power. The attitude adopted by de Gaulle's government in 1945 (the bombardment of Damascus) and the Russo-British intervention that followed, led to Syria and Lebanon becoming independent in 1945. This was a kind of independence which, on the formal plane, went much further than that of Iraq or Egypt, since the two new states were not bound to any foreign power by unequal treaties. British imperialism, which had taken over from the French, based itself more directly upon the Syrian bourgeoisie than its predecessor had been able to.

In its turn, however, a new imperialism was to come forward to seek domination of the region, the imperialism of the United States. Hardly had they installed themselves than the British found themselves under threat from their American allies. This explains the series of *coups d'état* in 1949—that of

Husni al Zaim (March), then that of Hinnawi (August), and that of Adib al Shishakly (December)—which established control by American imperialism until February 1954, and ensured a provincially narrow policy on the part of the Syrian dictatorship in the service of that imperialism.

The opportunist line of the Syrian Communists not only fostered this evolution but also enabled other forces to gain the advantage of putting an end to it. While the Iraqi Communists organized the Jewish community of their country in 1945 into an Anti-Zionist League, the Communists of Syria, like those of Egypt, rallied in 1947 around the thesis of Soviet diplomacy and accepted the creation of Israel. They were to pay dearly for this: six years of severe illegality and the loss of their prestige, which opened the way for the formation of the Baath party. The latter's origins go back to the 1950s, when, under the inspiration of the provincial petty bourgeoisie, especially in Hama, Homs, and Latakia, the Socialist Republican Party came into being, led by Akram el Hurani and Michel Aflaq. The party campaigned for land reform, something that the Communist Party had never dared to do. It thus prepared the conditions for the fall of Shishakly's dictatorship and the establishment in 1955 of Baath rule, which was at last to take Syria out of its provincial isolation.

From 1920 until 1948, then, imperialism was master of the entire region. In Egypt as in Iraq and Syria, the national bourgeoisie, essentially agrarian and latifundia-owning, enriched and strengthened by following in the wake of the imperialists, accepted a narrow provincial existence in the service of its foreign lords. Imperialist domination through this class did not seem to be seriously threatened, since the "opposition" remained very weak, lacking any real class backing, an intelligentsia-type opposition torn between its dissatisfaction, especially on national grounds, and the attraction it felt for the pro-imperialist national bourgeoisie. The Communist movement in this area did not manage to grasp that the national bourgeoisie had long since given itself up to national treason. The Communists restricted themselves more or less voluntarily to

being the "left wing" of the movement of the oppositional intelligentsia, thereby renouncing any attempt to put down real roots among the proletarian masses of town and country, who objectively required that they be offered the prospect of socialist revolution. Except for the Iraqi Communist Party in Fakh's day, this was no less the situation with the other Communist groups in the region, such as the *Hadetto* (Democratic Movement of National Liberation), Fagr el Guedid, etc., in Egypt, than with the "powerful" Communist Party of Syria and Lebanon.

The betrayal by the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie had for its most obvious corollary the abandonment of the Palestinian people to the mercies of Zionist colonization. It is therefore not surprising that the culminating bankruptcy of this policy of national treason, the establishment of Israel in 1948, opened *the crisis of the imperialist system throughout the region and the renewal of the class struggle.*

In Palestine the Arab national movement from the Ottoman period onward could not but be anti-Zionist, correctly seeing in the establishment of Zionist colonies in Palestine the beginning of European colonization of the country. Any illusions that the Palestinians might have entertained regarding the Ottoman authority collapsed very soon, for the latter, itself semi-colonial in character, could not protect them effectively. The Arabs then naively turned, during the First World War, toward the British. But the alliance between British imperialism and Zionism had already been sealed by the Balfour Declaration: Britain's firm intention was to set up in Palestine a European buffer state that would enable it to bring pressure on Egypt and provide a better guarantee for its permanent control of the Suez Canal. As for the Arab kinglets who had come out of the desert, they, as we have seen, agreed to leave Palestine to the Zionists. Faisal, who became King of Iraq, had the distinction of committing the first act of treason to Palestine, as the price of his throne. This was the significance of his agreement with Weizmann in 1919, which stipulated that "in the establishment of the constitution and administration of Palestine, all such measures shall be adopted as will afford the fullest guarantees for carrying into effect the British

Government's Declaration of 2 November 1917 [i.e., the Balfour Declaration] . . . provided the Arabs obtain their independence as demanded in my memorandum dated 4 January 1919 to the Foreign Office of the Government of Great Britain. . . ." The Zionists required no more than this, at that time.

Throughout the period of their Mandate for Palestine the British authorities favored the Zionist enterprise. Already in 1920 the Arab people of Palestine began protesting, by demonstrations, attacks, and riots which were savagely put down by the British. Seized with fear, the Arab ruling classes took to selling their estates to the Zionists. But the Arab peasants refused to do this, and resisted all forms of pressure that were brought to bear upon them. In 1947 the Zionists still owned only 5.7 percent of the land of Palestine. They needed political power in order to drive the Arabs out of their country and rob them of their land.

Relations between Jews and Arabs gradually became, during the Mandate period, relations between colonizer and colonized. In 1936 the Arab people rose in revolt. Their rebellion lasted three years, beginning with a six-months-long general strike, followed by many local resistance struggles which actually liberated a considerable area of Palestine. The Zionist colonialists would not have been able to hold out on their own against this revolutionary movement; it was the British army that broke it by force. The Israeli victory of 1948 could not have occurred without the Arab defeat in 1936-1939. The revolt had been largely spontaneous and popular in character. The Arab property-owning classes, panic-stricken, had hastily organized a Palestine Higher Committee, presided over by the traitor Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el Husseini, and, with the complicity of the pro-imperialist governments of Iraq, Egypt, and the rest, helped imperialism to disarm the revolution by persuading the people to believe in Britain's "good intentions." Nevertheless, it must be noted that already at that time in Iraq, in Egypt, and above all in Syria, the Palestine revolt filled the masses with enthusiasm, for it showed the way forward for national liberation

—*popular armed insurrection*. Grave consequences followed from the attitude of the Arab Communists—who, to be sure, were very few in numbers at that time—in that they failed to seize this historic opportunity to assume leadership of the revolt, giving it the ideological and organizational framework which it unfortunately lacked, and missed the opportunity to spread throughout the Arab East the armed revolt of heroic little Palestine.

After the Arab revolt had been crushed, British imperialism, now on the defensive because of its need for Arab neutrality during the Second World War, maneuvered to gain time. Zionism realized that it must seek a new protector, and found it in the United States. So it was that the path was taken that led to the partitioning of Palestine in 1948. Under direct pressure from the Americans, the United Nations proposed in 1947 a disgraceful partition of Palestine by which the Zionists, who had until then succeeded in acquiring only 5.7 percent of the land, were to be given 57 percent of the whole country. This was how American imperialism gave Zionism its state foundation.

It is still not clear why the Soviet Union supported this partition plan. By doing so it wiped out for twenty years all prospects for communism in this region, where all the objective conditions for its success were becoming so favorable. Belief that Israel would prove to be a “progressive” state could only reflect an incredible naïveté: from the very start, and unwaveringly, Israel functioned as the faithful ally of imperialism, in all its wars of aggression, from Korea in 1950 to Vietnam, the ally of all the most reactionary forces in international affairs, Portugal, South Africa, and so on. The interests of the Soviet state itself provide no adequate explanation for the decision to support Israel, since this delayed for ten years Russia’s penetration of the Middle East. It can be explained only by the Russians’ desire not to cross the Americans on a matter which then seemed of minor importance for Russia’s interests, and by a mistake on Stalin’s part in evaluating the potentialities of the Arab national liberation movement.

The Arab states themselves openly betrayed the Palestinian

cause in 1947-1948. Emir Abdullah of Transjordan negotiated with the Israeli leaders for the annexation of the West Bank to his desert kingdom that lived on British subsidies; while King Farouk, worried by his own people's national movement, thought only of providing an external diversion of the classical type.

Deserted and betrayed, the people of Palestine tried to resist. They were beaten, despite the heroism of their resistance. What followed is well known: the consolidation of the colonialist and racialist state of Israel, the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homeland, the expropriation of their land, and the rest.

The twenty years from 1947 to 1967 were marked by three fundamental features. First, the bankruptcy of the Arab national bourgeoisie and, owing to the opportunism of the Communists, the rise of the "nationalist" petty bourgeoisie. Second, the elimination of Britain from the region in favor of the two super-powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and the working out of a *modus vivendi* dividing the region between these two. Third, the affirmation in deeds of the expansionist nature of Zionist colonialism. It was the interaction of these three factors that was to determine the history of this whole period.

The social equilibrium that had been the basis for the dreary provincialism of the 1920-1947 period had been conditioned by the class alliance between the predominant imperialism of the region, Britain—with France playing an accessory role—and the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie of the various "states." This system was capable of functioning, as we have seen, so long as colonial development could guarantee some "crumbs" for the petty bourgeoisie. However, the internal contradictions of the regime of imperialist domination set limits to this system. Hassan Riad has analyzed, so far as Egypt is concerned, the increasing economic and social contradictions that were expressed in the tremendous growth in the masses of proletarians and semi-proletarians after the Second World War, the increasing misery of these masses, the rise in un-

employment, the remarkable growth of the dissatisfied petty bourgeois elements, and so on; while, on the political plane, new forces made their appearance, mainly the Communist movement and the Moslem Brotherhood. In Syria and Iraq we have seen that the same phenomena expressed the same basic contradictions, though the still recent colonial development of the country put off till later than in Egypt the moment of conflict.

It was Egypt, therefore, that opened the new period, with the military *coup d'état* of 1952. Here, too, Hassan Riad and Mahmoud Hussein¹⁰ have analyzed the stages of the shift from the old social relations based on the alliance between British imperialism and the latifundia-owning and comprador bourgeoisie and the new alliance between the Soviet state and Egyptian state capitalism. This shift took place gradually, from the land reform of 1952 which, abolishing the power of the latifundia owners, gave the kulaks the leading position in the countryside, to the nationalization measures of 1957 and 1961, which transferred to the state the ownership of undertakings belonging to Western capital and its partner, the Egyptian bourgeoisie. This shift had for its corollary the gradual affirmation of a new ideology, that of Nasserism.

Timid to start with, the new Egyptian ruling class in formation at first continued the provincially confined policy of the old bourgeoisie. The imperialist-Zionist aggression of 1956 forced it to break out of this narrowness and declare for a Pan-Arab policy. In the same timid way the new regime spent a long time trying to compromise internally with the national bourgeoisie, just as it sought to retain the imperialist alliance externally. By exploiting the weakened condition of British imperialism, it obtained in 1954 with American help what the Wafd had tried to obtain in 1950-1951: the withdrawal of British troops. Hardly, however, had it achieved this satisfaction when the now dominant American imperialism demanded that it join the anti-Soviet alliance of the Baghdad Pact (1955).

10. Hassan Riad, *op. cit.* Mahmoud Hussein, *La Lutte des classes en Egypte 1945-1968*, Maspero, Paris, 1969. This book will be published by Monthly Review Press.

Soviet diplomacy then showed skill in exploiting the demagoguery that Egypt's rulers were obliged to engage in on this point (declarations of Bandung and deliveries of arms from Czechoslovakia, 1955), so as to drive a wedge into the American system. What followed is well known: the refusal by the World Bank to finance the Aswan High Dam, Nasser's retort by nationalizing the Suez Canal (July 1956), the tripartite aggression by Britain, France, and Israel in October 1956, the stopping of the aggressors by the Americans and Russians, the drift of the Egyptian regime toward a form of state capitalism (1957). During this whole period Egyptian Communism remained at the tail of events and ended, from 1957 onward, by sinking into "collaboration" with the new Egyptian state capitalism supported by the Russians.

The example of Egypt was to exert a very great force of attraction elsewhere in the Arab East. In Syria the fall of the Shishakly dictatorship in 1954 brought to power a heterogeneous coalition made up of the new petty bourgeois social forces of the Baath party (supported by the Communists) and the forces of the traditional bourgeoisie of the National Bloc. For the first time, in September 1954, a Communist deputy (Khaled Bagdash) occupied a seat in an Arab parliament, while other deputies were elected with Communist support, such as Maaruf Dawalibi and Khaled el Azm. Unable to control the rise of the popular forces, which in Syria were very sensitive to the cause of Palestine, the new Syrian regime handed the country over to Nasser after the war of 1956: in February 1958 union between Egypt and Syria inaugurated the United Arab Republic. The Syrian Communists were again paid for their opportunism by being pushed aside.

The UAR lasted only three years: in 1961 the Syrian bourgeoisie profited by the "mistakes" and unpopularity of the Nasserite bureaucratic tyranny to recover control of their country. The land reform carried out in 1958 on the Egyptian model and the nationalization measures were for a moment in danger of repeal. But the "victory" of the traditional bourgeoisie of Syria lasted only a very short time. The forces of the rising petty bourgeoisie had at last brought about an irreversible situa-

tion. The *coup d'état* of 1963 put the Syrian Baath party in power, alone this time, and the movement toward a new state capitalism was resumed. Between the first "plan" of 1960-1965, still based on illusions about active participation by Syrian and Western private capital, and the "plan" of 1965-1970, in which nationalization measures and Soviet aid were given pride of place, the same evolution is to be observed as in Egypt between the period before 1957 and that of the "plan" of 1960-1965. In 1966 another *coup d'état* consolidated this change in Syria by bringing to power the "left" wing of the Baath party, symbolized by Salah Jadid. For the West this meant that Syria had begun to turn into a "satellite" of the USSR, and this was signalled by the harrassment of the Iraq Petroleum Company by the Syrian government. Here too, as with Egypt, developments caused the West to consider unleashing its watchdog for the Middle East—Israel.

In Iraq the outcome of events was the same. The Front formed in 1957 put an end to the power of the Hashemite dynasty and the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie by the *coup d'état* of July 1958. The new regime wavered, from 1958 to 1963, between a "right-wing" line of the Nasser type and a "left-wing" line. This was because matters had not proceeded in Iraq as in Egypt or Syria. The Anglo-Hashemite domination had been so complete and had gone on for so long that (the Communist Party being in Iraq less opportunist than elsewhere) the masses intervened violently. The Popular Resistance Forces (the revolutionary militia) settled accounts with their enemies, liquidating the latifundia-owning bourgeoisie. Kassem, the new head of state, quickly put an end to this "danger," but was then nearly outflanked by "right-wing" elements: Abdel Salam Aref, who was eliminated, but only just, in September 1958, and Shawwaf, who tried to carry out a putsch in Mosul in March 1959. When this putsch failed, the regime had to purge itself of its right-wing elements, both of the Istiqlal and of the Baath (the elements grouped around Rashid Ali, Fuad Rikabi, Abdel Salam Aref and Shawwaf). Kassem's supporters, the old guard of the Democratic Party, were left alone confronting the Communist Party, while land reform, here as elsewhere,

swept away, at least to a certain extent, the basis of the former latifundia-owning bourgeoisie.

Was the rapprochement the regime attempted to achieve with the Kurds, with the pardoning and return from the USSR of Mustafa Barzani and the creation of the Democratic Party of the Kurds of Iraq, to be the beginning of a new era in this sphere and to bring a final solution, on democratic lines, of the Kurdish national problem? In this sphere, alas, as in that of his relations with the Communists, Kassem kept wavering in an endeavor to appease the forces of the Right. For a long time he refused to have Communist ministers in the government and tried to make use of the opportunist faction of Daud Sayegh (which carried out a fresh split and formed a rival Communist party) against the Communist Party. Light has still to be cast upon the dark events at Kirkuk in July 1959. Was it a massacre of innocent Turcomans or of tools of the Right? Was it a deliberate provocation intended for use by the Baathist Right? Was it a "mistake" by irresponsible popular elements (as the Communist Party belatedly explained)? Whatever the truth, Kassem seized the pretext thus given to veer to the right, pushing the Communist Party out of its positions of power, crushing the attempted strikes of 1961, and in this way alienating the workers.

The summer of 1961 also saw the Kurdish revolt start up again, the Baghdad regime having delayed for too long the granting of autonomy demanded by the Kurds. Kassem then drifted into fatal isolation. He tried to give himself fresh popularity by raising in 1961 the "problem" of Kuwait, a territory which in the Ottoman period had formed part of the Iraqi vilayet of Basra but had been handed over in 1913 to be a British protectorate, and after the Second World War had become, as is well known, one of the richest oil-producing countries in the world. But the maneuver proved vain: isolated, Kassem was struck down in February 1963 by the *coup d'état* of Abdel Salam Aref, and murdered by his old colleague of 1958.

The regime that succeeded Kassem in Iraq was a right-wing petty-bourgeois one, in the wretched tradition of Rashid

Ali. It inaugurated its reign with a bloodbath, massacring thousands of Communist militants, workers, peasants, and left-wing intellectuals. Then, in November 1963, it got rid of its Baath elements, regarded as still being too "left," and put an end both to the land reform and to the policy of developing state capitalism. It made up for its actual surrender to imperialism and imperialism's internal allies by "Arab" demagoguery: the quarrel about the Shatt-el-Arab, claimed by both Iran and Iraq, the periodical hangings of "Zionist agents," and so on. At the same time it became bogged down in the repression of still rebellious Kurdistan. All these right-wing elements were always given full support by Nasser's government. At the time of Shawwaf's putsch at Mosul in 1959, a direct appeal to the Egyptian army stationed in Syria was to have brought about, in the event of the putsch succeeding, the annexation of Iraq to the UAR.

Thus it was Israeli expansionism which, in 1948 and again in 1956, unmasked the real nature of the latifundia-owning comprador bourgeoisie of the Arab states, exposed its collaboration with imperialism and its provincial narrowness, and revealed the demagogic and hypocritical character of its intermittent and purely verbal "Pan-Arabism." It was this Israeli expansionism that really *forced* the Arab states to emerge from their mutual isolation, for by its very nature it threatens the existence of these states, since Israel *must inevitably* annex more territory from them if it is to realize the Zionist aim of creating a state where most of the world's Jews can live.

Twice, then, in 1948 and 1956, Israeli aggression had for its chief result the revolt of the Arab masses against their governments. But because the Communists of the region did not understand the thoroughly pro-imperialist nature of the national bourgeoisies in their countries, because they chose to follow an opportunist line, refusing to put forward the aim of an armed popular struggle under the ideological leadership of the proletariat as the only way to win freedom from imperialist oppression, they helped to bring about the transfer of

power in these countries from the comprador and latifundia-owning bourgeoisie to the petty bourgeoisie. They were helped in doing this by the policy that Russia followed.

Having become a world power, Russia sees in the Arab East merely an area situated on its southern flank which is dominated by its American opponent. It has chosen to break down this enemy bastion, and to do this it bases its activity on the political groups and social strata that seem to it most likely to be able to take their countries out of the American zone of influence. The "theoretical aspect" of this policy—"national democracy" and the "non-capitalist road"—fulfills here as elsewhere the function of bringing certain countries of the Third World out of the American orbit without subjecting the policy of peaceful coexistence to the dangers that would be entailed by spreading the socialist revolution. Whether consciously or not, the Communist parties of the region, by obeying Moscow, are deceiving their own peoples, disarming them, and offering them the road of state capitalism which is being laid down by the power of the petty bourgeoisie.

Soviet diplomacy achieved big successes in this period. It managed to break both Egypt and Syria to a serious extent from the Western system, and to do the same, though less thoroughly, with Iraq.

Gradually, a new status quo was established in the Arab East, a new "partition." The Russians dominated two or three states, while the Americans retained control of the economically important countries of the oil-bearing Arabian peninsula. Equilibrium was maintained by the *modus vivendi* between Israel and the Arab states: Israel, supported by Western imperialism, was to refrain from aggression, but in exchange the Arab states had to prevent the Palestinian people from challenging the Zionist colonization of their country. If either Israel or the Palestinians were to violate this *modus vivendi*, everything would inevitably be put in question again.

The Arab states set themselves very actively, between 1947 and 1967, to "respect" their engagements, preventing the Palestinian people from waging *their* fight for freedom, which could only be revolutionary in character. The Jordanian and

Egyptian administrations in Arab Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip) fulfilled this task. Between 1948 and 1955 they imposed silence on the Palestinians who had suffered defeat. In 1955, however, Israel took the initiative by envisaging a new annexationist offensive. When Ben-Gurion returned to power in 1955, he declared: "I agree to form a Cabinet on condition that we do everything possible to expand southward." Under this direct threat, Egypt could not but react. The Egyptian authorities tried to do so in the "least dangerous" way, from the standpoint of maintaining the *modus vivendi*, by organizing commando groups (Fedayeen) under their control, so as to exert pressure upon Israel and oblige her to renounce expansion toward the South. The Egyptian government had no desire, however, to let this means of pressure get out of its control, and so the Palestinians were not allowed to organize themselves for their own freedom struggle: they had to remain a flock of disorganized refugees.

We know that Israel decided to go ahead, taking advantage of the conjuncture of events in 1956, by seeking to annex Sinai with Franco-British support, France being moved by her troubles in Algeria and Britain by her hope of making a comeback in the Middle East from which the United States had expelled her. It was the Soviet-American agreement that compelled respect for the *modus vivendi*, with the withdrawal of the French, British, and Israeli troops. Once more the Arab states returned to their policy of "respect" for their undertakings and repression of the Palestinian people. Again, however, the same internal dynamic that inevitably urges Israeli colonialism to expand was to produce the same effects. The increasing crisis of Jewish immigration into Israel caused Israel to envisage from 1963 onward a fresh aggression against her Arab neighbors: the diversion of the waters of the Jordan and the threats of a "preventive war" already warned of what was to come in 1967.

The Arab states replied by the establishment in 1964 of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization). In order to realize that this PLO was a feeble affair, incapable of mobilizing the people of Palestine to take part in their own libera-

tion, and that the organization's actual function was, on the contrary, to prevent them from doing this, it is enough today to recall that the "leadership" of this organization was conferred by the Arab states (at their summit meeting in Alexandria), after much bargaining among themselves, upon the garrulous demagogue Ahmad el Shukeiri. The so-called PLA (Palestine Liberation Army) was an integral part of the Arab armies, no freedom of action being allowed to the Palestinians. The PLO gathered together, in bureaucratic form, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements which had long since been overtaken by events, elements which had already betrayed their people's struggle for liberation at the time of the revolt of 1936-1939. The Arab states continued to claim that the emancipation of Palestine would be brought about by their armies. Not only had experience already shown—and was to show again in 1967 and after—that this was *impossible*, but this claim was purely demagogic and hypocritical, for the Arab states actually accepted the *modus vivendi* which forbade them to contemplate this solution of the problem.

We must analyze the underlying reasons for this incapacity of the petty bourgeoisie to do any better than the comprador and latifundia-owning bourgeoisie they had replaced: the reasons for their twofold defeat, in relation to Israel and in relation to Arab unity. Analyzing the stages in the formation of the "new class" in Egypt, its form of government and its ideology, Mahmoud Hussein shows that state capitalism, just because it *is* capitalism, *must remain* within the system of world capitalism, and therefore cannot really break with imperialism. Its attachment to the world capitalist system therefore *inevitably* perpetuates underdevelopment, dooming all hope of real independence and progress. The replacement of the United States by the USSR as trading partner and supplier of capital (called "aid") alters nothing in this fundamentally dependent relationship. For development cannot be accomplished within this framework, which has the purpose of "buying" the local intermediary who perpetuates dependence upon the centers of the world system. The petty bourgeoisie, the channel of the *local dependent state capitalism*, becomes the

chief transmission belt, in our period, of the *former latifundia-owning and comprador bourgeoisie* which served as the channel of the *dependent private capitalism* of the previous period. This role of transmission belt is clearly to be seen when we analyze the ideology of this petty bourgeoisie. The ideological emptiness of this class, its tendency to acculturation, reflects this role which it plays, the role of bearer of bourgeois ideology on a world scale.

Hence the "socialism" of this new dependent class is merely a mask to hide its real nature as a dependent state bourgeoisie. And this "socialism" cannot deceive the masses; it may disable them for a time, but cannot actively mobilize them. This is the source of the almost visceral weakness that the Arab armies have shown. Similarly, the Arab unity which this class claims to be working for is not its real aim. This "unity" is forced upon it by the permanent Israeli aggression and by the reaction of its own people to this aggression. Unity can only be unity in struggle against imperialism. Only the masses can appreciate that they will not succeed in freeing themselves from imperialism within the cramped framework of the "states" that imperialism itself has created. Liberation of Egypt, or Syria, or Iraq, taken separately, is meaningless. Israel keeps reminding all concerned of the impossibility of salvation in isolation, through its repeated aggressions that threaten each and every one of these countries. Has the petty bourgeoisie, having become a state bourgeoisie, and bearing responsibility for the destinies of these states, made any attempt really to promote Arab unity? Not the slightest. The most "advanced" of these bourgeoisies has merely sought to conquer the others: this is the meaning of Egypt's "Pharaohism" in Syria, its aspirations in relation to Iraq, and the reaction of the peoples and the bourgeoisies of these countries, which has brought grist to the mill of imperialism. Real unity, the only possible unity, that of peoples in struggle against imperialism, is not desired by these bourgeoisies: on the contrary, they fear it.

In this way matters proceeded inexorably toward the

catastrophe of 1967. The accelerated development of the contradictions in Israeli society between 1956 and 1967, the falling-off of Jewish immigration, the social and racial conflicts in the country (between Western and Eastern Jews), led to the Israeli aggression of June 1967. Israel's military victory, with the annexation of territory from Jordan, Syria, and Egypt which increased the number of Arabs subject to Israeli colonialism from 300,000 before the war to 1,300,000 after it, *put an end to the modus vivendi and the status quo* on which was based the partition of the region between the Americans and the Russians, each with its own local transmission belt.

The Russians and the Americans were the first to be inconvenienced by this disturbance of the status quo. This was why they caused the United Nations to pass the famous resolution of November 22, 1967, calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli troops to the positions they held previous to the aggression. This resolution, accepted by the principal Arab states, including Egypt and Jordan, solved nothing, since it left intact the aggression-potential of Zionism. It arose from a "pious wish" to repeat the operation of 1956, going back to the status quo ante. But the Israel of 1967 is no longer the Israel of 1956. Israeli "micro-imperialism" has gained strength since then, and it is not compelled to renounce the fruits of its victory. Henceforth, too, the Arab states are having to cope with their own peoples, and the possibilities of deceiving the latter by means of verbal demagoguery have become very limited. It is all very well to promise to reconquer Sinai with regular forces; but every day that passes shows that this is impossible, that the Israeli army, whose aircraft fly over Upper Egypt with impunity, bombard Cairo, violate Syrian airspace and destroy the Beirut airport, continues to be stronger than its adversaries.

What is more, the Israeli "victory" has released the Palestinian people from the yoke of the Arab bureaucrats and enabled them to take up the revolutionary struggle for their liberation. As the party most "interested" in the effects of Zionist colonial oppression, the Palestinian people have never had any other alternative. That was why, even before the Second World War, the Palestinians were much more radical than the

other Arab peoples. The Communist Party of Palestine, formed by some Jewish intellectuals in the 1920s, became Arabized in the 1930s. In those days the Communist International still played a revolutionary role, as was shown by the slogan of Arabizing the party, put forward in 1924. Confronted with the betrayal by the Arab "ruling" classes, the CP became the only Arab party of national liberation, although it was unfortunately still not strongly enough rooted in the people to ensure the triumph of the revolt of 1936-1939, transforming this into an invincible revolution under Communist leadership. The world war, the Soviet Union's policy of appeasing Western imperialism, and then, after the war, its "state policy" and subsequent degeneration, brought about the decline of Palestinian Communism. During the war the Party became transformed into a vague "National Front," and with acceptance of the partition of 1947 an "Israeli Communist Party" was set up, which was doomed to sink into Zionism, at any rate so far as its Jewish section was concerned.

Thus the Arab masses were left in helpless disarray. Driven out of their own country, shipwrecked, the Palestinians at first tried to join in the political life of the neighboring countries where they had taken refuge, especially in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. There they brought about the Baath party's "move to the left." They then began trying to organize themselves as Palestinians. The brief experience of 1956, when for several months they were left alone to face Israel without any "Arab protection," was rich in lessons for them: they learned to fight once again. It was this experience that gave birth, on January 1, 1959, to Al Fatah, the great fighting organization of the Palestinian people. In 1965 Al Fatah and its military arm Al Assifa began armed struggle, overwhelming the helpless PLO. The June war finally swept away the humbugs of the PLO and made Al Fatah the *de facto* leadership of the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people. The battle of Karameh, in March 1968, established the Palestinian people as the chief obstacle to Israeli colonialism. The aim of Al Fatah, *an independent, democratic Palestinian state*, all of whose citizens, Jewish or Arab, shall be truly equal, not only "before

the law" but also *in reality*—which presupposes the abolition of Israeli colonial and racial privilege, and so of the capitalist system which underpins this privilege—defines the only possible prospect before the revolution.

Struggle, and struggle alone, will settle the ultimate *forms* in which the problems of the Arab East will be solved: a unitary state or a binational one, a Middle Eastern confederation, or something else. To dispute now about these matters is objectively to play into the hands of those who seek to hold back *the anti-imperialist fight*, the only way forward.

Al Fatah is not the only organization playing a part in the Palestinian struggle. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, formed in Syria around 1960 by members of the Baath party, has also declared that the Palestinian people are primarily responsible for their own cause. Its left wing, which calls itself the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, emphasizes its Marxist-Leninist character but does not separate itself in action from Al Fatah. Moreover, the different fighting organizations have set up a joint Palestinian National Council. This is not the place to distribute "certificates" of Marxism to the various groups and tendencies in the fighting organization of the Palestinians, since the Palestinian people alone have the right to speak on these matters. Attempts to do this—such as are, alas, too often made by the left elements in Europe organized in small revolutionary groups—not only constitute interference in what is not their business, and provide evidence of an intolerable ideological "imperialist paternalism," but also commit a disservice to the cause of the Palestinian struggle.

The appearance of the Palestinian people upon the field of battle has radically altered the factors in the problem, not only in Palestine but also in the neighboring Arab countries where the refugees from Palestine are concentrated (mainly Jordan and Lebanon), and thereby throughout the Arab world.

The puppet state of Transjordan, entrusted to the Emir Abdullah (promoted to King in 1946), had no political life

before its annexation of the West Bank territory from Palestine in 1948. The traitor Abdullah (shot down in 1951 for his collusion with Israel), his son Talal, and eventually his grandson Hussein, gradually lost control of the country. The National Liberation League, an offshoot of Palestinian Communism, was at first, between 1949 and 1955, the only really organized political movement in the country. But its opportunist line ("to change the ruling power in Amman before attacking Israeli colonialism") prevented it from winning the masses, for which revolutionary action was needed, and confined its influence to Palestinian intellectual circles. When the crisis came in 1956 the way was thus open for Jordanian "Nasserism," symbolized by the short-lived government of Sulaiman al Nabulsi, supported by the Communists of the National Liberation League. The subsequent dismissal of this "progressive" government by King Hussein showed that this was not the correct line. The correct line was put into practice by Al Fatah, which organized its own authority in Jordan, inside and outside the refugee camps, in contempt of the puppet king and his administration—organizing this authority *de facto*, as a function of the armed struggle in occupied Palestine.

Even in quiet little Lebanon, political conditions were overturned by the entry upon the scene of the Palestinian people. Official Lebanon has hitherto remained immune to the changes that have led to the establishment by the petty bourgeoisie of dependent state capitalisms in Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. Lebanon's special functions in the imperialist system in this region, as a hiding-place for capital and as a tourists' brothel, gave cause to believe that the "Switzerland of the Middle East" would always remain untouched by the popular liberation movement. The fall, in 1952, of Bishara el Khuri, symbol of the corrupt plutocracy guaranteeing the "operation" of the system, actually altered nothing, any more than did the challenge to Camille Chamoun in 1958, with the landing and then the departure of the United States marines in the summer of that year. Everything changed, however, from the moment when, in 1967, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon took up a fighting stance. As is well known, the musical-comedy state

of Lebanon has since then no longer been a safe place for the capital of the Arab emirs and the "socialist" bureaucrats.

The Arabian peninsula, the Sudan, Libya, and the far-off Maghreb have also been affected by the arrival of the Palestinian people upon the battlefield.

The time is past when the oil companies and the nomad sheikhs reigned unchallenged over the Arabian peninsula. Saudi Arabia, created after the expulsion of Sherif Hussein from Mecca following the First World War, is still the realm of Aramco, but there are now urban nuclei of workers and petty bourgeois, and they have forced the reigning dynasty to grant some concessions. The fall of the Imam Badr of the Yemen in September 1962, the popular disturbances in South Yemen, the strengthening of the national liberation movement throughout this region, have dragged the ancient kingdom of Saba into the world of today. The constant intervention by the Saudis on the side of the tribes loyal to Badr in the Yemen, and the no less constant defeats suffered by the Egyptian military intervention from 1962 onward (until the Egyptian troops were withdrawn after the war of June 1967), which based itself on the "moderate" elements in the republican regime (Sallal, and later the Kadi Abdel Rahman el Iriani), did not bring about the demise of the new republic. On the contrary, the lessons of the relative defeat of the revolutionary forces in the Yemen have been learned by the people of south Yemen, who, in frustrating the British plan to perpetuate the division of south-eastern Arabia into petty sultanates (Aden, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, etc.) may be led to go forward to still further victories.

Though mainly marginal to the Arab world, the Sudan no longer stands aloof from the liberation movement of the region. The handing over of local power to the traditional ruling classes of this country (the "semi-feudalists" of the religious brotherhoods, Ansar and Ashiqqa) by the Anglo-Egyptian agreements of 1953 has not ensured unchallenged continuance of imperialist domination. It is not only the Communists (organized since 1944), the working class (especially the powerful railwaymen's union), and the "educated" petty bourgeoisie that from time to time express their "discontent." With the

fall of the pseudo-parliamentary system controlled by the traditional ruling classes, and then that of the military dictatorship of Abboud who tried to base himself on the urban petty bourgeoisie, the masses of town and country have begun to move. The rebellion in the southern, non-Arab part of the Sudan, which has become endemic, is at one and the same time the reply of the peasantry of this region to imperialist oppression exercised through the northern bureaucracy, and the means whereby imperialism exerts pressure on this same bureaucracy which serves it.

Even the desert country of Libya, realm of the oil companies, has experienced, during the past year, the effect of the coming into action of the Palestinian people. The *coup d'état* which replaced the outmoded monarchy by a team of army officers of petty bourgeois origin, similar to those in power in other Arab countries that have undergone changes of this kind, was largely a consequence of the Israeli aggression of 1967 and its aftermath.

The Maghreb was long kept untouched by the currents that were disturbing the Arab East, by the French colonial order, its specific forms of oppression, and the local problems to which it gave rise, as also by its geographical remoteness and its special feature, in particular its Berber character. French colonization in Algeria, probably because it began long before the age of imperialism, and because of the backwardness of French capitalism, took the form, in part, of the settlement of colonies of "poor whites." This aim of agricultural colonization applied, too, in relation to Tunisia and Morocco. Only later on were more advanced forms of colonialism developed in the Maghreb, and especially in Morocco, characterized by the investment of French finance-capital in mining and even industrial enterprises. Analyzing the differences in social structure brought about by colonialism in each of these three countries, Samir Amin writes:

The landed aristocracy has long since vanished from Algeria, more because of the blows struck by Abdel Kader (1830-1848) than from the effects of colonialism, whereas in Morocco it has, on the contrary, been strengthened by colonialism, while the case

of Tunisia falls somewhere between these two types of development. Even though these differences of structure are nowadays gradually losing importance owing to the remarkable rise of the petty bourgeoisie in all three countries, they will for a long time continue to affect the national movement.¹¹

The war of extermination undertaken during the conquest of Algeria, down to 1848, endowed the Algerian resistance with a popular peasant character, at the same time leading to the destruction or large-scale emigration of the urban elites. The new urban strata recruited by the colonialists had no ties either to the countryside or to the former ruling classes of the towns. This was why their nationalism was for so long of a superficial sort and their demands "assimilationist" in character, as Ferhat Abbas defined them even after the Second World War. Opposition from the *pieds noirs*, the French settlers, made this absurd prospect of assimilation an impossible one in any case. Gradually the resistance movements shifted their basis to the popular elements in the towns and the Algerian workers in France. It was a movement which had evolved in this way that launched the armed insurrection of 1954. And it was during the long and terrible Algerian war (1954-1962) that Algerian nationalism was truly reborn.

The long gap, from 1850 to 1945, between the early period of Algerian nationalism and its rebirth in our own time, is without a parallel in Tunisia and Morocco, which were colonized later than Algeria. This explains, according to Samir Amin, why in these countries "the modern national movement has no popular antecedents such as it possesses in Algeria, the conditions of colonial conquest having been different." In Tunisia the national movement, formed in the 1930s in bourgeois and petty bourgeois circles, never cherished any illusions about assimilation, but on the other hand it has always been "bourgeois" and "moderate," as symbolized by the man with whose name it has been linked from the beginning: Bourguiba. When this "moderate" movement was overwhelmed by the

11. Samir Amin, *Le Maghreb moderne*, Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1970, particularly Chapter III, section IV, and Chapter VII from which this and the following quotations are taken.

revolt of the peasant masses in 1954, the situation was saved thanks to the policy of concessions followed by France, which culminated in Tunisian independence in 1956. In Morocco, brought under colonial rule even more recently, continuity is still more marked. This is why "the modern urban nationalist movement [in Morocco] . . . had . . . to line up behind the country's traditional elites, which remained in unchallenged control of this movement until independence was achieved."

Emerging from the long night of French colonialism, the Maghreb recovered its personality only with difficulty, isolated as it was from the Arab East. Its nationalism was purely local in character—Algerian, Tunisian, and Moroccan—though the sense of belonging to the Arab world was not wholly absent. Despite the fact that for historical reasons, the circumstances in which the three countries became independent were different, Samir Amin writes of the period since independence:

The political evolution of the states of the Maghreb during the last decade reflects to some extent the victory of deep-going social realities over the apparent political reality shaped by the vicissitudes of colonialism. The Algerian national movement, after reaching the apogee of its radicalism during the first years of the war of independence, was in the end captured by the petty bourgeois strata which have subsequently been the chief beneficiaries of independence. . . . In Tunisia, under the increasing influence of the rising petty bourgeoisie, the Destour party gradually moved over from capitalist liberalism to "national socialism." . . . While Algeria evolved from left to right, Tunisia's evolution went the opposite way. . . . In Morocco, the regime has not yet managed to stabilize itself: petty bourgeois pressure was on the point of succeeding in sweeping it away in 1960, but the failure of this movement restored the traditional conservative forces to power. Algeria and Tunisia have practically completed their evolution: from moderate nationalism in Tunisia and revolutionary peasant radicalism in Algeria to petty bourgeois national "socialism" in both countries. Morocco has not yet finished this chapter of her history, but the social and political forces of petty bourgeois "socialism" are already in position there.

The "petty bourgeois nationalist" authority on which imperialist domination rests in our time, through the perpetuation of "underdevelopment," is the same everywhere, regardless of variations in foreign policy. "Aid," whether Soviet as in Alge-

ria, or American as in Tunisia, fulfills the function of upholding and strengthening this dependent political authority. At the same time, because the Palestinian scene is geographically distant from the Maghreb and the threat from Israel is not felt there, awareness of the necessary unity of the anti-imperialist struggle is more restricted than in the Arab East to revolutionary circles lacking mass influence. Does this not provide striking proof that Arab unity cannot be accomplished by petty bourgeois rulers who have settled into a dull provincialism, which they accept, and which is possible because of dependence on outside powers (including the Soviet Union!) that is one of the conditions of their rule? Is it not further proof that this *unity* is something *forced* upon the states concerned by the permanent aggression of Israeli colonialism? Does it not show that this unity is meaningless except as *unity in anti-imperialist struggle*? The rest, that is, the "solving of the national problem" (one Arab nation or several Arab nations?) will follow; the outcome of this popular revolutionary struggle will alone decide this question, not quibbling and logic-chopping about "the theory of the nation."

The Israeli aggression of 1967 has thus put an end to the status quo of the previous twenty years. The irony of history has brought it about that this aggression, the purpose of which, for Israel, was to *consolidate* this status quo by causing it to be finally and publicly accepted by the Arab states, has had the opposite effect. Israel's "victory" has served only to expose the impotence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalism, whether supported by the West or by the USSR, and whether furnishing the basis for a local "liberal" capitalism or for a state capitalism. It has shown that state capitalism in our time can only be, in the "underdeveloped countries," a capitalism which is *dependent* and therefore powerless. It has "liberated" one force alone, that of the Palestinian people. But by doing so it has opened up a new epoch in the Arab world—the epoch of joint struggle by the peoples of the region against imperialism and Zionism, a fight for freedom that cannot but merge with the fight for socialist revolution, led by the ideology of the proletariat.

—Translated by Brian Pearce

Palestine and the Jews

by Eli Lobel

Until the war of June 1967, the existence of Palestinians as a people was generally denied, even in Israel. Palestinians were regarded as Israeli Arabs, Palestinian refugees, or West-Bank Jordanians. The refusal of the Palestinian people to submit to the loss of its national identity and to dispossession from the greater part of Palestine has created an irreversible challenge to the status quo imposed by foreign powers in this region. The Arabs in Israel, treated as second-class citizens, were quite conscious of their national oppression; but this oppression was no less real for the other Palestinians.

The Palestinians who stayed on in Israel after 1948 were deprived of their national rights by the same power that stripped the Palestinian people as a whole of its national rights. The Zionist establishment in Israel is responsible in both instances. Regardless of how this question is viewed, regardless of where one's sympathies lie, and regardless of whether one approves or condemns any particular act or declaration, the basic fact cannot be denied: an entire people has been deprived of its national rights. The Zionist leaders know this so well that they deny to this day the very existence of the Palestinian people. Zionists claim that it was *individual Palestinians*, and not a *considerable portion of the Palestinian people*, who were evicted from their

country and land (the expression "evict" is not used, since in the official view the refugees were incited to leave by Arab propaganda). Quantity must never turn into quality. Since only displaced individuals were involved, they were expected to resettle elsewhere with the financial aid of Israel and other countries. The matter was thus turned into a simple question of an indemnity, a generous one to be sure.

This, at any rate, was the official position until June 1967; now there is no longer an official position. The refugees, it is said, rejected the offer not because they refused to renounce their homeland (such a hypothesis was by definition inadmissible), but because they were incited to reject it (perhaps by those who incited them to become refugees), or because the Arab countries concerned did not want to receive them. Why? Because it was to the latter's advantage to keep the problem unresolved. The Arab refugees served as a convenient pretext and as "cannon fodder" for the bellicose aims of the Arab countries—according to the Zionists, that is. In the Zionist view, Israel is always the victim of attack, even when it is clearly the aggressor. This frenzy reached new heights in the spring of 1967 when, we are told, Israel was threatened with extermination. Israeli propaganda has thus transformed what is primarily a Palestinian problem into a Middle Eastern, international, conflict. This is quite convenient for Israel, both ideologically and militarily. *The fact is—and it is a significant victory for Israel—that since the Second World War and until recently the relative effacement of the Palestinian Arab people made it possible to displace the context of the conflict in a manner favorable to Israel.*

We are not unaware of the international, and especially inter-Arab, ramifications of the conflict. We maintain, however, that in Palestine, and wherever national freedom is repressed, the international context is a function of national developments and of the support for, or exploitation of, local forces; and even a direct foreign intervention must, in the final analysis, also enlist or confront local forces.

As long as the problem involved essentially the relations

between states in the Middle East, or as long as both sides (Arab countries, Israel) were able to represent it as such, and armed conflict was likely to entail a confrontation between regular armies, Israel was able to maintain national unity and count on the support of a considerable portion of world public opinion, even in left-wing circles. Viewed in this light—and this is how almost all Israelis view it—the specious Israeli slogan “We are the Vietnam of the Middle East” is not entirely unfounded. Israel would defend its territory house by house, inch by inch should the country be invaded. It has a modern regular army which resorts to acts of collective reprisal and the use of napalm, and which some would like to see commit even greater atrocities. In the December 8, 1967, issue of *Haaretz*, generally regarded as a respectable and liberal daily, its military correspondent, Z. Schiff, wrote:

Now that the Egyptian army has been rapidly reorganized and Nasser is once again beating the war drums, it is clear that we paid insufficient attention to the order to destroy the Egyptian divisions. Nasser admits that his army has lost about twelve thousand men. If we had caused Egyptian wounds to bleed more profusely, the reconstitution of his army would have been more difficult to achieve. Instead, Israel allowed itself to be intimidated by what the newspapers might report; it parachuted water to the fleeing Egyptian divisions, and even provided transportation to the Canal for Egyptian soldiers who had come to Sinai to destroy us. If we had refrained from such acts and cut off some of the escape routes, we could have inflicted even more terrible wounds upon the Egyptians.

And behind this regular army looms a people's army ready to initiate a people's war, if necessary, especially in case of invasion, whether real or alleged.

All this was valid as long as the problem was viewed essentially in terms of the relations between states in the Middle East. This is no longer the case. Until the Second World War the principal confrontation was that between the Arabs of Palestine on the one hand, and the Jews and the British occupation forces on the other. Since then, and until recent years, the conflict, due to the effacement of the Arab people of

Palestine and to the international situation (Nazi holocaust, the spirit of Yalta in the guise of Cold War or peaceful co-existence), affected primarily the relations between states. We are now witnessing a reversal to the original situation. The awakening of the Palestinian Arab people is related to the rise of new leaders, and to an international situation which features the shining examples of China, Cuba, Vietnam, and Che Guevara.

Zionists cannot pretend that the Palestinian Arab people, which presumably does not exist, threatens the physical survival of the Israeli people. International and domestic imperatives, and the need to maintain national unity, to arouse the pioneer spirit, and to steel the will to defense, required an appropriate *external* threat. Israel threatens Syria in order to provoke Egypt, for even Syria won't do. It launches *verbal* attacks against the Arab Republic of Syria but, in 1967 as in 1956, *military* attacks against the United Arab Republic.

The "Zionist establishment" as a whole was and is responsible for the national dispossession of the Palestinian Arab people—the "Zionist establishment," and not merely a "reactionary Zionist leadership." The Israeli social-chauvinist apologists, in fact, regardless of whether they represent themselves officially as Zionist (Mapam), non-Zionist (Haolam Haze group, "Movement for an Israel-Palestine Federation," etc.) or anti-Zionist (Maki, Jewish section of the Israeli Communist Party), are all doing their utmost to represent the Zionist establishment as a just and even revolutionary historical phenomenon. Yet at other times these apologists wax indignant over the reactionary, anti-Arab, and pro-imperialist character of the Zionist leadership and its ideology. The attacks are directed particularly against the pro-imperialist foreign policy of the Zionist movement, which is represented as a simple error.

Political Zionism arose fifty years before the establishment of the State of Israel; the process which culminated in the suppression of Arab nationhood in Palestine also began well

before 1948. Relatively peaceful coexistence between the two communities bolstered the Jewish position, but undermined the social and political cohesion of the Arabs, who were thus prevented from waging a successful national struggle. During the critical postwar years (1945-1948), the Palestinian Arab people was practically eliminated from the scene; it had suffered military defeat (the Arab revolt of 1936-1939), and lacked, or lost, both a national political structure and a political leadership commanding the allegiance of the masses.

Modern Jewish colonization in Palestine started around 1870, when Jews began to buy up land near Jaffa. Dozens of Jewish villages were subsequently established in Palestine by Baron Edmond de Rothschild and other Jewish investors. They purchased land from Arab owners and then proceeded along the classic road of colonization. The Arab peasants were generally employed as day-laborers on modern farms.

The aim of the Zionists, however, was not merely to exploit the resources of Palestine; they wanted to appropriate the country, evict the Arab laborers, and take their place. They carried on violent agitation for "Jewish employment," and later for "Jewish products," to this end resorting to a boycott of Arab workers and products. The strongest advocate of this policy was the labor wing of the Zionist movement; the General Confederation of Jewish Workers in Palestine (Histadrut) was often in the forefront of the struggle. On the other hand, the bourgeois elements in the Zionist movement and, even more so, the pre-Zionist colonists, were inclined to avail themselves of cheap Arab labor power. Consistent with the inner logic of political Zionism, the views of the labor wing prevailed. A compromise was reached under which funds provided by the World Zionist Organization were used to cover the difference in cost between Jewish and Arab labor power, and between Jewish and Arab products.

The emerging Zionist society entered upon a collision course with Palestinian Arab society. With its technological superiority and international financial resources, Jewish capitalism constituted a major obstacle to the growth of a Palestinian Arab

capitalism. The potential proletarianization of the Arab peasants was speeded by their eviction from the land purchased by the Jews, yet at the same time obstructed by their exclusion from the Jewish economic sector and by the weakness of Arab capitalism. Administration and public works provided a major, but of necessity limited, outlet.

This socio-economic deformation had political ramifications. Due to the weakness of the Arab bourgeoisie and proletariat, the political leadership of the Palestinian Arabs remained firmly in the hands of the landowners who controlled the countryside. These landowners gradually liquidated themselves as a class; they sold their land to the Zionists at great profits. They tried to mask their political and economic collaboration with the Zionists and the British with violently anti-Zionist slogans attacking the traitors who sold their land to the Zionists.

The internal contradictions of this society erupted during the Arab uprising of 1936-1939, which was a crucial stage in the confrontation between Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate. These events have received little attention, but it was now recognized that this was a genuine revolt which constituted a turning point. In a supplement devoted to this period thirty years later, the military correspondent of the important daily *Haaretz* had this to say:

. . . with respect to the events of 1936, it seems to us that had they not happened in the manner and at the time in which they did in fact occur, it is doubtful that the Jewish community could have waged a war for independence eight years later. The Jewish community emerged from these dangerous 1936 events in a stronger position as a result of the strong support it received from the British government and army in Palestine.

And he adds:

The 1936 events actually involved a confrontation between two national movements, but the Arabs made the mistake of concentrating their attacks on the British government and army . . . This confrontation with the British (and not with the Jews) caused the destruction of Arab military strength in Palestine, and was re-

sponsible for the partial elimination of Arab leadership in the country. After about three years of unequal warfare, Arab military power was destroyed; during this same period, however, the Jews, protected by the British, succeeded in building up their own strength. . . . British reprisals against the Arab armed groups and against the Arab population were much more severe than those against Jewish clandestine organizations a few years later. In their searches of Arab villages, the British frequently killed Arab civilians. Hundreds of houses, orchards and vineyards were destroyed.¹

This same newspaper devoted to the Arab revolt contains a long and penetrating study by Dr. Y. Bauer, professor at the Institute of Contemporary Judaism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. We cite the main points of this study, for it is extremely revealing with respect to the effacement of the Palestinian Arab people after the Second World War, the transformation of the Palestinian conflict into one between states, and the successive Israeli victories. The tone of this study is clear from its conclusion:

The 1936-1939 Arab revolt was *the last forcible attempt by the Arab people of Palestine to prevent Jewish appropriation of the country . . .* The Palestinian Arabs displayed astonishing weakness in 1948, and our struggle at the time was directed essentially against the Arabs of the neighboring countries and against the British who supported them. It is impossible to say whether we would have emerged victorious if the Arabs of Palestine had concentrated their attacks on us—but this is a matter for speculation. In any case we can say that the conditions for victory in 1948 were created at the time of the Arab revolt (of 1936-1939). (Emphasis in original.)

At the beginning of his study the author describes the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian Arabs on the eve of the revolt:

The Arab community in the 30s was in a state of rapid social transition; it was a semi-feudal society caught up in a capitalist era. This development was not a function of internal imperatives determined by a process of growth; it resulted primarily from external pressures, from a growing confrontation with the modern

1. *Haaretz*, April 15, 1966.

Hebrew colonizing establishment and with a relatively modern British imperial government.

The international situation in the early 30s was dominated by the great world depression. Palestine was one of the few countries in the world, outside the USSR, to remain relatively unaffected. At least at the outset, it actually benefited from the crisis. Practically nonexistent at the end of the 20s, Jewish immigration took on vast proportions after the economic collapse of the Jews in Eastern Europe and the rise of Nazism (this second factor is sometimes exaggerated: only one fourth of Jewish immigrants during the decade 1932-1942 were of German origin). This movement reached its peak in 1935, when 61,854 immigrants entered the country. This influx of immigrants terrified the Arab leaders, for at this rate the Jewish community would become a majority in the country within ten years (in 1931 the population of Palestine numbered 1,030,000 inhabitants, of whom 175,000 were Jews).

Economically, the country was thriving. There was an influx of foreign capital (30 million pounds sterling between 1932 and 1936); bank credit in this period of world deflation rose rapidly, and even inordinately (currency circulation almost doubled² between 1933 and 1936). In this climate of economic boom, the Arab workers were able to re-enter the Jewish agricultural sector (citrus fruit plantations), and even the construction and other emerging industries.

The situation began to deteriorate at the end of 1935. The region was threatened with an extension of the war in Ethiopia. The prestige of British colonialism was seriously undermined by its sacrifice of the interests of Ethiopia as well as of its own. Insurance rates for Palestine and other countries in the Middle East rose markedly, foreign capital became scarce,³ and the overextended local banking system witnessed numerous failures.

2. D. Horowitz, *The Economy of Israel*, in Hebrew, Massada, Tel Aviv, 1954, p. 97.

3. The index of capital imports, which stood at 80 in 1932, rose to 406 in 1935, then fell to 226 in 1936, and to 160 the following year. Cf. D. Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

The general slowdown also prevented Arab workers from making further advances into the modern economic sector. Large numbers of Arab workers lost their jobs, and many were forced to return to their villages. "The hammer of nationalist propaganda," writes Dr. Bauer, "fell upon the anvil of economic depression."

In 1935, under the twofold pressure of massive Jewish immigration and an approaching economic crisis, a number of Arab groups formed, for the first time, a political front. Most of these groups, except for the young Istiglal party, had a traditional political-familial character, and they were largely under the influence of the Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al Husseini, who was nominated to his post by the first British High Commissioner, the pro-Zionist Sir Herbert Samuel. (Since he had not studied at the Azhar in Cairo or at a similar institute, Haj Amin Al Husseini did not actually have the required credentials for his high religious position.) At the end of November 1935, the Arab front presented three demands to the then British High Commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope: an end to Jewish immigration, the prohibition of land purchases, and assurances of the establishment of an Arab government reflecting the Arab majority. Sir Arthur Wauchope rejected the first two demands, but apparently hinted that his government might be prepared to give a more restrictive interpretation to the clause linking immigration to the country's capacity to absorb it. He was, on the other hand, prepared to take an important step toward meeting Arab demands regarding internal autonomy ("home rule") by considering the possibility of a constituent assembly in which the Arabs would command a majority. According to Dr. Bauer:

Although immigration affairs were beyond his jurisdiction, the Jews could not accept the principle that the country's destiny should be decided by its inhabitants, rather than by international forces concerned about the Jewish people's lack of a homeland and the imperatives of its presence in Palestine. Hence their total rejection of the High Commissioner's proposals.

These proposals were rejected in February-March 1936 by

both British legislative houses. In Dr. Bauer's view it would be wrong to believe that Jewish opposition was the only reason for this rejection, but to the Arabs it seemed that this was what had in fact happened. They concluded that negotiations with the British were no longer useful, since the Jews were in a position to obstruct the implementation of any pro-Arab British decision. Revolt was the only possible course.

The early days of the revolt were marked by two important events: an attack on Jewish passers-by in Jaffa by excited Arab crowds on April 19, 1936; and a general strike that lasted from mid-April to October 21. Armed struggle shifted to the mountainous regions, and frequently took on the character of *jacqueries* by poorly disciplined armed bands, at least in its beginnings; but the rebels enjoyed wide support among the local population. The general strike, concentrated in the cities and based on a more conscious part of the population, was similar to the type of struggle being waged at the time in the neighboring countries, notably Syria. In that country, a fifty-day general strike, won on March 1, 1936, forced the French government to enter into negotiations which resulted, in September of that year, in an agreement with the French Popular Front government. The agreement provided for Syrian independence within three years, while granting France a privileged economic position and reserving the possibility of French military installations. The very length of the general strike in Palestine indicates that this method failed to achieve its objectives. The presence of an important Jewish sector was the decisive reason for this failure. In this connection, Dr. Bauer writes:

The strike led to a paradoxical development in the Jewish community. Its economic independence was strengthened. The port of Tel Aviv was built, and the expansion of the port of Haifa was speeded up. Strategic roads were built, which were very useful to the Jewish community. . . . Jewish agriculture no longer had to face the competition of abundant and cheap Arab agricultural products, which the Jewish sector could not meet. . . . The increased strength of the Jewish agricultural sector as a direct result of the general strike and the revolt was in itself a severe defeat for the Arabs.

Although these facts are correct, their interpretation strikes us as inadequate. The increased strength of the Jewish sector was not only the result of the strike, and to some extent of the armed revolt, but also the cause of their failure. The fact that the British occupation could base itself on a strongly entrenched Jewish sector prevented the Palestinian Arabs from bringing the economy to a halt. The existence of a strong Jewish sector prevented a successful national struggle based on the most conscious layers of the population and led by the emerging bourgeoisie and the urban intelligentsia. Far from contributing to progress and radicalization, the Jewish presence was an important factor, under the circumstances, in pushing the Arabs into a desperate struggle dominated by the backward layers of Arab society. Those who insisted that the only revolutionary course was a common Arab-Jewish struggle against the foreign occupation were ruthlessly persecuted by both sides. Numerous internationalist revolutionary militants were forced into exile to escape imprisonment by the British or physical extermination at the hands of nationalist activists in their respective camps.

This is not the place to enter into the particulars of the revolt which lasted three years, and which was marked by lulls and periodic resurgence. In listing its principal characteristics, we base ourselves largely on Dr. Bauer's study.

(a) At its height, the revolt encompassed the entire Arab portion of the country:

In the spring and summer of 1938 the rebels held most of the non-Jewish portions of the country . . . and British administration had become a fiction. The rebels levied taxes, administered justice, and provided civilian administrative services in the vast territories under their control.

(b) The Mufti of Jerusalem strengthened his authority during the violent stage of the Arab struggle. He succeeded in eliminating many of his political opponents, but failed to establish a unified command. The semi-feudal structure of Palestinian Arab society, with its divisions and lack of national unity, remained unchanged and even emerged stronger than ever.

(c) The fierceness of the Arab struggle in Palestine, the feudal-religious character of its leadership, and the symbolic importance of the country, all favored the participation in the revolt of Arabs from the neighboring countries. The first military commander of the revolt, Fawzi Kawkji, was of Syrian origin and Iraqi nationality. The Peel Commission for its part held to the view that the other Arab countries had a particular interest in Palestine, and had therefore the right to participate in the settlement of the Palestinian problem.

(d) The Jewish community adopted a policy of "Havлага" (which, for want of a better word, can be rendered as "self-control" or "self-restraint") under which action was confined to the defense of Jewish villages under attack. Acts of reprisal were undertaken only under cover of British troops. Only the dissident clandestine organizations toward the end of the revolt followed a different line.

It [havлага] derived from a desire to benefit from British support for the formation of a legal Jewish force, and from the conviction that all pretexts should be avoided that might cause a change in the favorable attitude of the British government.

This approach paid off, at least partially, for at the end of this period the legal Jewish force numbered 21,000 men who were enrolled in units of the gendarmerie; they became the nucleus of the Haganah, and subsequently of the Israeli army.

(e) The onset of the Second World War forced Great Britain to seek a rapid solution. "It could not afford to immobilize a third of its already reduced forces in this part of the Middle East." (Emphasis added.) The need to bolster a prestige already undermined by the Ethiopian affair and by Munich led to the decision to crush the revolt. The Mufti of Jerusalem made advances to Hitler's Germany and became its ally during the war.

The country was reconquered by the British during the months of October and November 1938. Militarily, the revolt had been crushed. Arab resistance collapsed. Internal dissension, terror, economic scarcity, and British reprisals—all contributed to the gradual withdrawal of support for the rebellious villagers. The revolt was not crushed, it died a slow death. . . .

(f) Having repressed the armed revolt, the British government considered it advisable to make political concessions to the Arabs. The military stressed the importance of safeguarding the security of the overland route to the Far East, since Italy was in a position to disrupt maritime communications in the Mediterranean. The overland route passed through the Arab countries, and the 1936-1939 revolt had demonstrated that even small, poorly armed groups could cause severe disruptions and immobilize large forces.

These considerations led in May 1939 to the publication of the British White Paper on Palestine. It met the most essential Arab demands, but delayed independence for the country. The approach of the Second World War thus hastened the search for an international political solution favorable to the Arabs, while at the same time inciting the occupying power to crush the armed revolt of the Palestinians. The war itself, and its consequences—the decline of British influence in the region, the discredit attaching to the Palestinian extremist wing associated with fascism, the attacks on the White Paper which had the immediate result of halting the admission to Palestine of Jews fleeing Nazism, and, finally, the terrible sufferings of the Jews during the war—all these factors prevented the Palestinians from capitalizing on the situation. Even more important was the fact that the Palestinian people was militarily defeated and politically disorganized, whereas the Jewish community was militarily strengthened by the wartime service of its members in the British army.

The resurgence of the Palestinian Arab people in recent years marks a new turning point in the evolution of the conflict. That this resurgence has attracted world-wide attention is due principally to the activities of Al Fatah, and to the operations of its military branch, Al Assifa. Several years in planning, the first raids on Israeli territory occurred in 1965, and became more extensive toward the end of 1966. The upsurge of Al Fatah activity coincided with the radicalization of the Syrian regime, and with an economic crisis in Israel which weakened

the pioneer spirit. Thus, the conditions existed for large-scale military action by Israel.

The Israeli leaders were quick to sense the danger posed by the renewed struggle of the Palestinian Arabs. The threat they faced was political, ideological, and even military. Although Al Fatah has been represented as a tool of the Syrian army or intelligence service, it is in fact a Palestinian organization enjoying wide support among the Palestinian refugees and exiles. The initial reaction of the Israel authorities was one of hesitation; they were unsure of the attitude to be adopted toward this deplorable phenomenon. Formally, the Israelis invoked the "rights of states." After all, foreign armed groups were carrying out commando raids on Israeli territory. The Israelis argued that a sovereign nation has the right to defend itself against such acts of aggression, and even to nip them in the bud.

Border incidents with Syria were provoked or exploited (the distinction has little importance) with the deliberate aim of shifting the context of the struggle. In the UN the first incidents were described as a seasonal phenomenon (during the rainy season, said the Secretary General, seeds sprout, agricultural work resumes, and this is when clashes occur). It is instructive to read the reports of the Syrian-Israeli Mixed Armistice Commission. Syria accuses Israel of seizing the demilitarized zones and establishing military installations in these areas in violation of international agreements; the Israeli representative replies that it is useless to engage in discussion with the delegates of a government which supports the armed bands operating in Israel. The number of border incidents began to multiply. An air battle on April 7, 1967, cost the Syrians six or seven MIG planes. Verbal threats became more violent, and a well-known sequence of events finally led to the war of June 1967.

Without retracing the course of this war, we must stress the fact that even before June 1967 the decisive factor in the situation was the armed struggle of Al Fatah and other Palestinian organizations. Far from attempting to play down these subversive activities, the Israelis took great pains to represent them as a confrontation between states. The threats against

Syria led to the Strait of Tiran affair, and to conflict with Egypt. In March and April the condition of inter-Arab relations was such that a number of Israeli leaders were led to believe that the war could be confined to the two most radical Arab states, Egypt and Syria. Jordan was a special problem, not because it was pro-Western, but because it provided a refuge for the majority of Palestinian Arabs. Jordan had annexed a sizable portion of Palestinian territory in 1948, and was *objectively* an "enemy accomplice" interested in preserving the status quo. The objective role of the Hashemite kingdom, which had already been the subject of secret negotiations between Abdullah and Ben-Gurion, (represented by Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan) during and after the war of 1948, was to contain and neutralize the Palestinian Arab people. Abdullah's grandson, the present King Hussein, carried on this role as long as he could, i.e., until June 1967. (Al Fatah reported that "we lost more men after their return to Jordan than during the hostilities themselves. The Jordanian intelligence service, financed by the American imperialists, were ordered to kill our men."⁴) All indications point to the fact that the strategy to be employed toward Jordan was not clearly defined and that opinion in this respect was divided, for there was no coherent policy regarding the Palestinian Arab people, except that of ignoring its existence.

As a result of their military victory in June 1967, the Israelis acquired an Arab population of 1,300,000, the entire territory of Palestine, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. These demographic and geographic changes define the new dimensions of the Palestine problem. The essential factor, however, was this: the armed struggle of the Palestinian Arab people was now directed against a physical occupation as well, and became more intense than ever.

The new situation did not eliminate long-standing problems; the victory celebrations were soon followed by a resurgence of old dissensions regarding the policies of political Zionism.

4. Interviews with Al Fatah commandos by Leonora Stradal, *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 253 bis, 1967.

There was a partial realignment within Zionism. Divisions had formerly centered on *how soon* a Jewish state was to be established (all political Zionists advocated such a state as their ultimate goal, even if they denied this officially or championed a binational state). After this state had become a reality, extremists sometimes found themselves in the moderate camp, and moderates in that of the extremists. Those who had advocated the immediate creation of a Jewish state, even though the Jews constituted a minority, were viewed as extremists if they favored a state encompassing the whole of Palestine, and rule by a Jewish minority over an Arab majority. This had been the position of V. Jabotinsky, the leader of the "Revisionist" faction; it is shared by his followers in the Herut-Gahal party.

The other extremists or activists, who viewed a Jewish majority in the new state as essential but wanted an immediate state and therefore advocated the partition of the country, with or without expansionist aims, now appeared as "moderates" since their *essential* or *provisional* goal had already been achieved. "Extremist" and "moderate" are thus not political terms, and are affected by new conditions. As long as a Zionist establishment is accepted—along with its corollary, the suppression of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people—disagreements center chiefly on the *extent* of colonization (the size of the state of Israel), and on its *pace*. Political Zionists must take a stand on the manner in which the Palestinian Arabs are to be deprived of their national rights: through the *direct political domination* of the Arabs living in the Jewish state, who would then become second-class citizens; or through their *eviction from the country*. There are therefore two tendencies: the "territorialists" who stress the need to annex as much territory as possible, and the "populationists" who give priority to the need to maintain a Jewish majority in the state of Israel. Both tendencies maintain close ties to world Jewry through the agency of the Zionist movement.

Foremost among the proponents of a "demographic majority" is former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. He says frank-

ly what he thinks, especially when he is suffering, as is currently the case ("I no longer belong to the party I helped found, and in which I was active for 35 years . . . because those who are now at its head are departing from the cause of justice and truth. I do not believe that a Jewish state can survive and assert itself if these two basic values are ignored."⁵). He suffers, therefore he speaks. As the aged Goethe wrote, "And though men become silent in their pain, a god has inspired me to voice my anguish." Ben-Gurion has recently explained himself with exceptional clarity. Mr. M. Yaari, leader of Mapam, had amicably "accused" him of having but lately advocated a binational state in Palestine.⁶ Ben-Gurion answered him sharply: "Neither my own writings nor those of my friends (I. Ben-Zvi and others) contain a single idea that could be described as favorable to binationalism."⁷ He recalled that the 1919 Unity Congress of the Jewish Workers' Movement had unanimously adopted the following resolution which he had formulated: "We demand an international guarantee of the creation of a free Jewish state in Palestine, to be placed under the trusteeship of a member of the League of Nations until the Jewish population constitutes a majority in the country."⁸ Subsequently, in a work published in Palestine, he defined his position in regard to the country's Arabs:

An Arab problem existed for me only in terms of a Zionist homeland. I believed that the problem of the Jewish people could be solved only in Palestine, where I wanted this people to settle so that it might become a free people living on its own land. Without this Zionist base there is no Arab problem in Palestine, but only a Jewish problem such as exists everywhere else—the Jewish people wants to be free and conduct its affairs in its own country, i.e., in a Jewish state.⁹

5. D. Ben-Gurion, *Haaretz*, March 15, 1968.

6. M. Yaari, *Under the Sign of Unity and Independence*, in Hebrew, Merkhavia, Sifriyath Poalim, 1967.

7. *Haaretz*, March 15, 1968.

8. *A'hdut Avoda*, Jaffa, 1919.

9. D. Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*, in Hebrew, Jaffa, 1931, pp. 81-82, and *Haaretz*, *ibid*.

In the same 1968 article in which he speaks of a Jewish state based on "justice and truth," Ben-Gurion reaffirmed his position with respect to the Palestinian Arabs, which has presumably never changed:

In speaking of the Arabs, I have always made a distinction between the rights of the Jewish people in Palestine and the rights of the Arabs *who live there*—I did not speak of the rights of the Arab people in Palestine. (Emphasis in original.)

Ben-Gurion does not notice the contradiction. From the Zionist viewpoint, the Palestinian Arab *people* does not exist because it *must* not exist. His notion of justice is presumably reflected in the following statement:

With respect to the Arabs in the Jewish state, I said that it goes without saying that the Jewish state will adopt the principle of one and the same law for the foreigner and for the citizen. (*Ibid.*)

To describe the Arab inhabitant of the Jewish state, he uses the term "ger," which can mean either "a person or people inhabiting a foreign country providing refuge and protection," or "a foreigner who has embraced the faith of Israel."¹⁰ The ambiguity between foreigner and convert is probably deliberate.

There is a close connection between Ben-Gurion's conception of the Jewish state and his submissiveness to the Western imperialist power which dominates the region. ("I no longer doubted that the center of gravity of our political work in the international arena had shifted from Britain to the United States, which had firmly grasped world leadership."¹¹) They are in the final analysis rooted in his attachment to the notion that the Jewish people can fulfill itself only in Israel, and in his desire to maintain ties to Western culture and civilization. He does not want the Jewish people to become a part of the Middle East lest it become integrated and lose its identity. The Israeli jour-

10. Y. Gur, *Dictionary of the Hebrew Language*.

11. *Israel: Years of Challenge*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, N.Y., 1963, pp. 17-18.

nalist Avneri has noted that Ben-Gurion, who learned Greek in order to read Plato, and Spanish out of love for Cervantes, cannot understand an Arab newspaper or broadcast after residing for 60 years, first in Palestine, and then in Israel.

Abba Eban, Foreign Minister of Israel, also views the Jewish (always Jewish) character of the state of Israel as essential. Unconditionally committed to the imperialist West, like his spiritual predecessors Weizmann and Sharett, Eban finds himself today in the same camp as Ben-Gurion.

There is a contradiction, Mr. Abba Eban has declared, between territorial factors and the demographic factors which determine the character of a society and its culture. The character of a state is conditioned primarily by its demographic composition, by the level and inner unity of its population. . . . *There is the vision of a great state and the vision of a Jewish state* based on national unity, stability and progress.¹² (Emphasis in original.)

The ideological premises of the two men are practically identical, and their conclusions are complementary, although the emphasis varies. In the face of a threatened resurgence of the Palestinian Arab people, of a people's war, and of the ideals that animate it, while the territories conquered by Israel remain unsettled by Jews and Zionist idealism is giving way to the spirit of conquest, Ben-Gurion is fearful. He knows or senses that something is changing. Understanding only his own past, and no longer capable of changing, he wants to act as in the past, place even greater stress on Israel's ties to Judaism, increase the country's Jewish population by every means possible, and maintain a Jewish majority at any cost.

Without continuous and growing Jewish immigration, and without a considerable rise in the Jewish birth rate, we are condemned to become a minority, even if the threats of the Arab dictators to exterminate Israel are defeated by our national army. To ignore this is to say: when we are gone let happen what may. . . . Without internal and external immigration, who knows whether the State of Israel would long survive. One must be blind not to see this.¹³

12. *Davar*, August 25, 1967.

13. D. Ben-Gurion, *Haaretz*, November 17, 1967.

Eban favors the same kind of Jewish stronghold in Israel, but he would like it to play a neo-colonialist role; in addition to the demographic perspective, this political technocrat clings to neo-colonialism as a last hope. He advocated, for instance, the establishment of an economic community to consist of Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon in a speech to the Council of Europe in September 1967. On that occasion he proposed that Israel's inventive genius help develop a prosperity zone in the Middle East. The substance of his remarks was that the Middle East can experience a rebirth only by establishing permanent ties to Europe and Africa. It is evident that this would allow Israel to dominate the Middle East, even though it remained no more than a bridgehead for Western capitalism. For this it does not need the territories. He wants to maintain, or rather establish, ties to the governments of countries such as Lebanon, and especially Jordan. He even thinks that the Palestinian population, which, like every advocate of a Jewish demographic majority, he finds a burden, could help him maintain ties to the Arab countries. In an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*,¹⁴ he refutes at length the thesis of "territorial fundamentalism," and condemns the proponents of this position as people afflicted by extreme rigidity, who in his view are but "a small minority in the Cabinet and nation." He castigates them for their "inbred suicide complex." All this is related to his view of the Jewish problem in Israel. When the interviewer "accused" or "complimented" him for being the only minister to pronounce himself publicly in this fashion, Eban brusquely replied:

No, I wouldn't say that. I have heard others speak like that. Mr. Eshkol said this very emphatically at our party meeting on Tuesday. I have never heard a stronger dissociation from the concept of an Israel with 1½ million Arabs.

What then should be done about the Palestinian Arab people? Eban's approach is very logical, reasonable, and even "moderate," although he adopts the same basic position as Ben-Gurion:

14. Weekly Overseas Edition, June 4, 1968.

Our emphasis must be put on Palestinian Arabs and on Jordan. There is an intrinsic centrality in this problem. It began as the "Palestine problem." That's what it now is. This affects Jordan and Israel far more than Egypt. I do not know if a Jordan settlement is possible. But to say that it is worthless is the height of absurdity.

Mr. Eban engages here in a polemic with the territorialists on the orientation of eventual negotiations with the Arab countries. We will return to this point. Mr. Eban's vision of the Jewish state and his pro-Western attitude coincide with respect to Jordan's continued role as policeman of the Palestinian Arabs. These must remain Arabs, but not Palestinians—at least in Mr. Eban's view. In a previous interview in the daily *Haaretz* he was asked: "How do you estimate the feelings of the inhabitants of the area west of the Jordan? Do they want a return to Hashemite rule or the creation of a Palestinian entity?" Mr. Eban replied:

I am of the opinion that these inhabitants desire two things: the possibility of defining their political destiny in an atmosphere of peace, and the possibility of contact with the entire Arab world. What attracts the Arabs to current realities on the other side of the Jordan is not always submission to "Hashemite rule." The inhabitants of Samaria and Judea will feel a common bond, whatever the regime on the other side of the Jordan, for one simple reason—this bond will express their desire to maintain contact with the entire Arab world. A solution which ignores this factor cannot be stable. Even under current cease-fire conditions, I support any measure that expresses the desire of these inhabitants for contact and continuity with the larger Arab world; but within the limits of the imperatives of security.¹⁵

Before examining the "territorialist" position, we will cite some demographic statistical data. They are drawn largely from the report issued by the commission for the study of the birth rate, presented to the Israeli government in April 1966. The growth rate of the Jewish population has shown a steady decline since 1951; it fell from a yearly 2.65 percent in 1950 to 1.61 percent in 1965. This trend is said to be even more pro-

15. *Haaretz*, February 2, 1968.

nounced in the other Jewish communities throughout the world. In a lecture at the University of Jerusalem, Prof. R. Bachi stated recently that "partial studies in various Central European countries have reached pessimistic conclusions concerning the capacity of these communities to hold their own in the demographic domain." The same situation is said to exist in the Jewish communities of England and the United States, but it is less pronounced among French Jews.

Israel's Arab population had a yearly growth rate of 4.58 percent in 1965. This rate shows a slight upward trend and is among the highest in the world, if not the highest. If we apply these data to the Jewish and Arab populations under Israeli jurisdiction—2.3 million Jews and 1.3 million Arabs, according to a July 1967 estimate—we can see that at present rates the Arab population will constitute a majority in the country in twenty years. This assumes that the growth rate of the new Arab population (West Bank of the Jordan, Gaza) will be the same as that of the Arab population in Israel before June 1967.

These figures must be qualified by estimates of Jewish immigration into Israel. Since the establishment of the state of Israel, gross immigration has averaged 69,000 per year, and net immigration, 60,000 per year. The net immigration average has declined: 53,000 in 1963, 46,000 in 1964, 23,000 in 1965.¹⁶ Gross immigration in 1966 reached only 13,450, and emigration during this year was of the same order. Since June 1967 the situation has improved slightly for the Jewish population, but this is probably temporary.¹⁷ On the other hand, the decline of the internal growth rate since 1951 affects the Jewish population adversely. This decline reflects a well-known sociological phenomenon, and may become even more pronounced. The relatively high fertility of the Jewish population in 1950 and 1951 was due essentially to the Afro-Asian Jewish communities

16. These immigration figures are taken from a study by the Bank of Israel, *The Economic Development of Israel*, 1968, p. 54.

17. 13,884 immigrants between January and July 1968, or approximately 2,000 per month. These figures are cited by L. Dultzen, treasurer of the Jewish Agency.

which had recently immigrated. Although their growth rate greatly exceeds that of the Jewish community of Western origin, it is declining due to their contact with the more developed Jewish population and to their improving standards of living and education (Jewish women of Afro-Asian origin without education had an average of 6-8 children, whereas such women with 11-12 years of education had an average of only 1-2 children).

Barring exceptional circumstances (large Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, especially the USSR), new sizable immigration to Israel is not to be expected. It has been noted that of 24,000 Jews who left the Arab countries between July 1 and December 31, 1967, the majority chose to live in France.¹⁸

There remains the possibility or the illusion that measures can be taken to raise the birth rate of the Jewish population. (Ben-Gurion recently paid a visit to a family with twenty children. "Your example should be followed by our girls," he said to the mother.) An inter-ministerial committee for the study of the birth rate was established in 1966, as was a demographic center attached to the office of the Prime Minister. Raising the birth rate, however, poses particularly delicate problems in the case of Israel. Whose birth rate is to be raised? Certainly not that of the Arab population. But in that case, should Israel institute racist laws or an equally racist system of inducements? A racist law is already in effect, "the Law of Return," which gives every Jew the right to settle in Israel and become an Israeli citizen by virtue of the simple fact that he is Jewish. The Arabs of Israel did not enjoy the same right, and even the Palestinian refugees, although legitimate inhabitants of the country, were not allowed to return. A "law of demographic increase" would have an even more odious character. Ben-Gurion tried to circumvent this difficulty by suggesting that responsibility in this area pass from the state to the Jewish Agency. This is an obvious deception. Others openly propose a discriminatory approach: encouragement of large Jewish families and birth-control mea-

18. According to a report by Louis D. Horwitz, Director of the American Joint Distribution Committee.

tures for the Arabs. In an editorial which appeared on October 29, 1967, in *Maariv*, Israel's most widely read daily, Mr. S. Schnitzer declared that

a high birth rate is not a question of destiny, but a danger against which society must defend itself by all means. . . . Viewing the matter in long-range terms, we must *act*, and appeal to the loyalty and economic interests of the Jews of Israel, and convince them that large families are essential to their survival. We must at the same time tell the Arabs that they cannot allow themselves to maintain the highest birth rate in the world in our small and poor country.

What aggravates the dilemma of the authorities is the fact that any policy designed to raise the birth rate through economic inducements (subsidies to large families) will, if not discriminate, primarily affect the least privileged layers of the population. This would defeat the purpose. The problem results not only from a basic contradiction between Jews and Arabs, but also from the Jewish population's internal social structure. It is feared that a relative increase in the number of Oriental Jews will "levantinize" the Jewish population. As G. Friedmann has pointed out, there is the problem that "two Israels" may emerge.¹⁹ The yearly growth rate of the Oriental Jews, or those of Oriental origin, is already 2.70 percent, as compared with 0.58 percent for the Western Jews. The contradictions within the Jewish community of Israel have therefore also an "ethnic" aspect.

The inter-ministerial committee and the commission for the study of demographic problems have already voiced their opposition to a policy of family allowances. The avowed aim is to increase the number of children of the average educated family from two to four. How is this to be done? No one has the answer. There is talk of modifying the liberal abortion law (the number of abortions recorded in hospitals has reached 25 percent of total births, or almost 60 percent of Jewish births; the real number of abortions is estimated to be at least twice as

19. *The End of the Jewish People*, Doubleday, N. Y., 1967.

large²⁰), but the experts doubt the effectiveness of such a measure. The fact is that it is impossible to raise the birth rate of one portion of the population, especially the privileged portion, which in this case is also the European portion. Logically, there remains only the negative approach: limiting the birth rate of the others. But what depths of racial discrimination would then have to be confronted!

One alternative, as we have already noted, is for the Israelis to isolate themselves in a Jewish stronghold and exercise neo-colonial domination over the Arab areas. This would involve either returning recently seized territories or establishing an autonomous Palestinian Arab territory closely watched by Israel. The advocates of the territorialist approach are opposed to this, as is the majority of the population.

The proponents of a "Greater Israel" and other territorialists are too easily identified as extremists or hawks. Sharp differences exist in their ranks. At least in their public utterances, the territorialists disagree on how to deal with the Palestinian Arab people. The view, similar to that of the demographers, that Palestine must exclude the Arabs, was most sharply expressed, as is fitting, by the head of the Jewish Agency's Colonization Department:

The only possible solution is to establish a Palestine, at least Western Palestine, without Arabs. . . . And there is no other way but to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries; to transfer all of them: not one village, not one tribe should be left. And the transfer should be directed to Syria and Iraq.²¹

Davar is the official daily of the Histadrut, and the semi-official organ of the government. Mr. J. Weitz, the author of the statement just quoted, has never been regarded as an extremist; he is a member of the ruling party (Mapam-Mai); for the past fifty years he has been in charge of land acquisitions for colonist settlements; he was an intimate friend and personal adviser of the late Prime Minister Levi Eshkol.

20. According to a study by S. Teveth, *Haaretz*, May 31, 1968.

21. *Davar*, September 29, 1967.

We see here again the willingness to ignore the Arab factor, the Palestinian Arabs, and to view the problem as a mere question of land. One might say that this reflects the professional deformation of those who have become used to robbing the Arabs of their land (it is robbery, even if the big landowners are compensated).

The position of such technocrats of the land seems, however, to be a minority view among the territorialists. A close reading of the writings of the advocates of a "Greater Israel" reveals a contempt for rather than fear of the Arabs, which fuses quite readily with the conviction that Israel can live with the Palestinian Arabs by subjugating them, as it has subjugated the Arab minority within Israel since 1948. This experience is regarded as conclusive. Those who adopt this position cling to a classic colonial tradition adapted to the requirements of colonists in the process of achieving a new national identity. General of the Air Force O. Weizmann, whose family has lived in the country for generations, expresses this contemptuous attitude blatantly. When asked by an interviewer, "Isn't it true that you have always been 'accused' not only of preaching the inevitability of war, but also of underestimating the strength of the enemy?," the general replied:

No, I have never underestimated the Arabs, I have estimated them at their proper value. I consider it wrong to treat the Arabs with contempt. I believe that the Arabs have many excellent qualities. I grew up among them, I speak their language, and I think that we will some day succeed in finding a common language; as for their military capacity—that is a different matter. It is high time that they understand that their education, their way of life, and the mentality of their leaders, have ill-equipped them to wage war. . . . A modern war requires not only strength and courage, but also brains, and in this combination we surpass the Arabs. I do not think that we will lose this superiority in the years to come. . . .²²

The attitude of this general is quite characteristic of a prevalent tendency; it reflects with military brutality a wide-

22. *Maariv*, July 14, 1967, quoted in "Everything." *Israel's Peace Borders*, in Hebrew, Dr. A. Ben-Ami, ed., Tel Aviv, 1967, p. 139.

spread opinion about the military capacities of the Arabs. For many Israelis, military values are synonymous with values. General Weizmann, however, must be having his doubts. The Vietnam war is demonstrating that an economically underdeveloped country can successfully resist one of the most powerful armies in the world; and we are also witnessing a resurgence of armed struggle by the Palestinian people.

The political extension of this attitude toward the Arabs in general, and those of Palestine in particular, leads to their direct domination; since they cannot defend themselves or assert their rights, they are presumably fit to be subjugated. Jabotinsky and his followers had always advocated such a policy (in 1925 Jabotinsky founded the Zionist-Revisionist Union which gave rise to the Irgun, and later to the extreme right-wing Herut party). The Revisionists favored the rule of a minority over a majority; Jabotinsky, in fact, was an advocate of minority rule. Barring new expansionist goals, direct domination today does not entail such a situation, at least in the immediate future. The territorialists are now in a position to represent it as a "humane" form of peaceful coexistence. We were about to write "peaceful coexistence between two peoples." But this is not the case. The fate of the Arab minority in Israel shows that what is involved is the domination of one people by another. For a *Zionist*, there can be no other relationship.

Between the extreme land territorialists who want to expel the Arabs from the country (J. Weitz) and the political territorialists who want to subdue the Arabs by force, are the majority of territorialists. This latter tendency advocates retaining both the present borders of Israel (with or without Sinai) and the Arab population. It appears to be particularly strong among the territorialists associated with the agricultural cooperative movement. In the daily *Al Hamishnar*, organ of Mapam, Mrs. R. Svorai writes:

We cannot accept binationalism. Eretz-Israel is the only place where we can be sovereign. It is the country of the entire Jewish people. But it is our duty to do more than merely tolerate those

Arabs who will decide to stay in our country. As if "allowing" them to stay and earn a living were merely charity.²³

Mrs. Svorai proposes the following:

Mass immigration of Jews.

Vigorous measures to settle new immigrants and native Israelis in agricultural colonies to be established in the ancient-new regions of the country.

An appeal to the inhabitants of the coastal plain to settle in Hebron, Bethlehem, Jericho, and Jerusalem.

Settling the Arab refugees in the interior of Israel, and granting them the same civil rights as those enjoyed by the other Arab inhabitants of the country.²⁴

Mrs. Svorai's view, incidentally, does not reflect the official position of her party, for Mapam advocates partial annexation (the eastern sector of Jerusalem, the Gaza strip), the demilitarization of Sinai and of the Golan Heights, and the return of the West Bank to the Hashemite kingdom after adjustment of the frontiers. The Mapam program also calls for most of the refugees from the West Bank to be resettled in Jordan (resolutions of the Political Commission of Mapam, August 24, 1967).

An approach similar to that of Mrs. Svorai is expressed in several articles which appeared in *Lamerkhav*, organ of A'hdut Avoda, and was republished in the collection issued by the Movement for a Greater Israel. It should be noted that there is a contradiction between rejecting binationalism in the name of "the entire Jewish people" and "Jewish sovereignty in the country," on the one hand, and granting civil rights to the Arab population on the other. Has the Arab minority in Israel enjoyed equal rights since 1948? Although they are Israeli citizens and can vote, they have been denied all forms of *independent* political expression. Is the "Law of Return" compatible with equality between the two communities or peoples? This position is inherently contradictory, as is any social chauvinist

23. *Al Hamishnar*, June 23, 1967, quoted in *Everything*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-6.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

position.²⁵ But the very fact that such a position is advanced indicates a willingness to entertain the possibility of a common life for the two peoples, or rather an awareness of the need for the two peoples to live together.

This attitude is gaining ground among the territorialists. Their ideological outlook and political views are compatible with the notion of coexistence—coexistence through domination, but coexistence nevertheless. Sugar-coated, and therefore demagogic, Jewish domination becomes a civilizing mission. On this point there is national unanimity among the Israelis. The country must not become “levantinized.” On the contrary, say some territorialists, those Arabs who wish to live in our midst must show their willingness to adopt the ways of Western civilization, or simply become Jews. “It seems to me,” wrote Mr. Bareli in the semi-official *Davar*, “that the most severe and absolute deprivation of the Arabs in Israel consists in preventing them from becoming Jews. Is this human? Is this in the interest of Israel?”²⁶

The resurgence of the Palestinian Arab people on the one hand, and the fact that the neighboring Arab countries, especially Jordan, can no longer contain this resurgence on the other, have contributed to this attitude. The strongest argument of the territorialists against the advocates of a Jewish demographic majority is the appeal to the imperatives of national security. E. Ben-Haim writes in the organ of A’hdut Avoda:

Even if Gaza is returned to Egypt or becomes independent, and Sinai and the Golan Heights are returned, and Mount Ephraim and Mount Judea are restored to Jordan or to a new Arab country, the Arabs will continue to multiply at the same rate, and remain sovereign, armed, and a threat to a small country that lacks adequate defenses and borders.²⁷

25. “Social chauvinism” derives from Lenin’s terminology in describing the position of the various Social Democratic parties during the First World War, meaning socialist in form and chauvinist in content.—Tr.

26. *Davar*, August 4, 1967, cited in *Everything*, op. cit., p. 214.

27. *Lamerkhav*, August 11, 1967, cited in *Everything*, op. cit., p. 229.

Certain circles concerned with national defense express similar opinions. Territorialism in this instance fuses with the conviction that the Palestinian Arab people must be resettled within the state of Israel, and subjected to stringent controls. We will return to this point.

The territorialist approach has international implications. The advocates of the demographic thesis have their "*interlocuteurs valables*" in the government of Jordan, and naturally also in that of the United States. A former Deputy Minister of Defense, Mr. S. Peres, denies the usefulness of negotiations with Jordan. He asks: "Will negotiations with Jordan guarantee the borders of Israel or halt the armed struggle of the Arabs? Will an agreement with Jordan be binding on Egypt, Syria, or Al Fatah?"²⁸

He even fears that such negotiations may result in a confrontation with the United States, for

although the United States has until now supported Israel's approach (direct negotiations), it is obvious that it will back Jordan's territorial demands once Israeli conditions are met. . . . Israel's position will then clash with that of the United States. . . . Jordan, therefore, cannot provide us with a guarantee of peace. The Security Council will not accept an agreement between Jordan and Israel. The Russians will press for a withdrawal in the south, and public opinion throughout the world will become increasingly hostile to Israel. (*Ibid.*)

This trend must be reversed: "We must above all emphasize the need for negotiations with the Palestinians." Mr. Peres is even more emphatic in an interview with Mr. E. Rouleau: "We must initiate talks with the Palestinians, and not with King Hussein and President Nasser."²⁹

Regardless of how we view the Resistance organizations and their views, the fact remains that the Palestinian armed struggle has caused much of Israeli public opinion to regard the problem no longer as one involving the relations between states, but as the problem of Palestine. To be sure, there are those who

28. *Haaretz*, May 31, 1968.

29. *Le Monde*, December 28, 1968.

hope to find collaborators among traditional Arab notables and politicians; others lean toward the perspective of increasingly ruthless domination, should this prove necessary. Both camps can conceive only of domination, with or without the mediation of Arab collaborators. But a basic change has occurred. The advocates of a Jewish majority rightly fear that the inevitable confrontation between the Israeli people and the Palestinian Arab people may eventually undermine Israeli national unity. (General I. Rabin is supposed to have declared unofficially that if the Israeli army had to occupy the West Bank and Gaza for any length of time it would undergo a radical change.)

This brings us back to our starting point.

What is the solution envisaged by the Israeli leaders?

It should be remembered that these leaders view certain requirements as essential. National unity must be maintained, as must an ideal capable of arousing and sustaining the overwhelming majority of the population. The current climate of uncertainty is proving increasingly unsettling. The Jewish (always Jewish) character of the state must be preserved; and "Jewish" in this case means Western, non-Arab, non-Levantine, alien to the region. It also means that attempts must be made to maintain the relatively high standard of living of the Israeli population at a level approximating that of the industrialized countries. In present conditions, this implies increasing dependence on North American imperialism. Such dependence involves basic commitments: adaptation to capitalist imperatives, especially those of North American imperialism, and responsiveness to the demands of North American Jewry. Finally, the Palestine problem must be dealt with, for the Arab countries, especially Jordan, can no longer contain the Palestinian Arab people.

The "peace plan" of General Yigal Allon, contender for the post of Prime Minister, is a typical example of the kind of compromise (between various extremist positions) made by Zionism throughout its history. Allon, according to an influential weekly of British Jewry, offered "an ideal way out of the dilemma of retaining strategic advantage without embracing the

possibility of an Arab majority within the next twenty years."³⁰ His "plan," which was presented to the Executive Committee of the Israeli Labor Party on June 6, 1968, proposes that the June 1967 cease-fire line be maintained as Israel's eastern border (a concession to the territorialists). Behind this line and a 15 km-wide Israeli corridor, an Arab enclave is to be established on the West Bank. This enclave would not have a common border with Jordan, but its population could opt for political links with Jordan (pro-United States), or for autonomy (a concession to the Israeli federalists). Since several roads considered strategic and essential to Israeli security pass through the enclave, especially the road leading from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, the plan apparently calls for the annexation of the southern part of the West Bank (to the southeast of Jerusalem). The Arab enclave, so defined, would receive the refugees living in the regions to be annexed by Israel (a concession to the advocates of a demographic majority). This would result in the presence of 650,000 Arabs within the borders of Israel, as against some 300,000 before June 1967, and 1,300,000 after July 1967. The plan holds out the hope that the methods used to control the Arab minority in Israel would prove effective even for a minority twice as large. As for the enclave, the hope is that it could be adequately controlled, for there are serious misgivings about its viability. ("The enclaves of Samaria and Judea to the north-east and southeast of Jerusalem can be easily controlled," writes A. Scemama.³¹ At that time there were still plans for establishing an Arab enclave to the southeast of Jerusalem.)

The "plan" elicited the following comment from the *Jewish Chronicle*:

The enclave, which would amount to about half the total area of the West Bank, would become one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

If those refugees in territories annexed by Israel and those who fled to Jordan after the June war were to be settled there, it

30. *Jewish Chronicle* (London), June 28, 1968.

31. *Le Monde*, June 11, 1968.

would have to accommodate about 800,000 people within an area of little more than 1,000 square miles.

Given all the financial and technical help in the world, the settlement of 800 people on one square mile of relatively poor land hardly suggests itself as a solution.

The reply of the other pretender to the post of Prime Minister, General Dayan, was presented at a meeting of the Israeli Parliamentary Labor Party on June 19, 1968. In their struggle for power these pretenders to the throne are forced to reveal their aims, at least partially. Whereas Allon evidently concocted his plan to satisfy contradictory extremist positions that had to be enlisted in favor of his proposed appointment as Deputy Premier, General Dayan, on the other hand, would strengthen national unity through a Bonapartist plebiscite on various nationalist positions. Like his friend S. Peres, he rejects the priority of negotiations with King Hussein who, in his view, could not make peace without Nasser's approval. No Arab state, declares Dayan, could settle for anything less than a return to the borders of June 4, 1967. He violently attacks the Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967, calling for a withdrawal from the occupied countries. He opposes "the division of the western part of the land of Israel (i.e., Palestine) by any political border." He therefore favors a "Greater Israel," and envisages the possibility of further expansion. He rules out an independent Palestinian state, with or without enclave, but accords the Arabs the right to administer their local affairs.

On the basic question of the Palestinian armed struggle, he observes that it can be dealt with only by Israel; Jordan, in this respect, is definitely ruled out. He has reportedly said that "we have to entrench ourselves in the territories. We have to deal a shattering blow to Al Fatah, even if the cost is high. We have to prevent a revolt by the Arab population, because the whole picture may change if we have to open fire on demonstrators and strikers."

With respect to the other basic problem, that of the character of the Israeli state, he is equally emphatic. The Arabs must be subdued even more strongly than was the minority before

June 1967, precisely because there would be more of them: "My plan is realistic. The Arabs of the West Bank are not Israelis. One day they may express the desire to become Palestinian citizens. But as long as the numerical relation between us and them is as it is at present, we cannot possibly accord them Israeli citizenship."

General Dayan's plan envisages two stages. First, Arab resistance must be ruthlessly broken by military means. Only then will it become possible to deal with the other Arabs, who are destined to become second-class citizens. In his view, only when Arab resistance is crushed will it become possible to "favor" the departure of many of these Arabs, and resume "coexistence" with a morally and numerically weakened Arab population. Moshe Dayan, who took part in the struggle against the Palestinian revolt of 1936-1939, thinks that he can again crush Arab resistance and subjugate those who remain in the country. Encouraged by a poll in which 62 percent of those questioned were in favor of Dayan as Prime Minister, as against 12 percent for General Allon (this poll was made public on June 14, 1968, and was corroborated by another poll in December 1968), Dayan hopes to impose himself through a popular mandate.

Our analysis is intended to have a general scope transcending the current situation. We have dealt at some length with the various positions that emerged in the spring of 1968 only because we regard this period as especially revealing. An acute stage in the struggle for power, and a period of relative calm at the borders, induced the leaders to express their deepest convictions with unusual candor.

What is the answer? This is a natural and widely asked question. We will not avoid it. Before attempting a reply, we must situate Israel on the international chessboard and examine the political ramifications of its special relationship to world Jewry.

We have thus far stressed the Palestinian aspect of the conflict, rather than the manner in which it affects the relations

between Israel and the Arab countries. We wished to emphasize the fact that a people has been deprived of its national rights. We have contended that the problem is essentially Palestinian, and that only the Palestinian people can assert its rights through its own, authentic popular struggle. The international character of the conflict becomes predominant, however, as soon as the problem is viewed in terms of its Jewish, rather than Palestinian, Israeli, or Middle Eastern aspects. In our opinion, the question of Israel is closely connected with the international Jewish "problematic."

The most penetrating study of the Jewish problem we know of is A. Leon's *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*.³² Leon develops the point of view presented by Marx in his famous 1844 article on the Jewish question. Leon writes:

*Above all, the Jews constitute historically a social group with a specific economic function. They are a class, or more precisely, a people-class. The concept of class does not at all contradict the concept of people. It is because the Jews have preserved themselves as a social class that they have likewise retained certain of their religious, ethnic and linguistic traits.*³³ (Emphasis in original.)

According to Leon, the Jews fulfilled a specific economic function as traders and moneylenders. The Jews were most prosperous during the precapitalist stage of the societies they inhabited. Jewish trade was not a function of local production, but met the marginal needs of a closed feudal economy. The Jewish moneylenders did not contribute to the growth of production; their role was to cater to the requirements of luxury consumption, and to finance feudal wars. "The 'capital' of precapitalist society existed outside of its economic system."³⁴ It is therefore a foreign element which could best play the role of "capital" in a natural, feudal economy. In Europe, Western as well as Eastern, this role was frequently played by Jews. "Feudal society *as such* could not create a capitalist element;

32. Ediciones Pioneras, Mexico, D. F., 1950 (in English).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

as soon as it was able to do so, precisely then it ceased being feudal. . . . From the moment that capital begins to emerge from the womb of this social system and takes the place of the borrowed organ, the Jew is eliminated and feudal society ceases to be feudal."³⁵

Anti-Semitism became most virulent precisely when the economic position of the Jews broke down. Many Jews were expelled from Western Europe at the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the modern era. At that time Central and Eastern Europe, which were lagging behind the West, offered the Jews opportunities as commercial agents and moneylenders. In Eastern Europe the crisis occurred in the eighteenth century; in the nineteenth century the same pattern was repeated, as in Western Europe several centuries earlier. In Western Europe in the meantime, conditions were favoring the assimilation of the Jewish communities. "The Jewish problem, close to vanishing in the West, flared up violently in Eastern Europe. . . . And everywhere, although in different forms and under different guises, the flood of Jewish immigrants coming from Eastern Europe will revitalize the Jewish problem. It is in this respect that the history of the Jews of Eastern Europe has certainly been the decisive factor in the Jewish question in our epoch."³⁶

Leon would have probably considered it unlikely that his remarks would be corroborated by one of the pillars of the Third Reich. In his memoirs, Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, President of the Reichsbank under Hitler, writes as follows:

Prior to 1930 there was scarcely any sign of an anti-Semitic political movement in Germany. . . . In good middle-class society the Jew was a welcome guest. The fact that Hitler made use of anti-Semitism for propaganda purposes can be traced back to his Vienna period. In Germany he was helped by the fact that, at the time of the Weimar Republic, an unusually large number of eastern Jews from Poland, Rumania and Russia poured into Germany, consisting to a great extent of suspicious or even desperate elements. They took advantage of the disturbed political conditions, not

35. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

only to profit by inflation, but to play a particularly active part in the corrupting of officials.

For Schacht, the distinction between Western and Eastern Jews was decisive. He regarded the former as his equals, and claims to have made efforts in their behalf:

I also managed to . . . ensure that, up to 1937 inclusive, the prospectuses for government loans offered for public subscription among the many other banks, should also be underwritten by the Jewish banking firms of Mendelsohn, Bleichröder, Arnhold, Dreyfuss, Straus, Warburg, Aufhäuser and Behrens.³⁷

The Jewish question gave rise to conflicting tendencies within the Jewish community. Where capitalism developed under stable conditions, it promoted assimilation. Where capitalism caused severe disruptions in Jewish life, this gave rise to a nationalist Jewish renaissance (stress on Yiddish culture, Zionism); this happened where the uprooted Jewish masses flocked to the cities in large numbers (percentage of Russian Jews living in cities numbering more than 10,000 inhabitants: 5 percent in 1847, 28.2 in 1897, 50.2 in 1926; similar figures apply for the German Jews: 6 percent in 1850, 32 in 1880, 61.3 in 1900).

In his introduction to the new French edition of Leon's work, Maxime Rodinson defends the author against the idealist interpreters of Jewish survival. He has reservations about Leon's excessive schematism. He is of the opinion, moreover, that the question posed by Leon—why did the Jewish people survive?—does not apply in the case of Europe before the Crusades, or of the Near East and North Africa even much later. In countries lacking a strong unifying force, the continued existence of ethnic-religious minorities was a normal phenomenon that was not confined to the Jews. Basing himself on recent studies, Rodinson observes that Leon's thesis of "functional specialization" is equally inapplicable in these instances. There can be no doubt, in our opinion, that both Marx and Leon were familiar only with

37. Hjalmar Schacht, *Confessions of "The Old Wizard,"* Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1956, pp. 322-323.

European Jewry. Their observations, therefore, are pertinent only to those particular Jewish communities, even if Leon's work has a much wider historical and geographic framework. Marx, in any case, dealt with the Jewish question only incidentally (even in his article on the Jewish question, his real subject is society and the bourgeois state in Europe). And it is a fact that the Zionist phenomenon which concerns us arose in the Jewish communities of Europe (both Western and Eastern), so brilliantly analyzed by Leon.

Leon's analysis reveals the social specificity of the Jewish people in the course of its history, and the international character of its present situation. The two are closely related. The social specificity of the Jews was dissolving in Western Europe; they no longer played an exclusive or predominant economic role. There the conditions for assimilation existed; and this led inevitably to the disintegration of the Jewish community as a distinct people-class. The economic and political emancipation of the Jews left room only for religion as a private concern of particular individuals or groups of individuals, perfectly compatible with a capitalist social structure. The international aspect of the Jewish problem, however, presented an obstacle to the unfolding of this process. The Jewish bourgeoisie understood that its prospects for assimilation were jeopardized by the Jewish masses from Eastern Europe. These masses had to be prevented from coming to the West in large numbers. In the eyes of the Jewish bourgeoisie, especially in France and Britain, their emigration, or even deportation, to distant lands was the ideal solution to the problem.

The dilemma of the Jewish bourgeoisie was perfectly clear to Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism. His pamphlet *The Jewish State* (1896) contains a passage devoted to French Jewry, which shows that Herzl was well aware that the Jewish immigrants

either introduce Anti-Semitism where it does not exist, or intensify it where it does. The "assimilated" give expression to this secret grievance in "philanthropic" undertakings. They organize emigra-

tion societies for wandering Jews. There is a reverse to the picture which would be comic, if it did not deal with human beings. For some of these charitable institutions are created not for, but against, persecuted Jews; they are created to despatch these poor creatures just as fast and far as possible. And thus, many an apparent friend of the Jews turns out on careful inspection, to be nothing more than an Anti-Semite of Jewish origin, disguised as a philanthropist.³⁸

Some ten years later, B. Borochoy, the ideologist of the Zionist Left and spokesman for the Zionist "Jewish masses" in the Tsarist empire, defined and condemned the attitude of the Jewish bourgeoisie in Western Europe even more emphatically:

The Jewish bourgeoisie finds its interests best served by assimilation; and were it not for the "poor *Ostjuden*" (East European Jews), the Jewish upper bourgeoisie would not be disturbed by the Jewish problem. The continuous stream of immigration of East European Jews and frequent pogroms remind the upper bourgeoisie of Western Europe only too often of the miserable lot of their brethren. . . . Since the Jewish upper bourgeoisie would like above all else to lose its individuality and be assimilated completely by the native bourgeoisie, it is very much affected by anti-Semitism. It fears everything which tends to spread anti-Semitism. . . . Anti-Semitism menaces both the poor helpless Jews and the all-powerful Rothschilds . . . Were there no anti-Semitism, the misery and poverty of the Jewish emigrants would be of little concern to the Jewish upper bourgeoisie. . . . Therefore, in spite of themselves and despite their efforts to ignore the Jewish problem, the Jewish aristocrats must turn philanthropists. . . . Everywhere the Jewish upper bourgeoisie is engaged in the search for a solution to the Jewish problem and a means of being delivered of the Jewish masses.³⁹

On the one hand, Herzl and Borochoy. On the other, the common internal enemy, the Jewish big bourgeoisie, especially in Western Europe, incarnated by its most famous representative—Rothschild.

Herzl was born into a Jewish middle bourgeoisie that was assimilated or in the process of becoming assimilated. In his na-

38. T. Herzl, *The Jewish State*, American Zionist Emergency Council, New York, 1946, p. 81.

39. Ber Borochoy, "Our Platform," in *Nationalism and the Class Struggle*, Young Poale Zion Alliance of America, 1937, pp. 185-186.

tive country of Hungary, the Jews had since 1867 enjoyed "equal rights with the Christian inhabitants in the exercise of all civil rights and in access to all political functions" (pro-Jewish Hungarian law of 1867). Borochof lived in Russia, where the Jews were persecuted, and where their economic position was rapidly disintegrating. He represents a tendency among the Jewish masses in the petty bourgeoisie and sections of the Jewish proletariat, employed primarily in consumer-goods industries frequently owned by Jewish industrialists. Theirs was a rapidly changing society in the grip of an extremely severe crisis. These East European Jews were the victims of a ferocious anti-Jewish onslaught. Estimates are that nearly 3,500,000 Jews fled this part of Europe (Russia, Rumania, Galicia) between 1880 and 1914. At the end of the century, the Jewish population in these countries numbered 6,500,000. Instead of decreasing, however, the number of Jews actually increased. This population had a very high demographic growth rate. A more or less spontaneous emigration movement to Palestine arose, but it remained weak. It is estimated that the Jewish population of Palestine numbered 24,000 in 1882, and only 85,000 in 1914.

Such were the objective conditions and the contending forces. A representative of the Jewish big bourgeoisie, Edmond de Rothschild, was known as the "Father of the Yishuv" (the name given to the modern Jewish establishment in Palestine; it means colonization or colony). Herzl had earned the title of "Father of the Jewish state." Borochof was described in the introduction to his works as "the guiding spirit of the Poltava Congress of 1906, which laid the basis for the Jewish Social-Democratic Labor Party, Poale Zion." The Poale Zion party subsequently became Mapai, the party of Ben-Gurion and Dayan. Borochof was also the ideologist of the Zionist extreme Left represented by Mapam, which also eventually degenerated into social chauvinism.

We will discuss these three tendencies briefly.

Honor to whom honor is due. Edmond de Rothschild was in his time (end of the nineteenth century) known among the

Jews of Palestine as “renowned Benefactor”; he acquired the title of “Father of the Yishuv” later. The Jewish big bourgeoisie reacted to the plight of the East European Jews in typical fashion—they resorted to philanthropy for political ends. This philanthropic activity was intended to promote the emigration of these Jews to distant regions where, it was hoped, they would cease to be a compromising problem for the Jews in Western Europe. One of the wealthiest Jews in France, Baron de Hirsch, had accordingly established the Jewish Colonization Association which financed the emigration of East European Jews to Argentina. The extremely powerful Alliance Israélite Universelle, founded in 1860, financed the emigration of East European Jews to many countries, but Palestine was excluded. A historian of Jewish colonization in Palestine writes:

The Jewish institutions which gave material aid to the refugees from Galicia steered them always to countries other than Palestine. They refused all aid to those who insisted on going there. The Alliance Israélite Universelle and other influential Jewish organizations in Central and Western Europe filled the Hebrew and Yiddish newspapers with propaganda designed to prevent emigration to Palestine, which they represented as materially unsuitable.⁴⁰

Yet this same Alliance Israélite was one of the first organizations to establish itself in Palestine, where in 1870 it founded a school of agriculture, Mikveh Israel, sometimes regarded as marking the beginning of modern Jewish colonization in the country. This school of agriculture, however, was designed to alleviate the poverty and misery of the local Palestinian Jews who had been supported largely by (international) charitable contributions. The Jewish philanthropists regarded Palestine as merely another headache.

The Jewish upper bourgeoisie almost unanimously opposed Zionism, at least until the First World War. What it feared most was that a political organization pursuing the aim of settling large numbers of Jews in an independent region which might

40. I. Margalith, *Baron Edmond de Rothschild et la colonisation juive en Palestine, 1882-1899*, Marcel Rivière et Cie., Paris, 1957, p. 46.

become a Jewish state—in Palestine or elsewhere—would perpetuate the Jewish problem. Asked to provide financial and technical aid for the settlement of Jews in Uganda in 1903, at a time when the World Zionist Organization had hopes of establishing a national Jewish homeland in East Africa, the Jewish Colonization Association replied: “We cannot participate in any effort to establish a Jewish colony in East Africa unless the project has a philanthropic, non-political character.” A lucid analysis of the situation had convinced it that any large-scale Jewish settlement resulting in the formation of a state would help keep the Jewish problem alive on an international scale. In the eyes of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie, what was wrong with Palestine or any other area in that region was not that it could not rapidly absorb the East European Jewish masses. On the contrary, the fear was that a political organization such as the Zionist movement would in fact bring about a new regrouping of Jewish masses and leave the international Jewish problem unresolved. The Jewish big bourgeoisie preferred to see these masses dispersed, absorbed by other populations, scattered as widely as possible. In July 1903, Herzl asked Lord Rothschild, of the British branch of the family, to support his project to establish a Jewish settlement in the British colonies or semi-colonies bordering on Palestine, at the time a Turkish possession. Lord Rothschild did not reject the plan out of hand, but insisted: “Just a small one, 25,000 settlers at the most.” The Zionist Herzl replied: “I shall do it on a big scale or not at all.”⁴¹ This basic difference in attitude manifested itself throughout the first decades of the Zionist movement. As early as 1896, Herzl had told Edmond de Rothschild, member of the French branch, who was “interested” in Palestine: “A colony is a little state, a state is a big colony. You want to build a small state, I, a big colony.”

The attitude of the Rothschild family typified that of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie in those days. True pillars of high finance around the middle of the century, possessors of enormous political and social power, the Rothschilds had had to conquer

41. *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, ed. Raphael Patai, The Herzl Press, Thomas Yoseloff, N. Y., 1960, vol. IV, p. 1296.

their social position, and even their political rights, in the face of great difficulties. Lionel Rothschild, head of the London house and son of the founder of the English branch (he died in 1879), had been elected deputy of the City in August 1847, but he was not allowed to assume his functions. A Jew was not allowed to sit in Parliament. In those days, writes a biographer of the Rothschilds, "no Jew could hold civil or military office in England. He was not elected to Parliament, and he could not vote at elections. The Jews in England lived in a kind of political and social ghetto."⁴² Lionel Rothschild had to be re-elected four times before he was finally allowed to sit in Parliament on July 26, 1858, the law having been modified to permit non-Christians to be seated.

Directly affected by anti-Jewish restrictions which confined many Jews to activities as traders and moneylenders, the Rothschild family in Central Europe supported the movement for the economic emancipation of the Jews. At the suggestion of the House of Rothschild, the Jews in Austria had in 1833 submitted a petition asking for the right of domicile, and to be allowed to engage in the sciences, arts, and trades, as well as to acquire and own real estate.⁴³ The Rothschilds, explains their biographer,

felt they must assist in the endeavor to secure this general extension of Jewish rights, as special exceptions to the laws had often been made in their favor. Thus they had received a special mining concession for the coal mines in Dalmatia and Istria, as well as for the Istrian quicksilver mines, although for nearly three hundred years Jews had been excluded from such activities.⁴⁴

After four years of bargaining, a conference of Ministers summoned by Metternich stated that "it is undoubtedly in the interests of the Government that the Jews should be accorded some improvement in their condition," but cautioned that this

42. Count Corti, *The Reign of the House of Rothschild*, Victor Gollancz Ltd., London, 1928, p. 252.

43. Petition of November 20, 1833. Cf. V. A. F. Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, Vienna-Leipzig, 1918, vol. II, p. 346.

44. Count Corti, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.

should be done in such a manner that the public will not "suddenly draw the conclusion that full emancipation of the Jews is contemplated and that the Government intends to put them on an equality with Christians."

The Jews had hardly achieved equality with Christians and secured the elimination of the obstacles to their fuller economic participation, indispensable to their continued prosperity, when the Jewish question erupted in Eastern Europe. Contrary to developments in Western Europe, the condition of the Jews in the East had been steadily worsening since 1860. In Rumania, for instance, the first laws prohibiting Jews from owning inns and taverns in the countryside—the number of such Jews was considerable—dated from 1861. In 1866 and 1867 they were prohibited from establishing permanent residence in the countryside. In 1866, the main synagogue of Bucharest was sacked. The expulsion of the Jews from Galatz a year later was accompanied by frightful massacres. The situation of the Jews in the Tsarist empire, the real center of Jewry, followed a similar course: extension of discriminatory legislation, especially after the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, and the rapid transformation of the natural economy. The year 1871 witnessed a pogrom in Odessa. The great pogroms, this time centrally organized, date from 1881-1882; they recurred periodically until the 1917 revolution. The Jewish big bourgeoisie had no choice but to intervene:

Beaconsfield (Disraeli) and Lionel (Rothschild) did not fail to act in the interests of their common race at the Congress (Berlin, 1878). Lionel wrote a letter to Beaconsfield requesting him in the name of humanity and civilization to intervene on behalf of the ill-treated Jews in the east of Europe; his letter was read to the Congress in session. At the same time Lionel brought pressure to bear upon Bismarck through Bleichröder, and also sent an appeal to the French delegate, Waddington, and to the Italian delegate, Count Luigi Corti, with the result that Article 44 of the Congress of Berlin actually provided that all the members of all faiths in the Balkan peninsula should be on an equality. The Austrian

delegate, Count Andrassy, had been appealed to in a similar way by the Vienna House of Rothschild.⁴⁵

This was also the period (last quarter of the nineteenth century) when the Rothschilds expanded their activities in the Russian financial market:

Whereas Baring and Hambro floated several (Russian) loans before 1870, the Rothschilds acted in this capacity in 1862, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873, and 1875. The credit standing of the Russian state, which honored its obligations scrupulously, improved steadily: the 1870 bond issue was sold to the public at 80 F.; that of 1875, at 92.50 F.⁴⁶

After 1878, the House of Rothschild suffered a severe setback in the Russian market. The biographers generally regard this blow as devastating. Issuing Russian bonds was at the time among the most profitable financial operations in Europe. The Jewish question in Russia undoubtedly facilitated the partial and temporary exclusion of the Rothschilds from the Russian financial market at the end of the 1870s. Ten years later the situation had changed. Europe was saturated with Russian securities, and it is possible that the Rothschilds were then subjected to pressures designed to re-enlist their financial participation:

The attitude of the Rothschilds with regard to the Franco-Russian rapprochement was at first reserved. . . . When, however, the Alliance between France and Russia took shape (July 1891) . . . it became a patriotic duty to assist Russia in her financial requirements, and the Rothschilds recognized that they would have to ignore the special interests of the Jews, as for the sake of their position in France, they could not stand aloof from participating in the big loans which that country was making available for Russia. Towards Germany they excused their change of policy, principally on the ground that, whereas they had previously refused Russia a loan, since she oppressed the Jews, they were now attempting to get better conditions for the Russian Jews by granting such loans.⁴⁷

There is an interesting observation and an added touch

45. *Ibid.*, p. 449.

46. J. Bouvier, *Les Rothschild*, Club français du livre, Paris, 1960, p. 228.

47. Count Corti, *op. cit.*, pp. 442-443.

in a commentary by Count Münster, then German ambassador to France. In a letter to the German Chancellor von Caprivi, dated October 23, 1892, he writes:

The prospect of making a profit, and, according to Alphonse Rothschild, the hope of attaining better conditions for the Jews in Russia, have induced the House here to enter into negotiations for a loan . . . that the wife of the new Finance Minister, Witte, whom Russian ladies here have described to me as being an intelligent and very intriguing Jewess, is of great help in bringing about an understanding with the Jewish bankers, seems to me to be not improbable . . . although the French market is saturated with Russian securities, the French give their good francs for bad rubles.⁴⁸

Herzl, incidentally, subsequently undertook several talks with this same Tsarist Finance Minister, S. Y. de Witte. When Herzl asked him to support the Zionist cause, the Minister made the notorious reply: "But the Jews are being given encouragement to emigrate. Kicks, for example." Witte regarded himself as a "friend of the Jews," but he was concerned over their role in the revolutionary parties. By his own admission, he expressed his "friendship" by giving the Tsar the following advice: "Your Majesty, if it is possible to drown the six or seven million Jews in the Black Sea, I have absolutely no objection to it. But it isn't possible; so we must let them live."

We will see further on that Zionism, aware of the gravity of the situation, advanced its own solution to the problem, and tried to exploit the eagerness of the Russian leaders to rid themselves of the Jews.

To return to the Rothschilds, it is evident that opinions vary regarding their attitude. The necessity of helping the East European Jews may have hindered them in the pursuit of profits, or in fulfilling their "patriotic duty"; or the necessity of helping these Jews may have forced them into dubious financial operations, or to engage in them reluctantly. Circumstances probably dictated which factor came into play in any particular instance. We incline to the view that at the turn of the century the Tsarist

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 443-444.

government used the Russian Jews as a means of pressuring the Jewish bankers. Following an old tradition, the Tsarist government used the Jews for ransoming purposes. Whatever the correct interpretation, it is certain that the East European Jewish masses interfered with the freedom of action of the Rothschilds and their associates.

Although largely hostile to the early Zionist movement, the Jewish big bourgeoisie nevertheless could not completely disassociate itself. The attitude of the Rothschilds in this respect was typical. The head of the French branch, Alphonse, conducted the business affairs of the House and negotiated international loans. The youngest brother, Edmond, headed the Rothschild philanthropic activities in Palestine. This permitted the family to keep an eye on the situation there and, if necessary, to apply the brake. It need hardly be said that a Rothschild could make his intervention count. In 1900, the Jewish agricultural colonies of the "Baron" encompassed 20,088 hectares (almost 50,000 acres)—of which 9,220 hectares (23,000 acres) were located in Transjordan—and 3,875 inhabitants. The other Jewish agricultural colonies totaled only 7,551 hectares (18,658 acres) and 1,314 inhabitants.

Baron Edmond de Rothschild persisted in his hostility to political Zionism, and became reconciled to it only after the issuance of the Balfour Declaration favoring the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jews. Fifty years later, in June 1967, the grandson of the "Father of the Yishuv," another Edmond de Rothschild, addressed an open letter to the French Jews asking them to give their financial support to Israel: "The contribution required of each of us is not an act of charity, it is a tax, the price of our dignity, pride, and solidarity. . . ." Many changes have taken place in the attitude of the Rothschilds, and, we believe, in that of most members of the Jewish big bourgeoisie. They have nevertheless remained true to themselves. Conditions have changed; political Zionism is no longer the threat it was once thought to be. To understand this change, we must examine the two essential components of the Zionist movement, the Western middle bourgeoisie and the

Eastern European petty bourgeoisie, embodied respectively by Herzl and Borochof.

The contradictory situation of European Jewry was mirrored in Herzl. A study of his life and works is of great interest, for he reflected his class accurately. The parallels in the lives of the founders and precursors of political Zionism are in truth striking. Dr. Max Nordau, next to Herzl the dominant figure of Zionism, was also born in Budapest. He settled in Paris and lived the life of an assimilated Jew. D. Wolffsohn, who became president of the Zionist organization after Herzl's death, was born in Lithuania. He settled in Cologne, became a prosperous businessman, and was one of Herzl's most loyal associates. Herzl's political pamphlet, *The Jewish State* (1896), had been preceded by another pamphlet, Dr. Leo Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation*, published in Odessa in 1882. In his diary Herzl states that had he known Pinsker's work earlier he might not have written his *Jewish State*, for these two pamphlets had so much in common. Pinsker was at first a strong advocate of assimilation for the Russian Jews, but changed his views after the pogroms of 1880-1882.

In regard to the central problem of assimilation, Herzl's position as set forth in *The Jewish State*, cited earlier, never changed. He reiterated it to the representatives of Western Jewry, and in his talks with non-Jewish political leaders. In April 1896, two months after the publication of his pamphlet and the beginning of his international political activity, he reassured the Grand Duke of Baden, who had received Herzl and his ideas with sympathy. He explained that "only those Jews would go to the Holy Land who wanted to. Since the Jews of Baden were happy under the Grand Duke's reign, they would not emigrate, and rightly so." And he added: "If your Royal Highness' benevolent attitude toward the Jews became known, your duchy would get such an influx of Jews that it would be highly calamitous."⁴⁹ In July of that same year he told the Anglo-Jewish Association: "The Society of Jews sets itself the task of acquir-

49. *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl, op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 334-335.

ing, under international law, a territory *for those Jews who are unable to assimilate.*" (Emphasis added.) In October 1898 he told the Chancellor of the Reich, Prince Hohenlohe: "Your Highness, not Berlin West, but Berlin East or North—I don't know exactly where the poor Jews live here—will go with me." (The geographic division of the European Jews was paralleled in Berlin by a very pronounced social division between the Ostjuden—Jews from the East—and the Yekkes—the German Jews). In August 1900 Herzl emphasized this point in his inaugural address to the Fourth Zionist Congress meeting in London:

The fact that the Jews in this wonderful England enjoy full freedom and civil rights must not give rise to erroneous conclusions. country were to become a refuge for our desperate Jews. Large—Our brethen here would fear for their privileged condition if this scale immigration would be dangerous both for the English Jews and the immigrants. For these poor immigrants would unknowingly bring with them the very thing that provoked their flight—anti-Semitism.⁵⁰

The social contradiction within European Jewry, reflected in the antagonism between West European Jews and East European Jews, manifested itself also within each of these two communities.

The Jews in the Tsarist empire displayed an ambiguous attitude toward Zionism, which was not lost on the Russian Minister of the Interior, V. Plehve, a fierce anti-Semite who allowed pogroms to take their course, when he did not organize them himself.

In one of his talks with Herzl in August 1903, Plehve remarked that "the creation of an independent Jewish state, capable of absorbing several million Jews, would suit us best of all. But this doesn't mean that we want to lose all of our Jews. Those of superior intelligence—and you yourself are the best example—we would like to keep. Brains know no distinction of creed or nationality."⁵¹ In referring to Jews of "superior intel-

50. Th. Herzl, *Zionistische Schriften*, Berlin, 1905, vol. II, p. 185.

51. *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 1535.

ligence," this hangman did not mean to include such Jews as Trotsky, for instance, who was indeed above "distinctions of creed or nationality," and whom Plehve would surely have liked to "lose"; Herzl was prepared to help him in this. The men of "superior intelligence," for Plehve, were the members of the Jewish big bourgeoisie.

Herzl's apparent inconsistencies may seem surprising. He vehemently attacks the Jewish philanthropist who would above all get rid of poor persecuted Jews, and who, in Herzl's view, was but "an anti-Semite of Jewish origin disguised as philanthropist." Herzl ostensibly wants to achieve the same end, but without resorting to philanthropy, by having these poor Jews settle in Palestine or in some other area where they might establish a state. In his pamphlet he even goes so far as to tell the French Jews that their refusal to move to a Jewish state, once it became a reality, would signify that they were wholeheartedly assimilated. Then, he says, they would cease to be Jews, and this would bring an end to anti-Semitism. We do not think that Herzl's contradictory pronouncements can be explained solely in terms of the tactical requirements of diplomacy. It would be tempting indeed to regard his inconsistency as a ruse, and thus explain his attempts to reassure the assimilated Jews and the "masters" of Europe whose help he viewed as indispensable, while at the same time advancing the Zionist cause by stressing the impossibility of assimilation. But this interpretation is inadequate. There was in those days a real and basic difference between the attitude of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the attitude of the middle bourgeoisie represented by Herzl on the other—between the "philanthropic" approach and the "nationalist" approach. The Jewish problem had assumed an international character which paralleled the international character of capitalism and colonialism. A section of the Jewish middle bourgeoisie, strongly influenced by the European nationalist movement in a period of European colonial expansion, was accordingly attracted to Jewish nationalism. Such an approach corresponded to the interests of this class (it was actually a section of a class), since it would enable it to

widen its field of activity. In a moment of nationalist delirium, when he was completely under the sway of his vision of a Jewish state, Herzl abandoned himself to hopes of an even more severe persecution which would make the Jews more receptive to his message: "But we shall have to sink still lower, we shall have to be even more insulted, spat upon, mocked, whipped, plundered, and slain before we are ripe for this idea."⁵²

It should be noted that the East European Jews had long had a highly developed communal character. In the last part of the nineteenth century, this community was disintegrating, and its members were emigrating in large numbers to the North American continent, with only a trickle making its way to Palestine. At the same time, the revolutionary movement began to loom on the East European horizon, actively supported by many Jewish intellectuals. It seemed as if this movement might effectively advance its revolutionary answer to the Jewish question. In brief, at a time when European Jewry found itself in the grip of a severe crisis, and the Jewish problem had assumed terrifying proportions, the Jews were confronted with two perspectives: emigration to the United States and a new social order, or revolutionary activity in Europe. This explains why a section of the Westernized middle class, conscious of these developments, began to support a small but nevertheless real Jewish popular movement in Tsarist Russia and in Rumania, which advocated a return to the Holy Land. It tried to take the leadership of this movement by giving it a middle-class "ideology."

This Jewish political movement, operating on an international scale through pressure groups in various capitals, became an end in itself. It was led by intellectuals born into the Westernized Jewish middle bourgeoisie. This leadership encouraged a Jewish rebirth, or rather the birth of a Jewish nationalism encompassing the principal centers of the Diaspora. At every Zionist congress (the first was held in Basel in 1897) Herzl stressed the fact that a world congress was in itself indicative of a new reality. "Four years ago," he said at the Fourth Zionist

52. Herzl's reaction after the initial unfavorable response by Western Jews to his idea of a Jewish state. *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 116.

Congress meeting in London, "the mention of a 'Jewish people' would have invited ridicule. Today it is those who deny the existence of such a people who appear ridiculous." The congress, in his view, was the Parliament of the Jewish people. Territorial concentration was an integral part of Jewish national existence; it was its base. "A territory," he wrote after the first Zionist congress, "is the concrete foundation of the state." To be sure, he thought that eventually a large part, if not the majority or even totality, of the Jewish people would settle on its own territory. (First to leave, he says in *The Jewish State*, would be the desperate, to be followed by the poor, the well-to-do, and finally by the rich.) But as we have already noted, he remained ambiguous on this point; the ambiguity was that of his social stratum. While reassuring the assimilated Jews of Western Europe, he remains persuaded that the creation of a Jewish state would make assimilation practically impossible, and prevent any non-Zionist solution of the Jewish problem. We will see that Israel plays in effect such a role, although not necessarily in the manner envisaged by Herzl and his Zionist associates.

In the view of the Western Zionists, territorialism and "statism" were more important than Zionism as such, than the return to Zion. For Herzl and most Zionist leaders, Palestine was not necessarily the only place suitable for large-scale settlement; but it had to be a region as close as possible to Palestine, the ultimate target of Zionism, which they hoped to reach even if Jewish colonization started elsewhere. In the face of resistance by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, who controlled the region, the Zionist leaders looked for other possibilities. In 1902, the Sultan offered to receive all the Jews desirous of settling within the borders of his empire. He even offered them a charter sanctioning Jewish settlements in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Anatolia, but not in Palestine, and without granting them national independence—the Turkish empire was to remain intact. This offer was rejected.

At that period (beginning of the twentieth century), Herzl and the majority of Zionists advocated the establishment of a Jewish state in the Near East or in Africa. The Uganda project

has received the most publicity, for it became the subject of official negotiations. Many other locations were at various times under consideration—Cyprus, the Sinai peninsula, the Belgian Congo, Mozambique. The British Minister for Colonial Affairs, Joseph Chamberlain, stipulated two conditions in regard to any project affecting the British Empire: there must be no colonization in areas already settled by Europeans (Chamberlain, reports Herzl, said that “if I could show him a spot in the English possessions where there were no white people as yet, we could talk about that”); and there must be no resistance, or threat of resistance, on the part of the local, non-white population. The various Zionist projects outside Palestine failed largely because of local opposition to the prospect of Jewish colonization, or because of the fear that such opposition might develop. The Zionist movement lacked the forces capable of defeating resistance. There was such a potential force in Eastern Europe, but insofar as these elements were oriented toward territorialism, they turned toward Palestine. The resistance to non-Palestinian territorial solutions within the Zionist movement was inspired principally by the Russian Zionists.

In the face of these formidable obstacles, strategic considerations as well as the inner logic of Zionism led to attempts to convince the European powers of the usefulness of the Zionist movement both in Europe and with respect to the possibilities for colonial expansion. The Zionists stressed the fact that their movement would enable interested countries to get rid of certain Jewish elements. The Tsarist leaders were told that they could thus rid themselves of Jews who were fomenting revolution. On September 5, 1903, Herzl wrote to Plehve that “if a settlement of the Jewish people took place in Palestine, the radical elements would be forced to take part in the movement. . . . The frustration of these hopes would upset the whole situation . . . the revolutionary parties would gain everything that Zionism, represented by my friends and me, lost.” With respect to the international situation, the imperialist powers must be persuaded that massive settlements of Europeans could play a pioneering role in subjugating the underdeveloped world. Herzl held out

his perspective not merely as a tactical argument designed to win the good graces of the European colonial powers, but also as a challenge to his own class. As it became increasingly evident that "peaceful settlement" would never lead to a Jewish state, the colonial tendency became dominant. In 1903, during the debate on the Uganda project, Herzl wrote to Max Nordau:

Look at England: she pours her excess population into the immense empire she has acquired. . . . Their national base has enabled many nations to build colonial empires that are making their fortune. Let us seize the opportunity offered us to become a miniature England. Let us begin by acquiring our own colonies. On the strength of our colonies we shall conquer our own homeland. Let the territory situated between Kilimanjaro and Kenya become the first colony of Israel. This, and not the philanthropic homes of Edmond de Rothschild, will establish the foundations of Zion, the true Rishon Le Zion (one of the first Jewish villages in Palestine; the name means "first in Zion") of the new Israel. . . . Other countries will follow the example of England; we will establish new "reserves of power" in Mozambique, Congo, and Tripolitania with the help of the Portuguese, Belgians, and Italians.⁵³

The various classes of a Jewish society undergoing growing differentiation would thus unite around this vast enterprise of inverted colonization (from the colonies to the homeland). In the view of the founder of political Zionism, the dilemma of the West European Jews—assimilation or Jewish nationalism—was thus resolved. In the tradition of European colonialism, Jewish nationalism was to become a *pioneering* Jewish colonialism. This would enable it to enlist the support of the Jewish upper and middle bourgeoisies, for, in addition to the challenge with which they were confronted, the prospect of Jewish colonialism was in keeping with the general trend of European colonialism and therefore should not undermine the possibilities for assimilation.

In this respect, as in so many others, the state of Israel has made every effort to carry out the mission with which it

53. Cited by A. Chouraqui, *Théodore Herzl*, Ed. du Seuil, Paris, 1960, pp. 310-311.

was entrusted by world Zionism. The infantry for this mission was naturally furnished by the East European Jewish masses.

The plight of the East European Jewish masses reactivated the Jewish question throughout Europe, and therefore on an international scale. They provided the first colonists to leave for Palestine in the early 1880s, well before the middle or upper bourgeoisies of Western Jewry began to abandon their philanthropic approach to the Jewish question, for which they were so violently attacked by the Zionist leaders. The movement of return to the Holy Land and of colonization was called "Hové-vei Zion" (the Lovers of Zion), and its leader from 1884 was Dr. Leo Pinsker, author of *Auto-Emancipation*, published in 1882.

Pinsker's position on the central problem of whether or not to assimilate is more explicit than Herzl's. "If the Jews," he writes, "could be equally distributed among all the peoples of the earth, perhaps there would be no Jewish question. But this is not possible."⁵⁴ Since the Jewish question would not disappear, the goal to be achieved by the Jewish leaders, in Pinsker's view, was to "possess as a counterpoise to our dispersion *one single refuge*, since a *number* of refuges would again be equivalent to our old dispersion."⁵⁵ (Emphasis in original.) Addressing the Jews of Western Europe, he says: "Shut your eyes and hide your head like an ostrich—there is to be no lasting peace unless in the fleeting intervals of relaxation you apply a remedy more thoroughgoing than those palliatives to which our hapless people have been turning for 2,000 years."⁵⁶ And he concludes: "The international Jewish question must have a national solution."

B. Borochoy, spokesman for the petty bourgeoisie and sections of the Jewish proletariat in Eastern Europe, is ever more incisive. He is known for his theory of the "inverted pyramid." The sociological composition of the Jews, he wrote at the beginning of the century, is characterized by a weak base

54. Leo Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*, Zionist Organization of America, Washington, D.C., 1944, p. 20.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 25.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

(known today as the primary sector) and by excessive activity at the summit (tertiary sector). This pyramid, says Borochoy, will be reversed through a process of national territorial concentration, for which Palestine is most suitable. It is then, and only then, that the conditions will obtain for a class struggle by the Jewish proletariat. "As long as any group of workers is subjected to national competition, it cannot carry on the class struggle successfully. Its strategic base is bound to remain weak."⁵⁷

Before the Jewish proletariat can hope to seize power, Jewish life must be normalized in a national state, the only arena of struggle acceptable to this ideologist, who would thus justify class collaboration. "The anomalous state of the Jewish people will disappear as soon as the conditions of production prevailing in Jewish life are done away with. Only when the Jews find themselves in the primary levels of production will their proletariat hold in its hands the fate of the economy of the country."⁵⁸

He dismisses the possibility that the Jewish question may be resolved through widespread assimilation. He writes: "We will consider the Jewish question fully solved and its anomalies wholly removed (insofar as it is possible within the framework of bourgeois society) only when territorial autonomy for the Jewish people shall have been attained and the entire nation shall constitute a relatively unified national economic organism."⁵⁹

Borochoy realizes that "colonizing a territory is a prolonged process," and proposes that the Jews in the Diaspora undertake a struggle for "national political autonomy" in their respective countries, which "will be a powerful unifying force among the Jewish masses; it will provide the Jewish nationality with a proper financial apparatus."⁶⁰ That Jewish nationalism should have an international structure was as logical to Borochoy as it was to Herzl. Territorialism must be the central concept of

57. Ber Borochoy, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

59. Ber Borochoy, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

this structure, whose "whole and synthetic form is Zionism," the conquest and colonization of a territory. Herzl believed, or pretended to believe, in the peaceful civilizing mission of the Jews in the Middle East (he notes somewhere in his diaries that something would have to be done for the poor *fellaheen*). Borochof, on the other hand, speaks for a Zionist infantry destined to face the dangerous task of expelling a people from its land:

Those who think that such a radical transformation of Jewish life as territorialism implies can occur without a bitter struggle, without cruelty and injustices, without suffering for the innocent and guilty alike, are utopianists . . . they are written in sweat, tears, and blood.

As for the Palestinian Arabs, they will lose their identity:

The native population of Palestine will be economically and culturally absorbed by those who will bring order to the land and develop its productive forces. The Jewish immigrants will build up Palestine, and the native population will in time be absorbed by the Jews, both economically and culturally.⁶¹

That the Palestinian Arabs may have their own national existence does not concern this Jewish "socialist" leader.

Palestine was indeed the scene of "sweat, tears, and blood." The conquering pioneers, the infantry of the Zionist movement, overcame innumerable difficulties: agricultural inexperience, a harsh climate, malaria and jaundice, the constant hostility of the native population, and, finally, the maliciousness and humiliating attitude of the Baron's bureaucracy which undermined all their independent activities.

One of the best witnesses of this period, the farmer and writer M. Smilansky, recounts these clashes and struggles in his autobiographical narrative:

The bureaucracy and its opponents clashed on two issues.

61. Ber Borochof, "Our Platform," in *Works*, in Hebrew, vol. I, *Hakibbutz Hameukhad et Sifriath Poalim*, 1955, pp. 282-283.

Bloch (a representative of Baron E. de Rothschild) insisted that the farmers holding title to land register it in the name of the Baron's representative, and that they sign a "letter of thanks" to the Baron for a cellar he had built. This letter deprived the signers of the right to challenge the decisions of the bureaucracy.⁶²

The first two decades of the Jewish establishment in Palestine were marked by colonist revolts against the "Baron" and his bureaucracy, which at times became extremely violent.

The activities of the first pioneers, whose courage and faith are indeed undeniable, have frequently been deliberately misrepresented. They were, in their majority, convinced that the indigenous population must be expelled from the land. Smilansky describes a typical discussion between Jewish pioneers in Palestine which took place in Rehovoth in 1891:

"We should go east, into Transjordan. That would be a test for our movement."

"Nonsense . . . isn't there enough land in Judea and Galilee?"

"The land in Judea and Galilee is occupied by the Arabs."

"Well, we'll take it from them."

"How?" (Silence.)

"A revolutionary doesn't ask naive questions."

"Well then, 'revolutionary,' tell us how."

"It's very simple. We'll harass them until they get out. . . . Let them go to Transjordan."

"And are we going to abandon all of Transjordan?" asks an anxious voice.

"As soon as we have a big settlement here we'll seize the land, we'll become strong, and then we'll take care of the Left Bank. We'll expel them from there, too. Let them go back to the Arab countries."⁶³

The new immigrants were immediately divided among themselves. Some of them realized that they were expected to play a far from admirable role. The opposition stated that

Hovévei Zion had deluded the Jewish people. It promised the peo-

62. M. Smilansky, "In the Steppe," *Works*, vol. I, 1891-1893, Tel Aviv, no date, p. 206.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

ple a homeland, but the country has been occupied by another people for generations, and the same country cannot be the homeland of two different peoples. The Jewish people must therefore expose the Hovévei Zion impostors, and seek another country.⁶⁴

Such were the realities of the early Zionist movement. We have discussed the contending forces and ideologies; these persist in our time, although conditions have changed, and still reflect the original ideological trends.

The subsequent history of the Zionist establishment is well known and requires little comment. The British conquest of Palestine brought about a reconciliation between the Zionist movement and an important section of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie. The 1917 Balfour Declaration was addressed to Lord Rothschild of England. Baron Edmond de Rothschild, the "Father of the Yishuv," also made his peace with the Zionist movement. The pivotal figure in this rapprochement was Professor Chaim Weizmann, the new president of the Zionist organization. Jewish nationalism no longer seemed to pose a threat to the Jewish big bourgeoisie and its interests in Western Europe. The October revolution also changed the nature of the problem. The tendency represented by Weizmann had, for the time being, come to prevail within the world Zionist organization, although less so in Palestine itself, and could in no way be regarded as dangerous. The Zionist establishment in Palestine was no longer the focus of Jewish nationalism; it had become one Jewish community among many (there were 150,000 Jews in Palestine in 1927). This community was closely dependent on international aid distributed through various Jewish organizations, and therefore easily controllable. Above all, the Jewish establishment in Palestine was useful to Western imperialism in the Middle East, notably to Great Britain, which dominated the region. It seemed, after all, as if Palestine might become one more region to which persecuted brethren could be dispatched "as far and as rapidly as possible."

64. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

The "timidity" of the Zionist leadership provoked a split. The nationalist extremists led by V. Jabotinsky, who threatened to "upset the apple cart" and even to provoke a confrontation with Great Britain, withdrew from the movement. Even Herzl's close associate, Max Nordau, withdrew from his political activities in the face of Zionism's concessions to the "philanthropists" whom the founders of Zionism had so violently attacked.

The compromise effected in the 1920s is still in force today, but the situation has been reversed: *the Jewish problem is now to some extent the product of Zionism*. The mass immigration to Israel after its independence consisted largely of persecuted Jews. The large Jewish communities in the West fervently supported this solution to the problem of Jewish migration. Next to the displaced persons rescued from the Nazi holocaust, the largest number of Jewish immigrants came from the Arab countries (since 1951, two thirds of the immigrants have come from the Afro-Asian countries). There is no doubt that *the policies of the State of Israel have had a profound impact on the Jewish communities in the Arab countries*. The emigration of the Iraqi Jews in 1950-1951 is a case in point. An advocate of the use of violence to promote Jewish emigration (often described as "cruel Zionism," i.e., cruel toward the Jews) has stated:

The Israeli government saw the possibility of rescuing 130,000 Jews while at the same time improving its demographic situation. The Iraqi Jews lacked a strong leadership. Their leaders, who either did not know what to do or refused to take any initiative, did not do anything. Someone had to act. He (Ben-Gurion) made the right move at the right time. Only an act such as the "unfortunate affair" could have induced them to emigrate.⁶⁵

In this "unfortunate affair" grenades were thrown into synagogues and other places frequented by Baghdad Jews; there were casualties, and the ensuing panic resulted in a Jewish emigration. Israeli agents and their local Jewish hirelings were arrested. Two of these provocateurs were condemned to death

65. S. Mendes, *The Iraqi Immigration and the Israeli Government*, cited in *Haaretz*.⁶³

and executed. The details of this "unfortunate affair" and of the anti-Jewish acts of provocation in Iraq were revealed by the Israeli weekly *Haolam Hazeh*.⁶⁶ It would be wrong to assume that no Jewish problem might or did arise in Arab countries: insofar as a Jewish community endorsed the policies of the imperialist powers—as was largely the case of the Jewish community in Algeria during that country's struggle for independence—it shared the fate of the foreigners and their allies among the local populations. What seems essential to us, however, is *the fact that the very existence and role of Israel in the Middle East is an additional, and sometimes decisive, factor in determining the reactionary and pro-imperialist attitudes of the Jewish masses in question. We are speaking of the Jews as a community and insofar as they act as a community.* The Jewish community in Algeria was an extreme and obvious case; but this phenomenon recurred in various degrees in other countries.

Present-day Zionism is acceptable to the Western Jewish big bourgeoisie precisely because it has failed to gather the majority of Jews on a common territory. According to a 1961 estimate, out of about 13 million Jews, 2 million live in Israel, 700,000 in the Afro-Asian countries, 2,700,000 in the East European countries (2,300,000 in the USSR), 1,100,000 in Western Europe, and 6,500,000 in America and Oceania (5,500,000 in the United States). But as a nationalist movement which helps keep the Jewish question alive on an international scale, Zionism is far from having failed. The persistence of the Jewish problem today is due essentially, but not exclusively, to the existence of a Jewish state. The basis for a Jewish community as a people-class as analyzed by A. Leon is in the process of disappearing. The unity of the Jews is closely dependent on their relationship to a factor external to their communal life. This factor is the *Jewish state*, Israel. In order to be able to play this role, this state must remain Jewish, exclusively Jewish, even if it contains Arabs within its borders.

66. April 20, 1966.

The triple alliance (Western imperialism, Jewish big bourgeoisie, Israeli government) is strengthened by Israel's economic dependence on financial aid from abroad. During 1949-1965, Israel received various forms of foreign financial aid (unilateral transfers, long-term capital investments) to the tune of \$6 billion, an average of \$350 million per year. This aid is growing. For the period 1961-1965, it exceeded \$2.5 billion, an average of over \$500 million per year. The Jewish communities abroad, especially in the United States, are the principal source of this aid. Of the \$6 billion mentioned above, \$3.6 billion came from world Jewry, \$0.7 billion from official U.S. aid, and \$1.7 billion from German reparations. The Jewish communities funnel their aid to Israel, thus helping integrate the country into the global imperialist network. Financial aid from the North American Jewish community is encouraged by current legislation which allows contributors to deduct donations to Israel's economy for income-tax purposes. To understand the importance of foreign aid in the Israeli economy, it must be viewed in relation to the Gross National Product, which reached about \$24 billion in the sixteen-year period 1949-1965. Foreign aid—\$6 billion—therefore accounted for 25 percent of the GNP.⁶⁷

The situation is growing worse. According to figures presented to the Knesset on February 19, 1969, Israel's foreign trade deficit in 1968 amounted to \$222 million, an increase of 97 percent over 1967, and was expected to reach \$435 million in 1969. This deficit therefore almost doubled in 1968, and will double again in 1969.

It is immaterial in this context that the deficit is due partially, or even entirely, to the military and immigration budgets. This argument is commonly advanced by Zionist polemicists, but it is irrelevant here. We are not claiming that the Jewish community as such is incapable of managing an economy. What we are saying is that the Zionists have settled in Palestine, which was already occupied by another people, for the purpose of con-

67. These figures are taken from the study by N. Halevi and R. Klinov-Malul, *The Economic Development of Israel*, published in cooperation with the Bank of Israel, Praeger, New York, 1968.

centrating the Jews in that country, a goal which has been but partially met; at the same time the Western structure of Israel requires a standard of living approximating that of the most developed capitalist countries, i.e., one which is five to ten times higher than that of the surrounding Arab countries. Given these concrete conditions, the Israeli economy is a largely artificial creation sustained primarily by massive injections of foreign capital and donations. The Zionist establishment in Palestine has always been dependent on financial aid from abroad.

It would be a mistake, however, to view Israel as a mere creature of the West or of the world Zionist movement. Israel has its own dynamics. To be sure, the international factor and Israel's links with world Jewry give an international character to Zionism and to the internal conflicts we have analyzed earlier. The posthumous compromise between Herzl and Rothschild—we are using these men as convenient symbols—prevailed both in the world Zionist movement and in world Jewry. In the Jewish community established in Palestine, however, the dominant tendency originated in Borochoy-type social democracy, and was impelled toward social chauvinism by successive waves of immigrants. Borochoy's successor, and the unchallenged leader of the party (Poale Zion) and the Yishuv, was Ben-Gurion. And Ben-Gurion's successor, although currently under fire and facing the possibility of temporary defeat, is Dayan. This is also Ben-Gurion's opinion:

There will be other governments. I think Moshe Dayan will head them. He is a man of sense. He was successful on security. Now he has a different job—he understands that a million Arabs want to live. He was gifted for the one and now he is gifted for the other. He is the ablest of them.⁶⁸

The rapprochement mentioned earlier between Foreign Minister Abba Eban and Ben-Gurion has been categorically denied by the latter. Eban's position is more in line with the policy of compromise of the world Zionist movement outside Israel. The view that Ben-Gurion is a moderate results from a

68. Interview published in *The Jerusalem Post*, Weekly Overseas Edition, October 13, 1968, p. 7.

misunderstanding which he himself has tried to clarify: "But I will tell you something. If I could do it, if it were my choice, I would give up the [occupied] areas in exchange for peace." Asked by the interviewer, "Then you agree with Eban? He thinks we must get rid of the areas or be outnumbered," Ben-Gurion exclaimed: "I don't agree with him. You didn't understand him. . . . Maybe he thinks there is a choice between keeping the areas and having peace. . . . I said if there were such a choice, I'd choose peace."⁶⁹

The explanation is not satisfactory. Why does Ben-Gurion think there is no choice? Beyond the problem of the Palestinian Arab people, which they view and try to solve in different ways, the two men are profoundly divided on the territorial aims of Zionism. Viewed in terms of its inner logic, Zionism has never pursued the goal of turning Israel into a haven for any one group of persecuted Jews, and even less so for persecuted Jews *in general*. Its aim was always the rebirth of the Jewish people on its own territory, the ingathering of the majority, if not totality, of the world's Jews. This is Herzl's brand of Zionism as influenced by Borochoy, and developed by the Jewish immigrants. It is social chauvinism. Dayan, a native son and member of the Labor party, expresses this most clearly. Speaking to a kibbutz youth congress in Ramat Golan on July 5, 1968, Dayan said:

I want to tell you, Israelis and Jews of the new generation, that throughout the 100 years of our Return to Zion we have pursued, and continue to pursue, two goals: the construction of this country, and the consolidation of the people. In the old days this task involved adding "another dunam, another goat," another Jew and another immigrant. This meant growing expansion, bringing in more Jews, establishing new agricultural colonies, and continually strengthening our presence in this country. Let no Jew say that the task is done. Let no Jew say: this is the end of the road. This is not the case. The process has not yet come to an end. . . . You must believe in two things . . . *in continuing immigration, and in the settlement of the Jewish people in this land.*

69. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

You yourselves and your generation must make every effort to strengthen our presence in this country. (Emphasis added.)

It is this goal of "settling the Jewish people in this land" that gives Israeli Zionism its aggressive and expansionist character, and underlies its confrontation with the neighboring countries. Earlier in this study we commented on the imminence and overriding importance of the confrontation between the Zionist establishment and the Palestinian Arab people. We wanted to emphasize the current and decisive aspect of the *people's struggle* now being waged. The struggle to assert its national rights is primarily the task of the Palestinian Arab people itself; it cannot be otherwise. We also wanted to denounce the demagoguery of the Israeli leaders who, with the help of a good deal of complicity on the part of the governments of the Arab countries, try to represent the conflict as a confrontation between a Jewish state permanently established within its present borders and neighboring Arab states bent upon destroying this state. But if we consider the very powerful ideology of Zionist expansionism (it would be an error to underestimate it), which views Israel as destined to harbor the majority, if not totality, of the Jewish people, in terms of Ben-Gurion's and Dayan's international brand of Zionism, the potential threat which the Jewish state poses to the neighboring countries becomes very real. They are all the more concerned about this threat since the contending brands of Zionism all share the basic outlook and objectives of Western imperialism.

The point is this: the "moderates" (Eban, Sapir) and the "extremists" (Ben-Gurion, Dayan) disagree not only on how to subjugate the Palestinian Arab people and on whether to adopt a demographic (Jewish majority) or territorial (Greater Israel) approach, but also on the nature of the Jewish problem and on the extent to which Israel should depend on world Zionism. Eban and Sapir (a diplomat and a financier, they practice professions traditionally reserved for "moderates") tend to reflect majority opinion in the Jewish communities abroad. Their views are also closer to the *official* position of American imperialism,

a fact which can impel them toward more "moderate" views when warranted by circumstances. In the eyes of the North American Zionists, the most powerful group in the world Zionist movement, the Jewish state must remain exclusively Jewish, abide by the status quo, and do nothing that might undermine their position in North America. (When Mr. Sapir was Finance Minister, he opposed Ben-Gurion's plan to attract a large number of Jewish immigrants from the Western countries, on the ground that this might undercut fund-raising efforts among U.S. Jews.) Israel, in their view, must be strictly controlled, for independent action on its part might complicate matters and weaken the influence of the American Zionists. Finally, the Jewish state must remain a sanctuary for other Jews, notably for Jews from the East. (Mr. Nahum Goldman, president of the World Jewish Congress, until 1968 president of the World Zionist Organization, and elder statesman of North American Zionism, is particularly active in the campaign for the unrestricted emigration of Soviet Jews.) They also serve the interests of North American imperialism by proclaiming the relevance of Israel for other countries, especially in the underdeveloped world (they represent Israel as a model for those countries, advocate sending numerous Israeli technical assistance missions to Africa, which pave the way for more thoroughgoing imperialist penetration, etc.). In the Middle East itself, the stress is on neo-colonial domination by a strong Jewish state surrounded by pro-Western Arab states (Eban has suggested Lebanon and Jordan as likely candidates). All this does not exclude the prospect of eventual direct military intervention against an adversary whose defeat would be viewed most "favorably" by North American imperialism. The radicalization of the Syrian and Egyptian regimes in a pro-Soviet direction strengthened Israeli national unity and resulted in North American support for the June 1967 aggression. The raid on Beyrouth's international airport, on December 28, 1968, however, was only partially in line with the policy approved by both Israeli tendencies—to make Arab states pay for the struggle of the Palestinians. The raid was opposed by the Eban-Sapir wing, but the Prime Minister settled the matter,

for the raid had the additional purpose of striking a blow against the neo-colonialist tendency in Israel, which inclined toward a deal with the moderate Arab states, while at the same time confronting North American imperialism with an accomplished fact. It was a revolt of the centurions, to use Lartéguy's expression.

The "ultra" tendency is a more accurate expression of Israeli colonization. It is more aggressive with respect to both Arabs and Jews. Its local territorialism parallels its view of the Jewish state as the land of the Jewish people. The Jews, in this view, will subject the Palestinian Arabs to direct domination. The Arabs will become second-class citizens of a Jewish state. As the needs of the rulers may dictate, the Arabs will be exploited or dispossessed. The territories must be kept. According to the "ultras," the proper course to be followed must depend on the strength of the Palestinian resistance movement, and on the possibilities for its containment by the neighboring Arab countries (especially Jordan). Withdrawal to a Jewish stronghold in the Middle East is unacceptable, or can be conceived only as a stage in the struggle (hence the possibility of temporary compromise). The Jewish state must be more than a refuge for persecuted Jews; the plight of the Jews can have no other solution than Zionism, a Jewish state in the "historic homeland." In the early years of the century, the resettlement of persecuted Jews in Uganda had already been opposed by the Russian Zionists who, although belonging to persecuted Jewish communities, represented the most nationalistic trend in Zionism. They said at the time that "the question of how to provide immediate relief for the plight of the Jews is not the main concern of Zionism; its chief aim is to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine, and only in Palestine." Their successor Ben-Gurion said this even more clearly at an equally crucial point in Jewish history. In a letter to the executive committee of the Zionist organization, dated December 17, 1938, Ben-Gurion wrote:

If the Jews had to choose between saving the Jewish refugees and contributing to the establishment of a national museum in

Palestine, pity would prevail, and the people would direct its energies toward saving the Jews. Zionism would then cease to be a compelling force not only for public opinion in Great Britain and the United States, but also for the Jews. *If we permit the refugee problem to be separated from the Palestine problem, we endanger the existence of Zionism.* (Emphasis added.)

The "ultra" tendency is also more aggressive in serving the international interests of imperialism. Its most characteristic exploit was the tripartite aggression against Egypt in October 1956. The June 1967 war, on the other hand, was approved by all tendencies, and was dictated by the need to achieve national unity. The "ultras" have links with colonialist extremists and dictatorial regimes, such as the OAS in France and the Portuguese colonialists. Israel has had a curious involvement with the dictator Trujillo. Dayan visited the U.S. in Vietnam, and expressed his gratification at Nixon's election. The notorious and Machiavellian Lavon affair, which involved Israeli acts of sabotage intended to create friction between Egypt and the Western powers, was also the work of the "ultras." In 1960, Ben-Gurion suggested to de Gaulle that he follow the Israeli precedent in dealing with the Algerian problem—divide the country, keep the productive portion, and settle it with immigrants from the metropolis. In its own way, Israel aspires to become a model for the colonialists. Paralleling the image of a peaceful Israel—the image of a people which has worked tirelessly to make the desert bloom, and whose example should be emulated by the Third World—there is also the image of a conquering nation, a bridgehead for imperialist penetration into an underdeveloped region.

This outlook and readiness to serve imperialism reflect a Zionist vision of expansion and unending conquest. Here again is General Dayan:

It is absolutely essential, in my opinion, to understand that Degania (old kibbutz in the Jordan Valley) is not an end, that Nakhla-Oz (new kibbutz facing the Gaza strip) is not an end, and that three million Jews are not an end. Each generation will add its own share.

And in the same interview:

Tsahal (Israeli armed forces) has never engaged in a defensive battle. This is important from a psychological point of view. . . . The military problem of Tsahal was never that of finding cover in case of war, but that of how to cross the Jordan or Sinai. Barbed wire, shelters, and entrenchments are usually synonymous with "Arab army."⁷⁰

We have described two tendencies. The traditional image of doves and hawks is not appropriate here. These are rather vultures and hawks. On the one hand, those who feed on the dead flesh of Arabs, whether dead or exiled, provided they are out of sight; on the other, those who thrive on the living flesh of exploited Arabs, in the pursuit of an ideal very similar to that proclaimed in South Africa.

The correct analysis of the Palestine problem on the one hand, and of the Jewish question on the other, provides the basis for a revolutionary solution. The two problems are inter-related; to ignore this invites serious disappointment.

Let us begin with the Jewish side. The question is not whether there is a *Jewish people* dispersed throughout the world and with a center in Israel, but whether there is a *Jewish problem* which includes Israel. This is the way the question presents itself in real life, and the answer is obvious: the Jewish problem continues to exist. Zionism in its political and territorial guise, i.e., as a Jewish state, has become a decisive factor in causing the Jewish problem to persist. The Zionist movement has met with great success in this respect. We are not concerned with its "legitimacy" or "illegitimacy" as a nationalist movement, but with the conditions for its realization. Like every nationalist movement in the epoch of capitalism, Zionism is based on a class alliance. What distinguishes Zionism is the fact that it could succeed only through an act of colonial spoliation supported by an expansionist Western imperialism. The social structures of both Arabs and Jews, and the schemes of the great powers, were decisive factors. The current awakening of the Palestinian Arab people and the new international situation

- 70. Interview in *Maariv*, September 22, 1968.

have created the basis for a radical change. Moreover, the perpetuation of the Jewish problem on an international scale, primarily because of the existence of Israel and the alignment of the Jewish organizations with the imperialist camp, present us with an international task.

The problem has international dimensions, and the struggle against Zionism must therefore be waged on an international level. Concretely, this implies international popular support for the struggle to achieve a united Jewish-Arab, revolutionary Palestine—a step toward or a part of a Middle Eastern socialist federation—regardless of whether the majority is Arab or Jewish, and without racial or ethnic discrimination, whatever the intermediate stages. The necessity and possibility of such a perspective are increasingly recognized by the most conscious Arab militants in Palestine and by the country's Jewish militant internationalists. The latter are squarely in the anti-Zionist camp, and unequivocally support the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people to assert its national rights. Under current conditions, the immediate task is to give full support to the struggle of the Palestinian Arab people against the occupation. The long-term perspective is a common struggle for the common objective outlined above. The success of this struggle will have vast repercussions on the development of the anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggle in the entire region. Its failure would exacerbate nationalism, and greatly weaken the region with respect to imperialism.

International support for this common struggle for a common objective will be a decisive factor in its eventual success. Those who support this perspective have the important task of demystifying Zionism and the Jewish state. There are few instances of ideological mystification so widespread as is the case of Zionism at the present time. Zionism must be demystified in all its aspects—demystification of the state of Israel and of its role, both regionally and internationally; demystification of Zionism and of the Jewish state as fallacious answers to the problems of Jews anywhere in the world. We believe that Jewish revolutionaries have a particular, but not exclusive, role to play

in this international struggle. In capitalist countries with large Jewish communities invariably dominated by Zionist organizations—this is particularly true in the United States—the struggle against the Zionist organizations is a struggle against a pressure group subservient to imperialist interests. Revolutionaries must combat these organizations in their countries. The origins of the first immigrants to Palestine (persecuted Jews of petty bourgeois or working-class origin, frequently influenced by a quasi-socialist, populist, and Tolstoyan ideology); the conditions under which they settled in the country (a hostile environment, the absence of a farming tradition conducive to the establishment of collective agricultural communities); the fact that the colonists did not directly exploit or subjugate the indigenous underdeveloped population (except for a minority), but dispossessed it—all these factors have made the colonialism associated with Zionism particularly adaptable to social-chauvinist claims throughout the world. The equation of support for Zionism with struggle against anti-Semitism has had a similar effect. Paraphrasing Bebel, we could say that, in its own way, pro-Zionism is the internationalism of fools. The Palestine-Zionism complex is undeniably a far from negligible divisive factor within the revolutionary movements in the West. The May movement in France, for instance, in its active phase a magnificent example of internationalism (“les frontières on s’en fout”—to hell with frontiers), nevertheless came up against the troublesome problem of Palestine. At the only demonstration with an ethnic character, whether provoked or not, Arabs and Jews in Paris came to blows on the occasion of the anniversary of the June 1967 war.

Jewish revolutionary militants have a particular role to play in the anti-Zionist struggle, which is an important front in the struggle against imperialism. Their ethnic origin makes it easier for them than for their non-Jewish comrades to influence the Jewish masses; they are more effective. They have the task of freeing the Jewish masses from the influence of the Zionist organizations. It is important to understand that this is not a *private* or personal matter, but a *political task*. Nor is this task exclusively theirs. This means that the international struggle for

a revolutionary Palestine—as a step toward a Middle Eastern socialist federation—is not exclusively theirs, nor is the struggle against Zionism. We have already said so. It also means that they must not necessarily confine themselves to this front. Far from it. We only mean that they can wage this struggle most effectively.

We deem it politically wrong, or at least inadequate, for Jewish revolutionary militants to react to Zionist propaganda with the following kind of reasoning: we are Frenchmen of Jewish origin, but Frenchmen, that's all; or Englishmen, Germans, Americans, Moroccans, etc. Such an attitude is wrong because it poses the problem *exclusively* on a personal level which is of little interest here. The real task calls for an international anti-imperialist struggle in which revolutionaries have a particular role to play. The attitude we are criticizing results from an inadequate analysis, for these comrades view the solution of the Jewish question solely in terms of a victorious international revolution. This in turn implies that one contributes most effectively to the solution of the Jewish question by waging a revolutionary struggle in one's own country. This is an overly simplistic approach. These comrades are closing their eyes to the powerful accumulated impact of a vast emotional complex. Witness the attitude of Herbert Marcuse. Although we take exception to his conclusions, we deem it wrong to ignore his motivation. In a lecture to students at the Free University of West Berlin (July 1967), he said:

You will understand that I sympathize with Israel for reasons that are very personal, and not only personal. I who have so often insisted that emotions, moral ideas, and feelings have a place in politics, and even in science, and that without emotions there can be no politics or science, cannot view this sympathy as a mere prejudice on my part. I cannot forget that Jews have been persecuted and oppressed for centuries, and that six million of them were exterminated not so long ago. This is an irrefutable fact. When now at last these people find a place where they no longer have to fear persecution and oppression, I can only sympathize with this enterprise.⁷¹

71. H. Marcuse, *La Fin de l'utopie*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1968, p. 128.

What is true for Marcuse, is even more true for large numbers of Jews throughout the world, and not only for Jews. Finally, the narrow attitude of Jewish revolutionaries has made it possible for the Zionist movement to exert a powerful and unchallenged influence over the Jewish masses, insofar as they constitute an organized Jewish force. We are especially concerned *in this context* with the future of Jewish communities everywhere, including in Israel.

We have already noted that the persistence of the Jewish problem is due largely to the existence of Israel. The pro-imperialist orientation of the Jewish communities as reflected in their organizations is also strongly influenced by the existence of Israel, and poses a serious threat to Jews everywhere. We have also shown that it is precisely this dialectical interdependence between persecution and the persistence of the Jewish problem, on the one hand, and the concept of Israel as a homeland for the entire Jewish people, on the other, which fuels the most expansionist tendency in Israel itself. This tendency in turn helps keep the Jewish problem alive throughout the world, including in the Middle East (viewed as a region which includes the Israeli people). This concatenation of cause and effect prevents the emergence of revolutionary consciousness in Israel, and the country's participation in the anti-imperialist struggle in this region.

As A. Leon's analysis shows so brilliantly, *the Jewish communities played a specific economic and social role in European feudalism during the period of its decline; they are doing so again, but this time their role is ideological and political.* Formerly their fate was linked to that of a feudalism in decline, today it is linked to that of a world imperialism in decline.

This situation can be reversed under the impact of the awakening of the Palestinian Arab people whose struggle will succeed only if it becomes a popular revolutionary struggle, a common struggle for a common future by both Arabs and Jews. The support the Palestinian Arabs receive from revolutionaries throughout the world will be a decisive factor in the future orientation of the Palestinian resistance movement. A successful common struggle will effect a profound change in the way the

problem presents itself. It is also in the course of this struggle that the choices made, and the degree of participation in a common struggle and cause, will determine the extent to which Jews and Arabs can join in creating a revolutionary Palestine, a step toward or a part of the federation of socialist states in the Middle East.

An awareness of this revolutionary perspective is currently emerging among Israeli revolutionaries. It is evidenced in an important statement by the Israeli Socialist Organization (ISO), published in May 1968 in its monthly *Matzpen*. Defining this organization's attitude to the Palestinian resistance movements, the statement reads:

A conquered and oppressed people has the right and duty to resist and to struggle for its freedom. The means and methods necessary and appropriate to such a struggle must be determined by this people itself; it would be hypocritical on the part of outsiders—especially if they are members of the oppressing nation—to offer pontifical advice on what it ought to do.

While recognizing the unconditional right to resist occupation, we can support only those organizations which, in addition to resisting occupation, also recognize the right to self-determination of the Israeli people; on this basis, the struggle of the Palestinian people can become a common struggle of Arabs and Jews for a common future in this region.

To this far-reaching political statement, let us simply add that beyond the mutual recognition of the *right* to self-determination of both peoples, Jewish and Arab revolutionaries have the task of advancing the only common revolutionary perspective, that of a common homeland.

This perspective is in keeping with the broader perspective contained in the same declaration of the Israeli Socialist Organization:

We believe that the socialist-revolutionary solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict remains valid—in fact, more valid than ever—in the new post-war situation. The de-Zionization of Israel, and its integration into a socialist union with the Arab countries—that is the solution.

Instead of the chauvinism and nationalist hatreds which are engulfing the Middle East in futile and endless wars, we hold out to both sides, Arabs and Jews, the socialist perspective of economic prosperity, social progress, and fraternal relations between peoples.

—*Translated by Alfred Ehrenfeld*

The first principle of the Jewish people is the right to self-determination in their own land. This principle is the basis of the Jewish people's struggle for freedom and independence. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land. This principle is the basis of the Jewish people's struggle for freedom and independence. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land.

An essential element of the Jewish people's struggle is the right to self-determination. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land. This principle is the basis of the Jewish people's struggle for freedom and independence. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land.

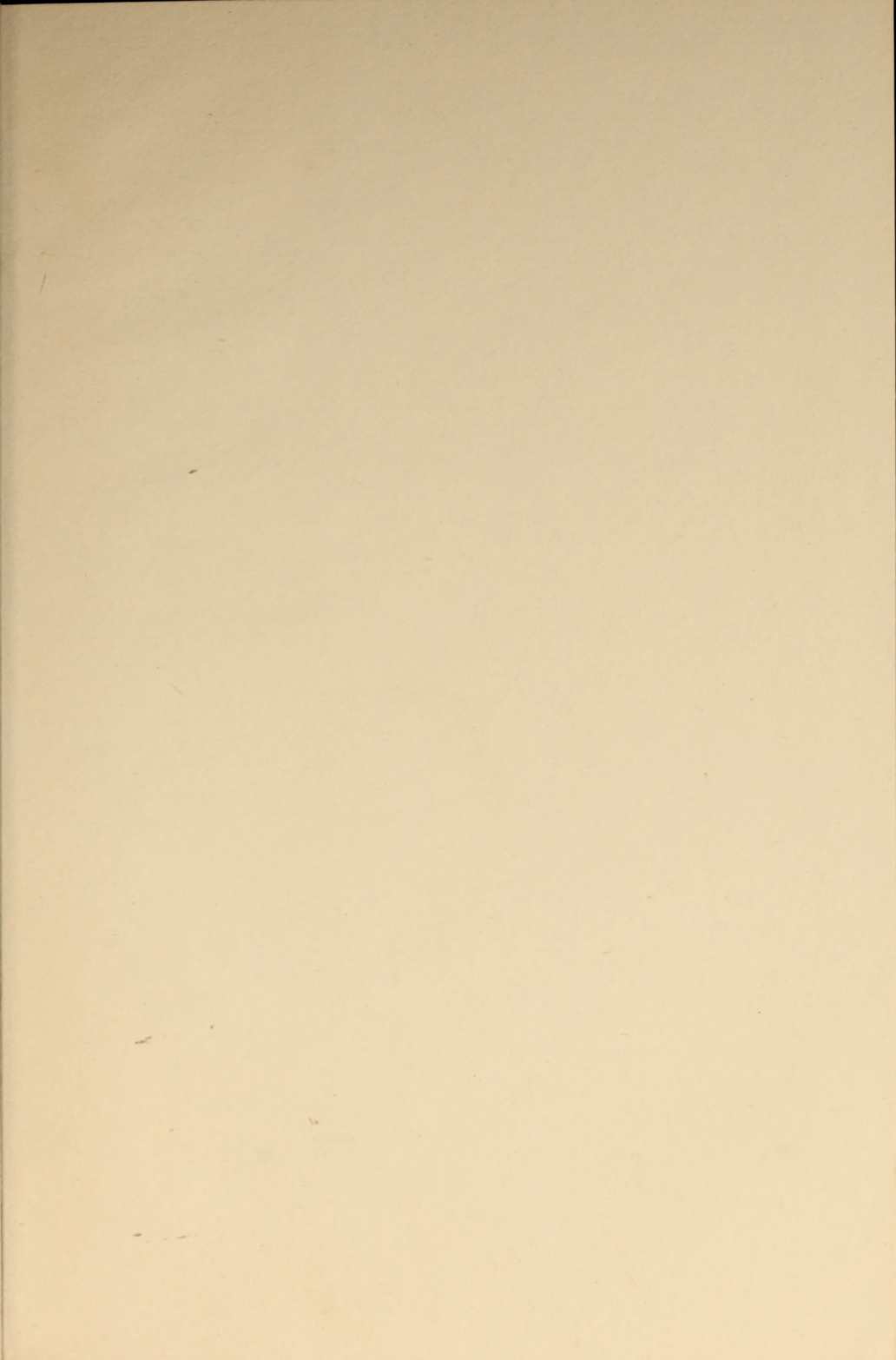
The Jewish people's struggle for self-determination is based on the principle of the right to life and liberty. This principle is the basis of the Jewish people's struggle for freedom and independence. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land.

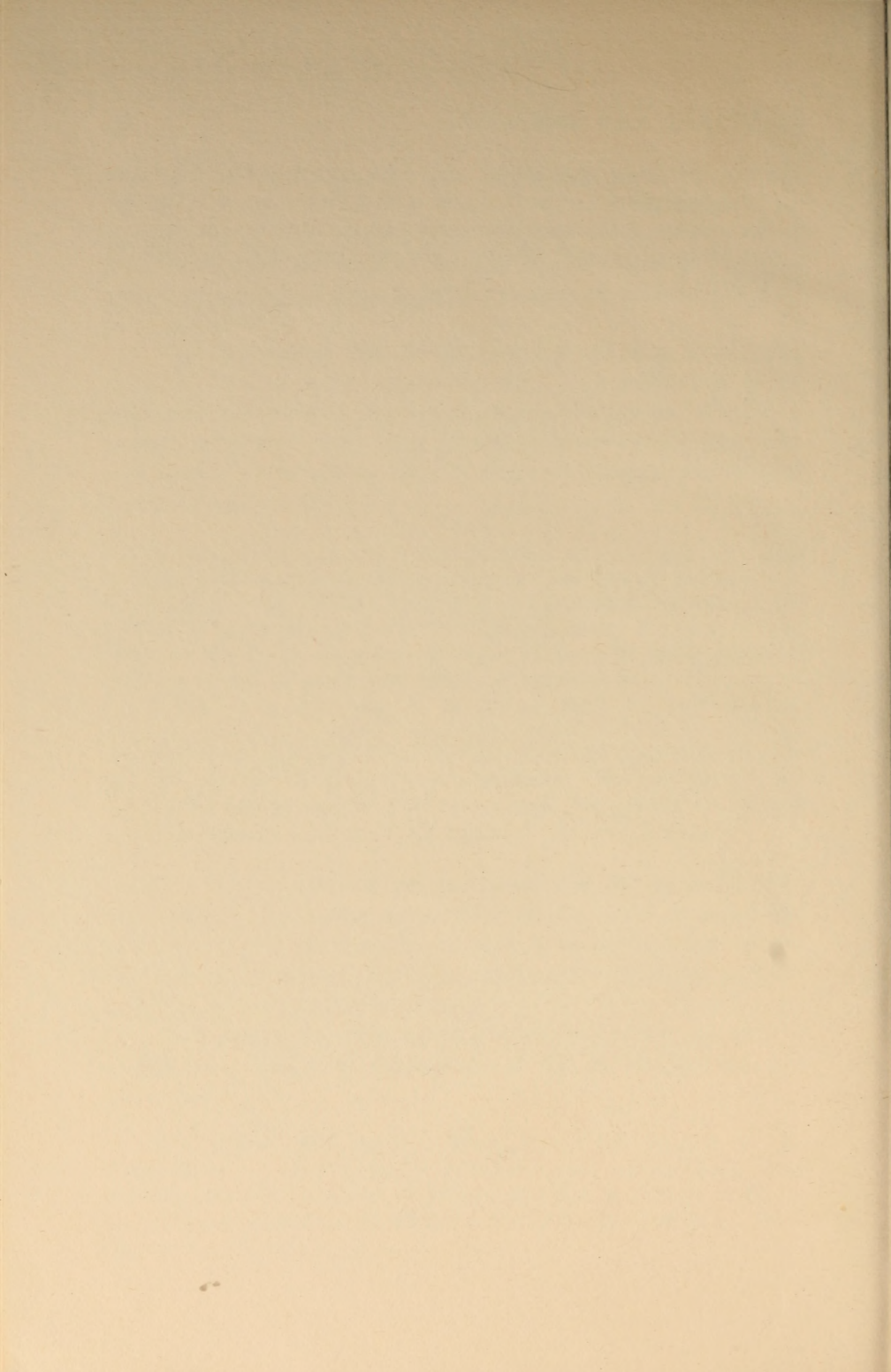
While recognizing the Jewish people's right to self-determination, we also recognize the right to self-determination of the Arab people in the same land. The struggle of the Jewish people is the struggle of the Arab people. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land.

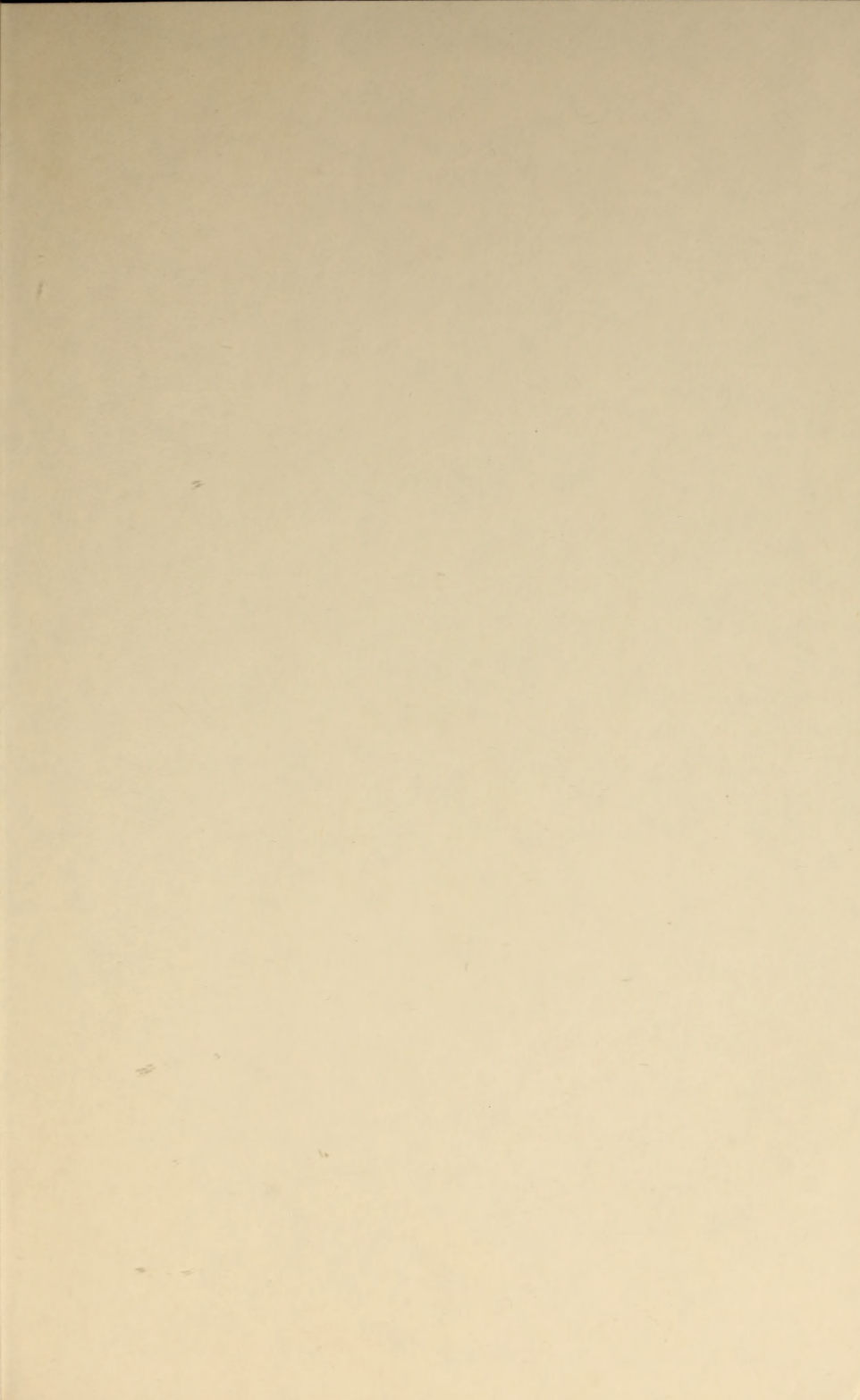
To this far-reaching political statement, let us simply add the words: the national movement of the Jewish people is the movement of the Arab people. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land.

This proposition is in keeping with the broader perspective contained in the basic Declaration of the Jewish People's Organization.

We believe that the Jewish people's struggle for self-determination is the struggle of the Arab people. It is the right to determine their own destiny and to live in their own land.







(continued from front flap)

vide a solid historical footing for analysis of the current conflict, he starts with the origins of modern political Zionism, the beginnings of colonization around 1870, and the role of the Jewish big bourgeoisie, especially the Rothschilds. The attitude of the Zionists toward the Palestinian people is traced from the inception of colonization down to the present-day conflict, and the programs of various Zionist currents are explained and analyzed fully. Lobel concludes that Israel has linked itself to an imperialist system in decline, and that "this situation can be reversed under the impact of the awakening of the Palestinian Arab people. . . , a common struggle for a common future by both Arabs and Jews."

Printed in U.S.A.

*Jacket design by Martin Stephen Moskof Assocs., Inc.
SBN: 85345-167-2*

Monthly Review Press

116 West 14th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011
33/37 Moreland Street, London, E.C. 1, England

“It was Israeli expansionism which, in 1948 and again in 1956, unmasked the real nature of the latifundia-owning comprador bourgeoisie of the Arab states, exposed its collaboration with imperialism and its provincial narrowness, and revealed the demagogic and hypocritical character of its intermittent and purely verbal ‘pan-Arabism.’ . . . Twice, then, in 1948 and 1956, Israeli aggression had for its chief result the revolt of the Arab masses against their governments.”

– Ahmad El Kodsy

“There are few instances of ideological mystification so widespread as is the case of Zionism at the present time. Zionism must be demystified in all its aspects – demystification of the state of Israel and of its role, both regionally and internationally; demystification of Zionism and of the Jewish state as fallacious answers to the problems of Jews anywhere in the world.”

– Eli Lobel