



**"A STATE LIKE ANY
OTHER STATE"?**

Joseph Neyer

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SINCE THE HOSTILITIES OF JUNE 1967 in the Middle East, more than one American writer has decided to assume the responsibility of telling the "Arab side" of the story, in order to redress the imbalance created by an allegedly pro-Zionist press. The readiness to perform this task is understandably encouraged among writers on the political left by the strenuous and monotonous efforts of Arab and Communist diplomacy—with interesting exceptions—to associate Israel with "colonialism and imperialism". The consequence is that there has appeared in the past eight months some stunningly creative and original writing of history.

The contribution of Hal Draper in the Winter 1967 issue of *New Politics*, "The Origins of the Middle East Crisis", finds a place in this growing body of imaginative literature. The article begins with a statement that cannot fail to put the historically aware reader on his guard. Mr. Draper says, "When I was born, there was an Arab nation in Palestine, in whose midst Jews had lived for 2,000 years in relative peace." Now 2,000 years before Mr. Draper's birth takes us to about the year 85 B.C. At this time the land that was later to be called Palestine was a Jewish kingdom governed by Alexander Jannaeus of the Maccabean dynasty, which had had to struggle against the Greeks and Romans. The Arabs had yet to wait more than seven hundred years before making their appearance—emerging from the Arabian peninsula in the south to challenge Byzantine and Persian rule. Arab hegemony over the land was itself challenged by western Christianity at the end of the eleventh century. And then there was the long period of Turkish rule and deterioration of the land which began at the beginning of the sixteenth century and lasted until the First World War in this century. What Mr. Draper has in mind when he speaks of two thousand years of "relative peace" in this strife-torn land it is difficult to guess.

But let us move with Mr. Draper's historical account to more recent times. He says that there was, when he was born, an Arab nation in Palestine, and it "has been destroyed."

It is necessary to recall that before the First World War, the whole area that is now divided into the states of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Israel—this vast under-populated area of West Asia (as the Indians call it) was governed by Turkey. The present divisions did not exist,

nor (for the most part) did their present names exist. After the Romans suppressed the last Jewish rebellion in 135 A.D., "Judaea" was changed in name to "Syria Palestine." However, in the seventeen hundred years before the First World War, Palestine was not to be found on a political map of the world; whether under Roman, Byzantine, Arab, or Turkish rule, the land was always part of a larger province; its heterogeneous inhabitants, the products of many invasions, were never conscious of themselves as a national unit. The language spoken was mainly Arabic, but the only persons referred to as "Arabs" were the desert beduin nomads and, occasionally, the *effendi* landed aristocracy, who might thus refer to their supposed descent from the noble families of the conquering tribes that came out of the Arabian peninsula in the seventh and eighth centuries.

THERE IS NO NEED to dwell on the misleading phrase "Arab nation in Palestine." The important query concerns the human inhabitants. According to the 1922 census of the British Mandatory government, only 184,000 non-Jews lived in the area that was to become Israel in 1949. Of course, the non-Jewish population increased by the time of the 1947 U.N. Partition Resolution. From 1919 to 1936, the period in which the basic social substance of the Jewish community was established, the increase of the Arab population in Palestine exceeded in absolute numbers the increase in Jewish population. The large Arab immigration was a response to opportunities created by the industry, agriculture, and medicine of the Jewish immigrants.

The general point is confirmed for the decade between 1937 and 1947 by the testimony offered in an UNRWA bulletin of 1962:

A considerable movement of people is known to have occurred, particularly during the Second World War years when new opportunities of employment opened up in the towns and on military works in Palestine. These wartime prospects and, generally, the higher rate of industrialization in Palestine than in neighboring countries attracted many immigrants from those countries [mainly Syria and Egypt], and many of them entered Palestine without their presence being officially recorded. (*UNRWA Reviews*, Information Paper No. 6, Bierut, September 1962)

In the period between the Balfour Declaration and the establishment of the State of Israel, Palestine had changed from an area of Arab emigration to one of Arab immigration, and this fact characterized none of the neighboring Arab countries. The Jewish socialist pioneers drained the swamplands and marshes and irrigated the rocky soil that nobody had been able to live on for many years—land that was purchased by the Jewish National Fund at exorbitant prices. They had reason to believe that their reclamation of the land would benefit everybody and hurt nobody. They were not surprised at the fact that they were stimulating non-Jewish immigration.

So much for the myth—and Mr. Draper is concerned to destroy "myths and illusions"—that a Jewish immigration drove out an entity called the Palestine Arab Nation. Mr. Draper wishes not only to perpetuate this particular myth, but he also offers the proposition that toward the end of the nineteenth century the Zionist movement arose and "*set itself the aim of destroying the nation which inhabited Palestine then...*" (my italics) Since he offers no evidence for this startling thesis, one must say that it is simply

obscene and irresponsibly inflammatory. Also, it should be noted that the thesis is incompatible with the frequently expressed charge against Zionism that the early Zionists were hardly aware of the fact that there were already inhabitants in their promised land. Relevant also to this point is the reaction of the Zionists to the position of the British Labor Party in December 1944, when the national conference of the Party (not then in power) endorsed the statement of its Executive that "the Arabs be encouraged to move out as the Jews move in. Let them be compensated handsomely for their land and let their settlement elsewhere be carefully organized and generously financed." The Zionists were shocked by this proposal and declared that it was incompatible with their aims, which never involved the emigration of the Arabs.

The general characterization of Zionism offered by Mr. Draper—he treats it as if it were a platonic essence open to his intuition—calls for comment. Zionism, he says, like anti-semitism, is a "doctrine about a tribal blood mystique." "It is easily possible to quote pages and pages more of this same mystical blood-tribalism from the best Zionist sources..." But Mr. Draper is content to offer us one quotation, and he culls it from Moses Hess' *Rome and Jerusalem*. Here is his quotation in its entirety:

The converted Jew remains a Jew, no matter how much he objects to it . . . Jews and Jewesses endeavor in vain to obliterate their descent through conversion or intermarriage with the Indo-Germanic and Mongolian races, for the Jewish type is indestructible . . . Jewish noses cannot be reformed, and the black wavy hair of the Jews will not change through conversion into blond, nor can its curves be straightened out by constant combing.

The context of the third sentence is Hess' portrayal of German anti-semitism. The second sentence is found two pages after the third in *Rome and Jerusalem*—a rather jazzy way of citing a text—, and the first sentence is not to be found in the vicinity.

There is no "tribalism" in the pages of Hess. There is nationalism, and it cannot be denied that this is associated with a view of human heredity that is no longer acceptable. In order to find such a quotation, Mr. Draper has to go back to 1861, which belongs to another era in anthropology—a quarter of a century before the beginnings of modern Zionism in Russia and thirty-six years before the First Zionist Congress. However, there is no need for the movement of Labor Zionism to deny a place to Hess as one of its important predecessors.

Moses Hess had a very important influence upon the early development of Marx. Engels gave Hess the credit for making communism "credible and acceptable" to him. And it was Moses Hess who turned the Left-Hegelians to a "science" of the development of society. After the disenchantments of the Revolution of 1848, Hess went into exile in Paris, and there his studies led him to reconsider the importance of nationalism. But he never abandoned his socialism or his humanism:

When I labor for the regeneration of my own nation, I do not thereby renounce my humanistic aspiration. The national movement of the present day is only another step on the road to progress which began with the French Revolution.

Hess' reaction to the anti-semitism of German liberalism and socialism

should be understandable today to anyone who can perceive the authenticity of the "black power" movement in America. There is a passage in Hess which makes the point with sharpness. "The Jews . . . strive in vain to obtain equal rights. But what brother did not obtain from brother, what was not granted by man to man, will be given by a people to a people, by a nation to a nation."

TO UNDERSTAND LABOR ZIONISM, which, in the first decades of this century (the generation of Ben-Gurion), created the foundations of modern Israel, one must recall the revolutionary situation in turn-of-the-century Russia, in which young Jews who were ready to participate in the struggle were not always found acceptable. They were compelled in bloody experiences to view their Jewishness as more important than their identification with the interests of the international proletariat. If, as a consequence, some of them sought to find themselves by exploring their national past and rediscovering the rich spiritual resources of their fathers—while holding on to their European perceptions of humanism and socialism—shall we say their path was perverse?

Indeed, a substantial number of these pioneers tended to regard their creation of a Jewish community in Palestine as a position which they would hold until the rest of the world came up to their level of internationalism. This is not to deny that many of them could be fairly described as nationalists. Why should this be so disturbing—in the present period when the Left appears to have abandoned, or postponed, its earlier internationalist aims and is ready to support the national identities of all the "tribes" of the globe?

According to Mr. Hal Draper, Israel's "tribalism" is associated with the aim of moving "all Jews, from all countries of the world into Palestine, now Israel." He offers as evidence certain views which, he says, Ben-Gurion expressed in the early fifties to the Zionist Organization of America. Now whatever else one may say about Ben-Gurion, one must grant that he is a political realist, and to attribute to him the unrealistic and absurd proposal to move more than ten million Jews to Israel is to go beyond credibility. It is true that in the early fifties Ben-Gurion engaged in controversy with the ZOA, taking it to task for not devoting more of its energies to the encouragement of an immigration of Western youth with idealism and talent, which Israel needed at a time when immigration was mainly oriental. If one were to speak in terms of numbers, one might say that he was understood to be talking in terms of thousands or, at most, tens of thousands. One of the principal concerns of Ben-Gurion has been the development of the unpopulated Negev desert, which includes two-third of the land area of Israel (as defined by the Armistice Agreements of 1949), and which even today—after the growth of the towns of Beersheba and Eilat—has a total population of less than one hundred thousand. In the early years after the formation of the state, he looked to America for the kind of pioneering youth which had come with him from Russia Poland to Palestine in the early years of this century. Such young people, he hoped, would provide desirable scientific talent, would help educate the oriental immigrant populations, and would settle the Negev and "make the desert bloom."

THUS FAR, THIS DISCUSSION HAS BEEN A COMMENTARY on the *first two* pages of Mr. Draper's ten-page article. It would be possible to continue to examine—with similar consequences for the most part—the remainder of his elliptically composed sentences, which are offered with authoritarian aplomb and in the accents of plain speaking exposé. It seems more useful, however, to move more directly to the whole drift of his account, which is to the effect that Israel is "a state like any other state"; its basis is violence, and its path has been one of ruthless aggressiveness. He sums up his point with this statement: "In 1967 the road that started in Deir Yassin and goes through Kfar Kassem has now reached the bank of the Jordan . . ."

Now Deir Yassin makes its appearance in every anti-Israel tract—from Ahmed Shukeiry to I. F. Stone—and the reason for its repetitive appearance in these speeches and pamphlets is its uniqueness. If you want to refer to a massacre of Arabs by Jews, and in a tone of voice that suggests that this sort of thing was going on all the time, you can refer to Deir Yassin. It was a horrible deed committed by the Irgun on April 9, 1948, in the period of the Arab siege of the Jewish areas of Jerusalem. What happened at Deir Yassin was deplored by the Jewish community of Palestine and publicly repudiated by the Jewish Agency. It was carried out against the orders of Haganah, which at the time was demanding the cooperation of Irgun in the struggle for Kastel—a key position for lifting the siege of Jerusalem. (Mr. Draper is significantly inexact here). Deir Yassin stands out, because it is the exception which "proves the rule" of the general policy of Jewish restraint in the face of repetitive Arab violence against non-combatants. The systematic murder of Jews began (certainly not for the first time in Mandate history) the day after the U.N. Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947 was passed. In the subsequent period, there were daily incidents of scores killed on the roads, and this built up to a crescendo, which included the killing of forty-one Jewish workers in the oil refinery in Haifa on December 30, 1947, and the massacre at the Sheikh Jarrah quarter of Jerusalem of seventy-seven professors, physicians, nurses, and students who were on their way to the University and to the Hadassah Hospital on April 13. Such Arab violence was not only not repudiated but was officially encouraged by the Arab states.

There was a road, says Mr. Draper, "that started in Deir Yassin and goes through Kfar Kassem," and it "has now reached the bank of the Jordan." In his cavalier manner, he hints at how the intermediate points on his graph are to be filled in, but let us consider the second main point of reference—Kfar Kasim. On October 29, 1956 the Israel Defense Army began operations against fedayeen and Egyptian troop concentrations in the Sinai Desert. Jordan and Syria had signed a military agreement with Egypt for joint action. Many of the inhabitants of the Arab village of Kfar Kasim, located on the border of Israel with Jordan, came home from the fields, in ignorance of the curfew that had been imposed, and after the curfew had come into effect. Border policemen on duty in the area opened fire, and many casualties were reported. The entire Israeli nation was shocked. Mr. Draper says, "Some underlings were made the scapegoats." But this hardly sums up the historic importance of what ensued.

A three-man military court was convened. The Presiding Judge was the

civil judge of the District Court of Jerusalem. A second judge was also a civil District Court judge. Holding military rank, they could be called to this duty. The third judge was an army man. The trial lasted almost a year. The major in charge of the border contingent was sentenced to seventeen years in prison; a lieutenant and corporal were sentenced to fifteen years each; five constables were each given seven-year sentences.

More important than these sentences, and more important than the full indemnities paid by the Government of Israel to the families of the victims, were the principles enunciated by the court. "A soldier must refuse to obey any order that is obviously unlawful." And further, "It is forbidden for a soldier, any soldier and certainly for a soldier of the Defense Army of Israel, to kill . . . an unarmed man, who has given himself up to that soldier"—even if ordered to do so.

Thus, the story of Kfar Kasim serves notice on every soldier in the Army of Israel that *all* men are protected from their arbitrary acts of violence, even when ordered "from above." Yet, this story—told elliptically in the manner of Mr. Draper or alluded to obliquely—finds its place in the repertoire of almost all Arab "information" materials as supporting the contrary view.

The story of the role of violence in the Holy Land during this century will some day be told. But certain of its ironies may already be appreciated. One finds a certain reluctance on the part of the Jews to tell their side of this story. The feeling of the early settlers and their sons was that they had had enough of the business of asking the world to protect them from pogroms; it was to create another type of human being that they had left East Europe. And it doesn't fortify one's spirit to dwell on the mutilations discovered on the bodies of one's comrades. Besides, the children hear everything, and they learn to read early. And the way to encourage more civilized modes of behavior among one's neighbors is not necessarily to bewail their barbaric behavior. What is important is to learn how to be prepared for the marauder, to show no fear, and to have the patience to cultivate, and to await, the development of better relations.

Whether or not such thinking and feeling account for the reticence of the settlers concerning the violence they were encountering, there is no doubt that such reticence existed, and it was probably healthy instinct that found a self-preservative function in it. This may be surprising to those who remember only the recent United Nations debates, in which Israel had to remind a world that found it strangely easy to forget—that the threats of extermination coming from her neighbors had been serious. Nonetheless, it is the old tradition of reticence which still inhibits Israeli information agencies from offering a batch of atrocity stories in response to the mention of Deir Yassin and Kafr Kasim. The Arabs, on the other hand, appear singularly uninhibited both in this regard and, at the same time, in their continued readiness to offer blood-curdling threats.

THE VIOLENCE ENCOUNTERED BEFORE WORLD WAR I by the early settlers had nothing to do with the "nationalism" that is these days attributed to it. Its concern was single-minded — loot. Readers of T. E. Lawrence will recall that loot was the cement that held together the following of the Hashemite princes

as they came up from the south to molest the Turks during World War I. There was nothing dishonorable in this pursuit, which appears to be a constant trait of certain modes of quasi-nomadic life—modes destined to pass away, with or without the presence of Israel.

The early Jewish settlers came with the intention of mixing their own sweat with the land, putting an end to the exploitation of man by man, and this came to mean to them that they must cease the practice of hiring Circassian guards to protect their land. Thus, the sons of generations of Talmud-studying fathers learned to handle the plough and to organize themselves for defense at the same time. The organization of watchmen (Hashomer) was the forerunner of Haganah. The agricultural communities were thus less vulnerable during the Arab "disturbances" of 1920, 1921, 1929, and 1936; the towns and cities, on the other hand, were more dependent for their security upon the police and military of the British Mandatory government, and these agencies developed an unfortunate habit of arriving late on the scene. In 1929, the ancient Jewish communities of Safad and Hebron were almost wiped out in savage massacres, but by this time the Arabs were aware that a new type of Jewish farmer had developed roots in the land and was prepared to defend himself—especially if the British did not indulge in their unpredictable habit of depriving him of his arms.

The reader will here be spared an arithmetical account of the consequences of Arab violence during the period between the two World Wars. But there are a number of features of that period which it is well to recall for the light which they throw upon present issues.

In the first place, during this period, those responsible for Jewish defense efforts followed the explicitly formulated policy of *Havlagah*, or of self-restraint. It involved non-retaliation and the use of force only for self-defense on the occasion of attack. It won the admiration of many pro-Arab partisans. Sir Alec Seath Kirkbride, who lived and worked in the area in the British military forces and civil administration for many decades, and whose partisanship for the Arabs is well known, dwells at length on the policy of *Havlagah*. He says, "The restraint which they [the Jews] exercised in the face of provocation could only have been possible on the part of a well-disciplined people." (*A Crackle of Thorns—Experiences in the Middle East*, John Murray, London, 1956, p. 105.)

Kirkbride is referring here to a period as late as 1937-39, when he was District Commissioner of Galilee and Acre. It cannot be claimed of course that *Havlagah* was continued into the hostilities of 1947-49. For it was soon discovered that, if you wanted to get supplies from Tel Aviv to beleaguered Jerusalem, it wouldn't do simply to attempt to defend your convoy from attacks that came from the hills. You had to take the positions on the hills from which the attacks would come. Nonetheless, the tradition of *Havlagah* has had its effect upon the *present* quality of the Army of Israel. And this explains why, according to Martha Gellhorn (*Manchester Guardian*, July 24, 1967), "a total of *two hundred* civilians, Arab and Israeli, everywhere, throughout the war [of June 1967] is the highest conceivable number of noncombatants killed." Miss Gellhorn was following in the trail of the atrocity stories that travelled so fast after the hostilities. She found that no refugee camp was

hit and that the only civilian target bombed by the Israelis was the Syrian garrison town of Kuneitra—after its civilians had been evacuated. The situation was summed up for Miss Gellhorn by a young Israeli soldier. "The General say and every soldier understand we fighting armies not peoples."

Havlagah, then, is the first feature of the period between the two World Wars to be noted here. The second feature of this same period is that certain acts of Arab violence—committed by a minority against the Jewish population—had an injurious effect upon the psyches of most of the Arabs of Palestine, and this can best be explained by the following illustration.

On July 30, 1967, the Mayor of Hebron (West Bank) Sheikh Muhammed Ali Jabari made the following statement at a reception of Arab notables: "I swear that no Israeli soldiers harmed any of our residents. . . . Before the war began, we expected a mutual slaughter between our people and the Israeli army. You can imagine how pleasant was our surprise on 8 June, when the victorious army used common sense and showed that it was a well-organized disciplined body like the armies of the West. Since that day, our attitude toward the Israel army has changed, and we are cooperating with it and its commanders in an attempt to solve once and for all the painful and complicated Palestine problem."

Why did the Mayor of Hebron expect a "mutual slaughter" and why was he *surprised* at the good behavior of the Israel army? Like most inhabitants of the West Bank, he had heard King Hussein's last broadcast before the cease fire. "Kill the Jews wherever you find them. Kill them with your arms, with your hands, with your nails and teeth." Since the Jews had won, they might be expected now to do the killing. This effect of Hussein's speech would be operating on all West Bank inhabitants and was probably responsible for *part* of the population movement across the Jordan. But the Mayor of Hebron had a special reason for expecting a "slaughter." He undoubtedly had in mind the massacre of almost the whole Jewish population of Hebron in 1929, when Hebron was yet part of undivided Palestine. And he expected the Israeli army to remember.

This is the kind of hurt that the Arabs inflicted upon *themselves* through their violence in the period between the two World Wars. It matters not whether you call it guilt or fear of the other fellow's supposed impulse for revenge. It inhibits the capacity for direct and unambiguous dealings with the other fellow. It is certainly *part* of the explanation of the exodus in 1947-48 of about five hundred thousand Arabs from the parts of Palestine that were to constitute Israel in 1949.*

* It is probably the same psychology which underlies the general fact that among beduins—and nomadic peoples of similar social structure—fighting resulting in deaths can be brought to a close only by reconciliation ceremonies in which the side that has lost more men is paid so much a head. Booty may be kept without repayment—that is part of the sport of inter-tribal warfare—, but deaths must always be paid for. This helps to keep down casualties. Among many peoples the killing of any animal must be ceremonially paid for in order to ward off disaster.

It is not because it places so much faith in "scraps of paper" that the government of Israel wants peace treaties. What it wants is for the Arabs to take part in "ceremonies" in which participants signify that the exchange of killings is brought to a close.

THE THIRD FEATURE OF THE VIOLENCE in the period between the two World Wars that needs to be recalled is that it did not consist only of Arab attacks upon Jews, but also of Arab violence against Arabs. Any challenge on the part of Arabs to the party of the Mufti of Jerusalem was likely to result in assassination or intimidation to the point of flight from the country. This political gangsterism began in the twenties, but it reached its height during the "disturbances" of 1936-1939, when the number of Arabs murdered by Arabs exceeded the number of Jews murdered by Arabs. The victims included wealthy "Arab notables" as well as "progressive" elements, but in almost all cases they represented sectors of the Arab population that were more prepared to look for modes of accommodations which the Jewish population. When Mr. Draper reminds us that "the idea of a bi-national state in Palestine . . . was rejected," he is on the right track; but he fails to point out that the Arabs who might have participated in such designs were crushed by a small but ruthless group of Arabs who were, for the most part, the party with whom England decided to do its business.

Why did England play such a role at this time? The period of the late thirties is the period of England's appeasement of the fascist axis. In Palestine, this mood led to a policy which sought out the bully in the situation—indeed, the one most likely to go over to the axis, if he were not adequately appeased—and attempted to come to terms with him. When the chips were finally down, and the fortunes of England appeared to be very low, the Mufti did go over to Hitler and later found he bet on the wrong horse.

Finally, it is important to recall that, from the very beginning of the period between the two World Wars, the violence which periodically afflicted the Holy Land, issued from the most reactionary of impulses. Mr. Draper pays some respect to this point when he says, "These stirrings took on strong overtones of the backward social and religious aims of the Arab movement . . ." This is putting it mildly. The Mufti had no interest in "nationalism." His concern lay in preserving the power of the effendi landlords and "religious" authorities—an establishment that was bound to disappear, with or without the presence of the Jews. What he feared most from the Jews was the example of social progress which they presented to the *fellahin* and to the town workers. Indeed, throughout this period, not only in Palestine but also in the world beyond, the important opposition to Zionism came from those who feared that its success would contribute to the global diffusion of socialism and communism.

For the immigrant Jews who entered Palestine did not exploit "cheap native labor" and refused to behave like "white settlers," and this disconcerted the veterans of the British Colonial Office. In mixing their labor with the soil and basing their economy on agrarian socialism, they were in the forefront of the colonial revolution. Before coming to Palestine, the relation of the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe to their host countries had been similar to the relations of "natives" to their colonial oppressors in Africa and Asia. They had been the "Negroes" of Russian Poland—suffering pogroms rather than lynchings, and their movement toward Palestine was a movement of national liberation. This kinship is felt instinctively today by those new African and Asian nations who are able to profit from the aid in education, engineering,

agriculture, and social organization which Israel is able to offer. There is no ingredient of the *imperial* in these new cooperative endeavors, and this can be said of *very* few relationships of international assistance today.

Israel was established in defiance of the aims of British imperialism after a campaign of civil disobedience against the colonial government. The British government—in a mood of resentful impotence—finally turned the “Palestine Problem” over to the United Nations early in 1947. There is good reason to believe that the purpose of Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin was merely to stall for time. But the United Nations took its task seriously. A special committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), consisting of eleven small and (relatively) neutral nations, took six months to study the problem and to recommend a solution. The General Assembly then worked over the report for another three months, and on November 29, 1947, the Partition Resolution was adopted by a vote of 33 to 13, with 10 abstentions. The 13 votes against the resolution included those of the 6 Arab states that were already members of the United Nations. Both the United States and the Soviet Union voted affirmatively.

The resolution of 1947 envisaged the second partition of Palestine since the First World War. The first partition took place in 1922, when Great Britain “unilaterally” created Trans-Jordan for Abdallah, the grandfather of the present King Hussein, and the name of Palestine was retained for about one fourth of the land originally designated for the Jewish National Home. It was this one-fourth of the original territory, that was to be further divided by the Resolution of 1947 into an independent Jewish state, an independent Arab state, and an international enclave around Jerusalem—all three parts to be linked in “economic union.” Such an arrangement could endure only on the assumption of peace. It should be recalled that the partition was to be between Palestine Jewry and the Palestine Arab community. No Arab state had any claim to any part of Mandatory Palestine.

The Jews *accepted* all the provisions of the Resolution, including the “internationalization” of Jerusalem. What they sought was peace and the opportunity to receive within the bit of land allotted to them the migrants from the devastation of Europe. The Arab states—five of them—invaded Palestine on May 15, 1948. Azzam Pasha, then Secretary-General of the Arab League, announced at a press conference: “This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades.”

Then, as in June 1967, the Jews surprised everyone—and annoyed not a few—by surviving. The invasion by the Arab states had the avowed purpose of preventing the realization of the provisions of the Partition Resolution, and the Arabs were partially successful in this aim: they succeeded in preventing the proposed Arab state from coming into being. Much of the land that was to form the Palestine Arab state was taken by King Hussein and comprises the “West Bank,” part of it was taken by Egypt (the Gaza strip), and part by Israel. (When Mr. Draper reports that “five sections of it” were taken by Israel, it is probably unintentionally that he conveys the false impression that Israel got most of it.) The Israel-Arab Armistice Agreements of 1949 froze this situation until the Arab states in June 1967 tried again to exterminate Israeli citizens and to have their “rendezvous in Tel Aviv.”

THE MOST SIMPLE ARGUMENT against the image of Israel as "expansionist," that is so much batted about these days, is the plain fact that Israel, all through the years, has asked for some kind of dependable big power guarantee of non-aggression in the Middle East. She could get no response from the big powers, which always feared that a movement in this direction would offend the sensibilities of the Arabs. The demand of the Arabs has always been for the freedom to make another try at the "Tel Aviv rendezvous," and rescue, by the United Nations and the big powers, from the ill consequences of such attempts. It may be asserted that what they have received has not fallen very far short of this.

The invasion by the Arab states in 1948 was the first—and perhaps the fatal—serious challenge to the authority of the United Nations. It created the devastating precedent of negation. It also created the Arab "refugee problem," which Israel placed immediately on the agenda for peace talks in which the Arabs declined to participate.

If Mr. Draper, following I. F. Stone, says that it is a "myth" that the "Palestine Arabs left at the behest of the foreign Arab invaders," this doesn't make it a myth. It is now too late in the day to carry on such controversy when the evidence on this topic is readily available. Most persuasive of all are the reports and discussions in Arab newspapers and journals. Thus, the Jordan daily *Falastin* wrote on February 19, 1949: "The Arab States . . . encouraged the Palestine Arabs to leave their homes temporarily in order to be out of the way of the Arab invasion armies . . ." Or, more succinctly, the Jordan paper which represents the views of the refugees *A-Difaa* of September 6, 1954: "The Arab governments told us, 'Get out so that we can get in'. So we got out, but they did not get in."

The Research Group for European Migration Problems (REMP) reported the following in its *Bulletin* of January–March 1957:

As early as the first months of 1948 the Arab League issued orders exhorting the people to seek temporary refuge in the neighboring countries, later to return to their abodes in the wake of the victorious Arab armies and obtain their share of abandoned Jewish properties.

Or, probably most persuasive from Mr. Draper's point of view would be I. F. Stone's book, *This is Israel*, published in 1948—an eyewitness account of the situation which, judging from his current writings, the author has forgotten.

EVERYTHING ISSUES FROM THE INVASION OF 1948—the refugees, the negation of United Nations authority, the Armistice Agreements, from which the steps to Peace Treaties were never taken. It is useful to recall the position of the Soviet Union in those days. Not only did the USSR vote in favor of the Partition Resolution, but, when the United States and other countries, in the face of Arab hostilities, suggested a movement away from Partition and a "temporary" trusteeship arrangement, it was the USSR which upheld the authority of the United Nations and stood firm on the original Resolution. Some of Mr. Gromyko's speeches in the General Assembly in that period should be recalled:

The fact that no Western European state has been able to ensure the defense of the elementary rights of the Jewish people, and to safeguard it against

the violence of the Fascist executioners, explains the aspirations of the Jews to establish their own state. It would be unjust not to take this into consideration and to deny the right of the Jewish people to realize this aspiration . . . In analyzing the various plans for the future of Palestine, it is essential . . . to bear in mind the indisputable fact that the population of Palestine consists of two peoples, the Arabs and the Jews. Both have historical roots in Palestine.

The considerations which led the Soviet Union to its position in 1948 are worth recall. Despite some earlier "philosophical" objections of communism to Zionism, the Russians could appreciate the social achievements of the Jewish community in Palestine. The Arab states had had sympathies, and even blemishing associations, with Germany and Italy during the war, and now most of them appeared to be inevitably pro-British. Getting the British completely out of Palestine was for the USSR a step in the right direction, so far as the Middle East was concerned.

The courtship of the Arab states by the Soviet Union began in 1952-1953, at about the time of the "Jewish doctors trials" in Russia. Until this time and later, Israel appeared to be antagonistic to United States policy in the area; she showed very little sympathy with the efforts of the United States to create a barrier against Soviet penetration in the area. She shared the negative attitude of Egypt and Saudi Arabia toward the Middle East Treaty Organization, sponsored by the United States and Great Britain for "Cold War" purposes. Indeed, a substantial sector of Israel's population was so sympathetic to the Soviet Union that for some considerable time after the hostility of the Soviet Union to Israel became apparent, the government of Israel was unable to react appropriately. Like the spurned lover, this sector of Israel refused to face reality and refused to withdraw its love. Finally, on December 29, 1955, Nikita Khrushchev made a speech, in which he said, "Imperialists are behind Israel, trying to exploit it against the Arabs for their own benefit." The eyes of the spurned lover were opened. Israel knew that she was in a very difficult diplomatic position. From this time on, the Arabs knew that the mildest censures directed toward them would be vetoed in the Security Council—no matter what their actions.

For the causes underlying the shift in Soviet attitude toward Israel in the fifties, it is not necessary to explore complex questions concerning oil and global strategy, although these questions are relevant. It is sufficient to perceive that in a precarious world, it could appear more sane to the Soviet Union to be allies with "a hundred million Arabs"—not to speak of hundreds of millions of Moslems dispersed over the globe—than to retain the friendship of a couple of million citizens of Israel. It was this same simple *Realpolitik* consideration which largely explained the abandonment of the cause of Jewish Palestine by the British in the thirties and forties.

But should this consideration carry weight with the New Left in America? Or should truth and justice and the humane concern for all the struggling human people on this globe?

M. S. Arnoni has said recently, "The Middle East controversy is capable of affecting the American Left more than the American Left is capable of affecting the future of the Middle East." Whether or not this is exactly correct quantitatively, the fact is that radical movements in the past have

been destroyed by their yielding to the temptations of conformism, when the need for expressing their unity in accepted formulas subdued the zest for truth. Over a year ago, the New Left in America seemed to be young, fresh, undogmatic, pluralistic, and apparently in direct contact with human need and human pain. That it was anti-intellectual seemed to have at least the advantage of saving it from being *pseudo*-intellectual. That it was ahistorical seemed to make its perceptions of the immediate more keen and relevant.

What has happened? For one thing, the Left has its writers and they have to write. When the crisis developed in May-June 1967, they were unprepared. The issues of the Middle East cannot be perceived with the naked eye as can the living conditions of the migrant workers of New Jersey; they involve a knowledge of history, and it is no dishonor to these writers to say that most of them were largely ignorant of Middle Eastern history. Understandably, they took their clues from what they considered to be trustworthy international sources, and all this took place at a time when the American Left was beginning to take satisfaction in its new connections with new friends abroad.

This article can hardly pretend to offer a short-cut to the kind of knowledge of Middle East history that is required for intelligent and humane discussion of recent events. It may, however, convey some intimation of the chasm that has existed between recent literature and reality. But new beginnings are always possible in life, in literature, and in politics. This, we may assume, is the reason for the existence of the journal called *New Politics*.

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