

And Lippmann compared this decision to that which was made at the turn of the century when the United States seized the Philippines and intervened in China.

Thus Lippmann's conception—and he reflected the views of the ruling oligarchy—was that Palestine must become the springboard for American economic and political expansion in the Middle East. As is known, the United States made the decision which Lippmann urged, though its presence in the port of Haifa came later and under the nominal aegis of the United Nations. Washington used its intervention in Palestine to supplant London as the dominant power in Israel, and exploited the military debacle of the Arab states to extend its influence over them.

The maneuvers of Washington and London in regard to Israel, the Arab states, and Iran must be viewed not only as reflecting the Anglo-American conflict, but primarily in terms of the Anglo-American partnership for war against the Soviet Union, against democratic Europe and Asia. This ultimately governs all decisions. Thus, the Middle East has become one of the principal incubators of World War III.

Within this larger context the Arab Middle East is one of the chief means by which imperialism blockades Israel, economically, politically, and militarily, undermining its independence and seeking to dragoon it into its war schemes. But the Arab Middle East can also become one of the chief means of completing Israel's liberation, of assuring its progress and enabling the Jewish state, together with the Arab peoples, to become a force for peace. This can come to pass if the people of Israel, rejecting their government's false course, overcome misunderstanding and make common cause with their Arab brothers against common enemies. "Anglo-American diplomacy," admitted Cyrus L. Sulzberger in the *New York Times*, "has worked to safeguard Anglo-American strategical interests with reactionary feudal elements in the Arab world who must inevitably be brushed aside by time."<sup>16</sup>

Not simply by time, but by the peoples, Arab and Jewish.

#### IV. The Jews: Zionist Premise

On a July day in 1948 I stood with cheering thousands on the streets of Tel Aviv and watched the khaki-clad, bronzed defenders of the Jewish state march in celebration of Israel's first Army Day. It was the forty-fourth anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl. Nearly fifty-one years earlier, after the congress which was to create the World Zionist Organization, Herzl wrote in his diary:

"If I were to sum up the Basle Congress in one word—which I shall not do openly—it would be this: at Basle I founded the Jewish state."<sup>17</sup>

Herzl of course did not found the Jewish state. It was the work of the Jewish people, whom this half-assimilated Austrian intellectual understood little, and of world forces to which he was blind. Yet Herzl's name is indissolubly linked with Israel, even though the struggle that forged the Jewish state represented the negation of so much of his doctrine.

That doctrine was political Zionism. It is not the purpose of this book to present a history or a complete evaluation of Zionism, but only to consider those aspects which help in understanding Israel and its problems. Let me emphasize at the outset that though Zionism initiated and nourished the project that eventually became Israel, Zionism and Israel are not the same.

Zionist doctrine holds that the Jews of various countries constitute a single nation which has existed continuously since Biblical times. According to this view, after the destruction of the Second Commonwealth in 70 A.D., the Jews were exiled from their homeland, Palestine. In that exile, called the Diaspora (in Hebrew "galut"), the Jews have everywhere been condemned to an abnormal

economic and social life, have everywhere been hated and persecuted. This is their inevitable fate in the Diaspora. Throughout the centuries, however, the Jewish people have longed for the return to Palestine. There alone can Jewish life be normalized and the Jewish problem cease to exist. Let us examine its assumptions.

The fact is that only a part of the Diaspora was established as a result of separation from the homeland enforced by alien conquest. The greater part represented an entirely different phenomenon. It was largely the result of economic factors similar to those that caused the migration of other peoples. In the case of the Jews, insufficient land to support a rapidly expanding population and the attractions of trade elsewhere induced large numbers to settle in other countries—in Egypt and all along the northern coast of Africa, in Greece and Asia Minor, on the southern and northern coasts of the Black Sea, on the shores of the Danube, in Italy, Gaul (France), and Spain. Thus, it is estimated that in the first century A.D., prior to the final armed attempt of Palestine Jewry under Bar Kochba to win their independence from Rome, two and a half million Jews were in Palestine, one million in Babylonia, and about four million in various parts of the Roman Empire.<sup>2</sup>

For the most part these Jewish communities lived in peace with their neighbors, adopted their language and customs, intermarried, and became integrated into the societies in which they made their homes, even though in many cases (not all) they continued to maintain their Jewish identity. The Jews were farmers, merchants, artisans, and manual workers. The real persecution of the Jews and their exclusion from agriculture and manual labor occurred much later, after the breakup of the Roman Empire and the rise of feudalism. This persecution was the poisonous fruit of the centuries of dark reaction that weighed heavily on the common people as a whole. The anti-Jewish terror was a combination of three factors: the drive of the Roman Catholic Church for total domination, a drive directed at all dissenters, Jewish and non-Jewish; the effort of Gentile merchants and money-lenders to eliminate Jewish competitors; and ordinary lust for plunder on the part of various kings and nobles. The Jews were not the only persecuted minority. But because they were so widely scattered, and because for various historic reasons they survived through the

centuries while other minorities disappeared, the affliction of the Jews became a constant in the social life of Europe: they were the universal scapegoat.

Thus, the true exile of the Jewish people began not with events in ancient Palestine, but with their expulsion in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries from England, France, Germany, Spain, and Portugal, followed by their ghettoization in Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Italy. This was an exile from the life and culture of western Europe.

As for the age-old yearning of the Jews for Palestine, during the centuries before the anti-Semitic persecutions it was virtually non-existent except as fossilized religious ritual. For example, fifty years after the Jews were carried off into Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C., they were given an opportunity to return to Palestine, but only a minority went back. The rest remained, and Babylonia (now part of Iraq) became for some fifteen centuries a flourishing center of Jewish life and learning that at times outshone Palestine. A second example: in the rebellion against Rome, which brought to an end the Jewish state, the Diaspora west of Palestine gave little aid because of "its loyalty to Rome and its unwillingness to be considered part of the Jewish nation."<sup>3</sup> What bond there was between the various Jewish communities and Palestine was religious and cultural. And even in the later period, when catastrophe overwhelmed European Jewry, the Messiah-image and the false Messiahs that sprang up were expressions of the desire to be free of torment and oppression, a status which the Jewish people associated with the ancestral past in Palestine, rather than an urge to uproot themselves and settle in that country.

All this points up the fact that while ancient ethnic, religious, and cultural associations have fed the stream of Zionist ideology, Zionism as a political movement is not a continuation and culmination of a centuries-old national striving, but a product of new forces operating in the modern capitalist world. These forces have a direct bearing on the most fundamental concept in Zionist doctrine: that of a common and continuous Jewish nation. This is not a question of semantics. From the premise of single nationhood centered in Palestine a course of action flows that is quite different from that flowing from the opposite premise: that the Jews are a people



belonging to many diverse nations, sharing the fortunes of those nations, developing among them centers of Jewish life and culture no less valid than the Palestinian center.

#### PEOPLE AND NATION

If we consider the Jewish people in various countries concretely, what is it that they have in common? Their Palestinian origin and early history would not have sufficed through the years had not other, more decisive factors built bridges among them in widely separated countries. Persecution and discrimination have been perhaps the strongest cementing forces. Yet it would be a mistake to regard them as the only bonds. Once the Jewish religion represented an almost universal nexus. Religion is still a major influence in Jewish life in the capitalist world, though it has lost its former dominance, and large numbers of Jews are non-believers. Among the Jews of Europe and the Americas, where the majority of world Jewry live, cultural and psychological ties are also an important factor. And millions of Jews speak or understand Yiddish, though at no time has it been the language of the Jewish people everywhere. These bonds and others like them are real; and even though they represent in some cases a waning influence, they are sufficient to make it possible to speak of the Jews of different countries as belonging to one people.

Yet it takes no deep reflection to discover that these bonds are decidedly limited and, except for anti-Semitic persecution, are almost exclusively in the ideological realm. Physically the Jewish people are separated from each other in many countries. And the conditions of life for them differ from country to country. These are the basic determinants. American Jews, for example, share with non-Jewish Americans the economic, social, political, and cultural life of the United States, just as French Jews share with non-Jewish Frenchmen the economic, social, political, and cultural life of France. And the language of daily intercourse for the Jewish people is predominantly the language of the lands in which they live. Certain it is that in each country the Jewish people retain a distinctive character and interests of their own, and make a distinctive contribution to the life of that country. Yet all this develops within the context of different national circumstances for the American

Jews from those of the French Jews, and these differing circumstances also leave their impress on that which is specifically Jewish. In other words, while the Jews throughout the world are one people, they are not one nation, but members of diverse nations.

What, then, is a nation? Many writers have tried their hands at defining it, and many have gone astray. Some single out one or two aspects of nationhood and ignore the other indispensable qualities. For example, the American sociologist, Professor Harry Elmer Barnes, defines a nation as "a culturally homogeneous social group, which is at once conscious and tenacious of its unity of psychic life and expression."<sup>4</sup> But a homogeneous culture and national psychology, though characteristic of nations, are themselves products of more fundamental factors and cannot alone signify nationhood. The Arab peoples are a culturally homogeneous group, as are most of the Latin American peoples, but they constitute separate nations. Other writers try to define nation in purely subjective terms, shutting out completely the objective conditions which determine human relationships. To the American psychologist, Professor W. P. Pillsbury, "Nationality is the mental state of community in behavior,"<sup>5</sup> and "the only way to decide whether an individual belongs to one nation rather than another is to ask him."<sup>6</sup>

One must turn to Marxism not only for the most precise and scientific definition of a nation, but for an understanding of the national question and its relation to the social struggle. In his classic *Marxism and the National Question*, written in 1913, Joseph Stalin, after analyzing the various factors of nationhood, sums them up as follows: "A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a community of culture."<sup>7</sup> Stalin points out that no single one of these attributes but all combined constitute nationhood.

A nation is, moreover, a relatively recent phenomenon. The ancient Hebrews, with their tribal loyalties and tribal wars, were not a nation. In Plato's Greece and Caesar's Rome a man was a citizen not of the country as a whole, but of a city-state like Athens or Rome. (The very word "citizen" is derived from "city" and both come from the Latin "civitas," meaning "city" or "state.") "To a man of the Middle Ages," writes Professor Edward A. Westermarck, "'his country' meant little more than the neighborhood in



which he lived. The first duty of a vassal was to be loyal to his lord; but no national spirit bound together the various barons of one country."<sup>8</sup> And even much later, in the American colonies a settler identified himself more with Virginia or Pennsylvania or Massachusetts than with the whole of America. One of the problems that the American Revolution and the young republic faced was that of welding together the separate colonies into a single nation. It may be said that this process was not completed till the overthrow of the slavocracy in the Civil War, that is, till the capitalist conquest of the entire United States.

As Stalin puts it: "A nation is not merely a historical category, but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism was at the same time a process of amalgamation of people into nations."<sup>9</sup>

By these tests, were the Jewish people in Herzl's day a nation? Are they today a single world nation? They have neither common territory, nor language, nor economic life. Many of them have elements of a common national character and culture, but these by themselves could not constitute the Jewish people a distinct nation in Herzl's day or give them single nationhood today. Certain it is that a half century ago their sufferings and Zionist propaganda awoke among a considerable number of Jews, chiefly in Eastern Europe, a desire to become a nation, with a land of their own. Yet the huge emigration to America, England, Argentina, and other countries indicates that, whatever the subjective desire, objective social-economic processes were dispersing the Jews among other nations and weakening even those elements of potential nationhood which existed among them.

Why did Zionism appear when it did and where it did? Following the assassination of Tsar Alexander II of Russia in 1881, widespread repressions were carried out which also took the form of anti-Jewish pogroms. These pogroms became the catalyst that precipitated the first organized Zionist movement. Subsequent persecution and discrimination and the growth of anti-Semitism in the West, especially as manifested in the Dreyfus case in France, fed the Zionist flame. But why had earlier persecutions failed to produce a movement like Zionism? The answer lies in the fact that

a Jewish nationalist or quasi-nationalist movement could not appear before the epoch in which nations first appeared. Zionism was a product of capitalist development in Eastern Europe in general and among the Jews in particular.

Zionism was the successor to the Haskala (Enlightenment) movement among the Jews of Eastern Europe. Haskala was the counterpart of European rationalism, which the bourgeoisie forged as a weapon against feudal and clerical obscurantism in the struggle to establish capitalist power. Haskala set itself the task of ending the isolation of the Jewish communities from European culture, of introducing secular education, of rooting out ghetto customs and the ghetto mentality, of obtaining for Jews equality of status.

Haskala expressed the interests of the rising Jewish merchant class, which had begun to operate in the national and international market. It inevitably reflected the dualism of this class: progressive in relation to the feudal-clerical influences that were stifling Jewish life, but hostile toward the working class and toward popular democratic movements among both Jews and non-Jews. Yet on the whole Haskala during the first half of the nineteenth century was a positive factor even though the upper crust of the maskilim, as its active participants were called, were extreme loyalists in respect to the absolutist regimes in Austria-Hungary and Russia.<sup>10</sup>

The wealthiest merchants and their Haskala representatives, pursuing to the end the logic of their identification with the ruling classes, became openly assimilationist. For the majority, however, this path was closed. They sought to preserve traditional religion minus the more fanatical excesses, and to develop a modern Jewish culture as a means of lifting the masses to a level that would make them "worthy" of that equal status which they trusted such "liberals" as Tsar Alexander II to grant. On this purely bourgeois basis, and hostile or indifferent to the social forces that were rending absolutism and preparing the revolutionary crisis of the capitalist order, Haskala proved incapable of showing the way to the solution of anti-Semitism and the integration of the Jewish people into the life about them. The pogroms of 1881, followed by new anti-Jewish segregation laws, blasted the hopes Haskala had raised.

The resultant disillusionment turned sections of the Jewish capitalists and their Haskala spokesmen toward Zionism. Whereas



Haskala was primarily cultural, Zionism became an organized political movement that expressed the further development of capitalism and its ideology among the Jewish communities of eastern Europe. Zionism took over from Haskala its secular emphasis, its cultivation of Hebrew as a literary language and its contempt for Yiddish, the language of the ordinary folk (though some of the maskilim later changed their attitude toward Yiddish). It also took over the political loyalism of a large section of the maskilim and their antipathy toward popular revolutionary movements.

In certain respects Zionism was the obverse of the bourgeois coin whose other side was Haskala. In place of Haskala's attempt at integration with the non-Jewish bourgeoisie, Zionism expressed a separatist nationalism—while continuing to rely on the non-Jewish ruling classes to help it achieve its aims. For Haskala's optimism about the Jewish future in a reactionary milieu Zionism substituted pessimism about that future in every social milieu outside of Palestine. On the other hand, whereas Haskala had at one time been a predominantly progressive influence, Zionism, coming at a later stage, when the Jewish workers were being drawn into the mainstream of struggle against class and national oppression, became a reactionary force, seeking to divert the Jewish masses from the path along which lay the genuine solution of their problems. This was the objective role it played, a role which could not be altered by the fact that many Zionists were imbued with a genuine desire to serve their people.

Why did Zionism originate and acquire its principal strength in Eastern Europe? Because only there did the Jews have the character of an oppressed minority people, concentrated in a specific area—one among many oppressed national groups. In Western Europe the national question had, with the sole exception of Ireland, already been solved. Only in the tsarist Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, where feudal institutions had survived the feudal epoch, were there nationalities which had not developed rapidly enough to form independent states and had fallen under the heel of the absolutist states created by the Great Russian and Austro-Hungarian nations.

Was Zionism, then, a national movement similar to that of the Poles, the Ukrainians, and the Czechs? Since the Jews were not a

nation, they could not have produced a genuine national movement. Nor was Zionism a movement that sought to free the Jewish people from anti-Semitic oppression in countries in which they had made their homes for centuries. On the contrary, *Zionism rejected the struggle against anti-Semitism and for Jewish rights*. And by isolating the Jewish question from its social-economic context, Zionism sought to isolate the Jewish people from their democratic allies.

#### THE NATURE OF ZIONISM

To make clearer the nature of Zionism let us turn to its two principal classics, Leo Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation*, published in 1882, and Theodor Herzl's *The Jewish State*, published in 1896. The fact that these two works, written independently (Herzl had never read Pinsker and had had almost no direct contact with Zionist activity) contained virtually identical ideas indicates that these were not simply fortuitous products of individual minds, but expressed a maturing social and political trend. Both works (each was no longer than a pamphlet), and especially Herzl's, had important practical consequences in stimulating the growth of the Zionist movement.

Pinsker and Herzl both take as their starting point anti-Semitism. What is striking is their express renunciation of the struggle against it. This has remained an essential feature of Zionist theory—though not always of Zionist practice—even if it is not usually stated as explicitly as in the two classics. Pinsker, the physician, converted anti-Semitism into a biological law. "Judeophobia," he wrote, "is a variety of demonopathy with the distinction that it is not peculiar to particular races, but is common to the whole of mankind... As a psychic aberration it is hereditary, and as a disease transmitted for two thousand years it is incurable."<sup>11</sup> Therefore, "we must draw the important conclusion that we must give up contending against these hostile impulses as we must against every inherited predisposition."<sup>12</sup>

Herzl, the journalist, saw the cause of anti-Semitism as social rather than biological, but he too believed it ineradicable. "From the beginning I understood the emptiness and futility of efforts 'to combat anti-Semitism.'"<sup>13</sup> In both Pinsker and Herzl there is a deep-seated social pessimism. It is the pessimism of the bourgeois intellectual overwhelmed by the brutalities of capitalist life as mani-

fested in the treatment of the Jews. And the Jewish state they project is more a cry of despair than an affirmation of faith.

This line of thought led to the view that the Jews themselves were the carriers and even the cause of anti-Semitism. "The unfortunate Jews," wrote Herzl, "are now carrying the seeds of anti-Semitism into England; they have already introduced it into America."<sup>14</sup> Fifty years later, in 1946, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, then president of the World Zionist Organization, told the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine: "I believe that the one fundamental cause of anti-Semitism . . . is that the Jew exists. We seem to carry anti-Semitism in our knapsacks wherever we go. The growth and intensity of anti-Semitism is proportional to the number of Jews or to the density of the Jews in a given country."<sup>15</sup>

Obviously, if this is true, the way to get rid of the disease is to get rid of its carriers. However different the motives, this aspect of Zionist ideology tended to dovetail with the aims of the Jew-baiters themselves. And Herzl was not averse to playing on the anti-Semitic prejudices of the Russian Tsar, the German Kaiser, and their ministers and aides. Central in his appeal too was his emphasis on Zionism as a weapon against the revolutionary or anti-monarchist parties in Russia and Germany. This theme recurs again and again in his diaries. On May 19, 1903, in a fawning letter to von Plehve, the Tsar's Minister of the Interior and inspirer of anti-Jewish pogroms, Herzl attacked the Russian revolutionary movement and offered the services of Zionism to combat its influence among the Jewish youth.<sup>16</sup> Earlier, in two brief diary entries this prophet of Jewish salvation via Palestine had expressed his readiness to write off all Jews who did not accept the prevailing capitalist dogmas. "The French Jews," he wrote on September 29, 1898, "are obviously beyond salvation. . . . They are seeking protection among the Socialists and disrupters of the present bourgeois order." And the following day: "The French

\*Dr. Weizmann's mathematics was as faulty as his sociology. When Hitler came to power there were about 500,000 Jews in Germany, or less than 1 per cent of the population. At the time there were 4,500,000 Jews in the United States, or nearly 4 per cent of the population. The growth and intensity of anti-Semitism were nevertheless far greater in Germany because social and political reaction was more highly developed there. In the same period 4,000,000 Jews in the Soviet Union were completely free of the curse of anti-Semitism.

Jews are outside the pale as far as we are concerned. Properly speaking, they are no longer Jews. Of course, they also are not Frenchmen. They will probably become the leaders of European anarchy."<sup>17</sup>

The anti-Semites were not unresponsive to the attractions of Zionism. On August 10, 1903, Herzl recorded in his diary his interview with the aforementioned von Plehve, the violent Jew-hater who had instigated the horrible Kishinev pogrom only four months earlier. He quoted von Plehve as saying: "We were sympathetic to your Zionist movement as long as it helped to further emigration. You don't have to begin justifying the movement to me."<sup>18</sup>

This meeting of minds, even though from different standpoints and for different ends, also expressed itself in practical work. One of the best-known present-day leaders of the world Zionist movement, Isaac Gruenbaum, former Minister of the Interior in the provisional government of Israel and later a member of the executive committee of the Jewish Agency, tells us in his book, *The History of Zionism*, that at the sixth Zionist Congress in 1903, shortly after Herzl's return from Russia, his opening speech, while expressing sorrow for the Kishinev pogrom, "contained no word of protest against the Russian government, which had been responsible for the outrages."<sup>19</sup> Nor did the congress adopt any protest resolution. And Gruenbaum also states that the tsarist government at first "favored the growth and expansion of the Zionist movement" since "Zionism distracted the attention of the Jews from the struggle against the tsarist regime and from interest in Russia and Russian conditions."<sup>20</sup>

Thus we find that at the very outset Zionist theory and practice, faithful to their class origins, were characterized by collaboration, direct or indirect, not with the progressive elements in society, but with the overlords of reaction. This orientation was strengthened by Herzl's own social outlook. Outlining his conception of the future Jewish state, he wrote: "I am a staunch supporter of monarchical institutions because these allow of a continuous policy, and represent the interests of a historically famous family born and educated to rule. . . . A democracy without a sovereign's useful counterpoise is extreme in appreciation and condemnation, tends to idle discussion in parliaments, and produces that objectionable



class of men—professional politicians. Nations are also really not fit for unlimited democracy at present, and will become less and less fitted for it in the future. . . . Politics must take shape in the upper strata and work downwards.”<sup>21</sup>

In its external policy political Zionism likewise identified itself with reaction—with imperialism. Herzl’s feverish negotiations with various princes, potentates, and high dignitaries—Wilhelm II, the Grand Duke of Baden, the Sultan of Turkey, the King of Italy, the Pope, the Tsar’s ministers, the British Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, etc.—not to mention the millionaire Rothschilds and de Hirschs—read today like a fantasy out of Hollywood. Their political meaning, however, was not fable, but sordid reality: Herzl and his colleagues sought to place Zionism, the Jewish people, and the state they hoped to establish in Palestine at the service of one or other of the imperialist powers.

In *The Jewish State* Herzl had written: “If his Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in return undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. We should there form a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism.”<sup>22</sup> Later that year (1896), in a letter to Reverend William H. Hechler, chaplain of the British Embassy in Vienna, whose contents he requested be made known to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, Herzl wrote: “Now there is a means of regulating Turkish finances, and with it of maintaining the status quo for some time longer, and simultaneously creating for England a new road, and the shortest one, to India. . . . This means is the erection of an autonomous Jewish *subject state* in Palestine, similar to Egypt, under the sovereignty of the Sultan.”<sup>23</sup> (My emphasis—A.B.M.)

At that time the Zionist leaders had no preferences among the imperialist powers and were no less ready to serve Britain’s chief rival, Germany. Wrote Herzl in his diary on October 8, 1898: “To be under the protectorate of this strong, great, moral, magnificently administered, vigorously organized Germany can have only the most beneficent effect on the character of the Jewish people.”<sup>24</sup>

While Herzl’s successors discarded some of his extravagances in courting the crowned heads of European reaction, they continued to make the Zionist movement a pawn in the struggle among rival

imperialist powers which finally led to World War I. At the ninth Zionist Congress in 1909, David Wolffsohn, who had become president after Herzl’s death, “proclaimed the absolute compatibility of Zionism with loyalty to the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>25</sup> Only a few years later, when Palestine was wrested from Turkey by Britain, the Zionist leaders were proclaiming similar loyalty to the British Empire. Loyalty to Britain remained an article of faith of the Zionist leadership almost till the very end of the mandate despite the crass betrayals and anti-Jewish terror of the British government. “. . . The Rock of Gibraltar on which I have built my Zionist policy is absolute co-operation with Great Britain,” Dr. Weizmann told the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in the name of the Jewish Agency for Palestine,\* which he then headed.<sup>26</sup>

For years the Zionist leadership also clung to Herzl’s conception of a Jewish vassal state. In 1930, testifying before the Shaw Commission, which investigated the 1929 Arab outbreak in Palestine, Vladimir Jabotinsky, fire-eating leader of the Revisionists, the extreme Right wing of the Zionist movement, defined “Jewish state” as follows: “It does not necessarily mean being independent in the sense of having the right to declare war on anybody, but what it means is first of all a majority of Jewish people in Palestine, so that under a democratic rule the Jewish point of view should always prevail, and secondly, that measure of self-government which, for instance, the state of Nebraska possesses.”<sup>27</sup> A few years later the Revisionists became ardent advocates of making Palestine a dominion within the British Empire. Dominion status in the cockpit of the Middle East, where even nominally independent states are under foreign control, would hardly be comparable to the status of Canada, South Africa, or Australia.

An independent Jewish state was also specifically rejected in 1936 by David Ben Gurion, then head of the Palestine executive committee of the Jewish Agency. In his testimony before the Royal

\*The mandate for Palestine given to Britain by the League of Nations provided for “an appropriate Jewish agency . . . for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine. . . .” It recognized the Zionist organization as this agency. However, in 1929, after prolonged negotiations between the Zionist organization and non-Zionist Jewish groups, an enlarged Jewish Agency for Palestine was set up with equal representation for Zionists and non-Zionists, most of the latter being wealthy capitalists.

Commission headed by Lord Peel the man who later became Israel's first Prime Minister urged that Palestine "be attached to a greater unit, a unit that is called the British Commonwealth of Nations."<sup>28</sup> This was also the view of Dr. Weizmann, who wrote in 1942: "Considering the strategic and economic importance of Palestine, the inclusion of the Jewish state within the British Commonwealth of Nations would be to the interest of both."<sup>29</sup>

### ZIONISM AND NATIONAL STRUGGLE

Here it would be well to consider a phenomenon peculiar to Zionism: its exceptional lack of combativeness and resistance to foreign rule. This is all the more striking when we compare Zionism with such bourgeois national movements as those of India, Ireland, Puerto Rico, and the subject peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These movements have, with all their inconsistencies, represented some measure of striving for independence which at times has led to sharp conflict with the alien oppressor. This was also true of the Arab national movement despite the fact that its leadership was largely semi-feudal. But from its first congress in 1897 the Zionist movement pursued a different path, deeply entangling itself with various reactionary powers and looking to them for the realization of its aims. Thus Zionism, which appeared to be a liberation movement, became an instrument of imperialist enslavement in the Middle East. Nor can it be said that the Zionist leaders were entirely blind to the role they were playing. For example, in 1934 Eliezer Liebenstein, one of the leaders of the Palestine Labor Party (Mapai), wrote: "England needs the Jews in order to prevent the Arabs from becoming too strong, and in order to have an added protection against an Arab movement which aims at the emancipation of a united Arab 'middle Orient' from English domination."<sup>30</sup>

How explain this deep identification with imperialist policy which makes even a Gandhi, the exponent of non-resistance, seem a revolutionary zealot in comparison with a Weizmann? Part of the explanation undoubtedly lies in the fact that since the Zionists were seeking to establish their claims at the expense of Arab national claims, they necessarily had to depend on the dominant foreign power to help them. In other words, refusal to co-operate with the

Arabs led to extreme dependence on imperialism. There was, however, a more fundamental factor. *So long as no Jewish nation existed, Zionism could not have the character of a true national movement.* It was a nostalgic cosmopolitan movement of Jews of many countries which, in the absence of a territorial base and the other attributes of nationhood, could not reflect the deep conflicts of interest that develop between oppressed and oppressing nations. Until a Jewish nation began to mature in Palestine in the 'thirties, the national elements in Zionism were rudimentary. But growing Jewish industrialization and nationhood represented an increasing threat to the imperialist status quo despite the collaborationist policy of the Zionist leaders. It was this that caused Britain to attempt to straightjacket Jewish national development through drastic curbs on immigration and land purchase. Another major consideration was the British desire to appease the reactionary Arab leadership in the hope of pulling the teeth of the anti-imperialist struggles in Palestine, Iraq, Egypt, and other countries. A further factor was the pro-fascist appeasement policy on which the British government under Neville Chamberlain embarked in the mid-thirties. The Middle East policy was fitted into this larger framework.

It was in response to the British attempts to seal off the Yishuv's further development that a genuine bourgeois national movement arose in Jewish Palestine. It enlisted mass support and entered the path of struggle—naturally with half measures and many retreats—against the alien regime. But this liberation movement, which consisted of *Palestinian* Jews and embraced non-Zionists, was not identical with Zionism. And since the formation of the Jewish state the conflict within Israel has been between those in power who in a new form and under new conditions pursue the old aim of a vassal state, and those who represent the majority interest in flesh-and-blood independence.

Zionism is a species of nationalism, and all nationalism is in its class content bourgeois. Nationalism is that ideology which the bourgeoisie fashioned in its struggle against the feudal order. But when capitalism lost its progressive character toward the end of the nineteenth century with the opening of the epoch of imperialism, the nationalism of the imperialist countries became reactionary. Among colonial and semi-colonial peoples nationalism is a wavering



force. It subordinates the real interests of the nation to the interests of the capitalists and in critical moments betrays the struggle for independence. In all oppressed countries the working class, once it is freed of nationalist confusion, is the only consistent fighter for national liberation.

Zionism is, however, not a single, unified bourgeois nationalism. Only in recent years did a Jewish nation develop in Palestine with a nationalism of its own. World Zionism is actually a melange of the Jewish variants of conflicting bourgeois nationalisms, with the dominant ingredient today American.

At the same time, by setting masses into motion Zionism inevitably generated its own contradictions. After the Kishinev pogrom the great Hebrew Zionist poet, Chaim Nachman Bialik, wrote his powerful poem, *In the City of Slaughter (Be-ir Hash-chita)*, in which he castigated the Jews for failing to defend themselves. Zionist youths started organizing their own defense groups in various parts of Russia. Politically, too, Russian Zionists began to concern themselves with the immediate welfare of their brethren. This brought them into conflict with the tsar's police, though their activities were by no means revolutionary. But the greatest contradictions of all came to fruition in Palestine and eventually converted a colonization project sponsored by imperialism into a factor in the anti-imperialist struggle.

For in Palestine the Jews who settled there became in time a nation. And out of this nation arose a movement of national liberation that transcended the imperialist bounds in which the Zionist leaders sought to confine it. Though this movement was led by Zionists, it necessarily departed to a decisive degree from the theory and practice of Zionism. Moreover, its victory was made possible by the aid of progressive non-Zionist forces throughout the world. And the closer the Yishuv drew to statehood, the farther it moved from the letter and spirit of Theodor Herzl's *The Jewish State*.

## V. The Arabs: Counter-Premise

"Why did you fight?"

The commander of the prison camp translated my question into Arabic. The tall Arab prisoner of war shook his head. "I didn't fight. This war is the fault of Britain."

"Didn't you have a gun?"

"We are poor people. Those who want to fight are in Syria and Egypt and they left us poor people to suffer. We didn't fight, we didn't make war. Hagana attacked us. If Hagana had told us before the attack to surrender, we would have done so."

The tall Arab stepped back into the semi-circle of some thirty prisoners of war. Another came forward. He too insisted he had not participated in the fighting, had in fact been in bed when taken prisoner. Some four hundred prisoners—all civilians—had been brought to this stockade in the abandoned Arab village of Umm Chalid, near the Jewish resort town of Nathanya on the Mediterranean coast. They were being quartered in several rooms of a large one-story stone building and in the nearby mosque. Most of them had been seized in the Arab fishing village of Tantura, about twenty miles south of Haifa.

Of the four hundred prisoners, only about a hundred had been armed. Nor was the possession of arms necessarily proof that they had been used against the Jews. But Hagana could hardly have been blamed for refusing to take chances in view of the fact that an armed band had infiltrated Tantura and converted it into a depot for guns smuggled from neighboring Arab countries.

As we left one group of prisoners and went to visit another, the camp commander, a former inspector of police under the British,