

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,

said: "We pick sergeants from among them, one sergeant for every fifty men. We select them from the best families."

I expressed surprise at this since the "best families"—the well-to-do—had hardly proved themselves the best friends of the Jews. "They are very primitive people," explained the Hagana officer who had brought me to the camp, a note of condescension in his voice. "We must give them leaders from the same families as were their leaders before. It's not the best way, but the quickest."

I was skeptical about both the wisdom of this policy and the justification given for it. My skepticism grew stronger when only a few minutes later a sergeant from one of these "best families," a man whose swaggering air set him apart from the rest, admitted to having spent seven years in jail for murder!

Later that day I had the opportunity of visiting one of the "worst families," that is, one of the most typical. Fureidis is an Arab village lying between Tantura and the prosperous Jewish village of Zichron Yakov. Unlike Tantura, Fureidis had not resisted Hagana, but co-operated with the Jewish authorities. Besides working in their own fields, some of the people were employed by Jews in Zichron Yakov, one of the oldest Jewish colonies, a center of the wine industry and a health resort. Fureidis' school, established under the Mandate, had only three grades; after that, from the fourth to the seventh grades the children went to school in Tantura. They were lucky, for many thousands of Arab children had no school at all. On the whole, this was an Arab village whose economic and cultural level could be considered higher than most.

The portly, shabby-looking muchtar (village chairman) greeted us on our arrival, while barefoot children swarmed about us. He had only one request to make of the Hagana soldier who acted as guide: send a doctor to care for the sick. After chatting a bit, I asked whether I could visit one of the families. The muchtar led the way into a kind of yard in which stood a one-room house built of mud and straw. One of the rooms was occupied by a donkey and a flock of chickens that looked more like scavengers than fowl. Outside the other room, amid indescribable filth, squatted two women and seven children, the youngest an infant. The infant's face was covered with a rash and flies danced over him as he lay in his mother's lap. The muchtar explained that the woman and

her child were refugees from Tantura, temporarily sharing this family's quarters. The sight of these seven wretched human beings was an ordeal, and I left as soon as I could without giving offense.

The overwhelming majority of the 35 million Arabs in the Middle East live under conditions similar to these and worse. The economic and social structure in Palestine and the other Arab countries is predominantly feudal and pre-feudal. "The effects of the feudal system," writes a leading authority, Alfred Bonn , ". . . are to this day much more tangible and apparent in the Middle Eastern countries than in other parts of the world."¹ This is due only in part to the heritage from the feudal epoch. More significant is a neo-feudal development which began in the last half of the nineteenth century when the Turkish government, then the nominal sovereign over the Middle Eastern countries, sold to wealthy individuals large tracts of land. In this way a new parasitic class, the effendis, was created. This gave rise to a system similar to sharecropping in the United States. As a result, the fellaheen are shackled by debt through the accumulation of interest at usurious rates on loans extended by the effendis.

In addition, a form of communal land ownership, known as mushaa, dating from ancient patriarchal society, is still widespread. Under this system the land is individually cultivated, but is redistributed every two years, so that the peasant has little incentive to improve his strip. Mushaa is similar to the communal land ownership which persisted in various parts of Europe within modern times—in Russia till the early years of the twentieth century. Such collectivism mummifies social relations and blocks technical progress.

A third form of land ownership, semi-feudal in character, is waqf. Waqf land belongs to endowments and religious institutions and cannot be sold. The endowments often serve as a device for retaining property within the family of the endower. All three forms of land ownership act as a barrier to the emergence of an independent peasantry and a class of agricultural wage-workers. They also help preserve the most primitive methods of cultivation.

Into this ancient petrified society stepped in 1882 the Bilus, the first Zionist pioneers, thoughtless of the impact on the Arab world of the movement they were initiating. Small Jewish communities had continued to exist in Palestine through nearly all the storms

and changes since the failure of Bar Kochba's revolt in 135 A.D. But the Bilus were the first group of modern colonists fired with the determination to build the temple of Jewish nationhood in Zion, and to build it with labor rather than prayer.

Yet within the shell of Arab society not all was sleep and decay. Something was stirring. That something was the Arab national movement, which was born in the second half of the nineteenth century. And its birthplace was Syria and Lebanon, which were closely linked, geographically, politically, and historically, to Palestine. It was the activities of the powers, especially Britain and France, as well as European and American religious and cultural influences that drew the Middle East into the orbit of the capitalist world and quickened the first frail buds of Arab nationalism. But for years this remained a stunted movement, the preoccupation of intellectuals and army officers. The low industrial development and the pre-capitalist character of agriculture retarded the process of the national struggle even more than in Eastern Europe.

The second stage of the national movement opened with the Arab revolt of 1916. It was organized by the British through pledges and bribes to Husain, Sharif of the Hejaz in Arabia, who claimed descent from Mohammed. The revolt was led by feudal-clerical grandees headed by Husain and his three sons, with the support of Ibn Saud. Under this leadership the Arab national movement served the interests of Anglo-French imperialism in the war against their Turkish-German rivals. By and large the Arab masses remained passive and indifferent. But despite its pro-imperialist character and reactionary leadership, the Arab revolt set in motion forces which soon came into conflict with the British "liberator." London's diplomacy during this period was an elaborate shell-game, tortuous with conflicting commitments to three parties, the Arabs, the Jews, and the French.

The third stage of the Arab national movement, which opened after World War I, marked a new level of struggle. Four characteristics stand forth: first, despite many inconsistencies and digressions, it became a movement directed at all foreign imperialism and seeking independence for *all* Arab countries; second, the bourgeoisie, chiefly commercial and banking elements, came to the fore, but as a close ally of the feudal-clerical landowning families; third,

the peasantry entered the arena as the mass force behind the movement; fourth, in the 'thirties the working class became a factor in the struggles in Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and Palestine, the trade unions and the Communist parties participating actively in the liberation movement.

The leadership, however, remained in the hands of the capitalist-landlord groups. During this period industrial development in the Arab countries was impeded by the privileged position of foreign capital, by the typically colonial restrictions imposed by the western powers, and by the feudal limitation of the domestic market—the rural population was too poor to buy factory goods. Thus, neither the industrialists, whose interests conflicted with those of foreign capital, nor the working class was strong enough to play a leading role in the Arab national movement.

It is important to note that not every national independence movement serves the cause of progress. The rights of nations are not absolutes, but must be viewed in relation to the worldwide battle for democracy and freedom. The touchstone of every national movement is not the social character of its leaders or participants, or the program it adopts, but its concrete relation to imperialism. Whatever combats and weakens imperialism is on the side of progress even if princes and sheikhs are its leaders. Whatever supports and strengthens imperialism is reactionary even if alleged socialists are its leaders. Thus the Arab revolt of 1916-18 was not anti-imperialist since it served one side in a war in which both sides were reactionary. But the revolts in the period after World War I were anti-imperialist even though their leadership and programs were virtually unaltered. The role of the Jewish community in Palestine has undergone similar changes.

In the wake of the cynical scuttling by the British and French of their pledges of Arab independence, uprisings and demonstrations swept Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Palestine. They coincided with similar anti-imperialist struggles in China, India, Indonesia, North Africa, and other parts of the colonial world. As a result, by the beginning of World War II all the countries of the Middle East had won or were in process of winning formal independence with the exception of Palestine and Transjordan—and

even the latter had been granted a shadowy sovereignty. Actually these countries continued to be semi-colonies of Britain and France.

The tactic of imperialism in the Middle East was outlined with unusual candor by the semi-official *Temps* of Paris on January 15, 1926, in discussing the rebellion in Syria: "Our duty is clearly marked out—to divide in order to rule. The division has been carried out; ruling now begins."² The most tragic consequences of this ancient technique of tyranny were unfolded in Palestine.

Millions of words have been written in support of the rival claims of Arab and Jewish nationalists in regard to Palestine. No purpose would be served in again threshing that old straw. Whatever may have happened hundreds and thousands of years ago, and whatever conclusions are to be drawn or not drawn from those distant events, the history of the past three decades has created new irreversible facts even if some persons fail to recognize them. The old controversies are important only to the extent that they influence the actions of men and women today. But the solutions must be governed by the conditions of the present and not by those which no longer exist.

And so the reader will have to look elsewhere for a discussion of the various diplomatic documents that have engendered so much heat and so little light—the McMahon correspondence with Sharif Husain (1915-16), which committed Britain to Arab independence in return for services rendered; the Sykes-Picot agreement (1916), providing for the partition of the Ottoman Empire among Britain, France, and tsarist Russia; the Balfour Declaration (1917), in which the British government expressed its support of "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" and pledged to "use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object"; and the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine (1923). The inconsistencies and ambiguities in these documents could hardly have been accidental. All were designed to further imperialist aims in general and British aims in particular. And London resolved the dilemma of conflicting promises to the Jews, the Arabs, and the French by breaking them all.

In 1917, when the Balfour Declaration was issued, the population of Palestine, as of most of the Middle East, was predominantly Arab. The Arabs in Palestine and elsewhere were in an early

stage of nationhood. But world capitalism was in a late stage of its development, the monopoly stage which is imperialism. This made inevitable a clash between the two. It is sometimes asserted that the Palestinian Arabs do not constitute a distinct nation, but are part of a general Arab nation, which already has other lands and states. Those who hold this view ask the Palestinian Arabs not only to relinquish their right to political independence, but to accept the dominance of others over them.

This argument is based on a fallacy. One might as well insist that the people of Chile are not a distinct nation, but part of a general Latin American nation. Among the Arab peoples, as among the Latin American, there are close bonds and a common cultural heritage. However, because of various factors—geographic, climatic, economic, and political—they have evolved not as one nation, but as several.

One of the ablest of recent pro-Zionist books has pointed out that "to the Arabs of Palestine, the country is as uniquely their homeland as to any Zionist Jew. . . . They have made their lives in Palestine and buried their dead in its soil. They are not rootless people, to be lightly shipped off to any other country. With the awakening of nationalist consciousness, they have come to feel themselves Arabs—but Palestine Arabs."³ And their right to self-determination derives from the reality of present nationhood and not from any ancient associations, even though Arab, like Jewish, nationalists are prone to emphasize the past.

The Arab outbreaks in Palestine in the years after World War I have often been called pogroms. In the first years they did take the form of anti-Jewish pogroms, but it is a superficial view that fails to see what lay behind them. In view of the fact that revolts, strikes, and demonstrations against foreign rule occurred during the same period in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq—all countries which entered the postwar period without achieving political independence—it would be inconceivable that the Palestine Arabs alone should have been indifferent to their similar lack of freedom. However, while the Balfour Declaration and all that flowed from it were not the cause, they inevitably became an aggravating factor and determined the form of the struggle. In the eyes of the Arabs the Zionists were encroaching on their national rights. By their very

presence the Jewish settlers served as a screen for the main enemy, Britain. And the reactionary Arab leadership often found it convenient to make the Jews the scapegoat and deflect the anger of the people both from the imperialist master and the native exploiter. This became the tragedy of the Arab national movement, a tragedy that eventually overwhelmed it in the other Arab countries too and facilitated its betrayal.

Yet it is significant that as the Arab independence struggle in Palestine developed, its anti-Jewish aspect diminished, and its anti-imperialist character became more clearly defined. This was conceded in the Peel Commission report in 1937: "In 1920, 1921 and 1929 the Arabs had attacked the Jews. In 1933 they attacked the government."⁴ And: "In 1939 this was still clearer. Jewish lives were taken and Jewish property destroyed; but the outbreak was chiefly and directly aimed at the government. The word 'disturbances' gives a misleading impression of what happened. It was an open rebellion of the Palestinian Arabs, assisted by fellow-Arabs from other countries, against British mandatory rule."⁵

The Arab revolt which began in Palestine in April, 1936, was no isolated event. It was part of an anti-imperialist movement that surged through Egypt and Syria in 1935-36, characterized by demonstrations, strikes, and clashes with British and French police. In Palestine the struggle got under way with a remarkable general strike, which embraced workers and shopkeepers and lasted nearly six months. Such solidarity could never have been enforced from above, and attested to the wide popular support of the national movement. The strike developed into a mass revolt against British rule in which the Arabs attacked police stations and barracks and destroyed communications. Though guerrilla bands also assaulted Jewish settlements, their main target was the British. However, the revolt was led by the old treacherous feudal-clerical-bourgeois clique, now organized in the Arab Higher Committee whose chairman was Haj al-Husaini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, head of one of the great landowning families. And in the later stages a new unseen participant entered the arena—Italian fascism. It played both sides of the street, providing arms and money to the Mufti's gang and establishing contacts with the Zionist Revisionists, who organized

anti-Arab terror bands known as the Irgun Tsvai Leumi. In World War II the Mufti became an open Nazi agent.

The betrayal of the Arab national movement by its leaders, who aligned themselves with Italy and Germany, merged with the Axis war against the freedom of all peoples. After the war these leaders, together with those of the so-called independent Arab states, continued their Judas role by becoming the catspaws of British and American policy in the holy crusade against Israel. It is usually overlooked that this aggressive war was simultaneously directed at the aspirations to statehood and independence of the Palestinian Arabs, aspirations which the United Nations partition decision were designed to fulfill. This adventure of the reactionary Arab cabal led not only to military disaster, but to increased economic and political dependence on foreign imperialism.

It was the misfortune of the Arab anti-imperialist movement that its landlord-capitalist leaders were strong enough to keep the working class in a subordinate role and prevent the unleashing of an agrarian revolution which, as in China today, could have liberated it from its betrayers. The war against Israel laid bare the utter bankruptcy of that leadership and foreshadowed the coming of new class forces to the helm.

THE ARAB-JEWISH CONFLICT

The Jews of Israel belong to one of the oldest peoples in the world—and to the youngest of nations. History has no precedent for such deliberate, organized nation-building. But all the Zionist efforts would not have sufficed, or at any rate, nationhood would have been indefinitely delayed had it not been for other factors. It was not the mystical bonds of the past, but the brutalities of the present that brought into being the Jewish nation in Palestine. It is a tragic paradox that Hitler played a major role in creating this nation, without which there would today be no Jewish state.

The fact is that despite the alleged homelessness of the Jews, until the rise of Hitler few of them were impelled even by anti-Semitic persecution to settle in Palestine. True, life there was no bed of roses and was not likely to attract those primarily interested in improving their material lot. Immigration under the Mandate even before 1939 was also not entirely free. Yet with all allowances

for these handicaps, the Zionist showing was still far from impressive. When the Bilus arrived in 1882, there were about 24,000 Jews in Palestine. Thirty-five years later—which was twenty years after the first world Zionist congress—the Jewish community had grown to only 56,000, partly, of course, as a result of natural increase.

The Balfour Declaration in 1917 placed Palestine in the center of the consciousness of millions of Jews. It appeared to be that charter which Herzl had vainly sought. Zionism achieved a status that it had never before enjoyed, its ideal of a “national home” officially sponsored by Britain and within a few years endorsed by the United States—the two greatest world powers. At the same time the tide of anti-Semitism rose after World War I in the semi-fascist progeny of the Versailles Treaty: Poland, Rumania, and Hungary. Yet not even all this induced any large number to go to Palestine. From 1919 to 1931 inclusive the net gain in population from immigration was approximately 100,000.⁶ This was only about 50 per cent more than the number of Jews who went to Argentina during the same period. It was less than the total that entered the United States in the single year of 1921. The conclusion is inescapable: so long as anti-Semitic persecution fell considerably short of genocidal proportions, and the doors of other countries remained at least partly open, very few of the 16 million Jews in the world felt their “homelessness” acutely enough to emigrate to the place which was supposed to be their homeland.

Back in 1913 Stalin, rejecting the idea that the Jews of various countries constituted a single nation, pointed out: “But how can it be seriously maintained that petrified religious rites and fading psychological relics affect the ‘fate’ of these Jews more powerfully than the living social, economic and cultural environment that surrounds them?”⁷

Hitler made a difference. The Nazi dictatorship and terror profoundly changed “the living social, economic, and cultural environment” of the Jews of Europe west of the Soviet border. Previously that environment had acted to disperse and weaken the potentialities of Jewish nationhood; now it served to concentrate and heighten them. The Nazi murder crusade changed the environment in a way that was common to millions, forcibly uprooting them from Germany and the other countries which fell under the

fascist axe. This cataclysmic experience stirred in many a new sense of national identity and the desire to go to some land where they could be secure and establish their own national life. This and the fact that the United States and most other countries were closed to all but an insignificant number of refugees caused many thousands to seek escape in Palestine. In 1933, 30,327 Jews entered Palestine, nearly four times the number of the previous year. In 1934, 1935, and 1936 more than half of the total Jewish world migration was into Palestine. Only in 1937, when the British used the Arab revolt as a pretext for clamping down, did Jewish migration to Palestine drop to less than half the world figure. In the seven years from 1933 to 1939 inclusive over 200,000 Jews entered the country.⁸ Even in this period more came from Poland than from Germany. However, this was the first time that a country outside of Eastern Europe had become an important factor in Palestine immigration. After 1939 only the British White Paper, backed by naked force, prevented new hundreds of thousands from pouring in.

It is sometimes claimed that the early Zionists showed great historic foresight in working to establish a refuge from the horrors that eventually overtook European Jewry. One must, however, first ask whether it is not true that the victory of fascism could have been prevented. One must also ask whether it was really foresight to have renounced the struggle against fascism and reaction, to have collaborated—as the Zionist leadership did—with the forces that spawned and fattened the Nazi monster. Thus, it was hardly foresight to have become in some measure the unwitting handmaiden of the greatest evil that ever befell the Jewish people.

It was in the 'thirties that the process of Jewish nationhood in Palestine began to mature: the beginnings of a stable community emerged, with a national market and economy within a territorial framework, and a common language and culture. What was further needed was industrial development. Industry required capital and workers in sufficient numbers, plus technical skill to combine both in production. The 'thirties provided all three, the East European and Oriental groups supplying the workers, and the German immigrants bringing capital, technical knowledge, and in

some cases modern industrial equipment. This marked the first period of industrial expansion in the Jewish economy of Palestine.

An even more rapid expansion took place during World War II, when capital investment and the number of workers doubled, and industrial production increased more than twofold. *It was this growth of the forces of industrial capitalism that effected a decisive qualitative change within the Yishuv, transforming a colonization project into a modern nation.* And maturing nationhood, colliding with the British efforts to shortcircuit its development, generated the national struggle for statehood and independence.

All this was taking place, however, in a country already inhabited by others. The world economic and political forces which had created Zionism were also molding in a different way the Palestinian Arab nation and *its* striving toward national fulfillment. Today it seems incredible that the implications of all this were for so many years ignored by those European and American intellectuals and business men who became the leaders of the Zionist movement. This was a class-conditioned blindness, a chauvinist incapacity even to imagine the heartbeat of another people. Herzl's concept of the Jewish state as "a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism" infected, consciously or unconsciously, most of those who embraced the Zionist ideal. With an intensity bred of enforced Jewish isolation and suffering, Zionism set about fostering not the solidarity of peoples, but their separation.

One or two voices, among them that of Achad Haam,* the philosopher of the Zionist movement, were raised in warning. But they fell on deaf ears. In the pre-Balfour period Arab national aspirations hardly entered the consciousness of the Zionist leaders. They were, moreover, staking everything on obtaining from this or that imperialist power a guarantee of Zionist claims that would override all others. During this period the Jewish settlers and their Arab neighbors, despite some friction, for the most part lived and worked peacefully side by side. But they developed as separate

*Achad Haam (1856-1927), a native of the Ukraine, was the literary pseudonym of Asher Ginsberg, the founder of "cultural Zionism." He had sharp differences with Herzl, who had no interest in a specifically Hebrew culture. Achad Haam's cultural emphasis influenced Dr. Chaim Weizmann and other Zionist leaders and eventually became part of Zionist policy.

communities, and after the World Zionist Organization began its practical work in Palestine in 1908 the cleavage grew sharper.

What brought latent conflict to a head was the Balfour Declaration on the one hand and the emergence of the Arab national movement on the other. Though the Balfour Declaration used the vague expression, "a national home for the Jewish people," this was generally interpreted as meaning an eventual Jewish state in Palestine. Of course, the British had no intention of ever relinquishing power, but they counted on the Zionist experiment (with or without statehood) serving their purposes. However, a Jewish state in the whole of Palestine, implying Jewish dominance, could not be reconciled with Arab national rights and the Arab desire for independence. Nor could an enterprise serving the aims of British imperialism be reconciled with world progress and democracy.

It was in this period that the dualism inherent in the effort to establish a Jewish nation and state in Palestine thrust sharply to the surface. Viewing the Jewish community and its work within the bounds of its own horizons, it represented prodigies of achievement. Labor and science and idealism were transforming the land. Desert soil and malaria-infested swamps were being made to bloom. Everywhere a vast outpouring of energy into projects that stirred the imagination. The harried Jew of Europe, herded into trade and the professions, was being transformed by productive work. And a modern democratic society was evolving, with a new Hebrew culture and a labor movement that was in the forefront of national life. Who, seeing all this—and not gazing beyond—could help but be filled with admiration?

But there was a larger whole of which the Jewish community was a part. Palestine was not a free, but an enslaved country—part of an enslaved Middle East. At a time when millions were rising against their oppressors, Zionist policy helped the slaveholders forge new shackles. ". . . From Napoleon to Balfour," writes a leading American pro-Zionist journalist, I. F. Stone, "there were Western statesmen who were ready to give Zionism a role as an auxiliary weapon of imperial expansion."⁹ And from Herzl to Weizmann, Jabotinsky and Ben Gurion there were Zionist leaders who, believing they were helping the Jewish people, were ready to accept that role.

What was the nature of Zionist policy toward the Arabs? On the eve of the publication of the British White Paper the pro-Zionist *Nation* of New York wrote: "The Zionist leaders must also shoulder part of the blame for the present debacle. Instead of trying to come to terms with their Arab neighbors, from the beginning they hitched their wagon to the British imperialist kite."¹⁰ It will be argued that they did try to come to terms and repeatedly affirmed their desire for friendship and co-operation with the Arabs. Resolutions were passed by Zionist congresses expressing "our desire to live with the Arab people on terms of harmony and mutual respect, and together with them to make the common home into a flourishing commonwealth. . . ."¹¹ These were for the record. The real policy was indicated in Weizmann's statement at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 that "there should ultimately be such conditions that Palestine should be just as Jewish as America is American and England is English."¹² It was made even clearer when Dr. M. D. Eder, head of the Zionist Organization's Political Department, testifying before the Haycraft Commission, which investigated the May, 1921, Arab outbreak, stated, according to the Haycraft report, that "there can be only one national home in Palestine, and that a Jewish one, and no equality in the partnership between Jews and Arabs, but a Jewish predominance as soon as the numbers of that race are sufficiently increased."¹³

Over the course of the years a number of conferences were held that sought an agreement with the Arabs on the question of immigration, which had become the chief obstacle to a general Jewish-Arab understanding. A leading participant in several of these conferences, Moshe Smilansky, for many years head of the conservative Jewish Farmers Association, has told how in 1936 outstanding Arab leaders proposed an agreement to admit a considerable Jewish immigration. Their proposals were rejected. Asked by whom, Smilansky replied: "The Mufti . . . But also Ben Gurion, Shertok. . . ."¹⁴

The reason for the Zionist rejection was indicated by Moshe Shertok (Sharett), then head of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, in testimony before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946: "Some Arab leaders seemed inclined to accept very substantial immigration, but they attached conditions which

could not be fulfilled. *It was not for the Jews to bring about the immediate liquidation of the British mandatory regime, nor did they at the time particularly cherish the prospect.*"¹⁵ (Emphasis mine—A.B.M.) In other words, the Zionist leaders' insistence on upholding what two years after Shertok's testimony they described as "an oppressive foreign regime"¹⁶ helped block an agreement that would have saved hundreds of thousands of Jews.

There were also actions that spoke louder than all the fine words about co-operation with the Arabs. For example, the campaign for *kibbush avoda* (conquest of labor). This slogan was used to drive Arabs out of employment in Jewish-owned enterprises. To its shame the Jewish labor movement under Right-wing Social-Democratic leadership became the spearhead in this campaign. *Kibbush avoda* was, however, not a monopoly of the labor leadership, but was an integral part of Zionist policy. Thus, all leases for land owned by the Jewish National Fund* contain a clause providing for the exclusive employment of Jewish labor.

Another economic measure directed against the Arabs was embodied in the slogan, *totseret haarets*, which means literally "products of the land." This slogan, used at first to promote the sale of Palestinian as contrasted with foreign products—a thoroughly legitimate end—was soon transformed into the chauvinist policy of buying only Jewish products and boycotting Arab goods. The Arab leaders too at various times organized boycotts against the Jews. Thus the nationalist policy-makers among both peoples erected economic barriers between them—which became bridges to internecine conflict.

Many Arab peasants and agricultural workers were also adversely affected by Jewish land purchases. This question has aroused considerable controversy. Arab nationalists have naturally been interested in inflating this issue. Zionists, on the other hand, have sought to minimize the extent to which sales of land, while further enriching the *effendis*, have displaced tenants and agricultural workers. No accurate statistics exist on this subject. A Palestine

*The Jewish National Fund (*Keren Kayemet Le-Yisrael*) was founded in 1901 by the World Zionist Organization for the purpose of buying land in Palestine. It leases land for forty-nine-year periods for rentals of from 1 to 4 per cent of the cost of the land. The Fund also engages in such related activities as soil improvement, afforestation, water supply, etc.

government registration of landless Arabs, which is often cited by Zionist propagandists to prove their claim that displacement was negligible, is of little value since it excluded various categories of displaced persons. Whatever the true figures, there is no doubt that for a considerable number of Arab peasants and farm workers—the largest and most impoverished groups among the Arab people—displacement from their land appeared as an actual or potential threat emanating from the Jewish community.

In this connection let me relate an experience of my own during my stay in Israel. In the latter part of May, 1948, shortly after the Arab invaders had been driven out of all of Galilee, I took an automobile trip to the north with a sturdy Israeli who was on a mission for the Hagana. We visited several communal farms, among them a comparatively new settlement called Neot Mordecai, not far from the Syrian and Lebanese borders. It was long after breakfast when we arrived at Neot Mordecai, but the secretary of the farm, a tall handsome man, insisted on getting us food—bread, apple jam, coffee, and milk. The three of us sat down in the communal dining room and talked as we ate. "What were your relations with the Arabs before the fighting started?" I asked. "We had a dispute with them," the secretary said and added, much to my surprise: "They were in the right. We took their land, that is, we bought it from the effendi. We thought at first we could work out an agreement for working the land jointly with the Arabs, but it proved impossible to mix the two economies. There followed law suits and all kinds of trouble. Finally an agreement was reached for them to concentrate on one part of the land and we on another. This was in November, 1947, just when the Palestine issue was coming to a climax in the U.N. At this point Arab leaders from Safed stepped in and told the peasants not to do it. That was the end."

What has been said about Zionist policy toward the Arabs may be epitomized in the following words of the Zionist writer, Eliahu Ben Horin: "Although the Jewish colonization of Palestine was a peaceful process, it was a process of conquest nevertheless. The Jews wanted Palestine for a Jewish state. The Arabs would sooner or later object to that." And he adds: "British colonial policy hastened the arrival of the clash, deepened it and systematically prevented any possibility of an eventual Jew-Arab understanding."¹⁷

But isn't it true that Jewish colonization brought great benefits to the Arab population of Palestine? Even if one were to accept all the Zionist data on this question, we would still have only a half-truth rooted in falsehood. Imperialism, by introducing capitalist relations into undeveloped colonial regions, often brings certain limited incidental advantages to some sections of the native populations. Who has not read of the great "benefits" conferred by the British on India, or the Americans on China, or the oil trusts on the Middle East? But basically, imperialism freezes the economic backwardness of colonial countries, retards and distorts their industrial development, and intensifies the exploitation of their peoples.

In the case of Palestine the minor incidental benefits for some sections of the Arab population have been greater than in most colonial countries because they have come from the activities of both the British and the Jews. Yet how meager and limited these benefits have been is conceded by an authoritative Zionist source:

"The advantages derived by the fellah from the Jewish development . . . came indirectly as a result of the general improvement of the environment, such as elimination of disease, malaria control, etc. *The improvement was not great enough to make any essential difference in the life of the fellah.*"¹⁸ (Emphasis mine—A.B.M.)

And from a Palestinian Zionist, the late Moses Beilinson, for many years editor of the labor daily, *Davar (Word)*, came in 1929 the charge that "during the last ten years the mandatory government from Sir Herbert Samuel's* time to this day, our financial and colonization organs . . . have consciously or unconsciously been working for the benefit of the effendis, the Arab officials, and the decayed Arab intellectual class, the Mufti and his entourage. These strata profited from the Balfour Declaration, from the British administration, and from the Zionist enterprises to an unusual, unimagined extent."¹⁹

And certain negative consequences for the Palestine Arabs have perhaps also been greater than they would have been from a "normal" imperialist domination. Some Arab industries, for example, suffered not only from the restrictions imposed by the British, but from the competition of Jewish industry, which had

*Sir Herbert (now Viscount) Samuel was the first British High Commissioner in Palestine, serving from 1920 to 1925.

the advantage of being aided financially, directly or indirectly, from abroad. Above all, Zionist policies played into the hands of the Mufti and his fellow-feudalists, who wanted co-operation with the Jews on their own terms: domination of Jews by Arabs and domination of both by the effendis. This clique exploited the misery of the Arab masses and the frustration of their national hopes to turn them against the Jews.

The wonder is that despite chauvinist incitement on both sides and British divide-and-rule machinations, and despite the wide disparity in living standards and culture, average Jews and Arabs lived so much of the time as good neighbors. Joint strikes by Jewish and Arab workers and joint marketing of crops by Jewish and Arab citrus growers showed that the capitalist development of the country, while intensifying divisive nationalist trends, was also setting in motion counter-trends and breaking down artificial economic barriers. There were also such instances of solidarity as that displayed by the Arab lightermen of Jaffa who, on the outbreak of the Arab struggle in April 1936, evacuated a large part of the Jewish population of Jaffa by sea to Tel Aviv and thereby saved many lives.

Among both peoples too there were those who, though a minority, genuinely worked to develop positive relations of co-operation and friendship. Most consistent in pursuing this aim were the Jewish and Arab Communists. But within the Zionist movement and among the Arab nationalists there also arose minority trends in this direction. Among the Zionists these were chiefly represented by Hashomer Hatsair, a Left labor Zionist party (now part of the United Workers Party, known as Mapam), and by various organizations of intellectuals. The most prominent of the latter in recent years was Ichud (Unity), headed by the late Dr. J. L. Magnes, president of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem. Both Hashomer Hatsair and Ichud favored a bi-national state.

Unfortunately, these efforts could not overcome the mischief done by nearly thirty years of British rule and by Zionist and Arab chauvinism. In an effort to free Palestine the United Nations found it necessary to cut it in two, while providing for an economic coupling that could become a bridge to future unity. But the price of freedom proved to be even higher.

VI. Economic Fact and Fancy

What kind of country is it that has roused the passions of so many in other lands and become a bone of contention in world politics? The mental image of a typical Palestinian Jew which most Americans carry with them is that of a smiling, sun-tanned man or woman working in the fields. This is the chaluts, the pioneer who has dedicated himself or herself to labor on the land, wresting bounty out of barrenness—part of the living legend of Palestine. But the fact is that these tillers of the soil form only a small percentage of the population. Palestine as a whole is an agricultural country, but Israel is not. Farming occupies a larger place in Israel's economy than it does among the Jewish population of other countries, but it is overshadowed by both industry and trade. Here is the occupational breakdown of the gainfully employed Jews (including owners) for 1947 in round figures:¹

| <i>Occupation</i> | <i>Per cent</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Agriculture | 12 |
| Manufacturing | 25 |
| Building and Construction | 6 |
| Transportation and Communications | 7 |
| Commerce and Trade | 15 |
| Professional | 14 |
| Services | 7 |
| Miscellaneous | 14 |

This occupational distribution in 1947 approximated that of the population in the United States and Britain.

The most important thing to note about Israel's economic setup is that it is capitalist. That is, private individuals or corporations