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372

by members of Israeli Socialist Organization

- The Palestine Problem

- Israel and Imperialism

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THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

Of all the problems bequeathed to the world by European imperialism, Palestine is among the most intractable.

It is a peculiarly emotional issue, not only for those immediately involved. In the West the burden of guilt left by Hitler's crimes against the Jews has created a barrier which the injustices suffered by the Palestinian Arabs cannot penetrate. In many Arab countries hatred of the Jews is whipped up to divert the internal struggle against reactionary regimes into external channels. Western economic interests in the area, and the tendency of both East and West to exploit the situation for ideological or strategic advantage, further complicate the problem. To make matters worse, in both Israel and the Arab countries there is almost total ignorance of the other's history, people and aspirations.

Emotions, however, whether rightly or wrongly based, cannot solve complex political problems. They are much more likely to lead to disaster. At the centre of the emotional miasma surrounding Palestine lie two hard facts — the displaced Arab population who still live in refugee camps round Israel's borders; and a new nation of Israel, with a complete class structure of its own, who by incessant propaganda and, to a certain extent, real achievement, are beginning to carve a place in the world. Neither can be forgotten, ignored, or annihilated. A political solution must sooner or later be found, that is both realistic and just. The alternative is — eventually — war, which will at best only defer, not solve, the political problems.

A realistic solution can only be based on a thorough historical, economic, political and social analysis of the problem. This has, however, yet to be made. In the following series of articles a brief sketch of such an analysis will be drawn. Because of space limitations it will necessarily be schematic and consist mainly of theses, rather than detailed argumentation and factual evidence. (The substantiating evidence could easily fill several volumes.) If — as we hope — the present series of articles give rise to a serious, unemotional discussion, we shall be able to provide factual material wherever necessary.

The first part of this article sketches the history of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine up to World War II.

The second part covers the period from World War II to the present day.

The third analyses the present situation, and discuss possible solutions of the problem, and outline our eight-point programme for a solution as a basis for discussion.

FROM 1870 TO WORLD WAR II

The original sources which gave rise to Zionism are threefold.

1. **Economical:** *The rapid development of capitalism in Europe during the 19th Century and the decay of the Austrian and Russian Empires.* In the less industrialised countries, like Poland and Russia, the new social stresses resulted in uprooting the Jews from their traditional occupations. Declining feudalism used the Jews as a scapegoat to divert the struggle of the peasants into the channels of racial persecution. These processes created a huge wave of Jewish emigration from eastern and central Europe. Some 5,000,000 emigrated to America and other "new countries". A few thousand went to Palestine.

In western Europe, where the Jews were mostly merchants and middle class, the pressures of economic competition made it increasingly difficult for them to integrate into local bourgeois society, and forced them to create their own social institutions.

2. **Political.** The capitalist development of 19th Century Europe brought to the fore two political phenomena: *nationalism and colonization of the under-developed continents.* Zionism arose and took shape under the influence of these two. It was the nationalist response to the problem created by persecution of the Jews. It proposed to create a national Jewish state, by colonizing an under-developed territory. In both these ways it was a charitable product of its time.

3. **Ideological:** The two objective trends mentioned in (1) and (2) found a favourable ideological soil in the Jewish religion. Unlike Christianity and Islam, which are universal cosmopolitan faiths, Judaism (being much more ancient) is a tribal religion. It is inherently nationalistic in character. It considers Palestine as "The Promised Land" — promised by God to "The Chosen People", namely the Jews. According to Judaism, the troubles of the Jews would end once they returned to the Holy Land. But whereas religious Jews expected God to perform this act of redemption, the Zionists gave the ancient traditional themes a secular, political, form.

In the first half of the 20th Century the population of Palestine was about 700,000, the overwhelming majority being Arabs. There were various minority communities, including some 70,000 Jews. Economically and politically these Jews were an integral part of the indigenous population, differing only in religion. They had nothing to do with colonization or Zionism.

The first step in the modern Jewish colonization of Palestine was taken in 1870 when Baron Edmund de Rothschild of France acquired some land near Jaffa and established an agricultural school (Mikveh Israel — "Gatherer of Israel"). This was followed by the building of some twenty villages, inhabited by some 5,000 Jews, mostly from Russia. Up to 1900 the Baron invested about £2m. in Palestine. The Rothschilds were (and still are) among the world's leading financiers, with the French and British branches of the family holding influential positions in the economy of these two countries. Baron Edmund combined his Jewish sentiments with his support for French interests in colonizing Palestine following the Algerian model. He wished to amalgamate the emigration of east European Jews with the colonial interests of French imperialism. He did not entertain the idea of an independent Jewish state in Palestine (he was no Zionist) but used his financial power in the Ottoman treasury in order to prepare a new sphere of influence for French interests, employing Jewish immigrants as settlers. His Palestine activities were thirty years old when Zionism was born.

Political Zionism was founded in 1897 at a congress held in Basle, Switzerland. It differed significantly from the Rothschild colonization in that it declared its intention of solving the Jewish problem by creating a national Jewish state. However, the Viennese journalist T. Herzl, the founder and first leader of the Zionist movement, did not consider Palestine as the indispensable location for such a state. On the contrary, he advocated Uganda as the most suitable place for Jewish colonization. But the majority of the Zionists rejected the Uganda scheme and insisted on fulfilling the Jewish religious sentiment towards Palestine.

From the very beginning, Zionism sought to achieve its aim by means of a deal with one imperialist power or another. The guiding principle of Zionist diplomacy was always to affiliate itself with that world power within whose sphere of influence Palestine happened to be. Herzl courted mainly the Turkish Sultan and the German Kaiser. After

World War I Zionism was orientated towards British imperialism. Again after World War II Zionism switched its orientation to the U.S. and occasionally flirted with France.

The fact that Palestine was already populated by Arabs hardly figured in the early discussions of political Zionism. The philosopher M. Buber relates: "When Max Nordau, Herzl's second in command, first received details on the existence of an Arab population in Palestine, he came shocked to Herzl, exclaiming: "I never realised this — we are committing an injustice". These moral shocks (which continuously troubled the Humanistic elements in the Zionist camp) proved to be a very weak barrier against Nationalism.

When at the beginning of this century organised Zionist immigration started to pour into Palestine, the surprising fact that the country was already populated could no longer be ignored. Like every colonizing society, the Zionist settlers had to shape a definite policy towards the indigenous population. Here we come to the specific feature of Zionism which distinguishes it from all other colonizations of modern times. The European settlers in other colonies sought to exploit the riches of the country (including the labour potential of the "natives") and invariably turned the former population into a proletarian class in a new capitalist society. But Zionism wanted not simply the resources of Palestine (which were not very great in any case) but the country itself to serve for the creation of a new national state. The new nation was to have its own classes, including a working class. The Arabs were, therefore, not to be exploited, but totally replaced.

The Rothschild colonization clashed with the Palestine Arabs only over one issue — land ownership. The Baron bought land from the feudal Effendis, sometimes by bribing the Ottoman administration, and drove the fellahin off the land. The expropriated fellahin were then employed as labourers in the Baron's settlements, following the usual colonial pattern. The Zionist colonization, however, raised the slogan "Jewish Labour". Aspiring to create a Jewish working class as part of a new nation, it advocated a transition of people from middle class occupations to manual labour, and it insisted that Jewish employers use Jewish labour only. The Zionists, therefore, clashed not only with the expropriated Arab peasants but also with the interests of the Baron's settlers who preferred to use the cheaper Arab labour. This issue was the main conflict within the settlers' community during the first three decades of the century. The main protagonists of the "Jewish labour" policy were the left-wing elements within Zionism. The bourgeois elements were always tempted to employ the cheaper Arab labour. Had the bourgeois attitude prevailed, Palestine might have developed along much the same lines as Algeria, South Africa or Rhodesia. It was, however, the left-wing of Zionism which prevailed. The funds of the Zionist movement were often used to cover the difference between the cost of Arab labour and the more expensive Jewish labour.

The nascent Zionist society clashed with all the various classes of Palestine Arab society. It brought from Europe capital, modern technological know-how and skills. Jewish capital (often backed by Zionist funds), gradually displaced the feudal elements simply by buying up their lands, and Zionist regulations forbade re-sale of land to Arabs. Possessing technological and financial advantages, the Zionist capitalist economy blocked the emergence of an Arab capitalist class. Having clashed with the Arab peasants by driving them off their land, Zionism also prevented them from becoming a proletariat in the Jewish sector of the economy. Since the Arab sector's capitalist development was retarded and hindered, the peasants (as well as the

Arab intelligentsia) found it hard to get any employment at all — except in the British Mandate administration and public services.

The entire economic and social structure of Arab Palestine (which had started off from conditions roughly similar to those in Syria) became totally deformed by Zionist colonization. This deformation persists even today.

This socio-economic deformation was reflected in the political sphere. Since the bourgeoisie, the proletariat and the peasantry were denied a normal path of development, they did not produce political parties and leaders of sufficient calibre. Political leadership of the Palestine Arabs inevitably remained in the hands of the landowning class, who, although they liquidated themselves as a class by selling their land to the Zionists, made enormous financial gains by these transactions. They retained the political leadership of the Arabs by covert co-operation with the Zionists and the British. In order not to be branded as traitors they assumed in public the most extreme anti-Zionist stands, even declaring the sale of land to the Zionists to be treason.

Typical were the El-Husseinis, one of the richest land-owning families. Secretly, they sold land to the Zionists. Officially, Amin el-Husseini was the religious leader of the Palestine Muslims and chairman of the Arab Higher Committee (the official political representatives of the Arabs in Palestine). His cousin, Jasmal el-Husseini was deputy chairman of that committee and leader of one of the main Arab political parties. Similarly, the leader of another party ("Al Istiklal") was Auni Abdul Hadi. The Abdul Hadis were the biggest landowners in Palestine. In 1928 A. Abdul Hadi made a secret agreement with the Zionists and saw to it that the customary denunciation of the Balfour Declaration would not be raised in the seventh Arab conference.

Similarly, and more far reaching, understanding existed between the Zionists and the Hashemite kings, who were the main ally of British imperialism in the Middle East. In 1922 in London King Faisal (the son of Sherif Hussein of Mecca) signed a joint political agreement with Weizmann, Chairman of the Zionist movement. Article 3 of this Agreement endorsed the Balfour Declaration. Article 4 states: "All necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration into Palestine on a large scale". This agreement was the ancestor of the secret agreement between Ben Gurion and Abdallah in 1948, when they divided Palestine between them and virtually arranged the result of the war.

Typical to the British Foreign Office attitude was the nomination of Amin el Husseini as Mufti of Jerusalem (April, 1921), and later as President of the Supreme Muslim Council (1922), by Sir Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner in Palestine, a pro-Zionist Jew. The Mufti was to be elected by a small number of electors who were, themselves, elected by the small minority of people who had had the right to vote for the Ottoman Parliament. Three other candidates got eighteen, seventeen, and twelve votes. Haj Amin received nine votes only. The High Commissioner had the "right" to nominate one of the first three. One of these three candidates was made to resign, putting Haj Amin in third place. He was then nominated the new Mufti. The new Mufti combined extremely reactionary politics with religious fanaticism and right-wing nationalism. During World War II he went to Berlin and found in the Nazis close and natural allies. He had never graduated, from El Azhar or any other similar institute, and lacked religious qualifications for his post. The majority of Palestine Arabs never took part in these or any other elections and never exercised any democratic rights.

The decisive period in the development of the Palestine problem started with the rise of fascism in Europe. This brought to play three significant factors:

1. Jewish immigration from Europe rose sharply, as can be seen from the following table of Jewish population in Palestine.

Year	No. of Jews in Palestine		
1922	83,790
1931	174,606
1944	553,600
1945	579,227
1946	608,225

The jump between 1922-1931 followed the rise of fascism in Poland. The still more significant jump of 1931-1944 followed the rise of Hitler. The rise of European fascism was a most potent, perhaps decisive, factor in the subsequent history of Palestine.

2. This new wave of Jewish immigration differed qualitatively from previous and subsequent waves in its class structure. Whereas other waves consisted mainly of petit bourgeois elements without much capital, this particular wave brought many middle-class capitalist elements. The following table gives the numbers of Jewish immigrants officially described as capitalists (i.e. those who proved to possess £1,000 or more, in current values):

Year	No. of Capitalist Jewish Immigrants	Year	No. of Capitalist Jewish Immigrants
1932	727	1937	1,275
1933	3,250	1938	1,753
1935	6,309	1940	802
1936	2,970	1941	314
1934	5,124	1939	2,606

The peak of capitalist immigration occurred in 1934-1935 (after Hitler rose to power) just before the great Arab general strike in Palestine. This turned out to be an important coincidence.

3. The religious and nationalist leaders of the Palestine Arabs saw in fascism a natural ally against British imperialism. They followed the maxim "my enemy's enemies are my allies". This choice later proved to be wrong, in principle, as well as in practice.

Meanwhile, the anti-imperialist struggle throughout the Arab countries reached unprecedented scale. In Syria, a general strike was declared in 1936 against French imperialism. This strike proved to be effective and on the whole successful. It brought Syria substantially nearer political independence.

This made a great impression in Palestine, and there, too, a long general strike was declared. Conditions in Palestine were, however, very different because of the presence of Zionist economical infrastructure, which did not, of course, take part in the strike. Moreover, the Zionists exploited the fact that Arab workers in Government administration and services (e.g. railroads, ports, etc.) were on strike, and that Arab commerce was paralysed, to secure a grip of these large and important sectors of the economy. As mentioned above, the strike coincided with a great influx of Jewish capital from Europe. Thus, while the Arab sector of the economy suffered a blow from which it never recovered, the Zionists secured a new and decisive hold on the whole economy.

British imperialism, which ruled Palestine from 1918 to 1948 used the familiar tactics of "divide and rule", exploiting to the utmost the possibilities which rivaling nationalistic movements offered. For the masses it employed nationalist and religious incitement and provocation, which proved to be effective. It employed Jewish policemen against Arab population and vice versa. For the leaders it employed diplomacy, "white papers", round-table conferences, giving

contradictory promises to both sides and acting as mediators". It succeeded in diverting what threatened to become an anti-imperialist struggle into the channels of nationalistic strife.

The first important statement of British policy on Palestine was set out in a private letter from Arthur James Balfour, Foreign Minister in Lloyd George's Cabinet, to Lord Rothschild. This became known as "The Balfour Declaration".

It reads as follows:

Foreign Office,
2nd November, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet: "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a National home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by the Jews in any other country". I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur James Balfour.

We will not analyse here in detail the wording of this document (which with extraordinary impudence refers to the Palestine Arabs who outnumbered the Palestine Jews by about eight to one, as "existing non-Jewish communities") but comment briefly on its main motives. The British Government was engaged at that time in the war against Germany, whose ally in the Middle East was Turkey. The Balfour Declaration was meant to rally the Jews all over the world (including those in Germany, America, Austria and Palestine) to its side. Moreover, being well aware of the aspirations of Arab Nationalism, it was calculated to supply Zionist hopes with a political foundation to use as a counterweight to Arab Nationalism. Similar promises of national independence were given to the Arabs through Capt. Lawrence and Ronald Storrs. The chief architect of the British policy was Herbert Samuel, who later became High Commissioner for Palestine in the early years of the British Mandate. Himself a Zionist (although not an extremist) he cogently argued the case for establishing a Jewish homeland as a bastion of British policy in the Middle East in a memorandum to the Cabinet in March, 1915. The contradictory promises were a typical manifestation of the "divide and rule" policy of the Foreign Office.

Even before these promises were handed out to the "natives", the whole area was divided between British and French imperialism in the Sykes-Picot agreement (1916) which dissected the Ottoman Empire two years before its downfall. In 1922 the British government implemented the Balfour letter by an official white paper and in order to pacify the enraged Arabs for the Sykes-Picot and Balfour "betrayal", granted "independence" to Trans-Jordan in 1923 and appointed Abdallah as ruler.

The calculated ambiguities and "contradictions" in the British Foreign policy increased the unrest and hostilities between Jews and Arabs, and involved considerable bloodshed. In the late 30's this factor turned from an asset into a liability. The religious, feudal and bourgeois elements in Arab Nationalism welcomed the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy, as fellow enemies of British Imperialism. Contacts between these camps worried the British. The oil-fields, pipelines and Suez Canal seemed in danger. Zionist demands for more independence and increased immigration quotas for European Jews fleeing from persecution were other issues which had to be handled, too. But the Foreign

Office, confident that the Nazis would never consider the Zionists as potential allies, produced another white paper in 1939, aimed at currying favour with the Arabs. It stated:

"His Majesty's Government now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish state. . . . It should be a state in which the two peoples in Palestine, Arabs and Jews, share authority in government in such a way that the essential interests of each are secured. . . ."

This, briefly, was the situation on the eve of World War II

THE PALESTINE PROBLEM: FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE PRESENT DAY

During the Second World War, new economic and political factors revolutionised the Palestine situation.

Before the war, the Palestine economy (especially the industrial and manufacturing sector) was dominated by the British metropolitan economy. The development of local light industry particularly was hampered by imports of consumer goods from Britain. Partly as a result of this, even in the Jewish community (numbering on the eve of the war about 500,000 out of a total of 1,750,000), noticeable anti-British tendencies were beginning to form.

The war brought about an unprecedented boom in the Palestine economy. Palestine became a major base for the British garrison in the Middle East, which had to be housed, clothed, equipped and fed. Supply lines from Britain were disrupted by the war, and the British economy was overstrained by the war effort. The British had to rely to a large extent on the local economy, and they encouraged its rapid development. In the Arab sector unemployment disappeared as thousands of workers were employed to build camps, roads and airfields. But whereas Arab industry was not ready to benefit fully from the enormously increased demand, the Jewish sector was already organised along modern lines and had considerable reserves of manpower.

It therefore drew the maximum benefit from the increased demand and entered a period of great expansion, known as "The Prosperity". Whole industries grew from modest beginnings to formidable size within a period of four to five years. By 1942 there were 6,600 Jewish industrial enterprises, employing about 56,000 workers and producing at the rate of £20m. per year. The level of production in 1942 was more than double that of 1939 in the food, textile, metal, machinery and chemical industries — treble in the electrical appliances industry. The Palestine diamond industry (exclusively in Jewish hands) grew at an even more spectacular rate as the European centres were cut off from their raw materials (in S. Africa): from 1,000 carats (valued at £25,000) in 1940 to 58,000 carats (valued £2.6m.) in 1943 and to 138,000 carats (£6m.) in 1945.

When the war ended, industrial growth slowed abruptly, and imports from Britain again menaced local industry — but by now the wartime growth had made the Jewish sector of the economy a force to be reckoned with. It did not want to return to the pre-war dominance by Britain and by now a much larger section of the Jewish population had a stake in maintaining industrial expansion. This new situation provided the economic impetus for the post-war demands of the Jewish community for political independence. Unlike the Arabs, the Jewish community had made no such demands before World War II because it was clear that an independent Palestine would be a state with an Arab majority. The new Jewish dominance of the economy was one of the main factors that brought about a change of policy.

Even more significant were new political factors, which derived chiefly from the rise and defeat of fascism in Europe. During the 30's many right-wing Arab nationalists had regarded German and Italian fascism as allies in the struggle against British imperialism. Like other nationalists throughout the British empire, they maintained this attitude throughout the war. In 1945 this policy was shown to have been wrong in principle, and also to be a grave tactical and moral disadvantage. Few Arabs served in the British army and; as a result, the Arabs, unlike the Jews, failed to gain experience in modern organised warfare. Moreover, the right-wing nationalists, having supported the losing side, were demoralized by the allied victory and found it difficult to resume the momentum of the pre-war struggle for political independence.

For the Jews the question of which side to support in the war hardly arose at all. A fascist Zionist party had existed during the 30's and had collaborated closely with Italian and Polish fascism. But the majority of Zionists maintained their pro-British orientation. By 1939 Nazi policy towards the Jews had forced even the fascist faction into the British camp. Of the 500,000 Palestine Jews, 50,000 volunteered for the British forces, encouraged and organised by the Zionist leadership. By the time the war ended 10% of the Jewish population had considerable military experience.

The Nazi crimes against the Jews also gave Zionists an entirely new status in the international arena. Previously, it had been a minority trend amongst the world's 18,000,000 Jews, with the majority either indifferent or hostile. After the extermination of 6,000,000 European Jews by Nazism, many more were attracted by the idea of an independent Jewish state. Zionism, which had always accepted anti-semitism, became a major political tendency even among Jews who had no intention of personally emigrating to Palestine. The World Powers began to regard Zionism as the representative of the whole Jewish people.

The war left large numbers of Jewish refugees in Europe, many of whom, encouraged by the Zionists, wanted to emigrate to Palestine. The Palestine Arabs had no wish to become a minority in their own country, pressed the British government to stop Jewish emigration. The Zionists thereupon began to organise clandestine emigration on a large scale. The British tried to prevent this not only because of Arab pressure but also because they were worried by the rising tendencies towards independence among the Palestine Jews. World opinion, especially in Europe and the U.S., was still reeling with the shock of discovering the enormity of the Nazi war-crimes and inevitably sympathized with the refugees. The resulting political atmosphere was hostile both to the British government and to Arab nationalism. This atmosphere persists today and is one of the major assets of Zionism.

The emergence of the U.S. as a major world power after World War II and the decline of British imperialism brought about a gradual shift of Zionist orientation from Britain towards the U.S. A strong Zionist lobby was built up in Washington and at the same time the pro-American elements in world Zionism gained supremacy over the pro-British faction.

The combined effect of these economic and political factors precipitated the clash between the Zionists and the British government. The war had transformed the Jewish community in Palestine into a nation with its own economy, army, political organisations, language and ideology. Its economic interests had become incompatible with direct colonial rule. It clashed with British policy on immigration, in a world atmosphere favourable to Zionism and hostile to Britain. Zionist re-orientation towards the U.S. and the growing American interests in the Middle East hastened the collision.

In this new situation the Zionist demanded political independence in Palestine. The right-wing demanded im-

mediate independence for the whole of Palestine under Jewish minority rule; the centrists favoured the partition of Palestine between Arabs and Jews; the left-wing Zionists (among them parts of the present-day "Napam" party) wanted to postpone independence until the Jews became a majority through increased immigration.

In essence there were three parties directly involved in the Palestine problem. British imperialism; the Jewish minority (about 0.6m.); and the Arab majority (about 1m.). Each of these had its own demands, in conflict with the other two. But — mainly owing to the deformation of Arab society by the process of Jewish colonization — the Palestine Arabs did not in fact constitute a major independent political force in the period 1945-1947. The struggle was waged mainly between the Zionists and Britain.

During these years a series of conflicts, accompanied by armed violence, occurred between the Jewish community and the British administration. The Palestine Arabs, although they still outnumbered the Jews by about two to one, remained relatively passive — a complete reversal of the situation during the 20's and 30's, when Arab struggle for independence had a mass character and often used violent means. The British government, preoccupied with a fuel crisis and Indian independence, neared desperation.

In 1947 Britain referred the Palestine problem to the U.N. expecting disagreement in the U.N. to lead to a renewal of the mandate. This would lend a new lease of life to the precarious British authority in the area. In November, 1947, the General Assembly adopted a resolution recommending the partition of Palestine into two independent, but economically linked, states. This solution was a victory for Zionism and was strongly opposed by the Arabs (who, of course, demanded an undivided independent Arab Palestine), and by British imperialism which struggled to retain its influence and power.

Both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. supported the resolution; the U.S. because they considered it a convenient way of gaining a foothold in the Middle East and replacing British imperialism; the U.S.S.R. because it considered it the most practical way to drive British imperialism out of one of its strongholds. The U.S.S.R. probably under-estimated the strong links between Zionism and American imperialism. As for the Foreign Office, it was worried not only because the creation of a Zionist state meant loss of influence to the U.S. but also because the establishing of an independent Arab state in Palestine could have repercussions in the Arab world.

After the U.N. partition resolution, the British tried to provoke the Palestine Arabs against the Jewish population, to prove that a British presence was necessary to keep law and order. This attempt failed. Next, the British organised in Syria an irregular volunteer army (headed by Fawzi el Kaukji) which entered Palestine and attacked Jewish settlements. When this attempt failed too, the British finally decided to employ the regular armies of Trans-Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Iraq in order to wage open war against the Zionist state, which (according to the U.N. resolution), was to come into existence on 15th May, 1948. The political and military plans for this invasion were drawn up by General I. C. Clayton (one of the main British colonial agents in the Middle East) in a meeting of the Arab chiefs of staffs held early in 1948 at Bludan, Syria.

The 1948 war became a military conflict between the Zionists and the Arab armies. These armies were not, however, playing an independent role for achieving Arab independence in Palestine, but rather serving British interests, through the puppet regimes of Farouk, Abdallah and Nuri Sa'id. The war was used by these regimes to divert the internal anti-imperialist struggle (especially in Egypt and Iraq) into an imperialist-sponsored Holy War. The conduct

of the war exposed the utter corruption of these regimes and hastened their downfall.

The fate of Palestine was decided not on the battlefield, but also in secret talks between the Zionist leaders and Abdallah. These talks started immediately after the adoption of the partition resolution by the U.N. and went on until 1950. In these talks the two "friendly enemies", although ostensibly at war with each other, agreed to divide between them the territory which the U.N. resolution had allotted to the Palestinian Arabs, as well as Jerusalem which, according to the resolution, was to become a separate unit under the U.N. administration. The armistice agreement coincided, more or less, with the results of the political negotiations between the Zionist leaders and Abdallah.

A new set-up was thus established in Palestine: 20,000 sq. km. (instead of the 14,000 sq. km. allotted to it in the U.N. resolution) became Israel; and the remaining territory (except the Gaza strip) was annexed by Abdallah, who renamed his kingdom "Jordan" (instead of Trans-Jordan). This new set-up expressed the new balance of influence among the Western Powers. The area of the Zionist state was lost to British imperialism and came under U.S. influence; while the area annexed by Abdallah represented the remnants of British influence. This new division of spheres of influence received formal confirmation in the Tri-partite (U.S., Britain and France) Declaration of May, 1950.

This state of affairs, established as a consequence of the 1948 war, persists today and is referred to as the "status quo" in the Middle East. It is an inherently unstable situation because the war was not terminated by a political solution of the Palestine problem but only by a temporary Armistice Agreement. Since Israel is interested in preserving the "status quo", it has become more and more dependent on the Western Powers who guarantee its continuance. The same applies, of course, to the Jordanian regime, which because of its military weakness also depends indirectly on Israel. In spite of their seemingly hostile relations, these two regimes share a common interest — to preserve the "status quo". Thus, the sum total of the relations between Imperialism, the Zionists, and the various Arab parties which was known up to 1948 as "The Palestine Problem" was transformed in 1948 into the "Israeli-Arab conflict", the latter being a direct continuation (albeit in a new form) of the former.

The losers and victims of the 1948 war were the Palestine Arabs, who hardly participated in the war. Their right to self-determination, which previously nobody — not even the Zionist leaders — had denied, was violated. Most of them became homeless refugees. The fate of those who remained in the area held by Israel was hardly better. They had lived ever since under military rule and are subject to constant and severe repression. The land remaining in Arab hands is still gradually but systematically expropriated, often by administrative subterfuge, to make way for Zionist development. The Arabs are second-class citizens in their own country.

In the early 50's the anti-imperialist struggle intensified throughout the Arab world. In the Arab East this intensification was, in part, a result of the Palestine war. Britain, already too weak to defend its old position, had to accept the fact that the U.S. was becoming dominant in this part of the world as in others. The global policy of the U.S. to surround the U.S.S.R. by a chain of bases and military pacts was welded in the Middle East with the traditional British colonial policy into a single anti-Soviet and imperialist policy. Throughout the 50's these two Powers tried to create a military alliance of Middle-Eastern countries, to serve as a link in the chain of anti-Soviet alliances stretching from Scandinavia to Korea and to strengthen Western domination in the Middle East.

This policy encountered great difficulties, because the

Arab masses were aware of its imperialist character and opposed it violently. On the government level, the consistent refusal of Egypt and Syria to participate in such pacts undermined the whole of Western policy in the region. The Israeli government on the other hand, was always willing to participate actively in any such scheme, not only because of the traditional links between Zionism and Imperialism, but also (and more specifically) because Israel's adherence to the "status quo" made it a natural ally of imperialism — an ally who identified his own national interests — indeed his very existence — with the Imperialist presence in the Middle East.

The Israeli position was fully understood and utilized by the West. Whenever the governments of Egypt, Syria or Jordan attacked the Anglo-American schemes, Israel was used as a threat against them. These threats often materialised in the form of armed raids by Israeli forces. Jordan, particularly, was raided during the period when the el Nabulsi government there conducted anti-Western policies. Usually, after such a raid, the Arab government concerned would turn to the West and ask for arms. The reply was always: "Join the Baghdad Pact, and you will get arms"

This Western policy was finally defeated when, after the big Israeli raid on Gaza on 28th April, 1955, Nasser refused to submit to Western pressure and turned to Czechoslovakia for arms. This broke the arms monopoly of Imperialism in the area, and considerably weakened its political influence. From this time onwards, the Soviet Union emerged as a protagonist in the Middle East scene. This development, followed by the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, drove Britain and France to desperation. Employing an Israeli invasion of Egypt as a pre-arranged pretext, they launched a direct military attack on Egypt in order to regain possession of the Canal and to overthrow the neutralist and anti-imperialist governments in the Middle East. The fate of this aggression is well known.

For Israel the failure of the Suez invasion meant that she was unable to force the Arab world to accept the "status quo". From that time the Palestine problem entered a period of stalemate.

THE PALESTINE PROBLEM: PRESENT ATTITUDES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Having examined in the two previous articles the historical development of the Palestine situation, we now turn to present attitudes — of the Zionists on the one hand, who present a comparatively united front on the main points: and, on the other hand the Arab countries where, because of conflicting internal forces and interests, the unity consists of words rather than deeds.

The Zionist leaders of Israel are generally satisfied with the present stalemate. It is true that originally Zionism aimed to get hold of all of Palestine, and that for most Zionists this included the whole of the territory west of the River Jordan. An extremist minority had, and still has, aspirations to the eastern bank, but the defeat of the Suez aggression brought home to the Zionist leadership the lesson that even direct military partnership with imperialist powers cannot, in the world of today, achieve a further expansion of Israel. At present they consider expansionism unrealistic.

But they do consider as realistic a policy aimed at consolidating and perpetuating the "status quo". This is the principle object of Israeli foreign policy. In carrying out this policy, they rely on three factors.

First, that Israel is the most stable and reliable ally of imperialism in the area. In return, imperialism — which has an interest in preserving such an ally — grants them protection. Their hope is that the West will always be able to grant them this protection and will never let them down.

Second, Zionism has a powerful ally in Western public opinion. The 5,000,000 American Jews constitute a strong pressure group exerting considerable influence not only on U.S. official policy but also on American public opinion. Even that section of Western public opinion which opposes imperialism, is reluctant to criticise Israel. This is a result of the deep feeling of guilt in the West after the massacre of 6,000,000 Jews by the Nazis. Even socialists in the West often mistakenly identify anti-Zionism with anti-semitism. Zionist propaganda has another great advantage: it aims at consolidating an existing situation and therefore preaches peace. Arab policy wishes to change the situation, and cannot simply preach peace, but has the difficult task of explaining the injustice of the "status quo". Thus the Zionists appear as peace seekers, the Arabs as aggressors.

Third, the Zionists rely on military force. Knowing that eventually the balance of conventional forces will be against them, they have recently started to develop nuclear weapons. They hope that possession of such weapons will make it impossible for the Arabs to upset the "status quo". Alternatively, should the Great Powers force them to give up possession of nuclear weapons, the Zionists hope to get in exchange for this an East-West guarantee to maintain the "status quo".

In the long run, the Zionist policies cannot succeed. Even if they do manage to maintain the "status quo" for a relatively long period, Israel will remain a small besieged fortress, economically unviable and dependent on outside economic aid for its very existence (about \$400m. per year flow into the country since 1950, to balance a constant deficit in the balance of payments). Its own natural resources are meagre, and its markets extremely limited. It cannot compete with the advanced economies of the European countries, and Arab markets are closed to it. It is only the world-wide fund-raising activities of Zionist organisations such as the Jewish Agency, and the reparations paid by the Germans which keep the standard of living in Israel at an artificially high level. If Israel's carefully cultivated image in the West — of a democratic, refugee sheltering, peace-loving country were seriously dented, the economic consequences could be very serious. The inevitable decline of imperialist influence coupled with the progressive unification of the Arab world, will make Israel's position even more precarious.

Arab attitudes can be broadly divided into two: those of the feudal regimes; and those of the bourgeois nationalist parties. Superficially similar, the attitudes of the two groups are backed by very different deeds and motivations. Neither propose a political solution to the Palestine problem.

The Arab feudal regimes, like Zionism, had always been natural allies of Western imperialism. Both waged a struggle against rising bourgeois nationalism, therefore, these regimes considered Zionism as the lesser of the two evils. Today, as in the past, they share common political interests with Zionism as both depend for their existence on Imperialist influence in the area.

The feudal regimes cannot uphold such a policy publicly in the Arab world where the masses are anti-imperialist and clamour for political independence. To cover up their co-operation with imperialism they put out virulent anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish propaganda. A classic example occurred during King Feisal's visit to Washington in June, 1966. While conferring with President Johnson on containing Nasser and his policies, and thereby running the risk of revealing his pro-imperialist policies to the Arab world, a press question him the opportunity to declare that "all the Jews in the world support Israel, and therefore are enemies of the Arabs". The mayor of New York city, which has more Jews than Israel itself, promptly cancelled an official dinner with him. Feisal could only congratulate

himself on this chance to consolidate his tarnished image in the Arab world.

Publicly, the feudal regimes advocate the annihilation of Israel: privately — they co-operate with it. In some cases (Jordan particularly), they depend on it for their existence. Whenever the Palestinian Arabs in Jordan threaten the regime of King Hussein (grandson of Abdallah), the Israeli army moves to the armistice lines, ready to intervene if Hussein is overthrown. The rebellious masses are immediately "pacified" on the grounds that only Hussein's army can defend them from the aggressive Israelis. Although Hussein's throne has rocked violently more than once, it has stood all attacks up to now, thanks to the intervention of Israel, which would regard the overthrow of Hussein as a violation of the "status quo" — a new regime in Jordan might refuse to recognise the Abdallah-Ben Gurion pact of 1948, and the Tri-partite Declaration of 1950.

Thus, whereas on the surface the feudal regimes appear to be the most extreme enemies of Zionism, they are as concerned as Israel to consolidate and perpetuate imperialist influence and presence in the area. Zionism, and Arab feudalism are, as always, "friendly enemies".

The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties throughout the Arab world approach the Palestine problem through the United Nations resolutions. This policy was first formulated by Nasser at the Bandung Conference (1955) and it was unanimously adopted. This policy meant essentially two things: (1) Israel should repatriate the Arab refugees (according to a 1949 U.N. resolution); (2) Israel should give up the territory annexed by it as a result of the secret pact with Abdallah. This policy would reduce the area of Israel but would not affect its Zionist character.

In fact, this conciliatory programme (which represents a considerable concession to Zionism) would not provide a stable solution of the Palestine problem. It would probably be as dangerous as the "status quo". A smaller Zionist state would still be dependent on Western imperialism, and as such would continue to threaten Arab progress towards unity and socialism. This programme was raised again by Bourgiba in order to embarrass Nasser, who dropped this formula after Suez, realising that although the slogan of adhering to the U.N. resolutions had an attractive propaganda value, it did not provide for a stable solution. Moreover, since Nasser's approach to the problem of Arab unity is a basically bourgeois one, relegating class contradictions within Arab society to second place, he was led to seek an understanding with the reactionary regime in Jordan. But this regime is as much opposed to the U.N. partition resolution as the Zionists are, because Jordan too annexed part of Palestine territory. Nasser is now not so keen to raise the U.N. formula.

Today, the Nasserites and Ba'athists do not have any political solution. Instead, they talk in military terms and argue endlessly with each other whether to go to war with Israel ("liberate Palestine") in the near future (Syrian Ba'ath) or to postpone the war until a considerable progress is made towards Arab unity (Nasser). This military approach evades the main question. War can, at the very most, serve as a means to political solution; it can never replace one. Even if a war against Israel were to be won, the question of the political future of Palestine would remain unsolved. A military Arab victory would, at most, destroy the Zionist regime, but 2,000,000 Jews would remain, and probably constitute a problem similar to the Kurdish problem, unless a political solution is implemented. As is well known, the Nasserites and the Ba'athists do not have a political solution even to the Kurdish problem.

The slogan of "liberating Palestine", although emotionally satisfying, has even more serious political disadvan-

tages. In the first place, it forces moderate Israelis and even anti-Zionist Israelis (there are some) to side with the Zionist government in sheer self defence. The result is a rare degree of solidarity between public opinion and government. Internal dissension, which would inevitably arise in a normal situation, is muffled. In this atmosphere few Israelis dare question their country's reliance on imperialism, which at least protects their lives.

Moreover, this simple slogan damages the Arab case in the world arena. Apart from the unpopularity of military solutions, it also has the fault of identifying an entire population with the policies of the state, and requiring them to pay the price for those policies. Such oversimplifications are no longer acceptable to progressive world opinion, especially anti-imperialist elements who demand political solutions to political problems. Even the North Vietnamese are careful to draw a distinction between the policies of Washington and the American people. As a result of these factors the Arab nationalists, in spite of the moral rightness of their case, have been consistently losing the propaganda war ever since 1948.

Any serious political solution to the Palestine problem must take into consideration that, unlike the European settler communities in South Africa, Rhodesia or Algeria, the Jews in Palestine constitute not an upper class but a whole nation, with a complete class structure of its own. The fact that this new nation was created artificially through Zionist immigration does not alter the fact that it exists. Whereas the political set-up of this community can be changed or destroyed, the nation itself cannot be eliminated. A stable solution must therefore fulfill two basic requirements: it must abolish the Zionist character of Israel; and it must establish the self-determination of this nation in a form which is in accordance with the interests of the Arab masses, with socialism and unification.

It is clear that the existence of an Israeli state (whatever the size of its territory) isolated from the Arab world is contrary to the interests of the Arab masses. It is also contrary to the interests of the Israeli masses. Such a state cannot exist without outside support and will always necessarily be dependent on imperialism. The inherent instability of such a situation will always be a threat over the heads of the Israelis. A stable solution must therefore provide for a non-Zionist form of self-determination for Israel within the framework of an Arab Socialist Union. The Palestine problem is, in fact, closely linked with the class struggle in the Arab world and with the problem of unification. This is the reason why those forces in the Arab world which are unable to solve the problem of Arab unity are also unable to solve the Palestine problem.

Another aspect of the Palestine problem is the self-determination of the Palestinian Arabs. Should they exercise this right and establish a state of their own? Naturally, both the Zionists and Hussein are hysterically opposed to any such suggestion. But progressive elements are also undecided on this issue, believing that the creation of a new small Arab state would have a harmful effect on the process of unification.

Here, too, any solution must be compatible with the interests of unification and socialism throughout the Middle East. If a political form of self-determination of the Palestine Arabs be established (because it is theirs by right) it must come about in a way that will conform with the interests of the masses throughout the Middle East. A unification based on the denial of the right to self-determination is morally, and politically, wrong, and whenever practised in the past has introduced suspicion, mistrust and instability into the union. If these are to be eliminated from the Union of the Middle Eastern states, the fundamental national rights of the constituent members must be fulfilled. They should be given up by consent, not coercion.

Taking these issues into account we believe that the

following principles have to be incorporated in any viable future solution of the problem:

1. Israel will be de-Zionized, i.e. all present laws and practices discriminating between Jews and non-Jews implementing Jewish supremacy will be abolished. In particular, the laws granting automatic rights to every Jew in the world to emigrate to Israel and granting automatic citizenship to every Jewish immigrant (denying these rights to every non-Jew, in particular — to the Palestine refugees) will be abolished. Applications for immigration and citizenship will be decided on individually, on their own merit, without any racial or religious discrimination. The state of the Jews would thus become the state of the Israelis, i.e. the political expression of its inhabitants, whatever their race, nationality or religion.
2. The Palestine refugees will be granted the right of repatriation. Those wishing to return should be fully integrated socially, politically and economically by Israel. Those preferring not to return will be adequately compensated for their property and personal suffering.
3. All existing "security" and discriminatory measures against the Israeli Arabs will be abolished. All expropriations and damages in land, property, and personal injury incurred through such measures and "emergency laws" will be fully compensated.
4. Israel will adopt an anti-imperialist foreign policy, actively supporting the forces struggling for socialism and unification in the Arab world.
5. The Arab struggle for unification and socialism will be carried out with a readiness to make a non-Zionist and socialist Israel a partner to the Union of the Middle Eastern states. The right to self-determination of the Israelis will be recognized.
6. Pending the establishment of the Union, and the over-

coming of the barriers set up by the national states in the area, the Arab states will carry out a policy of normalizing their economical, political and cultural relations with non-Zionist Israel.

7. The Palestine Arabs will be enabled to decide by themselves, without outside interference, how to exercise their right to self-determination. Israel and the Arab states will refrain from any steps which might prejudice or interfere with their decision.
8. Should the Palestine Arabs decide to establish an independent state prior to, and pending, the establishment of the Union (or federation), the states which at present control parts of the territory west of the Jordan as a result of the 1949 Armistice Agreements should by mutual consent, make the necessary territorial arrangements to facilitate the establishment of this state.

This programme is essentially non-nationalistic, and it is unlikely that any nationalist in the area (whether Jew or Arab) will hasten to endorse it. On the contrary, vicious attacks by nationalists from both sides are to be expected, yet this will be a good sign of its internationalistic character. Attacks of the nationalists can only try to cover up the fact that they have no political solution of their own to this problem, which is part of the problem of socialist unification of the Middle East.

The Palestine problem demonstrates the fact that nationalistic policies are unable to overcome the problem of unification of national states and unable to solve the problem of national oppression. They can only turn oppressed into oppressor. The underlying problems remain. Only those socialists who have gone beyond nationalistic ideology and policies hold the key to a stable solution of the joint problems of abolishing national oppression and unifying the national states.

Israel and Imperialism (a brief analysis)

The relations between Israel and imperialism are unique and merit a special analysis. Many people of various currents on the Left agree that Israeli policies are linked with those of (today) US imperialism, and condemn these links. Few, however, realise the origin or the internal mechanism of these relations. Can Israel ever align itself with the anti-imperialist forces in the Middle East? Did Israel not fight against British imperialism in Palestine in 1948? In the following we attempt to answer these, and similar, questions through an analysis of the origin and logic of the five stages of development of these relations.

An Illuminating Prelude to Political Zionism,

Modern Jewish colonisation of Palestine was not started by the Zionists but by a French organisation, sponsored and financed by Baron Edmund de Rothschild, 27 years before the Zionist movement had its founding Congress (Basle 1897). The Rothschild movement (named 'Alliance Israelite Universelle') was hostile to Zionism until the late 1930s.

What Rothschild had in mind was to provide the Jews who fled from the pogroms in Tsarist Russia with land in Palestine and colonise it along the lines of the contemporary French colonisation of Algeria. He never subscribed to the fundamental Zionist idea of a Jewish nation-state but opposed it. He was a financial pillar of French Capitalism and thought in terms of increasing France's influence overseas. Being a Jew he sympathised with the persecuted Russian Jews. Combining his sympathies with French interests, he sponsored the AIU and financed it (although he knew that little, if any, economic profit would come out of it.)

The Rothschild settlers had some conflicts in Palestine with the Arab peasants who refused to give up the land which their feudal landlords sold the AIU for enormous sums (in contemporary terms). Later the peasants became hired farm hands in the AIU settlements. The AIU never got into a political conflict with the Palestinian Arabs because it never aspired to achieve political independence. As for relations with imperialism — the Rothschild colonisation was part of the French colonial system so that the question of an alliance between two separate parties did not exist. It is precisely this absence of policy towards imperialism that illumines the meaning of the existence of such a policy in the Zionist movement. The AIU did not aspire to create an independent State, to achieve political power, therefore its choice of a foreign policy was limited to one possibility; that of French imperialism. With the Zionist movement it was different; from the very beginning — even before the Zionist immigrants reached Palestine — its main aim

was to achieve a politically independent, Jewish, nation-State in Palestine (for tactical reasons, this aim was veiled by the formulation 'to achieve a Jewish "homeland" in Palestine'). Possessing this independent political aim Zionism had to consider how to achieve it. It had to have a foreign policy. Some Zionists immediately recognised that their fundamental aim implied a foreign policy which prescribed not only their allies but also their inevitable enemies.

1. 1897-1917: In search of international recognition.

The history and nature of the Zionist movement differs significantly from those of all other political movements. It is the case, as someone put it, of 'a government which acquired a State.' What this hints at is the following: after its founding congress, convened by the Viennese lawyer, Herzl, the Zionists had a government (the Zionist executive committee) though no State to govern. They had a House of Representatives (the Zionist Congress) with a Left and a Right wing, moderates and extremists, progressives and conservatives, religious and secular parties yet no population (their followers up to the Second World War were a minority of world Jewry). They collected annual taxes (the Zionist 'Shekel' whose payment granted the right to vote in the elections to the Zionist Congress) yet they had no citizens. The Congress was a federation of differing political parties which shared one common objective — to achieve a Jewish state in Palestine — yet quarrelled on almost every other issue, including the means to achieve the common objective. All this activity was taking place in Europe while the Jewish population in Palestine was less than 10 per cent of the Arab population, and had nothing to do with the Zionist movement. Zionism originated in Europe and was a European phenomenon. Its main-springs were:

1—The severe persecution and pogroms against the Jews in Tsarist Russia in the second half of the last century. Not only the livelihood of the Russian Jews were in constant danger but also their lives.

2—The obstacles facing Jews in Western Europe, where their economic conditions were much better, in becoming integrated in non-Jewish society (exemplified by the Dreyfus affair which converted Herzl from an assimilationist into a Zionist). Using a present-day concept, one might say that Zionism was, essentially, the movement of 'Jewish Power.'

3—Ideologically, it was shaped under the impact of 19th century European Nationalism, which was the emerging ideology of a wide group of people living in the belt between the Baltic and the Adriatic.

4—Emotionally it was deeply influenced by the Jewish religion which is inherently nationalistic and has preached, for millenia, the resurrection of Jewish independence in Palestine as the end of the sufferings of the Jews.

Herzl himself underestimated the strength of the Jewish sentiment towards Palestine (coming from an assimilationist home he was unaware of the emotional-political power of the Jewish religion). He suggested to the Congress that the Jewish State be created in Uganda and was surprised to meet fierce opposition from the majority which refused to accept any substitute (not even as a temporary measure) to Palestine. The Zionists considered their rights in Palestine to be incontestable, but they realised that they must either achieve recognition of these rights by some world power or else convince those who happened to rule Palestine that the creation of a Jewish State there was to their benefit. Although Palestine was at that time populated by some 700,000 Arabs, the Zionists never bothered to consult their opinion on the idea of a Jewish State, for two reasons. First they could hardly expect the Palestinian Arabs — who had their own aspiration to independence — to accept the idea of a Jewish State there, especially at a time when Jews constituted less than 10 per cent of the population. Second, Zionism was a product of its period, and like any other colonising movement, it never considered the indigenous population of the colonised country as a political factor to be reckoned with. Its political and diplomatic efforts were directed entirely at existing powers, not towards emerging, potential, forces. Max Nordau, Herzl's deputy, formulated the principle of Zionist foreign policy thus: 'Our aspirations point to Palestine as a compass points to the north, therefore we must orient ourselves towards those Powers under whose influence Palestine happens to be.' Considering the circumstances and the nature of a nationalist movement bent on a colonising policy (be the reasons for this whatever they may) one can hardly see an alternative to this policy. Thus, during the first phase of its existence (from 1897 to 1914), political Zionism was orientated towards Turkey (which ruled Palestine) and its closest ally, Germany. Herzl courted the Sultan and the Kaiser, attempting to achieve their consent to the idea of a Jewish State in Palestine. He tried hard to prove to them that the existence of such a State would be in their own interest. During World War I this orientation was switched to Britain, precisely because it became clear that it would be the next ruler of Palestine. The first period in the evolution of Zionist foreign policy came to an end on 2 November 1917, when the British government published the Balfour Declaration. This Declaration recognised the right of the Zionists to establish a Jewish State in Palestine and made a vague promise to support its realisation. The basic right (and joint interest) being recognised, the first goal of Zionist foreign policy was achieved. It is evident, already at this early stage, that the pro-imperialist orientation of the Zionist foreign policy was inherent in its aims. Whether it liked it or not, Zionism could not begin to carry out its plan if the ruler of Palestine did not approve of it. It is not some wickedness, but its own internal logic, that drove Zionism into the imperialist camp. It simply had no choice. The aim, and the existing circumstances, prescribed the allies.

2. 1917-1948: In search of majority and land ownership.

Once the claim of the Zionist movement to re-establish Jewish

independence in Palestine has been recognised the next task was to implement it. This necessitated two things: mass immigration of Jews into Palestine, and mass acquisition of land by Jews in Palestine.

The Palestinian Arabs, awakened to political life under the impact of World War I, taunted by hints of independence from the British during the war (to gain their cooperation against the Turks), immediately opposed the Zionist aim as well as the Zionist immigration and land policies.

They had no wish to become a minority in their own country nor to be citizens in an essential Jewish state (ie, to suffer national discrimination). Moreover, they themselves aspired to achieve political independence in Palestine. To this end they had to rid themselves of the foreign rulers of the country, and hence found their political interests contradicting those of the British. As for the Zionists, they realised that if Arab nationalism in Palestine (with which they had not reckoned during the earlier period) achieved independence before the Jews constituted a majority the main Zionist aim would have been defeated. Thus their interest was to support British rule in Palestine, gradually to build up their numbers and buy more of the land, until they formed a majority over a considerable and continuous part of the territory, and only then to start the struggle for their own independence. Thus their interests prescribed not only their allies but also their enemies. Again, it was not some wickedness that caused the Zionists to oppose Arab nationalism and any other anti-imperialist policies in Palestine. This too was a direct consequence of the aim and the circumstances.

In their opposition to Arab independence in Palestine the Zionists naturally found their interests coinciding, once more, with those of imperialism (in this case, with the British rulers). Many Zionists were unhappy about this coincidence. But whenever a Zionist underwent a conflict between his anti-imperialist attitudes and his Zionism, it was always the latter which had the upper hand in the end. Those who put anti-imperialism before Zionism ceased to be Zionists, 'Jewish Power,' like 'Black Power,' was a product of imperialism, not only socially but also ideologically, but, unlike the latter which is forced by circumstances to align itself politically against imperialism, the former was always aligned with imperialism.

3. 1948-1950: In search of recognition of armistice lines as international borders,

In the 30 years from 1918 to 1948 the Jewish population in Palestine increased from 50,000 to some 600,000, mostly through Zionist immigration. Funds collected regularly throughout world Jewry helped to build an all-Jewish economy (which never was, nor aimed to be, economically profitable). Implementing the slogans of 'Jewish labour,' 'buy Jewish,' and 'redeem the land,' gradually brought into existence a closed, self-governing, Jewish community in Palestine. Despite some friction with the British (who on the eve of World War II started to court the Arab side, curtailing immigration quotas, etc) the basic alliance of interests remained. Both parties opposed the efforts of the Palestinians to get rid of the British. During the period 1936-39 the Palestinians carried through a major rebellion which, at times, tied down 50 per cent of the entire British army. However, this rebellion was defeated by the British in a major field battle. That defeat meant the departure of the Palestinians from power politics in Palestine, leaving in

the arena the British and the Zionists.

During the Second World War friction started to build up between these two parties. This friction turned into an armed conflict in the years 1945-47. The main reason was the refusal of the British to allow mass immigration of Jewish refugees from Europe. There were also economic reasons: during the war local industry (mostly in Jewish hands) became the main supplier to the British army in the area. When the war was over, economic prosperity was over too, and British competitive goods once more enjoyed preference. The Jewish community in Palestine started (often against the wish of its leaders) to clamour for independence. This clamour developed into an armed struggle based mostly on urban guerilla warfare. A number of reasons helped the Zionists to defeat the British: favourable public opinion throughout the world because of the massacre of 6 million Jews by the Nazis; weakening of British imperialism as a result of the War; strengthening of US imperialism (towards which Zionism started to orientate itself) as a result of the same war; economic and military strengthening of the Jewish community in Palestine during that war; demoralisation of Arab nationalism which hoped for a defeat of the British (sometimes actively supporting the Axis).

All this culminated in a resolution passed by a 2/3rds majority in the General Assembly of the UN on 27 November 1947, calling for the establishing of two States in the partitioned territory of Palestine, one for the Jews and one for the Arabs. To defeat this resolution British imperialism organised an invasion by the regular armies of Farouk, Nuri-Said, Abdullah, and Husni-Zaim into Palestine. The outcome of this war was that Ben-Gurion and Abdullah (who negotiated secretly during the war) each annexed half of the territory allotted by the UN to the Palestinian Arabs. The 1948 war itself was a case of a colonising community aspiring to political independence, thus coming into conflict with the imperial power under whose wings it grew. For the colonisers themselves it was a war of independence, for the indigenous population — a change from a foreign ruler who departed, to a local ruler who had nowhere to go, from a ruler who only wanted to exploit the country to one who made it his own home. Politically the Palestinian Arabs were better off before 1948 than at any time after it.

By annexing territory allotted to the Palestinians by the UN Ben-Gurion forfeited international recognition of Israeli borders. The territory ruled by the Zionists was now larger, but no international authority agreed that it was theirs. The major task of the Israeli foreign policy became the need to achieve recognition by some world power, or authority, that the territory they annexed at the expense of the Palestinians was theirs. The US, Britain, and France provided for this in their Tri-partite resolution of 1950 wherein they sanctioned the 1949 armistice lines (yet without recognising their finality nor declaring Jerusalem the capital of Israel). Once more Zionist foreign policy became dependent on imperialism, this time in order to ensure the territorial integrity of Israel by sanctioning the annexation of territory allotted by the UN to the Palestinians. Was there another possibility? Theoretically there was. Had Ben-Gurion kept to the UN partition lines and refused the temptations of territorial aggrandisement in 1948 there would have been no territorial issue (although the political conflict would have continued for some time), and no need to depend on imperialism to sanction annexations. Actually, it was impossible for a Zionist

leader to resist the temptation of territorial aggrandisement in Palestine. Moreover, the economic and political links between the Israeli leadership (who, from the establishment of an independent Jewish State became the *de facto*, though not *de jure*, leaders of the Zionists) and both-US Jewry and government, were already too strong to permit a neutral, let alone anti-imperialist, foreign policy. When the war with Korea broke out in 1950, the Israeli government aligned itself openly with the US, putting an end to a brief period of non-alignment. This signalled a certain transformation in the pro-imperialist attitudes of the Israeli leadership: from the previous co-alignment of interests on the local, Palestinian, issue, suddenly sprang a co-alignment of interests on global, distant issues. The price of relying on imperialist support at home is support of the imperialist system throughout the world.

4. 1950-1957:

Attempts to force the Arabs to recognise the status quo.

By 1950 political Zionism had succeeded in accomplishing four tasks: its claims in Palestine were recognised, it had created a Jewish majority, it had achieved political independence in (part of) Palestine, and it had achieved imperialist recognition of its territorial integrity. There was one flaw in this series of successes — the Arabs refused to recognise them or accept them as final. This is hardly surprising as they were all imposed upon the Palestinians as accomplished facts sustained by force. The Palestinians' aspirations to independence were defeated, many of them became refugees and lost all they had, including self respect. The Israeli leaders were well aware of this. From the moment they concluded the secret agreement (endorsed by the British Foreign Office) with Abdullah (in 1949), Ben-Gurion, Goida Meir, Eshkol, Dayan, and the rest of the Israeli leadership, scrupulously refrained from any mention of the Palestinians. They were willing to conclude peace with the rulers of any Arab State, to enter negotiations with them 'anywhere and anytime,' but they insisted that the Palestinians were, politically, non-existent. It is an irony of history that through their victory in the 1967 war these leaders were forced to recognise and deal once again with the same Palestinians they conjured away in their imagination 19 years earlier.

In 1950 Ben-Gurion expected that within a year King Abdullah of Trans-Jordan would conclude a peace treaty with Israel thereby bringing to an end the Israeli-Arab conflict. Abdullah was shot soon afterwards by a Palestinian, and Dayan later admitted 'he was politically dead (because of his secret agreement with Ben-Gurion) even before he was shot.' Suddenly peace seemed further away than ever. It is not clear what exactly the Israeli leadership meant by 'peace;' Ben-Gurion expressed more than once the view that lack of normal relations with the Arabs and their hostile attitudes towards Israel had a unifying effect on the heterogenous Jewish community in Israel. He saw the greatest role for the Israeli army as a melting pot of a new nation. There is reason to believe that, once outside hostility ceased, strong internal contradictions between oriental and European Jews in Israel (coinciding with class divisions) would put an end to 'Jewish unity.' Yet in spite of all this, there is little doubt that the Israeli leadership was intent on achieving the overt, *de jure* recognition, as well as the covert, *de facto* acceptance, of the 1949 territorial and demographic *status quo*, by the Arab States. Since the Arab States refused to grant this

recognition and all direct Israeli approaches failed, Ben-Gurion decided to use indirect means.

At that time (1953-55) the US was surrounding the USSR with a network of bases as well as anti-Soviet pacts. Numerous attempts to draw the Middle Eastern States into joint, anti-Soviet, pacts were made at the time, especially by J.F. Dulles. Israel was always eager to join, not so much because of fear or hatred to the USSR (which was the staunchest political and military supporter of Israel in 1948) but because of the possibility that a paragraph concerning 'mutual respect for territorial integrity' or the like, could always be introduced into such a treaty thereby causing any Arab signatory party to recognise, indirectly, the Israeli accomplished fact. Most Arab leaders, excluding veteran pro-imperialist politicians like Nuri-Said of Iraq, refused to sign. Not because of Israel, but because they were suspicious that these treaties were directed not so much against the USSR (with which they had no conflict) as against their own interests. They believed that these treaties constituted a veiled attempt by the US to replace the British imperialist presence in the Middle East. Ever since the end of the Second World War anti-imperialist movements throughout the Arab world were on the increase, they exerted direct and indirect pressure on every ruler and politician in this area. Gradually they came to power. This situation worried the Israeli leadership. For example, when it became clear, in 1954, that the British intend to evacuate the Suez Canal, the Israeli government made frantic efforts to make the British stay. One of these was the calculated provocation of sending a ship flying the Israeli flag into the Canal and using its detention as a propaganda move proving that 'Egypt cannot be relied upon to ensure free navigation to all nations.' The truth was that during the period that the British ruled the Canal no Israeli ship passed through either. Egypt was not ready to grant passage to Israeli ships before a settlement of the whole 'Palestine problem.' The significant point from this article's viewpoint is that whereas up to 1948 the Zionists had no conflict with Egypt, they now found themselves opposed to the anti-imperialist policies of the new regime in Egypt (which was not responsible for the 1948 invasion of Palestine), with a stake in the continuation of the British presence in the canal.

Once again the alliance with imperialism in local affairs prescribed distant consequences. Yet all the indirect methods, though they became more numerous and sophisticated, failed to achieve their aim. The Arab world stubbornly refused to accept as final the facts which the Zionists had imposed on the Palestinians. When this failure became clear to Ben-Gurion (who between 1949 and 1959 was the sole authority on defence and foreign policy in Israel), the method gradually changed to one of attempting to force the Arab States into a recognition of the *status quo*. The instrument of this policy were the 'retaliation' raids of the Israeli army into Arab territory. As their name implies these were, allegedly, retaliations for the small scale armed infiltration and sabotage acts carried out by various Arab States or organisations inside Israel. Politically there was a different motive behind them (a motive of which few Israelis were aware). When a serious Israeli raid occurred the usual reaction of the involved Arab government was to rush to the US ambassador and ask for arms. The answer invariably, was, 'join an anti-Soviet pact and you'll get all the arms you want.' This was exactly what Ben-Gurion wanted.

However, this technique backfired in a quite unexpected way. When, after a major Israeli raid on Gaza on 28 February 1955, Nasser approached H. Bayrod, the US ambassador, with a request for arms, and got the usual answer, he decided to turn to the USSR for help. The USSR agreed and the Egyptian-Czechoslovak arms deal was signed. The political implications of this move undermined the foundation of Ben-Gurion's foreign policy, because the USSR was not a signatory of the tripartite declaration, and refused to sanction the *status quo*. Whereas up to 1955 the West was all powerful in the Middle East, not only because of its economic grip or direct military presence, but also because it had a monopoly of arms supply to this area, it was now forced to compete with the USSR for the favours of the local rulers.

Nasser made much use of this competition. But Ben-Gurion was unable to exploit it, for two reasons: first, he was already too dependent economically on the US; second, the USSR refused to recognise the *status quo* as final, and kept insisting on the rights of the Palestinians. Thus, the Israeli leadership, which during its anti-British struggle in 1948 found in Stalin's power politics its staunchest supporter, now encountered a direct conflict of interests with the USSR over the Palestine issue.

From 1955 onwards the Israeli leadership had its own vested interest in diminishing Soviet influence in the Middle East. The culmination of these policies was the Suez war in 1956. Israel was not lured into this collusion by France, certainly not by Britain. There is good reason to believe that it was the other way round. Realising that France, because of its involvement in Algeria, had an interest in defeating the anti-imperialist movement in the area, particularly in overthrowing Nasser, who symbolised this movement, the Israelis started to tempt French imperialism into a joint military strike on Egypt. Once the bargain was struck Britain was lured into it. First the Israeli and French defence secretaries presented their own governments (especially their foreign ministers) with the accomplished fact of a military partnership, and then the two governments presented the British with their joint plan. It was as usual the 'hawks' who took the initiative, but once they presented the 'doves' with the accomplished fact, the latter were unable to resist the temptation and, however reluctantly, endorsed it.

The Suez war, which the US opposed, demonstrated one important aspect of the nature of the links between Israel and imperialism, namely — that Israel is not an obedient servant of US or British (and certainly not French) imperialism. Rather it is ready to present any of them with a *fait accompli* which will, in case of success, receive their *post factum* blessing but not necessarily their *a priori* approval. The failure of the Suez war, in spite of the Israeli military victory, to force the Arab States into a recognition of the *status quo*, terminated the fourth stage in the development of the Zionist foreign policy. It became clear to the Israeli leadership that there is no way of making the Arabs accept a Zionist State in Palestine. They can be made to endure it, they cannot be made to endorse it.

5. 1957-1967:

Impasse and the emergence of the policy of self-reliance.

After Suez it became clear to the Israeli leadership that they were in for a long period when little could be done to make the Arabs accept the facts imposed on them by Zionism. The situ-

ation was aggravated by the clear split in the Arab world between the anti- and pro-imperialist regimes which deepened during the Suez war. Pro-imperialists like, say, Nuri Said or Hussein, who, like Israel, were interested in preserving imperialist influence in the Middle East, were under constant pressure from the anti-imperialist attitudes of the masses supported by the anti-imperialist governments. To counter this pressure the pro-imperialists turned to racial, anti-Jewish propaganda, blaming the anti-imperialists for their reluctance to 'throw all the Jews into the sea.' Instead of empty words about fighting imperialism, they said, let us join ranks in the fight against the Jews. The fact that the Arab governments were no longer united in their attitude towards imperialism, and that it was precisely the pro-imperialists who resorted to the strongest anti-Israel propaganda, frustrated the Israeli leadership. Moreover, the fact that British, French, and US imperialism continued to court Nasser because of their economic interests in the area yet remained cool towards Israel so as not to antagonise the Arabs (and because they know that it had no possibility of turning against them) gradually brought into being the policy of self-reliance. This means simply that Israel cannot trust the governments of US, Britain or France, to safeguard its existence or security and must rely only on its own resources and those of the Jews elsewhere. One consequence of this was the aspiration to build an independent nuclear deterrent. Ben-Gurion, and his disciples, Dayan and Peres, insisted on this policy. The moderate Zionists, like Eshkol and Meir wavered; they disliked the idea of antagonising the US which insists on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Ben-Gurion built a secret atomic pile without the knowledge of the US (which donated a smaller one over which it had absolute control). When Washington finally learned about this, it was furious because of the obvious, local and global, implications. American pressure was one of the factors which contributed to the ousting of Ben-Gurion and his replacement by Eshkol.

One of Eshkol's first moves was to delay the construction of an independent Israeli nuclear deterrent. In return he received a very definite American military commitment to safeguard the *status quo*. However, when Nasser imposed the naval blockade in Tiran in June 1967, Johnson refused to intervene militarily. He already had a war on his hands in Vietnam and refused to antagonise the entire Arab world by siding openly with Israel. It was only after the CIA and the Israeli leadership assured him that there would be no need for 'American boys to die for Israel' that he accepted the possibility of a military conflict. For the Israeli leadership, however, Washington's refusal to honour its commitment was a shock; Ben-Gurion's arguments for self-reliance were vindicated.

A colonisers' State which, because of the way in which it came into existence, is an integral part of the imperialist power structure cannot always rely on active support from the major imperialist powers. It must reckon with the possibility that, because of their own imperialist interests, these powers will be ready to sacrifice it or, at least, to make concessions on its behalf for their own benefit. Whether this possibility will actually materialise is another problem. Its apparent existence forces governments of States like South Africa, Rhodesia, and Israel to prepare themselves for the worst. They cannot entrust their existence to the goodwill or interests of the big imperialist powers. As their very existence is threatened by the victory of

the anti-imperialist movement these States are much more desperate than the imperialist powers themselves. Since they are small they feel no responsibility for the rest of the world. Should their existence be threatened (as in the present, Israeli, case) they will not hesitate to safeguard it by independent nuclear weapons. Even a threat to, or blackmail of, a big world power is not impossible. There are enough Israeli politicians who will not hesitate, in the case of an Israeli military defeat, to pull a considerable portion of humanity down with them. The chances are that they will, probably, have the means within a few years.

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Thus, the 'Jewish Power' movement, aiming to re-establish Jewish independence by means of colonisation in Palestine, was forced — by its own aims and means — into a partnership with British colonialism based on joint local interests in Palestine. As this interest was to oppose the anti-British struggle of the Palestinians, the Zionists were forced to oppose anti-British struggles elsewhere, throughout the Middle East and, gradually, to support imperialism in Algeria, Yemen, etc. 50 years ago the adversaries of the Zionists were the Palestinian Arabs and the issue was: whose State will Palestine be? Today the adversary of the Israeli leadership is not only the entire population of the Arab world, but the entire anti-imperialist movement, including leaders like Castro, Ho Chi Minh. Today it is not the geographical affinity, but the political one, that matters. As long as Israeli policies run parallel to those of imperialism it cannot have peace with the anti-imperialist movement.

It is interesting to compare, however briefly, the State of Israel with South Africa, Rhodesia, or the French in Algeria (it was Ben-Gurion himself who pointed out to De Gaulle, in 1958, the similarity between the Algerian problem and the Palestine problem). The common factor in all these cases is the existence of a colonising society, aspiring to independence, and having achieved it, becoming an opponent of anti-imperialist movements, especially the ones in its neighbourhood. In all these cases the colonisers uphold measures of segregation against the indigenous population. The latter struggles not for integration but for undoing the entire institutionalised supremacist establishment. This struggle merges with the struggle against the US and British or French imperialism. There are, however, significant differences between the case of Israel and, say, South Africa. The first is the fact that the Zionists did not come to exploit the riches of Palestine (as the Boers in South Africa) but to achieve independence. In economic terms the Zionist enterprise was never profitable, neither to the Zionists, nor to the Jews elsewhere. On the contrary, preserving Jewish independence is a luxury which costs some £150 million annually (since 1949). This factor greatly increases the dependence of Israel on the West.

As for segregationist policies — in Israel they are based on nationality, not race, and do not coincide with the class divisions as in South Africa. The Zionist ideology does not consider the Arabs as inferior; rather, it tries to ignore them, especially the Palestinians as a political entity. Moreover many oriental Jews (comprising nowadays more than 50 per cent of the Israeli population) have more in common with the Arabs (in culture, tradition, and language) than with the European Jews; nothing consolidates this heterogeneous population more than a threat from outside to its political (and physical) existence. Although

the Israeli population is tired of a constant state of belligerency and armed hostilities with the Arabs, and the leadership certainly seeks Arab recognition and acceptance of the facts which it has imposed upon them, it is worried by the possibility that a full normalisation of relations with the Arab world will, eventually, undo the 'Jewish unity' of the Israeli population. The insistence on Zionist (ie, segregationist, anti-Arab) policies necessitates the dependence on imperialism (for economic, political, and military aid). Since Zionism is based on emotions, not profits, it is much harder to perpetuate, especially as it causes continuous hardships to the Israeli population. There are several anti-Zionist organisations inside Israel, and their membership (up to the 1967 war) was on the increase. This war has caused a

setback to these forces but there are signs that the tendency to increase will persist. It is typical that all the different anti-Zionists (be they nationalists or internationalists, of the Right or the Left) call for an anti-imperialist foreign policy, of actively supporting the struggle of the Arab masses throughout the Middle East for political, social, and economic liberation. This demonstrates the possibility that once Israel sheds its Zionism it will be able to break off its alliance with imperialism; whether this possibility will be realised is a different problem. One thing is certain: as long as the Israeli policies remain motivated by Zionist considerations its alliance, with, and dependence on, imperialism, cannot be undone.

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