

ISRAEL, PALESTINE AND SOCIALISM

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"The six-hundredth day of the Six-Day War" was the apt title of a television programme; and, as more days and more months pass, this continuing conflict remains the most intractable of all international issues. For Socialists it presents a particular difficulty. One cannot easily recall another problem over which Socialists of good faith have disagreed so much—disagreed in their sympathies, disagreed over possible solutions, disagreed in finding a way to apply basic Socialist principles, disagreed in analysis of the very nature of the problem. This essay is an attempt to establish a Socialist approach by an analysis related to principle. As a starting-point, it may be worth while to survey the very different attitudes taken by non-Socialists too, and in particular by political forces within the great powers whose intervention has been a major thread in the story.

Let us begin with the British, who exerted the dominant influence in the thirty years (1918 to 1948) that set the stage for subsequent battles. The famous contradictory promises of 1918 (the Balfour declaration and the McMahon letters, which led the Jews and the Arabs respectively to expect an inheritance after the ending of Turkish rule in Palestine) heralded an ambiguity that lasted as long as the British mandate. Imperialist interests suggested two alternative strategies for frustrating an Arab drive toward independence: one was to back the Jews, the other was to support the feudal and the fanatically religious forces in Arab society who appeared promising as stooges and who were the bitterest enemies of Jewish intrusion. Money also spoke with two voices. Banking and commercial capital looked with favour on Jewish schemes for development, while the oil companies regarded agreement with Arab rulers as a pre-condition for their operations. Ideologically, the go-getters of capitalism admired Jewish efforts to transform a stagnant region, or saw the new agricultural settlements as analogous to British pioneering in the White Highlands of Kenya; but traditionally-minded imperialists made a cult of the unsophisticated desert sheikh and the simple peasant, and favoured Islam (as in India) as a barrier in the path of the modern-minded agitator. The Foreign Office and the Army were generally pro-Arab all along, but within these castes there were cross-currents too. The administration of the mandatory system changed course with successive High Commissioners, or in response to volte-faces in Whitehall. British troops and police

directed the edge of the sword against the Arabs in the 1936–39 period, and the eccentric General Wingate (a fervent Zionist on Biblical grounds) was allowed to arm and direct Jewish irregulars while holding His Majesty's commission. Later (1944–48) these same troops and police went into action with ferocious zeal against the Jews.

Such divided counsels were apparent in political circles also, and individual attitudes were by no means pre-determined. From his general outlook, and notably from his espousal of the Princes and the "martial races" in India, one would not have cast Churchill as a sympathizer with Zionism, but in point of fact he was. Chamberlain's White Paper of 1939, seen by the Jews as a betrayal and by the Arabs as a triumph, was primarily a by-product of his appeasement of Hitler. We find Eden in 1955 delighting the Arabs with a speech suggesting a revision of the 1949 boundaries and a re-opening of the refugee question, but next year entering into an aggressive alliance with Israel when Nasser became the enemy. On the other side of the fence, Jewish sufferings at Nazi hands made Labour opinion predominantly pro-Jewish, and the election manifesto of 1945 contained an unreserved pledge of support for Zionist aims. But Labour policy in office has been at least as ambiguous as that of Tory governments, and Labour Foreign Secretaries (Ernest Bevin emphatically, George Brown to some extent) have shown hostility to Israel. Today, the liberal centre in politics—mainstream Labour men, Liberals, "civilized" Tories—generally favours Israel; but so does a trenchant organ of Toryism such as the *Daily Telegraph*, and so too does a considerable part of the Labour Left, at least in Parliament. Among upholders of the Arab cause we can discern unreconstructed High Tories like Sir Tufton Beamish, right-wing Labour politicians such as Lady Summerskill and Mr Christopher Mayhew (once Bevin's junior)—and also most radical students in our universities and the generality of militant crusaders against world-wide imperialism.

In the USA, support for Israel has been the majority trend in both big parties, but all Administrations have translated it into practice in a perceptibly diluted form. Eisenhower did not hesitate to condemn the Suez aggression on the eve of an election, and subsequently to exert determined pressure to make the Israelis withdraw from Sinai and Gaza. The Nixon Administration arms and supports Israel, but not exactly up to the hilt, and seems to be keeping its options open. Now that the USA has succeeded Britain as the major capitalist power in the Middle East and in the world at large, the same division between commercial capital and the oil interests is repeated on the American scene. On the Left, fervent support for Zionism was an accepted plank in the progressive platform in the Henry Wallace era, and is still a dogma of liberalism; but the younger radicals, and in particular

the black militants, have tended increasingly to espouse the Arab cause.

Stalin, at a time when Soviet Jews were being scandalously persecuted, rushed to beat the US to the post in recognizing the newborn state of Israel, then supplied with guns by Communist Czechoslovakia, and to denounce the incursions of the British-armed Arab Legion. One can construct an imaginary scenario of the succeeding twenty years, had this line been pursued; the CP of Israel would have gained in strength and entered a coalition government, and *bien-pensant* western opinion would now be denouncing Israel as a hotbed of subversion. But in fact the USSR swung sharply to a pro-Arab position and the Skoda munitions went to Nasser from 1955 on. The change was made under the "liberalizing" rule of Malenkov and Khrushchev. Soviet policy today can be characterized as pro-Arab, but allows for probing talks with the US in search of a settlement and a restraining hand on Arab eagerness for renewed all-out war—signs of "hypocrisy" which draw condemnation from China. Vitriolic denunciations of Israel, at the risk (to say no more) of stimulating crude anti-Semitism, have come from the most repressive and backward-looking groups in the Communist world—the Czech conservatives, the Ulbricht régime, and the Mozcar clique in Poland. Advocates of "socialism with a human face" in eastern Europe, and dissident intellectuals in the USSR, have been correspondingly pro-Israeli. But Tito, probably because of his links with Nasser from the heyday of non-alignment, takes a staunchly pro-Arab line.

So one might go on, with reference to France, West Germany, India, and virtually any country in which divergent political trends are open to analysis. Three general points are worth making. The first is the rather obvious reflection that such variations in attitude must indicate a highly complex situation, and inspire a proper caution in reducing it to simplicity. Secondly, the maxim of "Tell me where my enemies stand, and I'll know where I stand"—however useful in other situations—will not guide Socialists through this labyrinth. To be precise, a totally pro-Arab attitude might indeed be justified (later, of course, I shall argue the matter); but it can only be justified on its merits, not on a perception of imperialist strategies which, as we have seen, contain contradictions. Thirdly, the kind of non-Socialist policies that I have sketched have had, and still have, a diversity of causes. Palestine is a small place on the map, and even the Middle East is not the world. A dominant influence may at times be exerted by a quite extraneous motive—I have noted the case of Chamberlain, and others will come readily to mind. Considerations of internal politics play their part too; the celebrated Jewish vote in New York was never as potent as simplifiers believe, but it has not been a

negligible factor either. And, since even reactionary politicians are human beings and not automata, subjective intellectual convictions and personal attachments cannot be left altogether out of account.

Before I end this introduction, it should be noted too that this issue is peculiarly coloured in almost every mind by ideology in the broadest sense—by religions which have the potency of popular cultures, by deep-rooted traditions, by ineradicable habits of thought. I have heard two educated men, both Socialists and both atheists, arguing fiercely about whether Abraham was a Jew or was the common ancestor of Jews and Arabs. The "bookish" character of both the Judaic and the Moslem religion, and the concept of prophecy and fulfilment, are factors that it is seldom possible to forget. This dominance of ideology has a specific effect: the perceptions of events has become almost as important as the events themselves. (I am not denying that the perception is perfectly sincere and is often based on direct experience.) Any exposition of either the Jewish or the Arab case—and I have listened to both by the hour—is almost invariably a narrative embodying this perception. Let me take a single example. For the Arabs, the British withdrawal in 1948 should naturally have led to an act of decolonization as in Syria and Lebanon; this was forestalled by a Jewish seizure of towns and villages all over Palestine; and, had other Arab nations not come to the rescue, all the Palestinian Arabs would have been reduced to subjection or expulsion. For the Jews, the episode is known as the War of Independence; the enemies were the British, taking the field directly in the earlier phase and by the medium of British-armed and (in the case of the Arab Legion) British-officered forces in the later; and, had the Jews not fought, they would have been reduced to subjection or extermination. It is certainly not my intention to retell this or any other episode in an impossibly "objective" manner. My point is that there are two versions of every event; that, broadly speaking, both are true (the differences deriving from the omission of certain facts, not from invention); and that the power rests in the belief. Hence the extraordinary emotional strength of conviction on either side. The ideological factors reinforce the certainty that **right**—if you will, righteousness—is the prerogative of Jew or Arab, that it is impossible to imagine otherwise, and that anyone unconvinced must be either malicious or ill-informed. In this atmosphere, it is clearly very difficult for anyone affected by these factors to think like a Socialist. This applies equally to Jews and Arabs themselves, and to others who have adopted their perceptions and their ideologies.

SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM

What, then, is this embittered conflict essentially about? The reader will have noticed that I have talked about the Jews (or the Israelis) and the Arabs, without any social or political differentiation. This is a loose, journalistic terminology; but if I have employed it, this is because it reflects a reality. My thesis, in fact, is that what we should identify is a collision of one nationalism with another. Each is legitimate, by virtue of being nationalism. Each has its peculiar features, which must be analyzed. But the necessary preliminary is an examination of nationalism itself, and of the Socialist attitude toward it.

Nationalism is the emergence of a group of people as a self-conscious and exclusive entity, demanding collective expression in **institutional**—normally political—form. A nation is recognizable by various hallmarks, of which territory and language are the most usual, but to each of these an exception can be found in one case or another.¹ The process, as the word "emergence" denotes, is dynamic. Some nations are very old, but none has existed from time immemorial; some are very new; some are both old and new, in the sense of having been suppressed for a period, even to a great degree in their own consciousness. It is quite possible for a nation to exist which did not exist fifty years earlier, and the Socialist—or even the simple democrat—must take note of such an evolution. When it does exist and demands expression, it is perfectly futile for anyone else to say: "You're not a nation—you weren't on the list when the register was made up." For a nation defines itself by its own consciousness, by its desires, and by the struggles which themselves intensify that consciousness and those desires. One might say without undue flippancy that nationalism is like love. It demands to attain its objective, however unwise that objective might seem (or might actually be) in the opinion of others.

Pakistan is an illuminating case in point—for one relevant reason, because its origin was in religion, which is an unwise or "bad" origin on clear grounds of principle, but can nevertheless be a reality. The idea of the Indian Moslems as a nation was, at an early stage, partly a sectarian fantasy and partly a British divide-and-rule device. It was entirely reasonable for the Indian National Congress to oppose this development in the name of secular democracy, and equally for the Indian Communists to oppose it in the name of Socialism and class solidarity. However, the idea became a reality and Pakistan is a nation. No sensible Indian now imagines that Pakistan as a separate state *can* be abolished.

Exceptional cases apart, a nation develops out of a less positively distinct entity, which in many parts of the world is described as a tribe or simply as "a people". The point of nationhood is reached when the

groups feels itself to be distinct from a much larger group of which it has hitherto formed a part; or, conversely, when small groups recognize a common identity. Even when nationhood exists, the degree of distinctness is something of a variable. It is not uncommon for several nations to feel a common identity for reasons of propinquity and culture (Africa) or of language and history (Latin America). The clearest case of this common identity is the Arab world.

It will be seen that the development of a nation is by no means an inevitability. In Africa, it appears likely that many potential nations (now known as tribes) with their own language and territory will never become actual nations. The nations will be larger entities such as Kenya or Tanzania. The boundaries were in fact drawn in the crudest way to suit the convenience of imperialist powers, riding roughshod over tribal and linguistic distinctions, but it seems possible in the era of independence for a sense of nationhood to grow despite this heritage of "unreality".

It is also not inevitable that the sense of nationhood will always be expressed in a demand for total political independence, i.e. statehood. There is no doubt that large and firmly constituted groups in India, such as the Tamils, can reasonably be described as nations. But it does not follow that they are bound to demand the dissolution of India into its national constituents, and still less does it follow that this would be a progressive development in any sense.

Now let us ask : what have Socialists to say about all this?

The most elementary statement is that, whenever and wherever the consciousness (and thus the reality) of nationhood exists, its free expression is a human right which Socialists must support, and repression of nationhood is a crime which Socialists must combat. This is an absolute. But, the process being dynamic, the point at which nationhood should be encouraged to emerge—or should be recognized with regret, as in the instance of Pakistan—is a matter of judgement. Just the same applies to the demand for statehood : that is to say, the desires of the people concerned are the deciding factor. To take the case nearest home : I as a Socialist am neither for nor against the independence of Wales. I am for it if and when the Welsh people want it.

This is perfectly simple in cases where a nation is homogeneous on the territory in question, and is oppressed by the bureaucracy and armed forces of an alien power. The demand is clear-cut—the oppressors must go away. The situation is more difficult when two nation-groups lay claim to the same territory. Each, in that case, has a right to its own nationhood and statehood. Socialists have to concern themselves with such matters as the drawing of frontiers, minority rights where minorities must remain, economic arrangements, and so forth.

And the Socialist proves his genuineness by approaching these questions on the basis of the equality of each nation—not, as with the ordinary politician, by grabbing as much as possible for his own nation. The Socialist does not, in fact, support one nationalism at the expense of what is legitimate in another.

The Socialist who contravenes this principle—I should say the nominal Socialist—usually justifies himself by denying the rights, or even the very existence, of the nation to which he is opposed. Thus, for Israeli political leaders and their western supporters, there is no such thing as a Palestinian Arab nation because it has never been incarnated in a state—a curious argument indeed in the mouths of Jews. As Mrs Meir has expressed it, the Arabs of Palestine are merely "south Syrians". And for the pro-Arab Left, Israel cannot be conceded the same legitimacy as other nations because it derives from the "reactionary ideology" of Zionism. Both Arab and Israeli nationalism certainly do have special features, which I shall examine and of which Socialists must be critical. But, if the reader at all accepts the dynamic concept of a nation defining itself by its consciousness and its actual emergence, he will find in it sufficient rebuttal of these dogmas. I take it as reality, in fact, that the Arab nation of Palestine and the Israeli nation exist. What concerns us that they should exist without the one being oppressed by the other, as the Arabs are of course oppressed today under Israeli occupation.

For if it is true, in the well-worn phrase, that no nation can be free when it oppresses others, it is still more true that no nation can be free when it destroys others. This is the aim being pursued by those who deny nationhood to an opponent. By conquest, military occupation, and partial expulsion, the Israelis have deprived the Palestinian Arabs of all effective national status. For their part, the Arab liberation organizations set themselves the aim of removing the state of Israel from the map.² Each combatant, thus, seeks to deny the other the right of statehood, which I have argued to be implicit—when desired—in the right of nationhood. My contention is that no Socialist can associate himself with such aims.

The principles I have enunciated so far, though regrettably they are not honoured by all Socialists, ought in theory to be binding on any democrat of integrity. For Socialists, another important principle must be stated. This is that national independence, though an absolute right, is not an end in itself. It is certainly not an ultimate objective. The highest concern of Socialists is not with political structures, but with the social and economic ordering of human life. Of course, what can be achieved in this regard depends on the stage of social development that has been reached. It is not much use calling for Socialism in a new nation of pastoral tribesmen or even of peasant cultivators.

But in a capitalist, or even partially capitalist, society it is the business of Socialists to advance the idea of Socialism, not in opposition to nationhood but as its necessary complement if the word "liberation" is to be given its fullest meaning. For, without Socialism, human subjection will to a certain extent continue as it did under alien rule.³

Nationalists *pur sang*, in every country, will always denounce this appeal as a diversion. Their reply is: "First let us win independence, and the social system can be discussed later." This means in effect that the national struggle should be carried through without disturbing the social structure, which will thereafter be perpetuated by two methods—by evoking a sentiment of gratitude to the founding fathers of the nation and maintaining them in power, and by continuing national unity in opposition to external enemies.

It ought to follow that Socialists—especially Socialists abroad—should find some inadequacy in devoting themselves entirely to the support of nationalist aspirations, and in particular to the support of parties and movements of simple nationalist coloration. The championship of small national groups, preferably up against heavy odds, is a classical enthusiasm of the British liberal intelligentsia. In the last century it used to be the Greeks or maybe the Montenegrins. Today the Nagas, the Kurds and the Tibetans each have their passionate sympathizers. It is wholly natural (and no slur on sincerity is implied) if the victimized Palestinian Arabs too find their champions. For people whose ideological vision is limited by the goal of national self-determination, such partisanship is a sufficient expression of idealism. But for Socialists, the standards must be different. Uncritical backing for the Arab cause and idealization of Al Fateh, whose actions are equated with liberation struggles in Vietnam or elsewhere, give painful evidence of the political immaturity and *simplisme* of certain sections of the Left.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

Here another issue arises. It is sometimes argued that the Left should adopt a pro-Arab and anti-Israeli posture solely because of the role played by either side in world politics. In this argument, the actual merits of the case are irrelevant. Irrelevant, too, are any saving graces that Israel may have, any defects in Arab states or movements, and any undesirable consequences of an Arab victory. All that matters is that the Arabs find themselves in opposition to world (primarily US) imperialism, while Israel is an ally, outpost or implement of imperialism. An Arab victory would be painful for the imperialists, just as a Liberation Front victory in Vietnam would be. Therefore, the

conflict along the Jordan and the war in Vietnam form part of one indivisible liberation struggle.

There is a kind of caricature of this argument, according to which the Arabs must be supported because they are poor and are therefore part of the Third World, whereas the Israelis are bad because they are western in orientation and culture and belong to what a pro-Arab friend of mine distastefully calls "the TV world". Israel, it is often said, must become a Middle Eastern nation and not an outpost of Europe. It ought not to be necessary to point out that Arabs are poor, to a great extent, because their society is dominated by gross inequality and exploitation. Arabs want to be westernized in the sense of having clean drinking water and clinics, like the Israelis. Unconsciously, part of the Left seems to have been infected by the "noble savage" romanticism of desert travellers of the past.

Clearly, however, this aside does not dispose of the argument I have set out above. It is a serious argument and, I believe, has considerable force if it is not made to be utterly decisive. The Israelis, if they are ever to be safe and to live in peace, must in the end recognize Arab rights; and their reliance on ultimate US support is a major reason why they don't do so. Equally, the implicit US guarantee of Israel's survival is not given for the sake of Jewish *beaux yeux* or kibbutz ideals, but to avoid exclusion from influence in the Middle East.

And yet it can be demonstrated in two ways that the argument has at times been carried too far. The Israelis themselves are not fighting to serve American interests. There are plenty of precedents, from the birth of the US itself onward, for taking advantage of great-power rivalries and seeking help where it may be found. At a certain period, Arab and specifically Palestinian nationalism received active support from Hitler; but it did not thereby cease to embody genuine aspirations nor become merely an outpost of fascism. The fact is that Israel could at any time have ensured complete safety by entering NATO, becoming a formal ally of the US, and accepting American bases on her territory. To sum up, the argument is correct in what it says about US policy (at present), but not in what it says about Israel. Israel is a nation open to condemnation on many counts—but a nation, not an *American* creation nor an American dependency.

Now a consideration of principle. It is right for Socialists to take an international perspective and to consider the effect of specific events on the broad sweep of history. But this cannot be made an excuse for evading serious thought about actual situations—still less for indifference to the fate of actual human beings. The real reason why a victory of the NLF in Vietnam is to be desired is not that it will weaken US imperialism on a world scale. It may have that effect or it may not; arguably, by disengaging from a venture that has gone wrong and

restoring its order of battle both internally and externally, US imperialism would end up better off. Even if that were the result, the NLF victory would be gratifying because it would bring national independence—and, one hopes, social advance—to the people of Vietnam. This, decisively, is what the war is being fought for. And similarly, no "world view" should tempt us into pushing the interests of the Arab and Israeli peoples into second place.

ARAB AND PALESTINIAN NATIONALISM

If the conflict is indeed a collision of two nationalisms, we have to understand their origins and special features. The 100 million people loosely known as Arabs inhabit a vast region stretching from the Atlantic coast of Morocco to the Persian Gulf (or Arabian Gulf, as it is prudent to say when in the locality). There is no racial homogeneity, since only a minority is Arab in the strict sense of inhabiting or originating from Arabia. Some are descended from earlier inhabitants of the territory concerned (e.g. Canaanites and Samaritans in Palestine); and at a later stage there was much mingling with other strains—African, Turkish, Persian, etc. The factors of unity are broadly the following:

1. The Arabic language, which is spoken throughout (though dialects differ extensively) and the culture associated with it.

2. The Moslem religion, together with a structure of Islamic law, custom, and family life. Christians are fairly numerous among Lebanese, Syrian, and Palestinian Arabs; but in the region as a whole Moslem consciousness and Arab consciousness are not easily disentangled. Religious fanaticism and the idea of the "holy war", together with the identification of political and religious authority, are more characteristic of the wholly Moslem parts of the Arab world, which are also the most socially backward; whereas tolerance and political secularism are more characteristic of countries with sizeable Christian populations, these being also more socially developed.

3. As a historical tradition, a potent factor is the memory of the conquests made by Mahomet and his successors, which spread Arab rule over the entire region for seven centuries until the period of subjection by the Ottoman Turks. The appeal to past glories, as elsewhere in the world, is a favourite weapon of reactionaries.

4. A more recent historical factor—has been the sense of oppression by the Turks and the striving for national freedom—freedom from the Turks, and also freedom from the British, French and Italian imperialists who established their mastery at various times from 1830 (Algeria) to 1918 (Syria, Palestine, Iraq, etc.). South Arabia was a British colony until 1969 and neo-colonialism is still present. Clearly, this factor makes it accurate and important to speak of Arab struggles

for national liberation, having the same character as, and linked by sympathy to, similar struggles everywhere in the Third World.

Whether there is an "Arab nation" is much more open to dispute, and the question gets a variety of answers (very intricate and complex, as a rule) both from specialists on the region and from Arabs themselves. The Arab community—to use the best non-committal word—dates from a period when nations in the modern sense did not exist, or were developing only in exceptional instances such as England and France, and when the world was chiefly divided into supra-national power systems. The factors of Arab unity were certainly strong enough to have produced, in the right circumstances, a cohesive entity—a nation—like China or India. But we have seen that similar factors in black Africa and in Latin America have not had that result. In Israel one often hears derisive remarks about the inability of Arab states to co-ordinate their efforts; but, if these states are really distinct nations with no more than cultural links, it is unjust to expect them to be more in step than the nations of Europe.

The question, in fact, is whether today there is one Arab nation or several. I believe that there are several. and that events since 1918 have steadily promoted a process of self-definition in the various political units. The speedy failure of the attempt to merge Egypt and Syria in a United Arab Republic surely supports this belief. It should be remembered that different parts of the Arab world have evolved at a widely varying pace. Some are still characterized by extreme backwardness, general illiteracy, grotesque contrasts of wealth and poverty, an absence of all development save in the foreign-owned oil industry, and a rudimentary tribal system of authority and allegiance. Others, even under Turkish rule, manifested a well-developed mercantile capitalism, a reasonably prosperous class of peasant proprietors, and a diffusion of culture and education equal to many parts of Europe. Today, therefore, one comes across fears of domination among the weaker brethren, and assumptions of a right to "guide" among the more advanced, with the inevitable signs of distrust, contempt, and prejudice.

Politically, the patchwork is just as diverse. Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the minuscule Gulf states are old-style monarchies, sometimes with a veneer of parliament and cabinet, but with power firmly monopolized by "great families" or court nominees, and still patronized by the US, Britain, or France. Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Syria, and Iraq are "popular" dictatorships, originating in the "young colonels' revolt" so common in the Third World. There is a varying amount of Castro-style sounding of mass opinion, but no structural opportunity for popular participation in decision-making; Socialist rhetoric is continuous and nationalization measures have been effected, but it would be an abuse of words to call any of these countries

Socialist. Tunisia is a one-party state without any pretence of such radicalism, and Lebanon is a caricature of Fourth-Republic France, where formal democracy masks a discreet "hidden government" of bureaucrats and commercial interests.

In the midst of all this are the Palestinians—a people without a state, about half of them living under Israeli authority and the rest in various Arab countries. Palestine before the Israeli transformation was not exactly the tabula rasa depicted in Zionist oratory. Most of the peasants were scratching a living by primitive methods from poor soil which they had neither the knowledge nor the capital to improve, but others were efficiently and prosperously engaged in such spheres as citrus farming (which the Jews did not invent). There was also a sizable town population complete with craftsmen, entrepreneurs, a nascent working-class, professionals, and bureaucrats under the Mandate administration. Standards of literacy and education were high in relation to the Middle East in general.

After 1948, though many thousands of Palestinians languished in refugee camps, development did not come to a halt. The tractor replaced the mule and living standards rose, both under Israeli rule and in the West Bank territory which formed part of the new state of Jordan. The younger generation took advantage of opportunities for technical and university education; Palestinians supplied the bulk of skilled manpower in the booming oil states. Those in exile became aware of being among the most advanced and go-ahead national groups in the Arab world. The consciousness of having progressed despite immense calamities and difficulties generated feelings of solidarity, of pride—in a word, of nationhood.

This reality has been concealed because there has never been a Palestinian state. Palestine was not a political or even administrative entity under Roman, Arab, or Ottoman rule; in 1918 it was divided from Syria and Lebanon only because of an Anglo-French deal. In the confusion of 1948 it was open to the Palestinian Arabs to proclaim their statehood as a riposte to the proclamation of Israel (they held the Old City of Jerusalem) and one must assume that the necessary leadership was not available. With the formation of Jordan, the words "Palestine" and "Palestinian" practically vanished from the political vocabulary, to which they have now made an emphatic return. The false identity of the Palestinians as simply "Arabs" was distinctly harmful to them, since it suggested that they were neither capable nor desirous of national status and that the only question was how they were being treated under Israeli—or Jordanian—rule. But it is now evident that they have reached the crucial stage of defining themselves as a nation—in exile, through suffering and almost through desperation, just like the Jews who created Israel in the shadow of the crematoria. They

have their own welfare and educational institutions which stretch across frontiers; they have their own army in the shape of Al Fateh. All they lack is a state.

Disillusion with other Arab governments has been a factor in this emergence. Between 1948 and 1967 the Jordanian authorities discriminated against the West Bank in economic development and in appointments to senior positions, while Gaza was ruled as an Egyptian colony. In the Six Day War, the Palestinians interpreted the poor showing of the Egyptian and Jordanian forces (they had never been recruited to the latter) as deliberate desertion. After it, they were alert to signs that Nasser and Hussein might reach a settlement with Israel on terms which betrayed Palestinian interests. These resentments are of course added evidence of the reality of Palestinian nationhood.

The weakness, or perhaps incompleteness, of this nationalism is twofold. Firstly, it has no overt political expression—nothing comparable even to the Zionist congress and executive which spoke for Jewry before Israel existed—and no machinery of consultation or representation for the Palestinian people. (Admittedly, this can be ascribed partly to the ambiguous relationship with Jordan, whose authority still theoretically covers the West Bank.) The Palestine Liberation Organization shows signs of filling this lack, but its leaders are self-appointed and its functions mainly military. The other weakness is related to the first: Palestinian leaders have produced very little in the way of ideology or political—let alone social—programme. Some are reported to be Socialists, probably in Syrian or Iraqi style; but their tone reflects the limited nationalist outlook of "First win the struggle, and then we'll see". It is impossible to foresee what social system or what form of government would ensue from the "liberation" of Palestine. It would probably not be a restoration of power to the old wealthy classes, whose authority has been eroded by time. But it might very well be an unstable military dictatorship, as was the case in Algeria.

And yet, while Socialists are justified in adopting a reserved attitude to such *expressions* of Palestinian nationalism, there can be no doubt of the validity of the nationalism itself. In this context, the greatest reproach that can be made against the Israeli leaders and their sympathizers is the refusal to recognize this vital development. The Israelis since the Six Day War have been hoping for a peace treaty with Hussein and/or Nasser (though failing to make realistic efforts to secure it) while in fact the only *interlocuteurs valables* are the Palestinians. This blunder cannot be ascribed to stupidity or ignorance; the Israelis can recognize what is going on, when they want to. What one has to see is a refusal to admit the existence of another nation with equal rights. The sources of this refusal must be traced to a certain outlook toward the world in general and toward Arabs in particular.

ZIONISM AND ISRAELI NATIONALISM

Israel is a nation by any kind of definition, and I am arguing in this essay—just as I argue in the case of the Palestinians—that the right of these two million people to nationhood and statehood is an absolute. Nor is it diminished by the manner in which the nation came to define itself and to create its state. In the course of history, quite a number of nations (including Arab nations) have carried through the process by settlement or invasion. Some have added to this the enslavement or extermination of the indigenous population. They are nations with a guilty past, but they are nations none the less. Nor, finally, is the principle affected by whether these events took place one generation or ten generations ago. It is logically possible to distinguish the Israeli nation from its Zionist antecedents, and indeed this seems perfectly natural to many young Israelis, who have little interest in Jews abroad and are concerned only about the survival of the only homeland they have ever known. It is possible, moreover, to regard the Zionist settlement of Palestine and the formation of the Israeli state as errors—and indeed crimes—and yet to uphold the right of Israel to exist in 1970. I know very well that this attitude is unacceptable to most Arabs, who see in it only the immoral condonation of a *fait accompli*. I can only say that I am interested in living people, and that I derive my arguments from what I have set out as principles.

But it is also true that the present is conditioned by the past. When we examine the conduct of a nation-state—Germany is the prime example—we are taken back to considering how (under whose auspices, with what ideology) it came into existence. Thus, when we ask why Israel fails to respect the rights of other nations, and how Jews of all people can enforce a military occupation, we find relevant answers in the Zionist inheritance—coupled with the fact that Israel is governed by elderly Zionists. Four features of Zionism, carried over into the present, deserve analysis and proper criticism, though not in my view the outright condemnation of Arab partisans. These are the idea of settlement; the Jewish basis of nationality; the association between state and religion; and the attitude to the Arab population. Naturally, they overlap.

The Zionist settlement was a typical event of the era of colonialism.⁴ In saying this we should distinguish between simple imperialism (the administrative subjection of a territory, as in India) and the occupation of an empty or sparsely populated region with a view to creating an economy and a social system from scratch. The Zionists set out to do what had been done long since in the Americas and more recently in Australia, South Africa and Kenya. At the time, such "pioneering" was viewed

with general approval even by liberal opinion. Palestine was known to be capable, with development, of supporting a much larger population than it then had, and the population explosion was a thing undreamed of.⁵ Other factors which evoked sympathy were the persecution of the Jews in Czarist Russia, the enemy of all liberals, and the historical and sentimental connection between the Jews and the land of their origin.⁶

It was the misfortune of the Jews to be the last colonialists—to start their colony at a time when the operation was soon to become suspect and when the Arab drive for independence was gathering force. A misfortune, yes; but the fact remains that it *was* colonialism. The "pioneering" ideology maintains that the occupation of territory is justified by material improvement, and this in turn gives a title to possession. The more simple-minded friends of Israel, to this day, find an adequate argument in "Look what they've made of the country". Israelis, including Israeli Socialists, are still culpable in their reluctance to repudiate the colonialist outlook. Thus it is that new settlements have been planted since the Six Day War in places not, in theory, claimed as part of Israel. It is easy to understand Arab fears that territorial ambitions, springing from the Zionist ideology, are unlimited. Very clearly, there can be no peace unless Israelis learn to draw a line between the maintenance of their nation and its expansion—unless, in fact, they recognize that the colonialist phase of Jewish history is at an end.

During the Mandate period, the obdurate point of conflict between Arabs and Jews was the permissible amount and rate of Jewish immigration. After the establishment of Israel, the Law of Return guaranteed the right of any Jew to enter and assume citizenship. I cannot myself see that this gives the Israeli state a racialist basis, as Arabs argue;⁷ all newly independent nations (Ireland, Poland, Czechoslovakia) have welcomed compatriots arriving, say, from America. Though Israel was unique in that the Jews had previously possessed no territory at all, there are partial precedents: when Greece became independent, five-sixths of the Greek people lived outside its frontiers. But if we stop there, we are seeing the matter only from the Jewish viewpoint. The Arab fear was that immigration would alter the character of the country—"make Palestine as Jewish as England is English", as one Zionist rashly put it—and this of course was what was intended and, largely, achieved. They noted that Zionists were not concerned only to provide a refuge for Jews persecuted by Hitler, but were also urging the immigration of non-persecuted Jews from anywhere in order to increase the total numbers.

What the Arabs allege is that immigration is designed to exceed the absorptive capacity of Israel within its present ethnic area (roughly,

the 1949 frontier) and thus provide an argument for the "necessity" of further expansion. Economists would differ as to whether this is a real prospect, but it is true that there was serious unemployment in Israel during the recession of 1965-66, and Arabs link this with the launching of the 1967 war. Thus, the Law of Return is inseparably connected in Arab thinking with the continuing process of settlement and expansion. It would be unrealistic to expect Israel to repeal the law, not simply because any nation has the right to legislate in this field, but chiefly because Israel cannot renounce its function as a potential haven for persecuted Jews. What can be demanded is a binding declaration that no further territory will be sought, whatever the size of Israel's population. Israelis will have to see this as an essential precondition for peace.

The alleged religious basis of the Israeli state is a vastly complicated subject. Zionism itself has never been a religious movement; the most devout Jews in Jerusalem still refuse to recognize the existence of a Jewish state, maintaining that Jewish identity is "a thing of the spirit". About half the children in Israel go to religious and half to secular schools, both being state-supported. In the recurrent furious controversies about such issues as television on the Sabbath, anti-clericals do not hesitate to raise their voices. On the whole, the theocratic element in Israel is somewhat less than the power of the Catholic Church in Italy, Spain or Ireland, or indeed than Moslem control of law and life in certain Arab countries. Such matters, surely, are for democrats and humanists in each country to alter if they can, and at the worst do not affect the fact of nationhood.

Yet it is also true that Zionism gained much of its emotional force from the Biblical tradition, especially from the concept of Palestine as a land promised to the Jewish people by God. The cultural atmosphere in Israel is fairly heavy with constant reminders of such beliefs, and the history taught even in secular schools has a certain Biblical content, inculcating a strongly chauvinistic spirit. The Jews never possessed the whole of Palestine in their most fortunate days, but they fought battles all over it and beyond it, and each of these has created a "sacred place". The claim to the entire city of Jerusalem, of course, is backed by this appeal to ancient tradition.

The most telling point in the indictment is the absence of a civil marriage law. A Jew or Jewess can be married only by a rabbi, and only to a co-religionist. For Jews—but also for Arabs, whether Moslem or Christian—religion is not a nominal matter; it involves a complex of cultural associations and family links. It is well known that inter-racial friendship is impossible unless intermarriage is ultimately permitted, and this situation places a solid barrier between people who are neighbours and fellow-citizens.

But the barrier is already formidable enough, for Israeli attitudes towards Arabs are equally rooted in the colonialist past. The aim of Zionist settlement was to build up self-sufficient communities in which all the work was done by Jews. Gradually these were linked in a national community, all of whose needs were to be met by Jewish effort. Trade unions, for example, did not in general admit Arab members, nor did Jewish enterprises employ Arabs. One can explain all this as designed to avoid charges of exploitation, and also as a reaction from life in the Diaspora, where Jews did not work on the land and to some extent did not work with their hands at all, and the concentration on shopkeeping and money-making promoted an anti-Semitic stereotype. Still, the result was to shut out the Arabs from the increasing prosperity, and the educational and welfare systems, which the Jews built up for themselves. A sense of common interests could not develop in any sphere. Neither nationality gained any knowledge or understanding of the other's culture and outlook. Psychologically, the Arab village and the nearby kibbutz inhabited different worlds.

The characteristic Jewish attitude to Arabs came to be that of the settler toward the "native" anywhere else—with the difference, it is fair to say, that the gang labourer and the servant "boy" were absent from the scene. While the Arabs kept quiet, they were ignored; when they showed hostility, they were perceived—as pioneers in North America perceived Red Indians—as raiders to be beaten back, not as human beings with motives to be understood. After the state was created, these attitudes were intensified by the physical separation between Jews and (all but 200,000) Arabs—a separation embodied in a closed frontier from 1948 to 1967. Nothing in the most recent period has improved matters. Certain Israelis, such as General Dayan, speak fluent Arabic and pride themselves on "understanding the Arab", but rather in the spirit of the British district officer who knew how to **talk** to the Pathan headman.

Certainly, few Israelis feel much guilt about their treatment of the Palestinians. Their version of the position is accurate within its limits: Arabs in Israel have basic rights and the vote, the occupation in the West Bank is lenient by the standard of most other occupations, and if the Arabs are dissatisfied they can always make peace. What is absent is an understanding of why there is no peace—an understanding of the Palestinian national resurgence, inevitably linked with a burning resentment of Israel. Absent, above all, is a self-criticism of these complacent attitudes, which are rooted in the colonialist outlook inherited from Zionism.

The preoccupation in the Israeli mind has been, and is, with the survival of the nation. Simple nationalism, as I have remarked, makes it difficult for Socialist principle to gain a hearing. About Socialism,

Israelis are complacent too. They do in fact have a brand of social-democracy that would represent real progress in Britain. The trade unions are almost a second government, owning a variety of enterprises and welfare institutions. The kibbutzim are Socialist enclaves which exert a considerable effect as moral pacemakers for society. Inequalities of wealth are small, the social tone is free from privilege or snobbery, the political system is democratic, the ordinary civil liberties are secure. These are real achievements, and it is easy to forget that Israel remains a capitalist country in which private business is the principal mode of earning a living—not to speak of the grip on the economy maintained by a relatively huge American investment. It also remains, so long as its relations with its neighbours are not put on a basis of equality, a nation built on rotten foundations. To point this out is the unremitting duty of a Socialist.

THE "DEMOCRATIC STATE" SLOGAN

I intend now to discuss what I believe to be a false solution, which has gained considerable favour on the Left. This is the so-called secular democratic state, contrasted by implication with the theocratic and undemocratic state of Israel. The population of Palestine, if the refugees were allowed to return, would consist roughly of $2\frac{1}{2}$ million Palestinians and the same number of Jews. What is advocated is a single new state, in which all would enjoy equal citizenship rights. One may be forgiven for suspecting that the plan is sometimes advanced to enlist the sympathies of liberals and Socialists, who are a new field of appeal for the Arab cause and who could scarcely be attracted by the line taken before 1967—that Palestine must be restored to the Arabs and the Jews should be (according to who was talking) treated as alien non-citizens, expelled, or exterminated. But it is right to accept that the proposal is sincerely meant and examine it on its merits.

Obviously, if one starts from the assumption that Palestine is simply an Arab country in which Palestinians (Arabs) would be justified in holding complete power, then the democratic state is a generous concession and there is no more to be said. But if we recognize the presence of two national communities, it is surely a matter of principle that a merger of this kind ought to be effected only with the consent of both. The consent of the Palestinians has never been sought; it is extremely doubtful whether they want to live on intimate terms with Jews or to have their wishes nullified, as would sometimes be the case, by Jewish votes. The consent of the Jews to the liquidation of Israel, we can safely say, is never likely to be forthcoming. The democratic state, since it would have to be imposed, is therefore undemocratic in its inception.

Historical evidence indicates repeatedly that a state in which two self-conscious national groups are combined is the most delicate of political experiments—even when consent was expressed at the outset, even when both groups have traditions of democracy and tolerance, and even when the past has been marked by neighbourliness and not by conflict. Norway and Sweden, among the most pacific of nations, decided after making the effort that they could not live under the same government. Passionate animosities persist between French and British Canadians, between Walloon and Flemish Belgians. We have watched a ghastly war in Nigeria, in which the Left generally sympathized with those who would not accept a unitary state.

Also, while Palestinians and Jews are equal in numbers, Arabs as a whole and Jews are not. I have expressed the view that the Arab region consists of several nations and that its unification into a single state is unlikely. But it is quite possible that Palestine might be brought into unity, say, with Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, thus reducing the Jews to minority status. No doubt this would be forbidden by the founding constitution, but many stranger things have been done by force.

In the thinking behind this idea, one discerns an insufficient appreciation of what a nation-state actually is. It is much more than a unit endowed with political independence. It is characterized, from the start and increasingly as it develops, by its own political habits (e.g. a one-party, a two-party or a multi-party system); its own economic and fiscal methods; its own ways of organizing education, health and welfare services, public enterprises, cultural opportunities or restrictions; and its own international orientation. It is not democratic to throw all these into the melting-pot—or the dustbin—for they are themselves the expressions of collective choice, at least when any kind of democracy exists.

The essence of the plan is that, while failing to offer statehood to the nation now lacking a state, it involves the extinction of the nation-state that does exist, namely Israel. It thus represents total defeat for one side in the conflict without even giving the fruits of victory to the other. This is not compromise, but frustration. True, it is possible that the state envisaged could be a federation of two national units with a weak centre, and with extensive rights for each unit in the spheres I have mentioned. Nothing of the kind is suggested in any literature I have seen on the subject, and the idea contradicts the slogan of a secular democratic state, since one unit or the other might well fail to be either secular or democratic. In any case, if we are thinking in such terms, it is pointless to begin with the bitterly resented step of eliminating an existing state and binding unwilling partners together. It would be more rational to work towards federation—or, more hopefully, a less formalized co-operation—from the starting-point of two

nations each respecting the rights of the other. And this is indeed the only course that offers a real solution.

TOWARDS A SOLUTION

If I am not hopeful of an early peace, as of course no one can be, it is because of the bleak fact to which one must recur: the refusal of the parties concerned, especially of governments and wielders of power, to concede the rights of the two nations whose homeland is situated in Palestine. On the Arab side, objectives vary from the liquidation of Israel (the aim of the Palestine Liberation Organization) to a grudging acceptance of Israel's "existence" within the 1949 frontiers (the standpoint of the UAR and Jordanian governments), which would not, however, extend to normal state relationships, the signing of a peace treaty, or any kind of trade or co-operation.⁸ On the Israeli side, the Arab-inhabited parts of Palestine are regarded as an outer security zone for Israel, where certain key positions would be annexed and where (apparently) an Israeli military presence would remain even after a peace treaty. This, of course, is quite incompatible with any real recognition of Palestinian nationhood. Immediately after the Six Day War, the Israeli mood was to press for a peace treaty arising from direct negotiations, and it was understood that these would be negotiations without pre-conditions. By now there are several pre-conditions, notably the retention of Jerusalem, which are manifestly unacceptable to the other side. Israel has made no effort at all to offer inducements that might tempt her opponents to the conference table—quite the contrary—and is clearly content to go on holding down the occupied territories and to live by the maxim of rien *ne dure comme le provisoire*.

However, if we take our stand on the existence of two nations, it is not difficult to see where they are. The 1949 frontier, originally (and always in the Arab view) a mere armistice line, is highly illogical from the economic and other points of view, and there is no virtue in taking it as sacrosanct; but it does mark a general ethnic division between the two nations, and hence the only possible basis for agreement. Any Israeli claims beyond this line, other than small common-sense rectifications, infringe the rights of nationhood and must be unacceptable, for no Jews live beyond it except in recent and strongly resented settlements. The Palestinian territory consists primarily of the area known as the West Bank, and also includes Gaza, which has a considerable local population, in addition to the refugees for whom a move to the West Bank offers the only chance of a livelihood.⁹

Jerusalem is a difficult and an emotionally charged problem. It is the inevitable capital of Israel, but also of any Palestinian state. This fact,

together with the intensity of loyalties on both sides, rules out an international or Free City régime as a realistic proposal. On the other hand, one can scarcely wish to see a return to the "Berlin wall" situation of 1948-67. Indeed, Jerusalem is precisely the point at which the two nations could be drawn together by practical co-operation, as well as in cultural and educational matters. The best solution seems to be :

(a) The city to be designated as the capital of both states, each maintaining its Parliament, government offices, etc. in its own sector.

(b) A legal frontier dividing the city, but guarantees of freedom of movement throughout, and a right of residence for any Jerusalem citizen anywhere. The frontier and customs posts of each state to be located outside the city.

(c) A municipal administration elected by all citizens, possibly with a "weightage" provision to counteract the Israeli superiority in numbers.

Ultimately, however, a nation consists not of acreage but of human beings. It is impossible to envisage a peace settlement without agreement on the problem of the refugees. This question is embittered by all kinds of arguments about the circumstances in which they fled, or were driven out; about whether their numbers are exaggerated; about whether they ought, or in practice could, have been resettled; and about whether, remembering the Jews who fled (or were driven) from Arab countries, the reality is not that of an exchange of populations. But, polemics aside, what we are confronted with is a considerable mass of people, for the most part without homes or livelihood, who are Palestinians and whose interests must be championed by any Palestinian state.

No question demonstrates more clearly that peace depends on a repudiation of chauvinist attitudes. The Israelis have refused to allow any refugees (even urban householders) to return to their homes in Israel, and even (except to a minor degree) to allow those who had fled east of the Jordan in 1967 to return to occupied territory. To say nothing of the brutal indifference to human suffering, the determination to keep the non-Jewish population down to the smallest feasible numbers can only be described as racist. But for every Arab who left in 1948 (or his children or grandchildren) to regain precisely the home and the land which he then had, would entail such a disruption of subsequent development that the Israeli national community could scarcely survive it. To make this unqualified demand is in effect only another way of saying that Israel must be liquidated.

Israel undoubtedly will have to accept—what her government now rejects—a responsibility in principle for the refugees. In an atmosphere of peace, it would remain to be defined how far this would mean actual return, or money compensation to individuals, or the financing of

development projects leading to resettlement in Palestinian or other Arab territory. The creation of a Palestinian state is closely relevant to the refugee problem, for the refugee himself, even if his old home were in Israel, would probably prefer a future within his national community.

Such, I think, are the essentials of peace. But the vital condition is the existence of two states headed by governments with enough popular confidence to make and keep agreements. In 1967, the Israelis toyed with the idea of encouraging a government of Arab personalities for the occupied area, and even of forming a federation of this area and Israel itself. It is doubtful whether the notion was seriously meant, and for several clear reasons no volunteers came forward. Any government composed of Israeli nominees or willing to accept Israeli tutelage would be seen by the people as a mere quisling régime. Further, any state which did not enjoy complete freedom of action, including such links as it desired with other Arab states, or which consented to an Israeli occupation (however localized or discreet) would not be a real state.¹⁰ Indeed, the genuineness of a Palestinian state would be measured—at least for a number of years, until possibilities of trust come to birth—by the degree to which it did things that the Israelis disliked. Its ministers would be people who had thrown bombs at the Israelis, just as Israeli ministers were people who had thrown bombs at the British. The obligation rests on the Israelis to recognize the legitimacy—indeed the necessity—of such a state and its right to absolute sovereignty. What they can and are bound to require in return is that the Palestinians should recognize the legitimacy of Israel.

It is a platitude to say that a new attitude is needed on both sides. What is really needed is a new ideology. The dominant ideologies, as we have seen, are those of nationalism: a nationalism that goes beyond the defence of national rights (though this is how it is subjectively seen) to denial of the rights of others. The only viable opposing ideology is that of Socialism, since it is only from the Socialist viewpoint that one can frame a coherent criticism, firstly of the limitations of nationalism, secondly of the reactionary traditions and assumptions that generate the chauvinist outlook. Certainly an Arab state which accepted Israel would be markedly different from any existing Arab state, and an Israel which accepted Palestinian rights would be different from the Israel of the present. The changes must be in a Socialist direction.

It is vain to pretend that it is easy to preach this doctrine in any of the countries concerned. It always has been tough work for Socialists to counter a mood of national unity against an external enemy, above all when the national sufferings are real and the national danger obvious. The difficulties on the Israeli side should not be under-

estimated, since the state and government claim to be Socialist, and the citizen-soldier has the feeling of defending social achievements as well as national independence. At least, however, it is admitted that advocates of conciliation—though regarded as treacherous or crazy—are men of the Left. In the Arab world, an extra handicap exists, for it is in fact the conservative groups—the mercantile capitalists with their western links, and the remnants of the old British-sponsored politicians and court intriguers—who wish for their own reasons to end the confrontation with Israel and the Soviet influence that it has facilitated. The younger radicals, students, and trade union leaders, and the groups most conscious of a world-wide struggle against imperialism, are the most ardent preachers of the crusade to wipe Israel off the map. Their understanding of Socialism is crude and distorted, but their enthusiasm for it is undeniable. So it will continue to be, so long as they believe that Socialism justifies that crusade.

A serious responsibility, therefore, rests on Socialists who can think in freedom from such pressure. It is a responsibility that will not be met by picking sides and substituting nationalism for Socialist principle.

NOTES

1. My attempt at definition will remind the reader of Stalin's *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, which is an over-schematic book with a number of flaws, but which—written as it was under Lenin's tutelage—does represent a serious Marxist statement on the subject. Stalin went wrong chiefly in his comments on specific cases (he considered Polish nationalism a thing of the past—in 1913!) and in his insistence on each and every one of the "hallmarks" as a *sine qua non*. To what extent he insisted on territory in order to exclude the Jews from the list of nations is a matter for speculation. As one might expect from such a rigid thinker, what one misses in his analysis is the dynamic element which seems to me all-important.
2. This formulation does not assert that the liquidation of the Israeli state is the same thing as the expulsion or massacre of the Israeli people. I am not so sure that the distinction is entirely clear to everyone. When I remarked to one Arab dignitary (the Foreign Minister of Kuwait) that it was proposed to destroy the state of Israel, he vehemently denied it. It turned out that the interpreter had rendered my phrase as "kill the Jews"; possibly the two concepts were not quite separate in his mind. In varying degrees, Arabs to whom I have spoken concede that, *after* the liquidation of Israel as a state, Jews in Palestine should be free with respect to religious observances, education, welfare institutions and so forth—that they would in fact exist as a community. It is fair to welcome the emergence of this kind of thinking, as evidence of growth of Socialist trends in opposition to those of crude nationalism. But unhappily—whether in the actual Israeli occupation of Arab territory, or in a hypothetical Arab occupation of Jewish districts—the likelihood is that military governors rather than Socialist intellectuals decide what happens. The broader ques-

tion of whether the state of Israel *ought* to be liquidated is discussed later in this essay.

3. No one put the matter better than James Connolly, who wrote in 1897: "If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organization of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain." The social structure of Ireland and the weakness of the working-class movement have frustrated Connolly's hopes to this day. In 1970, Socialists who get absorbed in nationalist movements fail to talk his language even in Scotland and Wales—**industrialized** countries with Socialist tradition—let alone in Asia or Africa.
4. This point is admirably developed by **Maxime Rodinson** in his Penguin book, *Israel and the Arabs*, which everyone should read.
5. We have here a good example of the varied perception of reality. To the Jew, whose kibbutz was created by draining a swamp, irrigating desert, or ploughing a mountainside used at most for intermittent grazing, it does not seem that he has taken anything away from anyone. To the Arab, it seems that he has lost his title to land which he would have developed when necessary. The unforeseen growth of Arab as well as Jewish population is among the major background causes of the conflict.
6. The connection was greater than is sometimes suggested. There had been recurrent return movements, and it is probable (though the statistics are vague) that the population of Palestine was ten per cent Jewish at any time from the Roman conquest to the present century.
7. Recent reactionary legislation has tightened the link between religious allegiance and Jewishness, the latter being the principal title-deed to Israeli nationality. But citizenship, with voting and similar rights, also extends to over 300,000 Arabs, plus a small number of other residents who have acquired it as happens in other countries. A distinction between nationality and citizenship, unknown in the West, is traditional in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe, as Soviet identity cards still remind us. These governments (though not certain other Arab belligerents, notably Syria) accepted the Security Council resolution of November 1967 and officially still regard it as a basis for "non-belligerence". The resolution was a "least common denominator" diplomatic formula marked by obvious contradictions. If peace is the aim, it could at best be a basis for detailed negotiation. In practice, it is now pretty much a dead letter. Arab reservations about the most limited kind of settlement are described in my report on a tour of Arab capitals. (*New Statesman*, 13 June, 1969.)
Exact frontiers between Israel and Palestine (taking that as a convenient name for a Palestinian state, and not in this context for the country as a whole) can hardly be defined in advance, since a vital point is that they can only emerge from negotiations free from dictation. But, since readers may feel some doubts about the future of the two states—either doubts that Israel would be defensible, or doubts that Palestine would be economically viable—certain provisional points are worth making:
 - (a) Certain villages retained their Arab population when incorporated into Israel in 1948–9. Other villages went to Jordan, but the villagers were left without farming land. These villages and fields should belong to Palestine, where this would not create worse illogicalities.
 - (b) An obvious problem is the detachment of Gaza from the rest of Palestine. Economically, too, access to the sea is a virtual necessity for the new state. There is a need for either guaranteed rights over a road

and railway (which, with port equipment at Gaza, might well be constructed at Israel's expense) or perhaps the actual cession of a linking strip of territory.

- (c) It would be reasonable for Israel to retain Latrun, a point on the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem which she did not possess between 1948 and 1967.
 - (d) The occupied area of the Golan Heights belonged to Syria, so that Palestine is, strictly speaking, not involved. There is a case on defence grounds for Israeli retention of the escarpment, which is either uninhabited or populated by Druses. On a recent visit I got a strong impression that they prefer Israeli to Syrian rule. But Kuneitra was a Syrian-Arab town and should be returned to Syria.
10. An Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory is an essential part of any settlement. An Israeli withdrawal in advance of a settlement, and while the liquidation of Israel is still the aim of significant Arab forces, is in my opinion rather too much to ask.