

ISRAEL, PALESTINE AND ZIONISM*

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I. ZIONISM AND THE WEST

"A country *without a people* for a people without a country."

IF it were possible to reduce to a formula the underlying reason for the conflict between Israel and the Arabs, and for the Palestine problem, the formulation above is the principle to which reference should be made, because it represents the essence of Zionist thinking and of the Zionist effort: it contains in synthesis the entire programme of Zionism, and at the same time the main source of Zionism's weakness. Around this idea the Zionist movement was organized, and the progress of the movement has been measurable in terms of how far this idea has been realized. Now, this formula had two flaws. The first of them may still serve as the subject of a controversy of a more or less semantic order—what does the concept "people" mean when applied to the Jews? I am not going to get involved in the snares offered by such a discussion. The other flaw, however, in the Zionist formula is both undeniable and big with consequences: the country called Palestine which was presented to the Jews in order that they might realize in it their national aspirations was not a virgin and uninhabited land but, on the contrary, was occupied by a settled and active native population numbering, in 1880, about 500,000 persons.

The presence of this population did not worry the Zionists at a time when, sharing the normal European outlook, they regarded as a negligible quantity these Arabs whom they considered as underdeveloped and destined to be mere passive spectators of an undertaking that was, indeed, put forward as one of *colonization*. Later, as Jewish immigration into Palestine developed, and the various social, economic and political institutions that formed its framework became consolidated, this ignoring of the "Palestinian reality", namely, the wishes and even the very existence of a native population, took other forms, while remaining faithful to the original Zionist hypothesis: a country *without a people* for a people without a country. This was why, all through the period of the Mandate, the Jewish community in Palestine organized itself separately from the local environment; it set up a network of institutions that were independent and distinct, making no claim to do anything but serve the interests of the Jews, and of the Jews

* Translation by Brian Pearce.

alone. This is what has enabled one of the first of the writers who, in recent years, have focused analysis of the conflict upon the Palestinians themselves, to compare the policy followed by the Zionists to a policy of "social and economic *apartheid*".¹

Today, when the Jews settled in Palestine have formed their own state, their deliberate ignoring of the wishes of the Arabs remains the heaviest encumbrance weighing upon the future of Israel. It is not here a question of invoking the past and searching about in it out of pure love of history, or in order to go back to the ultimate beginnings of an injustice : what is important is to show the constancy of a policy, the permanence of a kind of logic, the continuity of a situation which are now manifesting more gravely than ever before their baneful consequences. When, addressing at the beginning of 1969 some American Zionist delegates who were visiting Israel, Moshe Dayan acknowledged that the Israelis felt infinitely closer to the Jews of Miami than to the Arabs of Amman, he thereby acknowledged and reasserted one of the essential features of the state of Israel : its radical "otherness" in relation to its geographical, social and human environment, its profoundly alien situation in the Middle East where it has installed itself. When one of the Israeli ministers belonging to the faction of the "doves" justifies his moderate attitude and his opposition to expansionism by stressing the danger of "Levantinization" that the Jewish state would run into if it were to extend its frontiers, he too proclaims the essential nature of Israel, which refuses to accept "Levantinization" although the Jewish state has deliberately chosen to establish itself in the Levant.² Zionist policy may have undergone important modifications since the movement began, but here is a constant factor in it which should never be lost sight of.

Overlooking this factor is a mistake frequently made, for example, in those Left-wing circles which are desperately anxious to find a quick and seemingly equitable solution to the Israel-Arab conflict. This mistake consists in accusing the Israeli *government* of a number of misdeeds, often very grave ones, while exonerating the Israeli *people* from all responsibility. It leads to criticism being directed at a policy which is regarded as basically accidental, and therefore capable of far-reaching change, given a few changes in the personnel of the ruling political leadership of Israel. This argument will not stand up. It runs counter to the lessons of history and to analysis of the profound and lasting reality of Israel. According to well-meaning critics of the *policy* of Israel and of the Israeli *government*, it is possible and desirable for this policy to change and this government to be replaced by another, so that an end may be made to the alliance between the Zionist state and Western imperialism, an alliance of which I shall have something more to say later. This reasoning completely ignores the nature of the

state of Israel, while showing much injustice to the Israeli leaders. Falling into the same error as some anti-Zionist Left-wingers who present Israel as a "puppet state", with its leaders so many puppets manipulated by American imperialism, they fail to take note of the remarkably popular nature of the Israeli Government. There are few examples to be found, in the world of today, of such complete identification between state and nation, between political authority and civil society. Israeli policy is the faithful expression of Zionist ideology and of the entire Zionist experiment, which explain and determine, in Israel, both the choice of alliances and the reality of national life, at the level of the popular outlook and at the cultural level alike. From this standpoint, the relationship between the Jewish state of today and the ideas of its "prophet", Theodore Herzl, is clearer and more direct—infinity so, indeed—than the link between the founder of Marxism and the régimes which speak in his name, whether in the Soviet Union, in China or in Cuba.

"From the moment when I entered the movement, I turned my eyes towards Britain, because I saw that, owing to the general state of affairs over there, it was the centre of gravity where the lever could be applied."

"Britain the great and free, Britain the ruler of the seas, will understand us and our aims. Starting from that point, the Zionist idea will take wing, ever farther and higher, we can be sure of that."

These two statements were made by Herzl.³ His Anglophilia and devotion to the British Empire appear again in his book *Der Judenstaat*, the foundation document of Zionist ideology. It was not just a matter of making the Jewish state a "protectorate of Britain", but more generally of making it an "outpost" of Europe, guarding the civilized world in a barbarian land.⁴ All Herzl's efforts were aimed at securing the help of different sectors of imperialism—British, German, Russian, Turkish. Eventually, the Zionist movement directed its attention towards Britain in particular. Despite hesitations that were shown both on the Right and the Left of the movement, it sought, on the initiative of Chaim Weizmann, to make a Jewish Palestine an integral part of the Commonwealth. True, there were many instances of friction between Britain and the Zionists. Nevertheless, it was under the British Mandate, and under the aegis of the Balfour Declaration, that the "Jewish presence" in Palestine was multiplied tenfold. In 1918 the Jews in that country numbered 50,000, or 7 per cent of the total population; in 1948 there were 650,000 of them, one-third of the total population. The alliance between Zionism and British imperialism was a difficult and uneasy alliance; but it contributed decisively to the creation of the state of Israel.

The juridical legitimacy of this state has the same "Western" origin.

The Balfour Declaration was confirmed in 1922 by the League of Nations, which awarded to Britain a mandate for Palestine which was immediately repudiated by the Arabs and accepted by the Zionists. The United Nations Organization renewed this international consecration in 1947, with its vote creating the state of Israel. (It is true that this decision made by an institution plainly dominated, especially at that time, by the West, received the support of Soviet Russia, which thus gave the decision a progressive and even anti-imperialist endorsement. This attitude on the part of the USSR testified above all, however, to the extreme flexibility of that state's diplomacy. Until then, under Stalin as under Lenin, Communist hostility to Zionism had been permanent, providing, in its own way, an additional proof of the "Western" nature of Jewish colonization in Palestine.) Typically, the Balfour Declaration, which was made in November, 1917, was not officially announced to the people of Palestine until May, 1920. Their reply took the form of a first wave of violent agitation, of which the League of Nations refused to take cognizance. In 1947, the United Nations similarly undertook the responsibility of creating Israel without taking the trouble to consult the population concerned, since such consultation must inevitably result in rejection of the plans of U.N.O.

These are facts, all of equal importance in the history of the origins of the state of Israel, which confirm its fundamental linkage with the Western world. Its juridical legitimacy is derived from Western institutions. Its moral legitimacy, as claimed by its supporters, is derived, also significantly, from an event in European history: the persecution of the Jews carried out by Nazi Germany with Europe's toleration, an event with which the Arabs had absolutely nothing to do. When, however, the question arose of making amends for this genocide, the same Western nations which had done nothing to prevent it decided that the price should be paid by the Arabs: neither their innocence of the crime nor their opposition to the solution imposed upon them was regarded as a valid objection.

The history of the state of Israel since its creation is a continuation of the history of Zionism. It corresponds to the same logic and reveals the same inspiration. The Soviet Union might imagine for a few months—a year or two at most—that the Jewish state whose creation meant a weakening of British imperialism was going to play a part in the fight against Western imperialism generally. It had to shed its illusions very quickly. As regards Britain, Eden in 1956 helped to dissipate the memory of Bevin. Above all, however, from the very beginning, Israel has shown itself a vigilant, active and effective ally of French and American imperialism in the Middle East.

While the Algerian war was going on, the Israelis were the most determined supporters of France's struggle to maintain her presence

in North Africa. True, the means available to the Jewish state were not at that time large enough for this support to mean very much on the battlefield. In the United Nations, however, the French attitude was regularly backed by the Israeli delegation. And, in Algeria itself, Franco-Israeli collaboration did take concrete forms, notably the dispatch of a number of Israeli parachutists, who learnt from the experience and the skilled teaching of their French instructors. How is it possible, moreover, to draw any line of separation between the colonial war that France was waging in Algeria and the Suez expedition which constitutes the most notorious episode in the collusion between Israel and Western imperialism?

For the state of Israel did not merely oppose, so far as its resources allowed, the independence of Algeria. The invasion of Sinai by the Israeli armoured columns was also Israel's reply to the bourgeois national revolution in Nasserite Egypt, at the moment when, through the nationalization of the Suez Canal, it had gained an important victory for the anti-imperialist movement. Nasser was not, after all, one of the most eager of the enemies of Israel. In 1955, at the Bandung conference, he had proposed a resolution by which the nations represented declared their "support for the rights of the Arab people in Palestine" and called for "the application of the U.N. resolutions⁵ and the achievement of a peaceful solution of the Palestine affair". And in August, 1956, one month after the nationalization of the Canal, Cairo radio "warmly congratulated Israel on its reserved attitude . . . and on its refusal to be used as a tool of the Western powers in the present conflict". On 29 October Israel gave this statement the reply that its military disposition inspired, by attacking, not Jordan, from which most of the attacks of the fedayin had been mounted, but Egypt.

Nor was this all. In 1958 when, after the landing of the U.S. Marines in Lebanon, Jordan was in uproar and Hussein's throne in danger, the Israelis allowed the British parachutists to cross their territory in order to hasten to the scene of the trouble and defend the threatened strongpoints of the West. At the same period, when the revolution broke out in Iraq against the pro-British régime of Nuri Said, the rulers of Israel did not hide their hopes that the West would intervene in force to put down anarchy and restore their domination in Baghdad.⁶ Finally, there is the case of Syria. In the two years preceding the outbreak of the Six Days' War, Syrian politics underwent a turn to the Left which was expressed especially in an open clash with the big oil companies and the entry of a Communist minister into the Damascus government. Was this the reason why General Rabin, at that time Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army, declared on 13 May, 1967 that, "until the ardent revolutionaries of Damascus have been overthrown, not a single government will be able to feel safe in the Middle

East"? Already in September, 1966 this same General Rabin had said: "As regards Syria, the essential problem is that of a clash *with the régime.*"¹⁷

In connexion with all these examples, the objection has been put forward that it was the systematic hostility of her Arab neighbours that *forced* Israel to make herself the defender of Western interests in the region. This objection results either from lack of information or from superficial reasoning. Lack of information, because it overlooks what happened regarding Algeria. The Provisional Government formed by the F.L.N. had made many appeals to the Jews of Algeria to co-operate in building an independent Algeria (which did not prevent the Zionist movement from inciting these Algerian Jews to emigrate to Israel). Without ever taking a stand on the basic problem of Palestine, the Algerian Government had publicly welcomed the formation of the Israel-Algeria Committee which Uri Avnery had set up in Israel. If Israel had come out in favour of Algerian independence, this would not have seriously endangered the security of the Jewish state, and it would have signified the breaking of the alliance between Israel and Western imperialism. It was no accident that Tel-Aviv chose to follow a pro-French policy *which nothing obliged it to follow*. How can we be surprised if, once independence had been won, Algeria took its stand among the most uncompromising opponents of Israel, something for which the friends of the Jewish state never miss an opportunity to rebuke it?

However, there is more here than inadequacy of information. If, as is sometimes alleged, it is by compulsion and not by free choice that Israel is allied to Western imperialism, then this would-be excuse for Israel is the harshest of indictments of Israel. It amounts to admitting that Israel's adhesion to the camp of imperialism is not the result of casual circumstances or of a mistake, but follows from a *compelling* situation that will last as long as the hostility felt towards Israel by her Arab neighbours. This argument cannot stop there. Those who use it must ask themselves what the reasons are for the Arabs' hostility, and nobody has done this with more competence and calmness than Maxime Rodinson.¹⁸ They must therefore be confronted with the objective and subjective reality of the Zionist undertaking which, from its very start and throughout its history, has never concealed its links with the West and its Western orientation. Closer to the Jews of Miami than to the Arabs of Amman: we are brought back to this confession of Dayan's, in which there is more truth than in all the rhetoric of the conditional and embarrassed defenders of Israel in Left-wing circles.

Closer to Miami: and, indeed, since American imperialism has taken over, in the Middle East, the positions formerly held by British-

and French imperialism, the protection it offers to Israel is beyond doubt. The supplies of Phantoms and other war-planes are only one aspect of this decisive aid. American political support continues to be guaranteed to Israel: the United States may make reservations on one aspect or another of Israel's attitude, but the leaders of Israel, whose visits to Washington are a regular feature of contemporary diplomatic tourism, are not misled, and recognize that the fate of the country is bound up with the American presence in the Middle East. How could a state so small as Israel enjoy the luxury of defying so regularly the resolutions of the U.N.—whether on the status of Jerusalem, the right of the refugees to return home, or the evacuation of the territories conquered in 1967—if it were not sure of the impunity guaranteed to it by the support of the United States? This support, finally, takes another form which is no less important than those already mentioned, namely, the privilege accorded to the Zionist movement to collect astronomically large sums in the U.S.A., send them freely to Israel, and, on top of all this, to benefit from tax-exemptions of a virtually providential order.

I will conclude on this point. All states follow a winding road in their diplomacy. The state of Israel, however, has shown remarkable continuity in its choice of alliances. It has always taken its place in the Western camp because it is the outcome of a movement which, from the very beginning, deliberately ignored the aspirations, interests and even the existence of the people living in the country it coveted: "a country without a people for a people without a country". It is thus the Zionist nature of the state of Israel that necessarily has to be faced.

II. ISRAEL, THE JEWS AND ZIONISM

There is one aspiration on which Left-wing opinion may be able to find itself unanimous: to see Israel return to the Arab states the territories occupied during the war of 1967. Though Mapam, which only a few years ago still seemed to be the Socialist Left in Israel, now supports the annexationist intentions, and practice, of the Israeli Government, no Socialist can show indulgence towards this annexationism. Where the split appears in the "progressive camp" is on the question of the destiny of the Palestinian people. For many years, this question was simply ignored. It is only recently that the Israeli-Arab conflict has assumed its true form, which is mainly that of an Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This has not happened because, all of a sudden, by some flash of illumination inspired by the spirit of justice, international public opinion, and the Left in particular, have become aware of the "Palestinian reality". It has happened because the Palestinians, ceasing to put their trust in the Arab states for the defence

and restoration of their rights, have themselves taken their cause in hand, and because their resistance has acquired the scope of a national movement. In face of this reality, the anti-imperialist Left is split. One section supports the demand by the Palestinians that the state of Israel depart from the scene, to give place to a "democratic and secular" Palestine; the other expresses hope to see the existence and harmonious cohabitation of the Jewish state of Israel and an Arab state of Palestine.

Thus, even in circles where sentimental attachment to Israel is undoubted, it is now necessary to admit the right of the Palestinian nation to self-determination. However, the political platform offered—that there are two legitimate national claims, the Israeli one and the Palestinian—comes up against a decisive objection: the fundamentally Zionist nature of Israel is an insurmountable obstacle to its integration in the Arab Middle East. Now, this Zionist character of Israel does not merely result from Herzl's ideas or from the tactics and strategy adopted by his successors in order to establish the Jewish state. It is reflected in the permanent and contemporary everyday reality of Israel, and is summed up in the will to create, maintain and develop, against all comers, a Jewish society along with a Jewish state, in what was Palestine, and, to use Ben Gurion's expression, "as Jewish as Britain is British". This aim explains a two-fold phenomenon—that of the policy followed by Israel in relation to the problem of the Palestinian refugees, and that, to which we are continually brought back, of the link between Israel and the Jews of the Western world.

I will not spend any time on the problem of the refugees, which has now in any case been transcended. For years, concern for justice has inspired a demand, to which the Left as a whole has paid little attention—the demand for the right of the Palestinian refugees to go back to the homes and lands that they occupied in 1948. This demand arose essentially from humanitarian considerations. Today the moral basis has been transcended. Politics has recovered its rights, and it is no longer merely or mainly a matter, so far as the Palestinians are concerned, of the right to return, but of the right to national existence and self-determination. If it is nevertheless useful to refer to the problem of the refugees, this is because it lights up once more the nature of the Israeli undertaking. In the controversy that this sad business has aroused, supporters and opponents of Israel have put forward mutually contradictory theses, according to which responsibility for the exodus of the refugees fell either upon the Arab leaders who were alleged to have called on the Palestinians to leave their country temporarily in 1948, or upon the Israelis who, by a policy of terrorism, were said to have driven out hundreds of thousands of people. This controversy, despite its obvious historical interest, is quite pointless.

It is not important to know what responsibilities are borne by each party in the origin of the problem of the Palestinian refugees, since in every military conflict an exodus of inhabitants takes place, in flight from the theatre of operations. What is important is that Israel has always refused to acknowledge the right of the refugees to recover their lands and homes, in any circumstances and even after a possible re-establishment of peace. We have thus arrived at the paradoxical and scandalous situation in which we see the very state that bases its existence on the right of "return" to "its" country ascribed to a community whose alleged ancestors left it twenty centuries ago, refusing this same right to people who had to leave their country only twenty years ago.⁹

This refusal is not to be explained by some mental perversity peculiar to the rulers or the citizens of Israel. Nor is it due to a stroke of bad luck which may yet be put right. What is involved here is the Israeli will to maintain the Jewish character of the *Jewish* state. The return of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to the towns and villages which formerly were theirs would threaten what constitutes the essential character of the state of Israel as the expression of Zionist ideology: its will to maintain and safeguard Jewish hegemony. This hegemony is manifested in thousands of aspects of the country's public life: the second-class citizenship imposed on the Arab minority, the policy pursued towards the inhabitants of the West Bank during the campaign of 1967, which led to the flight of a fresh contingent of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, the registration rules which hinder "mixed marriages" (between Jews and non-Jews) and the laws that give the Jewish religion a position of ascendancy in public life. This will to preserve Jewish hegemony at all costs has led to the formation of special ties between the state of Israel and the Jewish communities in the outside world.

Everyone knows what this means, even if there is not awareness of all the implications of such a state of affairs: the state of Israel claims to represent not merely its own citizens but also the Jews of the entire world. Nor does it restrict itself to intervening in their favour every time it considers they are being persecuted. It goes further: it strives to arouse throughout the world a movement of emigration to Israel, calling on the Jews of the "Diaspora" to leave the countries where they live and return to Israel, their "homeland". True, the representatives of the world Zionist movement state that material, i.e. financial, support is the normal expression of the solidarity that ought to bind all Jews to the state of Israel. But they do not fail, either, to proclaim that this solidarity, or rather identification, cannot be fully accomplished otherwise than by the gathering into Israel of the Jews who are still dispersed, in order to ensure the continuity and

survival of the Jewish people. The "Law of Return", which enables any Jew to become a citizen of Israel automatically, whenever he chooses, is an expression of the same tendency. It assumes its full significance only when account is taken of the enormous administrative difficulties and exaggerated conditions which are placed in the way of the recognition as citizens of Israel of non-Jews born in Palestine who have left the country at some time. In the same way, the refusal to allow the uprooted Palestinians to return to their country cannot be fully appreciated unless we compare this ostracism with the constant appeal that is being made for Jewish immigration.

The Zionist character of the state of Israel is the main thing about it. So long as Israel remains faithful to this, the problem of the country's frontiers will remain secondary, for the Zionist basis will ensure that the Israeli undertaking retains the features that make it an alien growth, linked with the West, upon the Arab Middle East. So long as Israel—whether this state remains within its frontiers of 1967, or is reduced to its frontiers of 1948, or of 1947—continues loyal to its Zionist calling, it will be an integral part of the Western (Jewish) world, bound up with the international structures and interests of capitalism and imperialism. So long as Israel remains Zionist it cannot expect harmonious integration into the Arab environment which it has chosen but which it declines to accept, and to which it actually refuses to adapt itself. Moreover, it is utopian to hope that imperialism will refrain from exploiting this presence in the Middle East of a ghetto-nation which regards itself as ethnically, socially and politically different from the neighbouring peoples, declares itself to be encircled (having chosen encirclement as its condition of life), and acts with the aggressiveness implicit in this kind of situation. The tremendous dangers entailed by this state of affairs resulting from Zionism would not be greatly modified if the state of Israel were to resign itself—as it has hitherto always refused—to favouring the creation of a Palestinian state on its borders. This is why the formula, at first sight so attractive, of the two legitimate rights, Israeli and Palestinian, is substantially flawed. It proclaims the equal rights of two peoples without reckoning with the fact that one of them, the Israeli people, has exercised its prerogatives to the detriment of the other, the Palestinian people, whom it has uprooted and whom it keeps in exile. The formula of the two legitimacies implies, moreover, equivalent conditions of settlement by these two peoples, whereas one of them, the Palestinian people, is (or, rather, was) established in its natural environment, while the Israelis established themselves there against the will of the inhabitants concerned, have provoked their enmity, and, what is more, have retained features which make them an alien element in the region. The formula of the two legitimacies ignores these differences, which

nevertheless are essential and, by refusing to take account of the special position occupied by Israel in the Middle East, amounts, in fact, to an invitation to the Israelis to retain their distinctive features—that is to say, Zionism—towards which the supporters of this formula show an indulgence which they do not trouble either to analyse or even to justify, though its justification is far from obvious.

Nevertheless, it is not enough to discuss Zionism without observing that it constitutes a danger—and more than a danger, a cause of spoliation and misery—not only to the Arabs of Palestine. It is also a danger to the Jews. The existence of sentimental ties between the latter and the state of Israel is, to be sure, a phenomenon that is at present inevitable and, in a way, natural. But this fact is accompanied by the effects of a policy systematically pursued by Israel and by the world Zionist movement which aims to consolidate these ties, to make them permanent, to give them far more than sentimental significance, by translating them into economic, military, political and diplomatic realities. From this standpoint, the men of the Left, and particularly the Socialists—above all, those who are haunted by the memory of the massacres of the Second World War—cannot but give attention to the problem of "the fate of the Jews", that is to say, more concretely, the future of Jewish communities and individual Jews throughout the world. A choice has to be made here: either we wish these communities to retain, for the sake of some metaphysical considerations (whether religious or not) which are dressed up in the all-purpose expression "Jewish values", a specific existence which shelters them from integration in the world around them; or else we hope that, in a climate of freedom and without violence ever being offered to religious and cultural rights, a harmonious integration of ethnic, religious and national minorities may take place—the Jews being seen as only one example of a larger problem. These are the alternatives. And it is hard to see by what criteria Socialists can declare themselves against the prospect of integration in freedom.

Now, Zionist policy and ideology are opposed to this prospect, and Zionist and Israeli practice hinder its realization. Fundamentally pessimistic, Zionism, as conceived by Herzl, bases its entire programme of "return" to Palestine on the certainty that the Jewish communities scattered about the world must necessarily fall victims to antisemitism, which, moreover, Herzl regarded as a phenomenon that was inevitable and in some cases justifiable. In his book *Der Judenstaat*, Herzl actually distinguishes between two types of antisemitism, one which is merely "crude mockery, vulgar jealousy and hereditary prejudice", and the other which he sees as a form of "legitimate defence" and which is characteristic of those "honest antisemites" whom Herzl calls on to co-operate in carrying out the Zionist plan. Furthermore,

Herzl declares that "the Jewish question is insoluble. With the best will in the world, the civilized peoples cannot get rid of it."¹⁰ Léon Pinsker, another prophet of Zionism, did not think otherwise and considered antisemitism as an "incurable disease".

There is from this standpoint a striking similarity between the ideology of antisemitism and that of Zionism. Both claim, in effect, that "the Jewish element" cannot be assimilated, that it is radically alien to its environment. The analogy goes even further. Popular antisemitism finds pithy expression in a blunt invitation to the Jews to leave the country where they have settled. Zionism asks precisely that, too, and this is why certain forms of collaboration were possible between the profoundly anti-Jewish Tsarist Government of Russia and Theodore Herzl,¹¹ and even between the Third Reich and the Zionist organizations between 1933 and 1938.¹² In any case, Zionist theory denounces the prospect of integration of the Jewish communities, either as impossible, owing to the inevitability of antisemitism, or as incompatible with the Jewish nationalist aspirations¹³ which form the foundation of Zionism.

This is not merely a matter of theory. The concrete policy of the present-day Zionist movement as it actually exists, dominated by the Israeli ruling power, also works in this same direction, and does this in a variety of ways. In the first place, the Zionist ideology has taken over from anti-Jewish discrimination as the main basis for Jewish identity and particularism. These were for a long time nourished by antisemitic persecution, which resulted in segregation, the Jews turning in upon themselves, and the exacerbation of national reflexes. Since the end of the Second World War, however, the Western world has seen a marked decline in antisemitism, with racialism nowadays attacking other targets—the Negroes, the North-African workers in France, or, more generally, communities which have immigrated recently and are of a proletarian or even sub-proletarian type. The liberalization of relations between non-Jews and Jews, parallel to the "establishment" and *embourgeoisement* of the latter in Western society, should have constituted a factor contributing to reduce Jewish particularism, lower the barriers between communities, and shorten the psychological and social distance between the minority and the majority. But this process, favourable to the integration of the Jews, is now being countered by the constant operation of Zionist ideology and Israeli propaganda, the effects of which are all the greater because of the fertility of the soil on which they fall. Zionist ideology and Israeli propaganda—exploiting, to be sure, an instinctive solidarity and firmly rooted complexes—arouse in the Jews reactions of national pride nourished by "Israeli achievements" and identification with the "Jewish fatherland". The state of Israel is presented as the cradle of Jewish regenera-

tion, glorified as the privileged place where "Jewish values" are guaranteed survival and flowering, while being cleansed of those features which made and still make the Jew of the Diaspora a diminished human being.

Thus, in a period in which religion no longer forms an adequate factor of cohesion, and in which the weakening of antisemitism could help forward the process of integrating ethnic groups, Zionism, faithful to its original choice, reinforces and exacerbates feelings of particularism and national pride which should normally have grown weaker. It goes ever further: throughout the world it seeks to create bonds of *political* solidarity between the Jews and Israel. True, Socialists are not at all convinced that citizens have any duty of allegiance towards any "national state", especially not in capitalist society. They cannot therefore demand of the Jews allegiance to the states whose subjects they are. Quite another matter, though, is the need for *rapprochement* and progressively closer identification between the Jews and the peoples among whom they live. And it is quite another matter, again, to reconcile oneself to the fostering and nourishing of a bond of political allegiance between these Jews and a foreign state, namely, Israel, which Zionism presents as the true fatherland of all Jews, whether settled in Palestine or *not*. There are millions of Irish outside the frontiers of the Republic of Ireland, and millions of Italians and Poles living outside their country of origin; but neither Italy nor Ireland nor Poland tries to enclose their nationals. or former nationals, within the close network of an international organization which seeks financial and political support from them. This situation, a profoundly unhealthy one, has already brought disastrous results and continues to be laden with dangers to come.

To appreciate the truth of this it is enough to look at what has happened to the Jewish communities whose homes were in the Moslem world. Down to the establishment of the state of Israel, they enjoyed relatively harmonious relations with the Arabs, relations that were in any case incomparably better than those which existed between the Jewish communities and the Christian nations of Europe—not only in Eastern Europe, that goes without saying, but even in Western Europe.¹⁴ The situation of the Jews settled in the Moslem world has suffered a complete upheaval through the creation of the state of Israel. The latter has done everything possible to stress the identification of these Jews with the Jewish state, so that they have increasingly looked like citizens who deserve to be suspected of sympathy with the enemy. Today, apart from small groups whose situation is a precarious one, the "Jewish presence" has almost entirely disappeared from the Arab countries, and hundreds of thousands of people who have been induced to emigrate to the "fatherland of Israel" see their

future doubly menaced—by the precarious position of the Jewish state itself and by the discrimination to which they are subjected by the Ashkenazi element¹⁵ and by the sabras, born in the count*.

What is happening in the socialist countries, especially in the USSR and Poland, also shows that the intrusion of Zionism and the impact of international complications centred on the state of Israel constitute a factor worsening the situation of the Jews. True, one cannot absolve the Polish authorities of the grave responsibility of having allowed and even encouraged a resurgence of antisemitism by exploiting legitimate opposition to Zionism: in this respect even more than any other, we see a particularly perverse expression of the political degeneration from which the states that call themselves Marxist are suffering. It is, nevertheless also true that Israeli policy has been a factor worsening the position of the Jews in Eastern Europe.

The situation in Western Europe is very different, especially because Israeli policy enjoys wide popularity there. But the position taken up by the leaders of the Jewish community in France, for example, nevertheless bears a disturbing aspect. The pro-Arab orientation of French diplomacy has stimulated such vehement opposition on their part that it has seemed that the political reflexes of French citizens of Jewish origin—or, at least, of those whose spokesmen succeed in making themselves heard—are governed above all by a feeling of loyalty to a foreign state. The Jews have, of course, the right to proclaim a community of interests between themselves and Israel. How can one not perceive, though, the unhealthy and dangerous character of such a loudly-proclaimed bond of solidarity? For the first time, the old and classical assertion of the antisemites, that the Jews are not "loyal citizens", finds an appearance of justification. So long as public opinion remains—for suspect reasons, moreover, in which hostility to the Arabs plays a bigger part than sympathy with the Jews—inclined favourably towards Israel, the dangers of such a state of affairs may not make themselves apparent. Just imagine, though, the results that would ensue from a change in the situation such that Israel ceased to enjoy the favours of public opinion, especially in those Right-wing circles which are most susceptible to expressing hostile feelings towards the Jews. An antisemitic campaign could, in such circumstances, draw strength from suspicion as to the real allegiance of the Jews and the genuineness of their feelings as members of the French national community.

One of the claims made for the Zionist state is that it constitutes a factor of security for the Jews of Israel and throughout the world. In reality, if we consider what has happened in the Moslem countries and in the Communist camp, and if we look ahead, we cannot but be struck by the effrontery of this claim. Without in any way solving

the "Jewish question", Zionism threatens to bring about fresh conditions of uncertainty and additional reasons for disquiet so far as the world's Jewish communities are concerned.

III. THE PALESTINIAN SOLUTION

Three years after the Israeli armies won a triumph that seemed to have brought the Jewish state final peace and total security, peace has never been so precarious, nor insecurity so great. In order to explain this paradox, the Israelis can only blame the obstinacy of the Arabs, who refuse to accept an accomplished fact, and their negative outlook, which has kept them for twenty years and more in a waking dream from which they have not the courage to arouse themselves.

The evidence shows that this explanation is not an explanation at all. The aftermath of the Six Days' War showed that the solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict was not to be sought in repeated military victories by Israel, the most resounding of these having not only failed to put an end to the Arabs' rejection of Israel but, on the contrary, served to intensify it. However, the Jewish state is caught in its own logic: it continues to try to impose its presence upon its neighbours, even when its will to power is hidden behind phrasemongering about peace. At no stage has it shown itself seriously disposed to pay the price for peace and its acceptance by the Arabs. In 1967, it claimed that the only reason for the attack it launched was its desire to survive, physically and economically, and that the spirit of conquest was entirely absent from its motives. Today, several Arab states, including the U.A.R., are openly inclined to take the path of recognizing Israel and offering her, in the immediate future, guarantees for her frontiers and freedom of access to the outside world. Israel, however, refuses to reckon with the pressure upon Nasser from an Arab public opinion opposed to any concessions; and, far from allowing an honourable peace to the most conciliatory of its foes—the only kind that they could accept—the overwhelming majority of the Israelis refuse to evacuate the territories occupied in 1967, blatantly pursue a policy of "accomplished facts", and no longer deny that there can be no question of their going back to the frontiers they had before their most recent aggression. This prospect, which is put forward by leaders who at the same time claim to be both moderate and realistic, can only lead to the repetition of military expeditions the sole effect of which is to reinforce the enmity of the Arabs, without destroying the at least potential force (less and less merely potential) which they represent. The way the Israelis visualize settling the problem of their relations with the Arab world reveals a mixture of optimism and fatalism which seems bound to lead their state to disaster.

A belated spasm of moderation ought, on the contrary, to impel the Jewish state to seek to negotiate with its neighbours, make serious overtures to Nasser, and provide proof of its conciliatory disposition by starting to evacuate the occupied territories, while declaring its intention of renouncing all territorial conquests, none of which has brought its citizens the security they so desperately seek. Let us suppose, though, that Israel, breaking with the intransigence fostered by contemplation of its successive military victories, were to strive seriously to obtain a diplomatic solution to the conflict which is tearing the Middle East apart. These hypothetical talks between the states of the region, even if such negotiations were to be crowned with agreement, would have little chance of fundamentally solving the problem of the state of Israel's presence in the Arab world. They would not remove the permanent cause of antagonism and conflict constituted by the existence of a state which, by its ideology and structure and by its international associations and dependence, would continue to be alien to the Arab world. If we go back to the first section of this article, we see that so long as Israel retains its Zionist character, its political, economic and social integration into the Middle East will be impeded by obstacles which neither the talent of its generals nor the cleverness of its diplomats, nor even the goodwill of those of its citizens most anxious for peace, will be able to overcome.

The diplomatic solution indubitably desired by Nasser's Egypt, but for which Israel stubbornly refuses to pay the price, comes up against another objection, connected with the first. It would constitute an attempt to solve the problem of Israel by ignoring the wishes and interests of the Palestinian nation, which would have no share in the negotiations. True, Nasser and other Arab leaders have many times declared that they will not sign any peace with Israel unless an "equitable" solution is found for the problem of the Palestinian refugees. But the terms chosen are often too vague for any reliance to be put on this sort of assurance. Finally, and above all, it is today no longer a matter of allowing these refugees to return, if they wish, to their native land, but of recognizing the Palestinians' right to self-determination, which implies their right to political sovereignty. Any attempt to solve the Israel-Arab conflict that ignored the demands of the Palestinian people would amount to ratifying an historical injustice. What is more, since it failed to tackle the essential causes of the conflict, such an attempt could not bring about lasting peace in the Middle East.

Thus, neither the Israeli prospect, based on chronic recourse to force in order to impose a solution rejected by the Arab nations, nor a diplomatic solution which ignores the rights of the Palestinians, could be seen as satisfactory. The first means nothing but the

mechanical recurrence of violence, the answering of terror with counter-terror, an apocalyptic hypothesis the absurdity of which is concealed only by the spectacle of Israel's *present* superiority. The second—highly improbable in any case, so long as Israel has not resigned herself to an agonizing reappraisal of her policy—in so far as it refused to establish a Palestinian state reflecting the reality of the Palestinian nation, could not, in the long run, be regarded as a just and effective method of solving the conflict. There remains to be considered the last of the solutions put forward by one of the parties involved, namely, the Palestinians themselves. It consists in proposing the replacement of the state of Israel—which, as already pointed out, is based on the retention and consolidation of Jewish hegemony—by a "democratic and secular Palestine" in which the different religious and ethnic communities would enjoy equal rights.

This formula, put forward by the Palestinian resistance movements as a whole, is a recent one. Before the outbreak of the Six Days' War, the Palestinian organizations, which had not yet succeeded in shaking off control by the Arab states, had refrained from putting forward coherent projects for the future of Palestine, and took refuge in uttering furious anathemas. This was the period when Shukeiry spoke of "throwing the Jews into the sea". Since then, the Palestinian national movement has not only developed so as to assume the aspect of a strengthened military and popular resistance movement which the Israelis have not managed to subdue. Its development has also been accompanied by a maturing of the political consciousness of the Palestinians, and this implies a better understanding of what is desirable and possible for the Palestine of tomorrow. In this connexion it is essential to stress that all the Palestinian organizations have turned their backs on that earlier nihilism which, basing itself on a single consideration, the unjust origin of Israel, formerly refused to contemplate the possibility of coexisting with the Jews now settled in Israel. Today, these organizations openly acknowledge that the positions they formerly defended and the language they used were symptoms of their political immaturity. Now they call upon the Jews of Israel to agree to co-operate in building a new state in which they would not have to suffer any discrimination but in which also they would enjoy no privileges.

What does this prospect imply? Negatively, and obviously, the end of the state of Israel as at present conceived, that is, in the last analysis, the end of its Zionist structures. But no political movement can base its programme on purely negative ideas, if it counts not merely on the strength of its arms but also on that of its means of persuasion. The superiority of the Palestinians, and so their chance of being successful, must in the long run be political, that is to say, moral. From this

standpoint, what they have to say to the Israelis is much more than a matter of propaganda : as the expression of an essential political attitude, it is one of the criteria for measuring the political strength of their movement. Negativism, even when nourished by a spirit of justice, is a sign of impotence, and it is both a condition and a proof of increasing strength when positive solutions are put forward which do not drive the enemy to despair and so to intransigence. So long as the Israelis feel that defence of their rights, both individual and collective, is impossible without the existence of a Zionist state, they will fight with a vigour of which they offer convincing proof with every day that passes. It is vain and absurd to call upon a nation to renounce a state machine, juridical structures and a policy of hegemony, even though these be indefensible from the standpoint of democratic (and a *fortiori* socialist) principles, if the nation thinks that this state, these structures and this mistaken and agonizing will to hegemony are the conditions necessary for its survival.

The task before the Palestinian national movement is twofold. Basing itself on popular support, which its resistance activity is bound to strengthen, it has to confront Israel with an opposition which is vigorous and, because profoundly popular, indomitable. This is an entirely new element in the problematics of the Israel-Arab conflict, the Israelis having, as a result of their easy victories, always been borne along hitherto by an arrogant self-confidence which is their worst fault. To this condition another has to be added, namely, making more precise the guarantees offered regarding the national rights of the Israelis in a democratic and secular Palestine. These two factors are interconnected : what the Palestinians need is to force their opponents to appreciate the impossibility of the Zionist solution, *without driving them to despair*.

The objection most often brought forward against this prospect relates to its allegedly unrealistic character. Its democratic nature is more and more widely acknowledged, but it is regarded as utopian. True, nobody will claim that it can be achieved quickly or easily. It can come only as the result of a long struggle, the ups and downs of which cannot be foreseen but which, in all probability, will be rich in suffering and in drama. At least, though, this struggle can be fruitful and bear the seeds of a genuine settlement of the Israel-Arab problem. The Israeli road, with its milestones of military expeditions, conquests, annexations, all of them so many sources of disappointment and rebuff, has been shown by twenty years' experience to be a road that leads nowhere. It is fashionable to call this experience the "Israeli reality" and to invite the Arabs to accept it as final and irreversible. Neither the defeats they have suffered, however, nor the support that Israel has found in the Western world have forced the Arabs to surrender.

They do not and cannot accept that the Zionist solution, to which they did not bow when Europe was still dictating whatever it wanted to the colonial countries, should be imposed upon them now, when domination by imperialism is encountering more and more resistance and revolt.

History today offers the Palestinians the opportunity to make themselves heard. After long years in which they were obliged to hold back and keep silent, they are rising to their feet with the impressive vigour of a people fighting for their rights without wishing to impose any form of domination on anyone else. It is this above all that constitutes the superiority of the Palestinian solution over the Zionist one. The Israelis, in spite of their technical prowess, have proved unable to persuade the Arabs to accept Zionism. In the next few years, the Palestinians will have to convince the Israelis, some of whom are only reluctant Zionists, that their solution is the only one that is possible and just. They will doubtless not succeed unless they manage to break away from the apparently monolithic block of the Israeli nation a group of people who understand, and will understand better and better, that Zionism is leading Israel into a dead-end, and who will have the revolutionary courage to respond to the "internationalism" of their opponent of today with their own "internationalism".

Such a *rapprochement* will be helped by everything that will demonstrate the revolutionary character of the Palestinian struggle. This demonstration cannot be aimed against Zionism alone, but must also strike at the reactionary states of the Arab world which are tied to imperialism no less than Israel is. In their policy towards these states, the organizations of the Palestinian resistance take up different points of view. The most important of them, *Al Fatah*, considers that it would be bad tactics to quarrel with states other than Israel, which is still, in its view, the only enemy. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which claims to be Marxist-Leninist, and the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which, without putting up this signboard, has a clearly Left-wing tendency, put themselves forward, in contrast to this attitude, as revolutionary movements determined to overthrow all the conservative or reactionary structures in the Middle East. These distinctions, however, though reflecting the different degrees of consciousness that are found in the Palestinian organizations, may prevent us from perceiving one notable fact—that the Palestinian movement as a whole represents in the Arab world today a leaven of popular agitation which, independently sometimes of the intentions proclaimed by the leaders of *Al Fatah*, endangers the stability of the established order. This is particularly so in Lebanon and Jordan, and the links that exist between certain Arab régimes and American imperialism, which provides Israel's principal support, are

an additional factor of friction and radicalization which could bring about the Arab revolution.

The confrontation between Israel and the Arabs is not taking place in isolation. The great powers are constantly intervening in it, either through political pressure, arms supplies, or consultations which pay little regard to the fate of the Palestinians. Israel, on its part, finds considerable support in circles possessed of enormous financial resources and whose influence on the Press and the other information media is not less important. The Palestinians, in contrast, find their support, on the world scale, among the Left-wing youth. Enlightened by their radicalism, the latter understand what the present struggle means. At the same time one may criticize them for engaging in over-simplifications which, far from serving the Palestinian cause, delay the coming of that awareness of the truth which has to be fostered in the wider trends of the socialist movement. Thus, for example, there is the allegation that Israel is merely a *pawn* of American imperialism, or that the Jewish state is a puppet state comparable to that in South Vietnam. Mistakes in evaluation such as these make it impossible to discover the true facts of the Israel-Arab problem, and hold back the effort which the Left will sooner or later have to undertake. Its contribution should consist particularly in making more precise, in alliance with the Arab Left, the formula of a bi-national Palestine, in conformity with the needs of its existing population, which at present is recognized only by the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Such an alliance, combating all the dregs of chauvinism and acknowledging the reality of the Israeli nation, would help to cause the latter to reject the delusive guarantees and false enticements of Zionism. The immensity of this task is in proportion to the drama that is being played out in the Middle East, which must end in hamstringing the power of imperialism in this part of the world and so contributing to the liberation of mankind.

NOTES

1. L. Gaspar: *Histoire de la Palestine* (Paris, Maspero, 1968), p. 114.
2. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain having offered to put Uganda at the disposal of the Zionist organization, the majority in the latter rejected the offer and opined that Jewish national aspirations could be realized only in Palestine.
3. Quoted by I. Cohen: *Le Mouvement sioniste* (Paris, 1945), pp. 73-74.
4. T. Herzl: *L'Etat juif* (Paris, Librairie, Lipschitz), 1926, p. 95.
5. i.e., principally, the resolution creating the state of Israel, that which provided for the internationalizing of Jerusalem and the one that recognized the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.

See the article by *Le Monde's* correspondent in Israel, in the issue of 14 July, 1958.

7. My emphasis.
8. M. Rodinson: *Israël et le refus arabe* (Paris, Le Seuil, 1969); "Israel, fait colonial?", in *Les Temps Modernes*, special issue, *Le conflit israëlo-arabe* (Paris, 1967).
The expression "return" is incorrect. What it is conventional to call "the Jewish people" is the result of so many population mixtures that the ethnic link between the ancient Hebrews and the Jews of today is extremely dubious, and rather mythical than otherwise.
10. T. Herzl, *L'Etat juif, passim*.
11. Herzl negotiated, for example, with Plehve, who was Nicholas II's Minister of the Interior and responsible for the pogrom at Kishinev. Plehve promised the Zionists his support without having thereby to do violence to his beliefs, because he wanted to rid Holy Russia of the Jews who were living there, and the Zionist organization had no other aim but that.
12. On this problem, see H. Arendt, *Eichmann à Jérusalem* (Paris, 1966), translated from the English, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 1963, and especially, E. Ben Ellessar, *La Diplomatie du IIIe Reich et les Juifs (1933-1939)* (Paris, 1969).
13. In an interview recently reproduced in the Zionist organ *Informations d'Israël*, Golda Meir explained that the state of Israel is the only refuge for the Jews of the world who are threatened with . . . "assimilation".
14. See on this subject S. Goitein: *Juifs et Arabes*, Paris, 1960.
15. The Ashkenazim are, broadly speaking, the Jews originating from Central and Eastern Europe, while the Sephardim are the Jews belonging, or formerly belonging, to the Jewish communities settled in the Mediterranean basin and the Arab world.