



# IMPERIALISM AND THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

SOME LEFT-WING VIEWPOINTS  
NO. 1

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THE ILLUSION OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT by Ghayth Joulani (page 14) is reprinted from FREE PALESTINE Vol. 1 No. 3.

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Cover photographs: Front—Cairo May 1967

Back—Refugees returning to West Bank

# EDITORIAL

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**IF WE LOOK** at progressive struggles throughout the world we find in the forefront students of every creed and colour. Where progress and social justice are at stake, students will continue to fight. No-one would deny for a moment that the student protest movement in the United States which has grown to such proportions that it can no longer be laid at the feet of a few 'militants', is responsible in no small measure for a reappraisal of American policies in Vietnam. The no longer silent protests against Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia is led in that small but brave country by thousands of serious, intelligent students. This cannot be dismissed as children playing at politics.

**SIMILARLY IN THE MIDDLE EAST** we find an intolerable situation to which students cannot afford to remain indifferent. We have a specific responsibility to listen to all sides in the conflict, to work together with progressive forces and students in the Arab world to bring about a lasting and just solution. We are not bound by government policies or restrictive pre-judgments of the issues involved. We believe that differences should be openly and frankly discussed and that together we can go a long way to solving the complex social problems of the Middle East.

**THE PROMOTERS** of this publication are students, interested and concerned about the situation in the Middle East. We feel it is necessary to open a student dialogue on this matter embracing all these students, Arabs and Israelis, Jews and Muslims, from Europe or from the Third World, that will help to consolidate the struggle for peace.



# JOINT DECLARATION BY 20 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GERMAN LEFT

CONCERNING

## THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

*reprinted from New German Pamphlet series*

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Since the outbreak of the Middle East crisis in May 1967, and in growing measure since the victory of the Israelis at the beginning of June, parts of the Western Left—including that in Germany—have begun to make accusations against the State of Israel. Yet, such criticism of Israel is based frequently not merely on ignorance of the historical background, so essential for an understanding of that country, but also upon the absence of real familiarity with the present situation. Taken by themselves, transitional measures and declarations by Israeli politicians or by the Israel Government, may not always be defensible. At times they are seized upon, in an irresponsible confusion of fact and theory, as an excuse to defame Israel as such. We therefore regard it as necessary to make the following declaration and ask all our friends to think again about the position they have adopted.

Just as, at one time, one wing of Socialism, in its fight against Capitalism and Imperialism set its hopes on Bolshevism, so today, having learned to look upon the latter with more critical eyes, its hopes are on the progressive 'Third World'. This formula, however, should not be taken as more than a working hypothesis. If it is not to degenerate into an oversimplified black-and-white portrayal of the situation, it must occasionally be modified when applied to specific cases. With regard to the relationship between Israel and its Arab neighbours, moreover, it has been shown to be eminently unsuitable. The inclusion of Israel in a capitalist front simply does violence to the facts. Does not Israel itself, in some respects, belong to the 'Third World'? On the other hand, developing countries are not invulnerable to a descent to inhumanity and cynicism; and Egypt, in particular, with its sympathy for Nazi Germany, its fascistic leader-cult, its swaggering militarism, its colonialist designs and its use of poison gas in the Yemenite civil war—is the most striking example of this tendency. We, more than anyone else, we who take our opponents to task for practising ideological delusion, must beware of lapsing into a doctrinaire position to which we would then tailor the facts

If to stand on the Left means to take a stand for freedom for the persecuted and the oppressed and for an end to exploitation, then today it should involve a commitment not against Israel but in support of its unimpaired existence. As a rule, Socialism is not concerned with identifying itself with any single State. Its ultimate goal must be the creation of a world of liberated peoples living peacefully together. For the Middle East, this would mean peace between Israeli and Arab workers—against the capitalists on both sides. In the present situation, however, one must be aware that a victory of even an expansionist Israel, while it could cause considerable harm to the Arab people, could not threaten its existence; the repeatedly proclaimed intention of the Arab States, on the other hand—and not only the utterances of a few vociferous extremists—was and is not a modification of boundaries or of Israel's policies, but the complete destruction of the State. There can be no illusion as to what this would mean for the country's Jewish citizens. That is not 'Third World', but fascist banditry. The avowed intention of genocide gives the Jewish-Arab conflict a unique, oppressive character and challenges international Socialism to adopt a position in favour of the existence of the State of Israel. At the same time it must take clear-cut exception to certain policy moves of the Israel Government and, in great degree, to the politics of bourgeois and clerical circles.

This has been acknowledged recently by many Leftist intellectuals in the Western world — Jean Paul Sartre, to name just one. It is the privilege of the living spirit to be able to reconsider a position in the light of a concrete situation, to challenge familiar categories of thought and to re-draw lines. If ever there was an opportunity to give proof that there is a Western Left that is not bound to Moscow, this is it. (Even within the Eastern Bloc itself, there have been grave discursions on this point. High Polish officers have been dismissed because they refused to disseminate anti-Israel propaganda material among the troops. Declaring war against his Government, Mnacko chose exile.) Had the Western Left made better use of this opportunity, it would today be enjoying greater credibility. At a time when, motivated by their own imperialism, the Soviets called the Israelis 'Imperialist robbers', and named those who had been attacked as the 'aggressors', when they made that historically, unprecedented, even grotesque demand that the Israelis withdraw to the old lines, without calling for the counter-move of an Arab peace settlement, this was time not only to refrain from 'picking on' morally maltreated Israel and pointing out only its errors — but to speak out sharply and energetically against the Russian distortion of the facts.

## II

As we have already said, this does not imply approval of Zionist and Israel policies in general. Jewish immigration did not come to grips sufficiently with the fact that Palestine was not an unsettled area. As a result of the Balfour Declaration, the Zionist Movement could not but appear in Arab eyes as an instrument of British imperialism, which



took the position of playing off one population group against the other and thus in this fashion, maintaining its own rule in the area. Today's bitter antagonism between Arabs and Jews is, not least, the result of imperialist policy and has its parallels in the partition of India and Pakistan, in the separation of Northern from Southern Ireland and in the fighting in Cyprus between Greeks and Turks.

After the Jewish State was founded in 1948, as a mono-national State — it granted formal equality of rights to the non-Jewish population, while in fact setting it apart from the mainstream of the people. Thus the Arab minority in Israel wound up in the position of sub-tenants on their own ancestral soil. Communication between Jews and Arabs was considerably hampered by an educational system that, for a long time, took too little cognisance of the Arabic language — the language, after all, not only of the Arab lands as of all the neighbouring peoples — and by clerical influences which have led to the domination of Orthodoxy over the non-religious majority of the population, especially in the field of personal status. We see in the combination of religious exclusivity and heightened national consciousness a danger of chauvinism that must be resisted in Israel and by the Jews themselves, if relations with the Arab part of the population of Israel are to prosper; and we regard this as the basis of any political solution of the Middle East conflict. The fact that a Jewish and an Arab economy exist on parallel but different technical and economic levels likewise prongs the possibility of integrating the Arab population and produces justified dissatisfaction.

A word would seem in place here with regard to Israel's policy since the Six-Day War. Israel had every right to free itself from the mortal grip of the Arab armies. We take exception, on the other hand, to the annexationist tendencies that have come to light since the June victory — though local adjustments of the by no means exemplary borders of 1949 need not be ruled out.

Since the soil of historical Palestine as a whole, as of the State of Israel in particular, is inhabited by two peoples — and that in an admixture that does not permit any delineation of boundaries — only a bi-national State that would guarantee the interest of Jewish as well as of Arab working men against capitalists, bureaucrats and feudal landowners could offer a basis for the peaceful coexistence of these two people in the Middle East. The capital of such a bi-national State would naturally be Jerusalem. We are of course aware that today's link between the economy and the State, which tends towards the creation of national-capitalist (wrongly called national-socialist) structures, stands in the way of such a bi-national development. Even in old, well-organised States like Belgium or Switzerland, differences between various segments of the population are played up into national problems. In this connection, we wish to express our conviction that it is not the State, in the conventional sense of the exercise of authority, that represents the highest and ultimate form of the organisation of human life, but rather the free association of free and equal producers. Within the framework of such an association, one could

envisage a unification of Jewish and Arab productive enterprises.

The Arab-Israel conflict is not the only one that exists in the Middle East. However, it has taken on such intensity only because its protagonists belong to different cultural worlds and social systems and because the world powers are interested in preserving a hotbed of unrest in that strategically important area, where they may enforce their own interests — which are not identical with those of the Jewish and Arab workers. In the Near East live a whole mosaic of peoples and fragments of peoples such as the Kurds and the Armenians, religious splinters dating to ancient times, whose national existence, like that of the Jews, is threatened by a national-capitalist, pan-Arab empire. For these peoples too, as for Jews and Arabs, the same truth applies: that only cooperation in multi-national States, and ultimately the overcoming of the State itself, represents the solution of these conflicts.

Addressing ourselves now to the other side, we say: Much as we are interested in the development and welfare of the Arab workers and peasants, we cannot simply identify ourselves with the interests of the Arab States — even when they try to don the mantle of Socialism and, on the strength of this, lay claim to Socialist solidarity. What we observe today in the self-styled 'Socialist', but in truth pseudo-Socialist Arab States — as in other countries of the 'Third World' as well — are militarist bureaucratic dictatorships. Taking the place of numerically weak, incapable bourgeoisie, allied with imperialist Powers abroad or with feudal relics within and unable to put the economic development of their country on a modern footing, they have taken upon themselves the task of primary accumulation. They fulfil this task with little success, establishing a regime of economic inefficiency on the backs of the toiling masses who have no democratic alternative, nor independent trade unions or mass organisations, at their disposal, to enable them to determine their own fate. We gladly acknowledge that the establishment of the Arab States in the face of imperialist domination was a step in the right direction; we deny, however, that the structure of these States and genuine, liberal Socialism, as it evolved from the movement of West European industrial labour, have anything in common.

On the contrary, far from being geared to any substantive socialist programme, the policy of these States — vis-a-vis Israel as well as vis-a-vis other national minorities in the Near East — aims at covering up their internal inadequacies with outer glory. The fact that these States today have the support of the USSR does not make them more Socialist. We remember only too well with what countries the USSR has, in its time, concluded peace and friendship pacts, according to its particular imperialist requirements of the moment. The true character of a State can be judged only by its own economic and social structure, independent of the role it plays in the imperialist arena. If Israel, despite its kibbutzim and its unionized economic sector, can be designated as a socialist country in the fullest sense of the term, then the Arab States, with their mere facade of Socialism, certainly cannot be so designated.



And now a few observations on our part with regard to some of the main charges that have been directed against Israel:

### **1. Israel is a 'Capitalistic Country'.**

Israel is a middle-class capitalist State; certainly (in the changed sense these terms have today) in relation to the 19th Century. However, in comparison not only with Arab countries but also with European States, Israel contains strong socialistic elements. There is less tension between the classes than in most Western States. Nowhere are the problems of land ownership so well regulated. The economic and social collective of the kibbutz is a model that is admired and studied in many other lands. The kibbutzim, moreover, have contributed decisively to the founding of the State, to the formation of the spiritual world of its inhabitants and, last but not least, to its defence. A further socialistic factor lies in the influence exercised by the General Federation of Labour (Histadrut) on the national economy; it controls more than a third of the country's industrial enterprises. If fault may be found with the Histadrut, it is in relation to its bureaucratic structure, which does not permit the emergence of a true workers' self-administration. The import of foreign capital is, for Israel as for all developing countries, a necessity. It is not the capital imports, but rather the inflation of the third sector of the economy (services), that brings harm to the socialist movement in Israel.

### **2. 'Neo-Colonialist Zionism'.**

It is a fact that the Jews established their State in territory which, though theirs at one time, later belonged to the Arabs, and they did so without Arab consent. When Zionism came into being, however, at the end of the 19th Century, the world had not yet reached such rigid positions and was not so firmly committed to the status quo as it is today. It was only during World War One that the Arabs developed nationalist tendencies. One must not blindly transfer the criteria of the present to the situations of those days. Otherwise we would have to charge the Americans, the Australians and the Russians with having settled unlawfully in foreign lands. Moreover, the first Jews did not come as citizens but rather as pioneer settlers who reclaimed the land for cultivation. The rapidly multiplying indigent population was the gainer.

The strengthening of Zionism was a reaction to the expulsion of the Jews from Europe in the wake of the transformation of liberal capitalism into monopoly capitalism — an expulsion that was the more merciless and painful the more powerful the feudal and pro-capitalist elements within the capitalism of the particular country. The migratory waves that swept the Jews from Europe, mainly from eastern Europe, to Palestine stand in strong correlation to the persecution to which the Jews of Russia, Poland, Germany and, finally, of all Europe were exposed. The goal of Zionism, as it was conceived 70 years ago, was not a State but, rather, the creation of an officially and legally secured homeland

for the Jewish people in Palestine, which would provide protection against humiliation and decimation. At that time, of course, this included the possibility of an international agreement with Turkey. For this the Arabs could not participate, since they did not as yet represent a sovereign nation (and lived under Turkish rule). This indeed could be regarded as a connection with colonialism. At the same time, such an international charter was, for the pre-World War One age, an age of unvarnished pogroms in Eastern Europe, the most liberal form of middle-class thought.

While the official programme of the Zionist movement since its first Congress of Basle in 1897 called only for the creation of a Jewish 'home', it is undoubtedly a fact that middle class and clerical circles were fascinated by the idea of a 'Jewish State', with all its associations of biblical glory. During the period of the British Mandate, only a minority of the population of Palestine — left-wing Socialists and academic pacifists — uncompromisingly held aloft the banner of the bi-national State. If it did not succeed in convincing the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine of the possibility of the bridging of Jewish-Arab differences, the fault is not that of the Jews alone, but also of the feudal-clerical circles among the Arabs, who saw in Jewish immigration a threat to their political economic and spiritual domination.

One could maintain, quite rightly, that the Arab world bears no guilt for the expulsion of European Jewry and, therefore, should not be made to shoulder the burden of its consequences. On the other hand, the wars and political upheavals of recent decades have brought in their wake, not only in this region but along many frontiers, population movements that appear to rule out any possibility of restitution. The shifting of the Polish border to an area that, at least since the 14th Century, has been German; the expulsion of the Greeks from Sonia, where they have been established for 3,000 years; the expulsion of the Armenians from their ancestral homeland in East Anatolia — these must be accepted as harsh facts. Little as Socialism need trouble itself with the religious aim of Jewish Orthodoxy to return to Jerusalem; little as we are in pursuit of some utopian situation in which every people is to reside once more in some region where it once held sway—we must, by the same token, take a determined stand against the idea that one expulsion is to be rectified by another. Even if we concede a partial injustice on the part of the Jews, that nevertheless cannot be secured by the commission of a second, inevitably far greater injustice—namely, through the destruction of Israel by the Arabs. Israel's right to exist, recognised in 1948 by most nations and by the UN is not denied even by the Soviet Union. A genuine solution can come only through mutual understanding between the two parties.

That the Jews—whether as a people or as a religious community—no longer wish to live scattered among other peoples but want to constitute a nation in its own land is a decision that must be left to them. In the post-Hitleran situation, an additional factor

comes into play. Before—in spite of all sorts of trials and tribulations—the survival of the Jews was never threatened. Following the destruction of the substance of Jewry, primarily in Eastern Europe, but also in large parts of Western Europe, such survival can no longer be taken for granted. If Jewry has any future to look forward to at all, it is thanks to Israel. To reject the State of Israel is to wish the Jewish people as a whole its demise. Israel is large enough, even within the unfavourable borders laid down in the 1949 Armistice—which would never have been violated but for the wars forced upon Israel by the Arabs—to continue its development and absorb its numerically sharply reduced immigration.

### 3. 'Imperialist Israel'.

(a) It is maintained that Israel itself is imperialistic, that its intention is to dominate the Arabs and exploit them economically. For many, this thesis is arrived at in the following roundabout way: 'The struggle of the "Third World" is anti-imperialist; the Arabs belong to the "Third World"; therefore Israel, against whom the Arabs are fighting, must be imperialist.' Here we have another demonstration of the application of an intrinsically sound system of thought to a situation to which it is entirely unsuited. Surely the Arabs do not have to free themselves from an Israeli yoke that until now has not burdened them, either in actual fact or by intent. What embitters them is the very fact of Israel's existence. The conflict, in other words, is couched in completely different terms from what is usually the case.

If there is a State in the East that is pursuing imperialist aims, then that State is Egypt, which, although resisting British and American imperialism, aims at the same time not only to wipe out Israel but also to bring the other Arab States under its domination.

(b) Another version of the charge of imperialism holds that Israel, while perhaps not intrinsically imperialistic, is to be condemned as the tool and base of Western imperialism: a Nasserist propaganda lie that should not be swallowed as naively as the world once swallowed Hitler's Big Lies. The West's concept of the Middle East is one of 'balance'. It also supports the Arab States. In Jordan, the Israelis fought against arms delivered by the United States. Another piece of historical unawareness even has Israel being established as a bridgehead by the Western powers! In fact, the State of Israel came into being and exists today not thanks to any imperialist interests. It was established by the Jews on the foundation of the Zionist idea—ultimately, in fact, in bitter struggle against British colonialist policy. To a far greater extent it is the Arab nationalist movement that is a product of British colonialism. The Arab League was created by Eden. Was the State of Israel, surrounded from the start by foes bent on its destruction, to reject outside help? Was it in a position to pick and choose its friends? If today Israel has, in the United States, a (rather lukewarm) advocate and supporter—(how rapidly that sort of thing can change has been demonstrated by Russia's turnabout and now by France's new position)—then that is because, momentarily and by sheer necessity, it found its way

into the game of high politics; it is not, on the other hand, a product and an instrument of its policy. The deterioration of the relationship with the Eastern Bloc does not emanate from Israel.

#### 4. 'Aggressive Israel'.

We are familiar with Hitler's tactic of projecting his own outrages into his opponents. This is precisely the mechanism employed in Arab psychological warfare. To the unbiased observer it is evident that the Jews have not escaped oppression and persecution in other lands and gathered in Israel in order to start playing at conquest and to live in a permanent and costly state of war with their neighbours. Their military preparedness is not the product of an indigenous militarism but is forced upon them by a hostile environment; were they not capable of self-defence, they would long ago have ceased to exist. For twenty years, the Arabs have turned down peace efforts initiated by Israel and Israeli circles, although they themselves would have reaped economic as well as social benefits from a peace settlement. Their obstinate intransigence produces the aggressiveness and prevents peaceful development in the Middle East. They want to divert attention from their own social tensions by defaming and ultimately destroying the more progressive Israel. Since 1948, the militarists of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have been proclaiming the continued state of war with Israel as continuing unabated, investing billions in fortifications and arms purchases, and announcing their threat of another round.

What led to the most recent conflict? Egypt blocks the Gulf of Aqaba to Israel shipping. On all of Israel's borders, except the Lebanese, Arab armed forces are deployed. For weeks, the Syrians shoot at Israeli positions and villages. Supposing Israel fired the first shot (in the Six-Day War), should it have waited instead for the strangle-hold to close entirely? Who but its enemies and the antisemites can still have the audacity to place the label of 'attack' on so obvious an instance of self-defence?

As we said, however, 'aggressiveness' is still too mild a term to describe Arab policy. Israel is to be wiped from the map once more; the nation is to be exterminated—and Arab newspapers in the days preceding the war's outbreak provided unequivocal proof of this—on the model of the 'final solution'. The intransigent mentality of the Arab leaders on this point is incomprehensible and disturbing even to their friends, the Russians. In order to bring about a two-thirds majority in the UN General Assembly, Gromyko and Goldberg in July 1967 agreed on a declaration that Israel was to withdraw its troops from the occupied areas but that every nation had the right to establish an independent State of its own. Gromyko encountered the Arab States' icy rejection of this compromise.

It is 'part of the game' today, of many Leftists, to belittle the Arab threats to destroy Israel, because they do not fit into the concept of their own positive and humane

thinking. This attitude is, however, extremely dangerous. Considering the Arabs' unmistakable determination to drown two million people in the sea, apocalyptic categories (of thought or speculation) are nearer reality than economic ones. It is only 25 years ago that we witnessed how such threats of destruction—directed against the same people and never quite taken seriously—were turned into the brutal truth. The Left would lose its credibility for all time to come if, through one-sided sympathy for the Arabs, it were to contribute to a new Auschwitz. To grant unreserved support to the Arabs in their present attitude means, to all intents and purposes, to give one's consent to their design to destroy Israel, as State and nation. Precisely if one wishes to help the Arabs, too, one must set oneself firmly against the political leaders who have led them astray.

Peace in the Middle East can be achieved if everything is done to get the Arab politicians to abandon their criminal plans. A well-known German political scientist, Friedrich, has written to the United Nations that States which openly threaten to eradicate their neighbours have forfeited their right to UN membership and should be deprived of such membership. Would the Arabs reject development aid if it were generally conditioned upon their recognition of Israel's right to exist? These would be genuine, radical demands worthy of the Left.

#### **5. The Arab Refugees of 1948.**

According to the decision of the United Nations, the Mandated Territory of Palestine was to be partitioned into Jewish and Arab sectors. The Jews accepted the decision, the Arabs rejected it. The moment the Mandate came to its end, a bloody battle broke out between the Jewish settlers on one side and the Palestinian Arabs and the armies of the Arab States on the other. A large part of the Arab population left the territory of the State of Israel, with the idea of returning in triumph to their homes, in the wake of the Arab armies. Conversely, however, all the Jews who had lived in that part of Palestine which fell to Jordan were driven out. To this expulsion of the Palestinian Jews of Old Jerusalem, Hebron and so forth was added the expulsion of the Jews from the other Arab countries. How many Jews had to leave the Arab countries is evident from the fact that today the majority of Israel's Jews are not of European but of Asian (Near Eastern) and North African origin. We are dealing here, in other words, not with a one-sided exile of the Palestinian Arabs but, rather, with an exchange of populations—Jewish and Arab.

Yet, while Israel has done all in its power to integrate the newcomers in the life of the State, the Arab States have blocked the normalisation of the Palestinian refugees' life and the productive absorption of these people among their Arab and Moslem brothers. They preferred to keep them crammed in barracks and to let UNRWA keep them alive with emergency food and clothing rations. Because only as refugees could they be considered a political asset and did they constitute an instrument of

political pressure. The wound was to remain an open sore, as a demonstration to the world and as a standing indictment against Israel. And this despite the fact that Israel had offered, from the start, to participate in the settlement of the refugees—even if only in the Arab countries.

Without question (or doubt) Israel, by its very existence, bears a responsibility for the refugee problem. Incomparably heavier, however, lies the blame on the Arab Governments, which have degraded these unfortunate human beings to the status of professional refugees. In 1913, economically weak Greece took in a million fellow-Greeks who had been driven by the Turks from Asia Minor. Finland, which in 1940 lost a substantial portion of its territory to the Soviet Union, reintegrated the population in the country's economic life within five years. The existence of the refugees is to be deplored, but, by the same token, one must speak out against the Arab perfidy that has sabotaged every constructive measure designed to assist them. It has been calculated in Israel that the first hour and a half of the war in June 1967 cost the Arabs as much as would have been necessary to settle the refugees.

#### IV

When an opinion has won official acceptance, it is a matter of simple justice to give the opposing view, too, a hearing. It is the idea and purpose of the Opposition to act as the guarantor of this right. We would like to believe that the position of the Left would in many places be different today if the Arabs had won the war in June 1967. The 'underdog' always arouses compassion.

There is evidence, on the other hand, that no clear-thinking person can ignore and on which there is agreement even among otherwise sharply divided political parties. Anyone who in the face of such evidence goes over to the Opposition only because he happens to be a 'professional' does not serve justice but merely puts himself in the wrong. If, during the Middle East crisis last year, the sympathy of the Western world was entirely with Israel, then this is not because the Western world is hopelessly imperialistic and, as such must, in biased partisanship, applaud its imperialist pet child, Israel. To see things that way amounts to a false ideologisation.

Conversely, in the case of the man who shuts his eyes to the evidence and turns it around, one must ask oneself what ideology he thus serves and at what political achievement he aims.

Is it, perhaps, that the Western Left is reluctant after all to cause too harsh a break with Moscow? Is this a case of anti-imperialism serving as a rationalisation for unadmitted anti-semitism? The agreement of the Radical Left with the extreme Right gives one food for thought.



The protests against the war in Vietnam have won many follows in Germany because—among other things—the German younger generation believed that the sons of those who committed a grave injustice against other nations should not stand on the sidelines when a new injustice is being committed. This solidarity with the Vietnamese people, however, if it is not to lose its ability to inspire confidence, ought to be accompanied by solidarity also—why should we be ashamed to say it?—even more so with the people of Israel. To cry out against the war of destruction being perpetrated by the Americans against the population of Vietnam—and to pass over in silence the far worse holocaust being planned by the Arabs against Israel—that is inconsistency.

The lines are not drawn so simply that one can always automatically side with the Third World. Merely because the Arabs belong to the Third World, they are not yet *eo ipso* the purest of angels. The Israelis are the ones who are menaced; it is the Arabs, on the other hand, who are planning attack, expulsion and annihilation. One must take sides, in the first instance, with progress, with justice, with humanity—rather than with a given group of nations. Just as from these ideas follows the stand we have taken against the United States and for the Vietnamese people, so too it follows that we must take a stand against Nasser and for Israel.

This declaration was drafted jointly by ERNST ERDOS (Zurich) for the Socialist aspect and PROF. DR. MICHAEL LANDMANN (Berlin) for the Zionist aspect.

The following have stated their agreement with its contents:

ALFRED ANDERSCH (Berzona)	PROF. DR. WALTER JENS (Tubingen)
PROF. DR. HANS-WERNER BARTSCH (Frankfurt)	UWE JOHNSON (Berlin)
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## THE ILLUSION OF POLITICAL SETTLEMENT

*by Ghayth Joulani*

TO MANY OUTSIDE OBSERVERS the term 'political settlement' appears as an attractive and tempting formula for resolving the so-called Middle East crisis. Some Arab leaders, in our view quite naively, seem to be drawn towards the same concept out of the hope that they and their countries may be spared the suffering and destruction that inevitably entails armed hostility. No doubt many of these observers as well as the Arab protagonists of the 'peaceful solution' are submitting their ideas and hopes from the best of motives and the purpose of this article is not to question the good faith of any person acting out of sympathy to or involvement with the Arab people's struggle. Nevertheless, one may certainly question the expediency of seeking such a 'political solution' when it tends to deflect from pursuing the only solution left to the Palestinian conflict, the regaining of the Palestinian people's rights by force of arms.

IN CALLING FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT of the Palestinian conflict, one is hopelessly pursuing an illusion. Another illusion is to think that somehow the points of issue that have arisen between the Arab states and Israel as a result of last year's war (i.e. the loss of territory by some Arab states) can be divorced from the basic issue of Palestine, the Land and the People. Any political solution between the Arab states and Israel aiming at dealing with 'the aftermath of aggression' can only be explained by the word 'compromise' which, in addition, must inevitably be heavily leaning toward the 'victor' Israel. Any improvement on Israel's pre-war position cannot but be detrimental to the cause of Palestine. It is, hence, almost axiomatic to state that the so-called Middle East crisis is intimately linked with the struggle over Palestine between the uprooted, but rightful people of Palestine and the alien Zionist invaders of their homeland, and that if there is to be no prejudicing of the Palestinian people's cause then no 'political solution' of the situation resulting from last year's war is feasible.

IT FOLLOWS that a solution must be sought to the root problem, Palestine. In the case of the Palestinian people's struggle to regain their homeland and to exercise their sovereignty over it, little can be said for a 'political solution'. In fact, and in the absence of a revolutionary and totally unexpected change in the foundations and the institutional components of the Zionist state, no such 'political settlement' can be envisaged. The parties to the Palestinian conflict are not involved in differences over territorial claims, as is sometimes assumed by opinion in the West, nor are they engaged in a 'senseless struggle that they can do without if it was not for the 'prodding' of their leaders. The Palestinian conflict is a struggle between a people heavily permeated by the racist doctrine of Zionism, usurping and expanding at the expense of the very existence of the indigenous population on one side, and the indigenous population of Palestine and its neighbouring territories who are determined to resist the alien invader and usurper, and to preserve their existence as a sovereign people.

THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE constitute one, undivided whole and cannot be divided into national, political and economic rights. In fact, the substitution of the 'refugee' issue for the real issue of denial of sovereignty and the right to self-determination is merely an attempt to isolate the economic injustice sustained by the Palestinian people from the total and more important national injustice. It is the Palestinians' demand for their national right as a people denied the exercise of their sovereignty over their land that forms the basis for their struggle against the Zionists. Such a right is an absolute concept; it cannot be divided and compromised.

THERE IS, in fact, absolute bipolarisation between the moral positions of the two parties to the Palestinian conflict and it is this very absoluteness that precludes any form of political compromise.

## THE SITUATION IN JORDAN AND COMMUNIST TACTICS

by FAHMI SALFITI

THE CONTINUING Israeli aggression against Jordan is having political, economic and social repercussions. The aggression and the subsequent occupation of Jordanian territory affects the thinking of the different classes and social groups, pre-occupied mainly now with the ways and means of overcoming the consequences of the June war.

The occupation has hurt national feeling and has resulted in national oppression. The Israelis aim at driving the Arab population out of the invaded areas and resettling them with Jews. In some areas, the occupation authorities are building new settlements for this purpose, and exerting political, economic and military pressures to compel Arabs to leave. So far, more than 400,000 Jordanians have left their homes on the western bank of the Jordan, adding to the many economic and social complications in the unoccupied areas.

Israel has seized Jordan's most fertile land, her most developed territory with 48 per cent of the country's industry and with 44 per cent of her working class. Something like 80 per cent of her tourist income is gone and just as much of her income from fruit-growing, while grain output has dropped 30 per cent. The loss of part of the home market has pushed down production in the unoccupied areas and increased unemployment. Prices have risen and commodities formerly produced in the western regions have now to be imported.

In the occupied areas conditions have deteriorated. Most of the factories are idle, with the result that unemployment has soared. Furthermore, the occupation authority has given over commerce to Israeli traders, while Jordanians are prohibited from purchasing goods in the unoccupied part of Jordan.

What is obvious from the general economic and social situation is that the workers and peasants are feeling the effects of the occupation more than any other class or group. But though the economic consequences strike hardest at the workers and peasants, they are not the only ones to suffer. Landowners in the occupied areas are badly affected, and so are holders of the fertile land on the east bank of the Jordan, notably at Al-Agwar,

exposed to Israeli raids. Agricultural production has fallen as a result.

Other effects of the occupation are forcible evictions and confiscation of land, which makes holders hostile to the occupation, for the sad experience of the Arabs who had lived in what became Israel after 1948 is still vivid in their memory. The industrial bourgeoisie, too, have sustained losses due to the closure of factories west of the Jordan and the consequent reduction of the home market east of it.

The nation is solidly opposing the occupation, excluding the big bureaucratic bourgeoisie connected with imperialism and benefiting from neo-colonialist policy. But the struggle assumes different forms by reason of the different class interests. Though opposed to the occupation, the big landholders and the big bourgeoisie, for example, seek a solution in a deal with US imperialism and are trying to win its favour and support. Their range of vacillation and choice of means depends largely on the scale, scope and influence of the general national movement, especially that of the workers, poor peasants and the petty bourgeoisie in town and countryside.

The Jordanian Communists took cognisance of this situation and the attitude of the various classes and social groups when drawing up their emergency programme. The programme contains an analysis of the situation and draws the appropriate conclusions. Prominent among the tasks it lists the aim of a national bloc of classes and groups affected by the aggression as a counterweight to the gravitation of some groups towards US imperialism, seeking to create the conditions for their participation in the common struggle against the occupation.

The programme does not overly stress problems of current economic and social growth. Instead, it outlines the advantages in the present contingency of a united national government embracing, among others, representatives of the big bourgeoisie and landowners opposed to the occupation. It calls for a peace settlement and condemns the reckless post-defeat tendency, reaffirming allegiance to peaceful coexistence. Explicitly, it states that the correlation of forces has not changed in favour of imperialism, the scales being tilted for peace and socialism.

Defeatist sentiment west of the Jordan has been largely dispelled, but vestiges of it remain. We hold that it will disappear altogether, depending on the scale of the popular struggle under the National Front Charter, on the firmness of our Party, on its prestige and influence, on common sense and flexibility in politics in keeping with the situation in Jordan, in the other Arab countries and in the rest of the world. Success depends also on the policy of the government, on whether it is oriented on a peaceful accommodation, a policy that would increase Israel's isolation in the world. Also important is the deepening hatred of US imperialism, which supports Israel and impedes a peaceful solution in keeping with the Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967.

Our Party has repeatedly voiced its support of this resolution and demands its implementation. The bulk of our people support the resolution, and we are pleased that influential Arab leaders, and President Gamal Abdel Nasser for one, have displayed understanding, are ready to adhere to the resolution and to work for a peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Jordanian Government has also taken a positive attitude, oriented on fulfilling the Security Council resolution, though it is somewhat contradictory, hesitant and influenced by differing factors. Compliant to popular pressure at home and in other Arab countries, on the one hand, it dreads any growth of the mass movement for what it may do to its class interests and refuses to sever the ties with imperialism, on the other. It is far removed from the idea of co-operating with the masses and the anti-imperialist forces at home, in other Arab countries and in the rest of the world for fulfilment of the Security Council resolution.

This is clearly reflected in Jordan's home and foreign policy. Some influential statesmen (such as the Prime Minister) favour solidarity with Egypt, better relations with Syria and co-ordinated action. Other forces, however, call for better relations with the United States and go out of their way, overtly and covertly, to obstruct rapprochement with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. They want to prevent the masses from becoming more active, their policy being aimed at suppressing democratic freedoms. Moreover, they object to Soviet arms for the army and oppose mobilisation and arming of the people.

The government's attitude to resistance in the occupied areas and to preparing the people and the army in the unoccupied part of the country for struggle against the consequences of the aggression, is contradictory, at least in the class context. It supports those who have related interests, and its methods discourage growth of the mass movement, for it fears that the influence of working-class and peasant representatives may grow. It is cool to the mass organisations west of the Jordan, refuses to recognise the associations of teachers and students, and all but ignores people's organisations in its radio propaganda. Yet it supports financially the bureaucracy on the western bank and members of the upper classes, with the purpose of shoring up their future positions after the occupation.

However, these contradictions between different groups and classes are overshadowed by the now main contradiction between the people, on the one hand, and imperialism, Zionism and the reactionary elements connected with imperialism, on the other.

The existence of this contradiction offers opportunities for influencing the ruling group, particularly the King, and prevailing on them to repudiate imperialism. After all, the King has a vested interest in retaining his throne and regaining a grip on both banks of the Jordan, while the United States and Israel wish to dispossess him of part of his kingdom.



We are also aware, however, that the King would not like the mass movement to grow to proportions imperilling his throne. That is why the Party opposes Left extremists campaigning for the overthrow of the present system, on the one hand, and the defeatist trend, on the other, whose exponents declare that what is done is done and cannot be undone.

In reference to forms of struggle in the National Front and among the masses, our Party is conscious of the need to deepen the contradictions between the men in power and imperialism. It seeks to paralyse the efforts of the pro-imperialist elements among the ruling circles and those who try to guide their hand by warning them against the growth of the mass movement and prevailing on them to co-operate with imperialism.

The persecutions of the past ten years have weakened the national-democratic movement and its various bodies organisationally and politically. With the sole exception of the Communist Party, the political organisations have become less active and their role has diminished. Subversive neo-colonialist activities and the isolation from the realities of life of some people in the national forces, coupled with an inability to comprehend the changes in the country, have but spurred on this process.

The above applies to the pre-aggression period of over a year ago, whereas the past twelve months have been a time of reorganisation. Our Party has done its best to help these people to find their bearings and to persuade them to abandon unrealistic slogans at variance with the present task. They have accepted the National Front Charter calling for the elimination of the consequences of the aggression by political means, not short of armed action. However, we have no illusions about the reckless and unrealistic trends having been outlived. They are still current, surfacing from time to time in a situation where the possibilities of a peaceful settlement are still unclear. In a way, these trends are a reaction to the provocative Israeli declarations and violence in the occupied areas. The only way to neutralise them is to promote mass action and draw the people in question into the struggle for liberation. In doing so, we must take into account the existing regime, the possibilities of the national movement and the thinking of the masses. The reckless trend represented by the fedayeen [Members of armed resistance organisations] has a negative effect on efforts to rally the masses in support of the political aims proclaimed in the Charter of the National Front and strengthens the tendency to spurn political struggle, hampering our Party's efforts to enliven the National Front in unoccupied areas with active fedayeen organisations.

Little has been achieved since the establishment of the National Front. Its activity is still limited, despite continuous efforts on our part to find and apply new forms of guidance. The influence exerted by the Front could be far greater, because it embraces parties, trade unions and personalities of considerable weight, capable of putting pressure on the government. The Jerusalem Liberation Committee, for example, has among its members people aligned with the National Front, including influential Ministers,

notably the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Our Party, too, is represented on the executive body. The Committee has called on the Afro-Asian Solidarity Organisation, the Soviet-Arab Friendship Society, the World Council of Peace, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Women's International Democratic Federation and the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam to participate in the demonstration in Amman organised jointly with the National Front.

Contacts with fraternal Communist parties, international democratic organisations and mass organisations in the socialist countries help change the outlook of our political and social bodies and show that, gradually, the need for organised contact between our own forces and the various contingents of the world revolutionary movement is appreciated.

Special mention might be made of the Federation of Workers' Unions which, at the prompting of our Party, has extended its relationships abroad, establishing close ties with the WFTU and trade unions in the socialist countries.

While extending foreign ties, the organisations are also inclined to strengthen their contacts with the people. National Front committees have appeared in towns along the eastern bank of the Jordan. Our comrades are working for interaction and solid ties between the leadership of the Federation and the various trade unions, and between the trade unions and the masses. The opportunities for this are good, because our Party wields influence in some of the bigger trade unions, as well as in the Federation. The Federation was the second important force, after our Party, that prepared and effected the mass demonstration on June 5.

Our Party is working to consolidate the mass organisations. We are active in the National Front, the Jerusalem Liberation Committee and in the trade unions, and initiated the Women's League, in which our women members play a leading role. The League has good relations with the Women's International Democratic Federation and with women's organisations in the socialist countries. Delegations from some of these organisations have visited Amman. The Women's League is active in political life, and is a member of the National Front and the Jerusalem Liberation Committee. At present, we and our friends are trying to set up a teachers' association on the east bank of the Jordan, and to organise the refugees. Our comrades are helping reorganise the unions of workers employed under the auspices of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, and have founded a Refugees' Welfare Society.

The Party's efforts to found a Jordan-Soviet Friendship Society are yielding results, and the initiators have applied for an official licence.

In the unoccupied part of the country we are working in the trade unions, refugee camps, villages and town neighbourhoods. The accent is on the central problem of the day:

marshalling the people for the fight against imperialist and Zionist pressure and the threat of a new aggression. We have a central newspaper, and Party statements on various issues are widely circulated.

In the border areas, Party members help train people in the use of arms, this gives impetus to the campaign for arming the people in other parts of the country. Wherever the people are active, our mass base expands. This is true also of the refugee camps, which have changed their locations several times due to the continuing Israeli raids. Despite difficulties, instability, ideological confusion and spread of extremist ideas, the Party has gained numerically in most of the unoccupied areas. Now it is concerned mainly with strengthening the bonds between the Party organisations at different levels in order to improve co-ordination. Among Party members it cultivates an understanding of present needs, equipping them for the fight against the extremist and defeatist tendencies. This does not mean, however, that our work has been flawless. Many opportunities for work among the masses are still untapped. Additional possibilities are available to improve our educational and organisational work and forge stronger ties between the Party and the masses.

Our Party has retained its organisational unity in the occupied and non-occupied parts of the country. In the occupied western part of Jordan it puts out the underground newspaper, *Al-Watan* (Fatherland), the only Arab daily appearing there at present, and we are happy to note that its circulation is increasing and that our membership in the occupied areas has doubled over the past six months. Our Party is the principal organising force there. We assumed this responsibility from the beginning, and are working to unite the forces opposed to the occupation in national committees on which other political trends, like the Baath Party and the Arab nationalists (with only a limited influence), heads of municipalities, trade unionists, teachers, doctors and other professions, are represented alongside the Communist Party. Our Party was the moving spirit in re-establishing some of the trade unions dissolved by the government before the aggression, and worked hard to establish women's organisations. National committees have been set up in many of the occupied towns and in the bigger villages. They are represented on the Higher Co-ordinating Committee, which provides guidance to the masses opposed to the occupation.

The national committees have sparked a series of strikes, organised the boycott of Israelis and the campaign for better conditions west of the Jordan. And they stood at the head of the strikes and mass demonstrations of June 5 in the occupied towns. Their guidance has the effect of rallying the people. All these aspects are followed closely by our leadership, which devises various forms of struggle to suit the situation.

Our thoroughly considered policy, far removed from petty bourgeois extremism, has enabled us to preserve our cadres in the occupation period, and to attain the present

high level of consciousness among the people. We have withstood pressures from sources who wanted to involve us in various undertakings for which the situation is as yet unsuited.

What I should like to stress is that our Party plays an extremely important role in the occupied areas. The success or failure of our mission there will inevitably affect our future and the Communist movement in the other Arab countries.

The defeatist trend, which came into being instantly after the occupation, has made little headway. Its exponents want to evade the issue of the struggle west of the Jordan. For us, on the other hand, the prospects of this struggle are vital. We lay the accent not on Israel's illegal conduct, not on its attempts to evict people, and not on the confiscations of property or the persecutions which also affect our own comrades. Our accent is on Jordan's future, the future when the now occupied territories are recovered. The occupation affects the attitude of Jordan's rulers. Pro-imperialist elements among them seek closer bonds with imperialism, they are writing off the Palestine problem and encourage Israel's expansionist aims.

Organisational work west of the Jordan, such as the establishment of new trade unions and of associations of teachers and students, tends to encourage similar efforts in the unoccupied areas. Nor can the authorities interfere openly, notably because these organisations do most of their work under the slogan of national unity and participate in the resistance movement. Furthermore, among other things, our work in the occupied areas has compelled the Amman authorities to ease up on the Communist Party. No longer is the anti-Communist line as brazen as before. The authorities refrain from applying anti-communist legislation and (within certain limits) tolerate democratic freedoms. The ruling circles realise our Party's important role in the occupied areas and some have gone so far as to admit it publicly.

The Communist Party of Israel is winning increasing respect among Arabs not only in the occupied areas. This respect is traceable to the active efforts of its Deputies in the Knesset, its demands for the rule of law, and to its printed word in the occupied areas. The Communist press there is semi-legal, because the Israeli authorities apply there the Jordanian anti communist regulations. Our understanding with the Israeli comrades is complete and we co-operate with them wherever we can.

We also co-operate with the national front in the Ghaza sector, where Marxist elements play a visible role. Our contacts are proving useful and should be broadened.

We have outlined here the main areas of our work and our assessment of the situation in the occupied and non-occupied parts of Jordan. To round out this account, we should now examine the guerrilla organisations, which are receiving considerable publicity in the radio and press abroad. The masses look upon them with sympathy, and so do the governments of the Arab countries.

The feeling of the masses is understandable. The military defeat and subsequent eviction of hundreds of thousands of people, the material and moral losses, the sense of national humiliation, especially among the petty bourgeoisie, the absence of a unitarian national government in Jordan that would modify home and foreign policy in a positive sense, the slowing down of reconstruction by the progressive regimes and the unfulfilled expectations pinned on them and their military potential—all this has evoked a strong public reaction. The masses gravitate towards movements that call for armed action instead of seeking peaceful political solution.

The masses attach a cardinal role to the resistance organisations, for they think that guerrilla action can restore our honour and avenge the national humiliation. This sympathy for the guerrillas is not at variance with the Party's attitude and its slogans, although any accent on armed action tends to depress the political activity of the masses.

However, the masses do not treat the matter as an alternative (either guerrillas or Communists) although some people, notably in the guerrilla organisations, try to distort Communist policy as concerns forms of struggle in the present period.

It should be borne in mind that the guerrilla organisations are politically heterogeneous and that many of their members are influenced by extremist ideas. Some leaders, especially of Al-Fatah [Palestine national-liberation movement] come from the reactionary Muslim Brotherhood and are still under its influence. Most members, by the way, are not Jordanians. The bulk are Palestinians. This limits the actual scope, producing aims that are, in effect, impracticable. Too, too, is a threat to our Party and the national movement in Jordan.

We should neither exaggerate nor ignore the dangers stemming from the above factors. There are also some influential patriotic elements in the guerrilla organisations, with whom our Party maintains contacts and conducts a dialogue, striving to prevail on them that they should participate in political activity and join the National Front, co-ordinating their efforts with the other patriotic forces in fighting to eliminate the consequences of the aggression in the context of the prevailing balance of strength and with an eye on local, all-Arab and international conditions. Acting on this logic, our Party holds that the guerrilla organisations should participate in the National Front. However, our appeals have evoked no response so far.

We have described our attitude to the membership of these organisations, our contacts with them and our assessment of the different elements in their leadership. Our stand is based on the following:

1. Neither in Jordan nor in any other Arab country are conditions ripe for guerrilla activity in or outside the occupied territories.
2. The guerrilla organisations are based outside the occupied areas and their activity, therefore, is usually the same as that of the regular Arab army commandos.

3. Fedayeen activity differs from the armed struggle waged by the people in the occupied areas. Supporting fedayeen organisations means supporting unrealistic political aims, aims that we reject. Their method of struggle is at variance with the objective conditions and strongly coloured by extremism. They tend to dissociate the resistance movement from the facts of life in Jordan and the rest of the Arab world, and from the world anti-imperialist movement. What is more, they ignore mass and political activity and object to the existence of political parties in the present period.

4. The progressive Arab countries, such as Egypt and Syria, appreciate the correlation of strength in the region and the dangerous consequences of provoking the enemy. Therefore, they object to actions in the immediate proximity of the cease-fire line. Their support of the guerrilla organisations is given on tactical grounds, for they desire to win sympathy among the masses and, possibly, conceal weaknesses they are reluctant to discard. On the other hand, the support of the fedayeen by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the collections of funds by Saudi princes and influential figures in Kuwait, and the support of Al-Fatah (especially by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait encourage the fedayeen. As we see it, those two countries want to divert the public from their ties with imperialism and surreptitiously reduce participation in the all-Arab effort, while prodding Jordan to extremism. This would supply the other side with fresh arguments justifying acts of aggression to the benefit of US imperialism.

5. In most cases guerrilla actions evoke disapproval. Though they do a certain amount of damage to the enemy and receive a certain amount of publicity, their price runs into too many casualties and precipitates evictions of Arabs from the most fertile areas.

Despite our view of the fedayeen, we do not write off armed struggle. It may be entirely justified, depending on the scale and scope of the general movement in the occupied areas and on the readiness of the masses to repulse the aggressor.

Yet when the premises for armed action appear, the character of the fedayeen organisation and the lack of realism in their programmes limit their possibilities for effective participation in the resistance. Also, they are unable to cross into occupied areas and have no bases there. And where they manage to penetrate they fail to integrate with the local population because, in effect, they are strangers.

It is farthest from our minds to attack the fedayeen organisations. All we want is to present an objective picture. We appreciate the national sentiment of the members of the resistance movement fighting courageously against our opponents. But we cannot afford to ignore their defects. We have contacts with their leaders and endeavour to deepen and develop their system of views, so that they should carry on the fight correctly. We also have contacts with the rank and file and do our best to develop their political consciousness to prevent anyone from using their sincere national convictions for selfish ends contrary to the interest of the people and country, far removed, in effect, from the struggle to end the nightmare of occupation.



# ISRAEL and the LEFT

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by

RAYMOND FLETCHER, M.P.

*ISRAELI SOCIALISTS who travel abroad in search of understanding, find themselves in a ghetto that is no less real for being invisibly walled. Amos Keynan, for example, was not even allowed into the revolutionary Cuba he wants to love and was publicly insulted by British pacifists he was anxious to befriend. For, in the eyes of so many on the Left, he has repudiated the only role they want a Jew to play. He refused to be a victim, the object of a million tears and the subject of a thousand acres of printed protest. He fought. He won. He helped save his nation from obliteration and his people from annihilation. He cannot be forgiven*

It is all very strange — especially when one considers how forgiving the Left has been to President Nasser. The Egyptian dictator can tell the editor of the Bombay journal, *Blitz*, as he did on October 4, 1958, that he believes in the authenticity of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and can instruct his representative at an Arab League conference, as he did on January 28, 1964, to propose its renewed distribution in Asia and Africa. He can even give an interview to the Neo-Nazi *Deutsche Nationalzeitung* in which he said "the lie of the six million murdered Jews is not taken seriously by anyone" (see *Minority of One*, September, 1967). These abominations are brushed aside as indiscretions. After all, as one MP informed me as though it closed the argument, Nasser also reads *Tribune* and admires Michael Foot.

There is a point beyond which silliness becomes sinister. It was reached in the 1930's by only one member of the Labour Party, Hugh Ross Williamson, who declared that Hitler, though nutty on race, was sound on Socialism. It has now been reached by many members who command more support and respect than Williamson ever dreamed of. In the interests of the inner health of our own movement, this sinister silliness must be confronted and confounded.

It is, of course, different in kind from the pro-Arabism that has always been with us and will always be with us so long as the Foreign Office is. The ghost of Ernest Bevin walks in its corridors as vigorously as it thrusts itself into Christopher Mayhew's speeches. The

confusion on the Left, moreover, does not derive from the anti-Jewishness that contaminates the lower depths of the Labour Party. The Member of Parliament who refused to sign a motion supporting Israel on the grounds that he had never seen a Jewish coalminer is not worth naming, let alone refuting.

Yet confusion it is and it derives, as most political confusion does, from twisted virtues rather than incurable vices. It is a virtue to espouse the interests of the Arab refugees, the most conspicuous and most unfortunate victims of the 20-year war. It is a virtue to assert that Palestinian Arabs have a case and should enjoy rights. It is a virtue to insist that the world community, through the United Nations, should have a say in the matter and that what it says should be heeded.

Even virtue, however, can be carried too far. Let me illustrate the point by briefly removing my argument from its Middle East moorings. In 1945 millions of German refugees streamed westwards, forcibly expelled from East Prussia and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. All of them suffered and many of them died. Yet is there a Socialist in the world who would change the Oder-Neisse line or the Western frontier of Czechoslovakia? Socialist doctrine provides no sanction for the punishment of whole peoples. We are sorry for the victims of Hitler's war but are totally hostile to those of them who campaign for a return to what they call 'the lost territories'. The peace of Europe is more important than the homesickness—or desire for revenge—of the expellees. Socialists, unlike Nasser and some of his ministers, neither write for nor give interviews to the German revenge-seekers, who publish the *Deutsche Nationalzeitung*.

Yet the Oder-Neisse line represents as great a denial of the right to self-determination as the Israeli frontier of June 1967 was alleged to be. When we accept it we fracture our logic and need apologise to nobody for doing so. But why is it so impossible for some of us to look at the Middle East through the same spectacles that we were when looking at Europe?

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

It is true that the historical background is not so clear. Yet certain landmarks stand out from the fog. On November 29, 1947, the UN Assembly accepted that Palestine should be partitioned and two states, one Arab one Jewish, created. Both East and West, Russians and Americans, supported the recommendation. The Jewish Agency accepted what it considered a compromise with some regret. The Arabs refused to accept it at all. They started fighting. Jamal Husseini, then acting chairman of the Arab Higher Committee, was quite frank about this in a statement to the Security Council. 'We have never concealed the fact,' he said, 'that we began the fighting.' (Security Council Official Records, April 23, 1948) On May 15, 1948, the Arab states invaded the infant state of Israel. *Everything they have attempted and proclaimed since flows from that first invasion. It was described by Trygve Lie, then Secretary-General of the UN, as 'the first armed aggression which the world had seen since the end of the war.'*

The Arab states have been in a state of war with Israel for 20 years and continually affirm that they will not make peace.

#### WHO STARTED IT?

This is the context within which the abstract formulae of the Left should be applied. Aggression is wrong, creating refugees is wrong, expanding frontiers by force is wrong—but who started it and who continues it? It is permissible in 1968 to take into account what conditioned Karl Marx's thought a century ago: the social structures of states in conflict. When Paris was run by Napoleon III, Marx supported Prussia. As soon as the workers of Paris established the Commune, however, the question of who was right in the Franco-Prussian conflict dwindled to an irrelevant abstraction. The Socialist theorist campaigned for the Socialist workers of Paris. Imbued with the same realism, Marx did not hold up his hands in horror when the Crimean War broke out. He wanted Tzarist Russia defeated at the hands of the lesser evils, Britain and France. What is more, he told the Allies, in the columns of the New York *Tribune*, just how to do it.

*Israel in 1948 was an infant social democracy. Her enemies, ideologically armed by the Nazi Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, were feudal, backward and barbarous. Their victory would have dragged all Palestine back to the 12th Century and turned Tel Aviv and Haifa into Auschwitz-style crematoria. Marx would probably never have supported Zionism. But can anyone doubt, given the criteria he thought and wrote by, that he would have supported social democracy against regimes that made Tzar Nicholas I look like a progressive?*

The Six-Day War was a campaign in the larger war that began in May, 1948. My attitude towards it is wholly conditioned by that fact. Though Egypt, Syria and Iraq have had revolutions, and Jordan has made some progress, they inherited their Holy War (as they themselves describe it) from the unholy alliance of 1948. Israel, despite her successes in three campaigns, remains what she was — a beleaguered social democratic state.

But, we are not told by the military experts of *Peace News*, the Arabs did not want a war. Does not their quick defeat, chime in the commentators on some Polish journals, prove that they were not prepared for it? Hitler, of course, did not want a war. He turned to fighting only when he could not get what he wanted by threatening. There are captured Arab operational orders, however, that give the lie to the whining claim that Arab dispositions in June, 1968, were purely defensive, just as there are the texts of Arab broadcasts that announce the liquidation of the Jews rather than the liberation of Palestine as the object of the exercise.

At whatever point the Left's arguments against Israel are shifted from the abstract to the concrete, they dissolve. A UN resolution is not complied with. Black mark against Israel. *But would any of my Left-wing friends comply if, say, they were farming below*

*the Golan Heights and compliance brought back Syrian artillery within range of their back gardens? And what would they do if the guns started firing, as they did with lethal regularity for years before the June campaign? Run up the hills waving the UN resolution? Or ask their friends in the House of Commons to table an early day motion? Syrian gunners read neither UN resolutions nor early day motions.*

British Socialists, moreover, do not treat all UN resolutions as Holy Writ. (Or is it only a matter of time before *Tribune* demands the return of Gibraltar to Spain?) Yet the particular UN resolution to which the Left is attached is a good one. All that I argue is that it will remain a scrap of paper until the Arab states and their state of war with Israel, discuss peaceful guarantees with Israel, and accept for themselves what they consider binding on others. It takes two sides to make a peace and enforce an agreement.

Let the Arab states make peace, or even sit down with Israelis to talk about making peace, then the whole context changes and I, for one, would have no hesitation in rejoining old comrades with whom I am at the moment in conflict. For it is then that the refugee problem can move to the top of the agenda, then that plans can be worked out for Middle East development that will make futile all the disputation about which people occupies what land, then that the formulae of international socialism can be advocated and applied. The time is not yet, as we all said in 1940 when we accepted Churchill's leadership in a struggle for socialism.

My support for Israel, I should add, does not imply support for everything Israel does or all that Israeli leaders say. I can vote Labour and disagree with the Labour Government at one and the same time. I am not a Jew. *I support the socialist dockers of Haifa, the socialist builders of Beersheba, the socialist farmers on the shores of Galilee, the socialist mayor of Nazareth, who has given his Arab people better houses and better conditions than they would get in Jordan, and the socialist soldiers who stand guard over this inspiring experiment in transforming deserts into gardens and who will one day join with their Arab neighbours to beat swords into ploughshares.*

## THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN 'SOLUTION' TO THE 'ISRAELI PROBLEM'

by  
Dr. MOSHE SNEH

### 1. WHAT IS BEHIND THE RUSE?

One does not have to be very clever to uncover the ruse lurking behind the plan for a "political solution" to the Middle East crisis, first published in an Egyptian, and more recently, in a Soviet version. The ruse is: evacuation without peace. In other words, to bring about, by fixing a "time-table", a list of priorities for the implementation of the paragraphs of the Security Council resolution, with Israel withdrawing from all the areas it captured in the Six-Day War before the discussion concerning the remaining paragraphs of the resolution, and without this leading, at the end of the process, to peace.

The ruse is the nullification of Israel's military victory without anything being given in return. The ruse is the eradication of the results of the war without eradicating its causes. The ruse is to leave the Arab-Israel dispute open for further extortion after the areas will have been evacuated. All this is clear to anyone with eyes to see. Still, it is worth our while to consider the long-range purpose of the Soviet-Egyptian plan: how it aims to solve the basic dispute, if and when the Israel withdrawal is achieved as a first condition.

Some time after the Israel withdrawal to the Armistice lines in 1949 will come the demand for a solution of the Palestine Problem in accordance with the UN partition plan of 29 November 1947. The reference here will not necessarily be to the twisting border-lines of that plan, which were determined according to a demographic pattern that has since altered, not to borders of that time, but to the size of the territory of that time, and to the composition of the population of that time. To be precise: the idea is to cut down Israel's territory to 14,000 sq. km. by transferring the entire Negev to Arab sovereignty, and to introduce more than a million Arab refugees into this truncated Israel, so that the ratio of the country's inhabitants will be restored to what it was on the day of the partition decision was adopted in the UN General Assembly — namely, 55 per cent Jews, 45 per cent Arabs.

Such a "solution" can then formally be interpreted as though the Soviet Union were carrying out the international obligation it undertook at the UN in 1947, when it voted for the partition plan. Such a "solution" is one the Soviet Union hopes to be able to persuade its Arab allies to accept: an Israel like that will no longer constitute a "wedge" between the African-Western segment and the Asian-Eastern segment of the Arab world, for the Arab Negev will be a bridge linking the two parts of the pan-Arab expanse; an Israel like that will no longer serve as an attraction for the Jews of the Diaspora, because there will be no room in it for additional immigrants and, willy-nilly, we will see the "de-Zionization" of the State of Israel. More than that. Such a State will quickly lose its Jewish colouring, just as Lebanon has a Christian colouring, but a State like that will be swallowed up and assimilated in the Arab world . . . .

Is this "solution" just a guess on the author's part, a theory he dreamed up or a piece of speculation? No, it is far more than that. There is a great deal of evidence to show that this indeed is the "solution" towards which the agreed Soviet-Egyptian strategy has been aiming in recent years. I shall not enumerate all, but only some of this evidence, varying in source and degree of importance.

Vladislav Gomulka, immediately upon his return to Moscow where he had attended the special consultation of the seven East European States at the height of the Six-Day War, on 9 June 1967, made a speech in Warsaw in which he gave the secret away: the State of Israel had been allotted an area of 14,000 square kilometres, with an Arab population of 45 per cent. Anything more than that is aggression . . . Meir Wilner, of the leadership of the New Communist Party, writing in the issue of Sartre's "Temps Modernes" devoted to the Israel-Arab problem, "proves" that the State of Israel implies the area of the partition plan and numerical equality between Jews and Arabs in that area. . . Muhammad Hasanein Heikal, known as Nasser's mouthpiece, wrote in "Al-Ahram" that, where Israel was concerned, the choice was between a forcible uprooting, on the one hand, and, on the other, dissolution in the great Arab ocean . . .

And we might as well know: the Soviet-Egyptian plan, which calls for an Israel withdrawal as a starter, is designed thus to take the first step towards the "final solution", the meaning of which is the eradication of the State of Israel as a Jewish State.

## 2. HOW ARE THEY PLANNING TO DO THIS?

It goes without saying that, in the international arena, the co-ordinated Soviet-Egyptian policy is limited, at this stage, to the demand for an Israel withdrawal, without unravelling the code of the steps that are to follow in the plan. That is the difference between Egyptian diplomacy and that of Syria, Iraq and Algeria, which do not hesitate to proclaim their intention of wiping Israel off the map.

Thus, Soviet-Egyptian strategy seeks to achieve the Israel withdrawal unconditionally, or as a pre-condition — by diplomatic means. It tried to achieve this at two previous sessions of the UN General Assembly — a Special Session and a Regular Session; then in the discussions at the Security Council; then by putting a distorted, one-sided interpretation on the resolution of the Security Council; and now again in the General Assembly. That does not mean that those who make this policy are so naive as to believe that they will obtain the necessary majority for a resolution ordering Israel to withdraw unconditionally, after having failed in this attempt until now. What they seriously intend to gain, first of all, is the support of world public opinion, to the largest extent possible, for the demand for withdrawal, so that they may represent Israel as the factor responsible for the absence of security and the danger of war in the Middle East.

Second, Soviet diplomacy strives for an agreement with the United States on the Middle East. Such an agreement would include an Israel withdrawal; it would not include peace. This is not a new Soviet idea, it, too, was revealed by Gomulka in the above-mentioned speech, as follows: It may be that, for the sake of maintaining what are for it vital positions in the Arab countries, the United States will be ready for all kinds of moves, "even at Israel's expense". ("Tribuna Ludo, "20 June 1967.") It was not for nothing that Kosygin went to see Johnson from the UN Assembly in July 1967 to Glassboro. Now this move has been given fresh impetus. The reason for this may be found in the realities to day. Both the United States and the USSR have lost much of their control over their allies, and as for France, on the one hand, and China on the other — they have turned their backs on them altogether. Both have lost considerable prestige, one in the Vietnam War, the other in the Six-Day War. In Washington as well as Moscow, therefore, there has been a rise in the tendency towards a rapprochement between the two Powers, with a view to dividing the world into spheres of influence, on the assumption that no nation will be able to stand up against the joint dictate of the two giants.

This, of course, is a perversion of the lofty principle of peaceful co-existence among all nations of the world, large and small — for the sake of the co-domination of the world by two super-Powers. And when principles are being perverted, we need not wonder at some other things that have been happening. What was the meaning of the appeal addressed by the present Soviet leadership to the President Johnson at the outbreak of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, if not to imply: Don't interfere when I make order in my backyard, and I shan't interfere when you make orders in yours' . . . And how is one to explain the supposedly procedural fact that the Soviet Government submitted its proposal concerning the Middle East not to U Thant and not to Jarring, but rather to the American President, if not to hint quite clearly: Let the two of us settle this matter between ourselves, and what we agree upon will have to be accepted by the rest, whether they like it or not . . .



The strengthening of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean Basin is not in contradiction to the tendency towards a rapprochement with the United States. In fact, it could even serve this tendency by raising the bargaining capacity in the negotiations for an overall deal. Some have been wondering against whom this reinforcement of the Soviet fleet is directed: perhaps against Albania? or Yugoslavia? There is no doubt that, after the severance of Albania from the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslavia, although it had never belonged to this pact, could have filled the breach admirably. However, following the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the threat against Rumania and Yugoslavia, such a possibility fell by the wayside. It may be recalled that, some months prior to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, at the "Mediterranean Anti-Imperialist Conference", the Yugoslav delegation opposed a resolution calling for the evacuation only of the American Sixth Fleet, insisting in the strongest terms that there should also be a call to the Soviet Fleet to evacuate the Mediterranean Sea. The delegation left the Conference. After Russia had lost naval bases in two Socialist countries on the Mediterranean, a substitute was found in two Arab countries, Egypt and Algeria, which, in emergencies, are tagged with the appellation "Socialist" . . . Perhaps it is directed against Israel? It goes without saying that, without the reasoning that this Soviet naval might is necessary to protect the Arab countries from "Israel aggression," Egypt and Algeria would never have agreed to be so hospitable. . . . In truth, then, is it directed against the NATO States? No doubt ultimate Soviet strategy involves the power play vis-a-vis the Sixth Fleet and the NATO forces in general — whether this is for the purpose of bargaining for an agreed settlement or in anticipation of a possible actual clash. But the arming of Egypt, which began in the autumn of 1955, was at first directed against the Bagdad Pact of those days — and, in point of fact, was turned in the spring of 1967 against Israel.

One must take into account three barriers to direct Soviet military intervention in the Israel-Arab dispute:

- the fear of a direct Soviet-American military confrontation;
- The absence of support in the resolutions of UN bodies that would justify intervention against Israel from an international point of view;
- the absence of a pretext, provided by Israel, that would make it possible to point to an act of aggression that necessitated such intervention.

Every barrier, of course, is circumscribed by limits of its own. The threats of Nasser and other Arab rulers that "what has been taken by force will be restored by force", Heikal's words, that "this time it will be the Arab side that will open hostilities"; the Soviet pronouncements about an "imperialist" and "Nazi" Israel which will have to bear the responsibility for its "aggression" and, most important of all, the increasing rearmament of the Arab States — all these are reminders of the limitations inherent in the effectiveness of the barriers that have been holding back a new war.

### 3. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR US?

From all that has been said, a number of conclusions may be drawn which, in my opinion, lay down the lines of Israel's political thought and action.

— The outlook is not for certain war; on the other hand, we cannot ignore the danger of war. In other words, we are called upon to maintain a state of high and constant preparedness and, at the same time, to strive consistently and tirelessly for peace. Peace is the one thing our foes refuse to give us, because it is the vital and the paramount thing for us, since peace alone is capable of providing us with a stable security and of rounding out the process of our national and political revival. And since this is paramount we are obliged to be stubborn about it and pursue it with great determination. But in order to achieve that end, we must be flexible in the choice of our means.

— Our demand for direct negotiations in proper and just, and it is accepted among all peace-loving elements in the international arena as the best means of solving disputes between States. The Arab rulers, who turn down peace and recognition of our existence, seek to impose the responsibility for the absence of a political solution upon us, because of our stubborn insistence on a certain form of negotiation. That happens to suit them. As for us, it suits us to prove their responsibility because of their stubborn refusal to conduct negotiations with a view to attaining peace. We should not underrate the importance of world public opinion — and of the answer to the question: will it be for us or against us? We have seen how powerful nations are ready to invest tremendous efforts for every bit of international goodwill they can obtain. For a small nation such as we are, in a state of siege and exposed to dangers of various kinds, the reaction, among nations near and far, to our deeds and omissions is immeasurably more important. Moreover, we need the friendship of many countries not only in our political struggle; it has made its impact felt in times of war as well. For this reason, we can afford to show a certain flexibility with regard to the form of the negotiations, so long as in their decisive stage they will be direct and will lead to a treaty of peace.

— There can be no withdrawal without peace; but there also can be no peace, nor yet negotiations, without readiness to discuss boundaries. That is why we must be ready for open negotiations on the fixing of mutually agreed boundaries, as a part of the peace settlement.

The Armistice lines that existed until 5 June 1967, and the cease-fire lines that have existed until now, are not political borders but, rather, temporary military lines of separation. It should be, for us, not only a matter of readiness but even of positive desire to pass from the cease-fire lines to permanent borders to be agreed upon in treaties of peace. Because what we are really yearning for is peace and security, and not territorial conquests. A declared Israeli policy such as this will not at once bring us the agreement

of the Arab rulers. But it will bring us international support and pressure on the Arab Governments for peace with Isreal — and until such time it will cause us no real loss, only political and moral advantage.

A firm stand on the main issue, coupled with a flexible one on side issues, will serve to deepen the differentiation, prevailing in any case in the Arab camp, with regard to the question of peace or war with Isreal. We are prepared to negotiate and to make peace with all of the Arab States and with each one of them.

Yet even if it should turn out that not a single Arab Government will be ready for peace with us, there still remains one Arab element with whom we can reach agreement, and that is the Palestine element. This would not be in contradiction to, or a substitute for, peace with the neighbouring States in general or with the Jordanian State in particular, but it is apt to constitute a driving force for a general peace; meanwhile such an agreement would establish an international relationship, not between conqueror and conquered, but between neighbours capable even of good-neighbourliness. An agreement between the Government of Israel and democratic peace-loving national delegation from the Israel-administered areas would not, under present conditions, be able to make final disposition of the political fate of these areas, but it would set the stage for the solution of this problem under conditions of peaceful co-existence between free peoples.

What we need, in the face of all the trials that lie ahead, is a combination of strength and wisdom.

For generation upon generation we were a wise and understanding people, but at the same time we were weak and helpless. We have become a brave and a daring nation: we must not now lose our historical qualities. Let us be both strong and wise; for then we shall overcome.

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