EDWARD W. SAID

THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

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"A COMPELLING CALL FOR IDENTITY AND JUSTICE."
–Anthony Lewis

Said, Edward W.
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The question of
Palestine

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In memoriam

Farid Haddad
Rashid Hussein

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INTRODUCTION

Although most of this book was written during 1977 and the early part of 1978, its frame of reference is by no means confined to that very important period in modern Near Eastern history. On the contrary, my aim has been to write a book putting before the American reader a broadly representative Palestinian position, something not very well known and certainly not well appreciated even now, when there is so much talk of the Palestinians and of the Palestinian problem. In formulating this position, I have relied mainly on what I think can justly be called the Palestinian experience, which to all intents and purposes became a self-conscious experience when the first wave of Zionist colonialists reached the shores of Palestine in the early 1880s. Thereafter, Palestinian history takes a course peculiar to it, and quite different from Arab history. There are, of course, many connections between what Palestinians did and what other Arabs did in this century, but the defining characteristic of Palestinian history—its traumatic national encounter with Zionism—is unique to the region.

This uniqueness has guided both my aim and my performance (however flawed both may be) in this book. As a Palestinian myself, I have always tried to be aware of our weaknesses and failings as a people. By some standards we are perhaps an unexceptional people; our national history testifies to a failing contest with a basically European and ambitious ideology (as well as practice); we have been unable to interest the West very much in the justice of our cause. Nevertheless

we have begun, I think, to construct a political identity and will of our own; we have developed a remarkable resilience and an even more remarkable national resurgence; we have gained the support of all the peoples of the Third World; above all, despite the fact that we are geographically dispersed and fragmented, despite the fact that we are without a territory of our own, we have been united as a people largely because the Palestinian *idea* (which we have articulated out of our own experience of dispossession and exlusionary oppression) has a coherence to which we have all responded with positive enthusiasm. It is the full spectrum of Palestinian failure and subsequent return in their lived details that I have tried to describe in this book.

Yet I suppose that to many of my readers the Palestinian problem immediately calls forth the idea of "terrorism," and it is partly because of this invidious association that I do not spend much time on terrorism in this book. To have done so would have been to argue defensively, either by saying that such as it has been our "terrorism" is justified, or by taking the position that there is no such thing as Palestinian terrorism as such. The facts are considerably more complex, however, and some of them at least bear some rehearsal here. In sheer numerical terms, in brute numbers of bodies and property destroyed, there is absolutely nothing to compare between what Zionism has done to Palestinians and what, in retaliation, Palestinians have done to Zionists. The almost constant Israeli assault on Palestinian civilian refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan for the last twenty years is only one index of these completely asymmetrical records of destruction. What is much worse, in my opinion, is the hypocrisy of Western (and certainly liberal Zionist) journalism and intellectual discourse, which have barely had anything to say about Zionist terror. [1] Could anything be less honest than the rhetoric of outrage used in reporting "Arab" terror against "Israeli civilians" or "towns" and "villages" or "schoolchildren," and the rhetoric of neutrality employed to describe "Israeli" attacks against "Palestinian positions," by which no one could know that Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon are being named?

(I quote now from reports of recent incidents during late December 1978.) Since 1967, with Israel in occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, there has been no letup in the daily outrage of Israeli occupation, and yet nothing galvanizes the Western press (and the Israeli information media) as much as a bomb in a Jerusalem market. With sentiments bordering on pure disgust, I must note here that not a single U.S. newspaper carried the following interview with General Gur, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Army:

> *Q*—Is it true [during the March 1978 Israeli invasion of Lebanon] that you bombarded agglomerations [of people] without distinction?
>
> *A*—I am not one of those people who have a selective memory. Do you think that I pretend not to know what we have done all these years? What did we do the entire length of the Suez Canal? A million and a half refugees! Really: where do you live? . . . We bombarded Ismailia, Suez, Port Said, and Port Fuad. A million and a half refugees . . . Since when has the population of South Lebanon become so sacred? They knew perfectly well what the terrorists were doing. After the massacre at Avivim, I had four villages in South Lebanon bombed without authorization.
>
> *Q*—Without making distinctions between civilians and noncivilians?
>
> *A*—What distinction? What had the inhabitants of Irbid [a large town in northern Jordan, principally Palestinian in population] done to deserve bombing by us?
>
> *Q*—But military communiqués always spoke of returning fire and of counterstrikes against terrorist objectives.
>
> *A*—Please be serious. Did you not know that the entire valley of the Jordan had been emptied of its inhabitants as a result of the war of attrition?
>
> *Q*—Then you claim that the population ought to be punished?
>
> *A*—Of course, and I have never had any doubt about that. When I authorized Yanouch [diminutive name of the commander of the northern front, responsible for the Lebanese operation] to use aviation, artillery and tanks [in the invasion], I knew exactly what I was doing. It has now been thirty years,

> from the time of our Independence War until now, that we have been fighting against the civilian [Arab] population which inhabited the villages and towns, and every time that we do it, the same question gets asked: should we or should we not strike at civilians? [*Al-Hamishmar*, May 10, 1978]

Thus one thing about "terrorism" is the imbalance in its perception, and the imbalance in its perpetration. One could mention, for example, that in *every* instance when Israeli hostages were used to try to gain the release of Palestinians held in Israeli jails, it was *always* the Israeli forces who offered fire first, knowingly causing a bloodbath. But even to cite figures and make explanations is not enough—for the record of hostility between Jew and Arab, between Palestinians and Zionist Jews, between Palestinians and the rest of mankind (or so it would seem), between Jews and the West, is a chilling one. As a Palestinian, I resent and deplore the ways in which the whole grisly matter is stripped of all its resonances and its often morally confusing detail, and compressed simply, comfortably, inevitably under the rubric of "Palestinian terror." Yet as someone who has been touched by the issue in all sorts of ways, I must also say that—speaking now only as one Palestinian—I have been horrified at the hijacking of planes, the suicidal missions, the assassinations, the bombing of schools and hotels; horrified both at the terror visited upon its victims, and horrified by the terror in Palestinian men and women who were driven to do such things. Since I do not pretend to write as a detached observer, I have believed that rather than trying to deal frontally with the terror itself, I would do better if I attempted to convey to my readers some sense of the larger Palestinian story from which all these things came. And if in the end the story does not—as it cannot—mitigate the tragedies of waste and unhappiness, it would at least present what has long been missing before such a reader, the reality of a collective national trauma contained for every Palestinian in the question of Palestine.

One of the features of a small non-European people is that it is not wealthy in documents, nor in histories, autobiographies,

chronicles, and the like. This is true of the Palestinians, and it accounts for the lack of a major authoritative text on Palestinian history. I have not tried to supply this lack here, for plainly evident reasons. What I have tried to do is to show that the Palestinian experience is an important and concrete part of history, a part that has largely been ignored both by the Zionists who wished it had never been there, and by the Europeans and Americans who have not really known what to do with it. I have tried to show that the Muslim and Christian Palestinians who lived in Palestine for hundreds of years until they were driven out in 1948, were unhappy victims of the same movement whose whole aim had been to end the victimization of Jews by Christian Europe. Yet it is precisely because Zionism was so admirably successful in bringing Jews to Palestine and constructing a nation for them, that the world has not been concerned with what the enterprise meant in loss, dispersion, and catastrophe for the Palestinian natives. Something like an ironic double vision is therefore necessary now in order to see both the very well-known success *and* the far less known disaster which Hannah Arendt has portrayed as follows:

> After the [Second World] war it turned out that the Jewish question, which was considered the only insoluble one, was indeed solved—namely, by means of a colonized and then conquered territory—but this solved neither the problem of minorities nor the stateless. On the contrary, like virtually all other events of our century, the solution of the Jewish question merely produced a new category of refugees, the Arabs, thereby increasing the number of the stateless by another 700,000 to 800,000 people.[2]

As I say throughout the book, whereas Israel and its history have been celebrated without interruption, the actuality of Palestinians, with lives being led, small histories endured, aspirations felt, has only recently been conceded an existence. Yet all of a sudden, the Palestinian question now seeks an answer: World opinion has demanded that this hitherto

slighted crux of the Near East impasse be given its due. But, alas, the possibility of an adequate debate now, much less a cogent solution, is dim. The terms of debate are impoverished, for (as I said above) Palestinians have been known only as refugees, or as extremists, or as terrorists. A sizeable corps of Middle East "experts" has tended to monopolize discussion, principally by using social science jargon and ideological chichés masked as knowledge. Most of all, I think, there is the entrenched *cultural* attitude toward Palestinians deriving from age-old Western prejudices about Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient. This attitude, from which in its turn Zionism drew for its view of the Palestinians, dehumanized us, reduced us to the barely tolerated status of a nuisance.

It would perhaps be too sweeping a statement to say that most academic political science studies of the Middle East and of the Palestinians continue this tradition. But it is true, I think, that they tend to. Insofar as most of them derive from and in most important ways unquestionably accept the framework that has legitimized Zionism as against Palestinian rights, they have very little to contribute to an understanding of the real situation in the Middle East. For it is a fact that almost every serious study of the modern Middle East produced in this country since World War II cannot prepare anyone for what has been taking place in the region: This is as patently true of the recent events in Iran as it is of the Lebanese civil war, of the Palestinian resistance, of the Arab performance during the 1973 war. I certainly do not intend this book as a polemic against what has rightly been called the ideological bent of social science work that pretends to scientific objectivity, particularly since the advent of the Cold War. But I do intend consciously to avoid its "value-free" pitfalls. Those include accounts of political reality that focus on superpower rivalry, that claim as desirable anything associated with the West and its modernizing mission in the Third World, that ignore popular movements while praising and valorizing a battery of undistinguished and oppressive client regimes, that dismiss as ahistorical anything that cannot be easily made to fit a particular *telos* or a particular methodology whose goals are

"rational," "empirical," and "pragmatic." The glaring shortcomings of such notions have been held publicly to blame for "our" loss of Iran and "our" failure to forecast the "resurgence of Islam," without at the same time allowing for any examination of the premises of these notions. So, in fact, they get reasserted, and once again political scientists with a great role to play in decision making advise the same shortsighted things, and once again U.S. foreign policy is risked on what to nonexpert eyes (such as mine) are obvious losing causes, regressive historical visions. Even as I write these lines, the serious defects of Camp David seem to be proving my point.

Until 1976, however, I do not think it is wrong to say that even Palestinians concurred in their own derogation, and hence in their unimportance as construed by Zionists and experts. Then we discovered ourselves, we discovered the world, and it discovered us. I try to describe our night and our slow awakening; without at the same time neglecting the setting of our life on the land, in the region, in world politics, and so forth. But throughout our experience is the strand formed by Zionism. This is no theoretical issue, nor a matter of name-calling. To us, Zionism has meant as much, albeit differently, as it has to Jews. What we need to inform the world about is how it meant certain concrete things to us, things of which we collectively bear the living traces.

I have called my book a political essay because it tries to put our matter before the American reader, not as something watertight and finished, but as something to be thought through, tried out, engaged with—in short, as a subject to be dealt with politically. For too long we have been outside history, and certainly outside discussion; in its own modest way this book attempts to make the question of Palestine a subject for discussion and political understanding. The reader will quickly discover, I hope, that what is proposed in this book is not an "expert" view nor, for that matter, personal testimony. Rather, it is a series of experienced realities, grounded in a sense of human rights and the contradictions of social experience, couched as much as possible in the language of everyday reality.

A certain number of basic premises inform the book's argument. One is the continuing existence of a Palestinian Arab people. Another is that an understanding of their experience is necessary to an understanding of the impasse between Zionism and the Arab world. Still another is that Israel itself, as well as its supporters, has tried to efface the Palestinian in words and actions because the Jewish state in many (but not all) ways is built on negation of Palestine and the Palestinians. Until today, it is a striking fact that merely to mention the Palestinians or Palestine in Israel, or to a convinced Zionist, is to name the unnameable, so powerfully does our bare existence serve to accuse Israel of what it did to us. Finally, I take it for granted morally that human beings individually and selectively are entitled to fundamental rights, of which self-determination is one. By this I mean that no human being should be threatened with "transfer" out of his or her home or land; no human being should be discriminated against because he or she is not of an X or a Y religion; no human being should be stripped of his or her land, national identity, or culture, no matter the cause.

At bottom I suppose that in this book I am asking the question, "What is Israel, what is the United States, and what are the Arabs going to do about the Palestinians?" Given the realities of the Palestinian experience, I do not at all believe, as President Anwar al-Sadat and his various supporters would have it, that 99 percent of the cards are in U.S. hands, nor do I think that they are mainly in Israel's or the Arab states' hands; the whole point—indeed, what makes this book possible—is that there are Palestinian hands, so to speak, and that they play an active role in determining Palestinian aspirations, political struggles, and achievements, as well as setbacks. And yet I do not deny that there is an important place in the question of Palestine for what Jews and Americans now think and do. It is this place to which my book addresses itself.

I mention what is perhaps an obvious thing in order to underline the existential bedrock on which, I think, our experience as a people depends. We were on the land called Palestine; were our dispossession and our effacement, by

which almost a million of us were made to leave Palestine and our society made nonexistent, justified even to save the remnant of European Jews that had survived Nazism? By what moral or political standard are we expected to lay aside our claims to our national existence, our land, our human rights? In what world is there no argument when an entire people is told that it is juridically absent, even as armies are led against it, campaigns conducted against even its name, history changed so as to "prove" its nonexistence? For even though all the issues surrounding the Palestinians are complex and involve Great Power politics, regional disputes, class conflict, ideological tension, the animating power of the Palestinian movement is its awareness of these simple, but enormously consequential, questions.

The Palestinians are not alone, however, in being either misunderstood or ignored by the United States as it attempts to construct a foreign policy in Asia and Africa. Certainly the Iranian opposition which brought down the Shah in January 1979 is a case in point, but not for want of information (despite President Carter's disingenuous accusations against the "intelligence community" for its failure on Iran). If it is true of individuals that they prefer tidy, simple solutions to complex, untidy realities, then it ought to be patently untrue of institutions and governments; but with regard to the Palestinian problem, it is true of the U.S. government. The present Administration came to office proclaiming itself in favor of a comprehensive Middle East peace, which was supposed to include a just solution of the Palestinian problem "in all its aspects," yet since Camp David, it has been powerless either to see the problem whole or in any way seriously to deal with it. Why it supposes that four million people should be content with less (autonomy, so-called) than what every other national group has accepted, why it supposes that treaties can be signed in the absence of the main party to a dispute, why it supposes that foreign policy can be conducted without *ever* coming face to face with the main actor in a region, why it supposes that powerful oppositional groups can simply be wished away, why it supposes that Palestinians, any more than any other

people, ought to accept permanent colonialization by Israel, or why it supposes that Palestinians are not going to fight indefinitely to regain their denied, usurped, or crushed national rights (as they have been fighting in every Middle East crisis)—these are questions that this book attempts to pose, and answer, given the almost astonishingly turbulent changes at present occurring in the Middle East. I would hope, too, that in my concluding chapter the reader will find discussed a fair analysis of those immediate political issues governing the present post-Camp David Middle East, U.S. policy, Arab and regional politics, and Palestinian positions and attitudes.

I have not found this book easy to write. A great deal of it derives from study of and reflection on the meaning of modern Palestinian history. A lot of this book, however, arises from an active participation in the often discouraging quest for Palestinian self-determination, a quest (in my case, at least) led while in exile. Inevitably I have been strongly put upon by daily events, by news and sudden changes, by chance discussions, and even more by erratic illumination. I doubt that I have escaped the influence of these things, which it would be wrong in any case to escape completely. But I have been conscious of trying to present more than a summary of recent history, or a prediction of tomorrow's developments. My hope is to have made clear the Palestinian interpretation of Palestinian experience, and to have shown the relevance of both to the contemporary political scene. To explain one's sense of oneself as a Palestinian in this way is to feel embattled. To the West, which is where I live, to be a Palestinian is in political terms to be an outlaw of sorts, or at any rate very much an outsider. But that is a reality, and I mention it only as a way of indicating the peculiar loneliness of my undertaking in this book.

I am grateful to Debbie Rogers, Asma Khauwly, and Paul Lipari for their help in preparing the manuscript. Over the years I have benefited from many discussions with fellow Palestinians who, like myself, have struggled to understand our situation as a people. Good friends in this country, in Israel,

and in the Arab countries have also shared their knowledge with me, but to mention names and specific debts here is unnecessarily to trivialize our shared experience, without which this book could not have been written.

The two friends whose names are memorialized on the dedicatory page could have had no idea that their lives so deeply moved and influenced me. Both were Palestinians, both lived the strange, obsessed lives of exiles; both died bitterly unhappy and unfortunate deaths; both in my opinion were completely good men. Farid Haddad was a doctor who lived and died in an Arab country, where for a number of years I knew him well. More than anyone I have known, he had the keenest sense not only of what human injustice was all about, but also of what could be done about it. Thoroughly idealistic and selfless, he was tortured to death in prison in 1961, although at the time he died (so far as I have ever been able to tell), he did what he did as a human being and as a political militant, not necessarily as a Palestinian. Rashid Hussein was an ironic Palestinian poet, who left Israel in 1966 and lived until his death in the United States. From him I learned whatever I know about life in Palestinian villages after 1948, a life which informs the question of Palestine with unique strength. His generosity of spirit, openness, and political honesty were his gifts to everyone he met. When he died a particularly wasteful death in 1977, he had already suffered too much for what he was, an independent, genuinely radical Palestinian. Between them, Farid Haddad and Rashid Hussein have illuminated for me the Palestinian cause, to which, along with so many of our compatriots in many places, they gave their lives.

THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

ONE

THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

I

Palestine and the Palestinians

Until roughly the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, everything to the east of an imaginary line drawn somewhere between Greece and Turkey was called the Orient. As a designation made in Europe, "the Orient" for many centuries represented a special mentality, as in the phrase "the Oriental mind," and also a set of special cultural, political, and even racial characteristics (in such notions as the Oriental despot, Oriental sensuality, splendor, inscrutability). But mainly the Orient represented a kind of indiscriminate generality for Europe, associated not only with difference and otherness, but with the vast spaces, the undifferentiated masses of mostly colored people, and the romance, exotic locales, and mystery of "the marvels of the East." Anyone familiar with the political history of the late Victorian period, however, will know that the vexing, mostly political "Eastern Question," as it was called, tended then to replace "the Orient" as a subject of concern. By 1918 it is estimated that European powers were in colonial occupation of about 85 percent of the globe, of which a large segment belonged to the regions formerly known simply as Oriental.[1] The romance of the Orient was thus succeeded by the problems of dealing with the Orient, first in competition with other European powers maneuvering there and second with the colonial people themselves in their

struggles for independence. From being a place "out there," the Orient became a place of extraordinarily urgent, and precise detail, a place of numerous subdivisions. One of these, the Middle East, survives today as a region of the Orient connoting infinite complexities, problems, conflicts. At its center stands what I shall be calling the question of Palestine.

When we refer to a subject, place, or person in the phrase "the question of," we imply a number of different things. For example, one concludes a survey of current affairs by saying, "And now I come to the question of X." The point here is that X is a matter apart from all the others, and must be dealt with apart. Secondly, "the question of" is used to refer to some long-standing, particularly intractable and insistent problem: the question of rights, the Eastern question, the question of free speech. Thirdly, and most uncommonly, "the question of" can be used in such a way as to suggest that the status of the thing referred to in the phrase is uncertain, questionable, unstable: the question of the existence of a Loch Ness monster, for example. The use of "the question of" in connection with Palestine implies all three types of meaning. Like the Orient of which it is a part, Palestine exists in another world from the habitual Atlantic one. Palestine is also in some way what the most thorny international problem of postwar life is all about: the struggle over, for, and in Palestine, which has absorbed the energies of more people than any other for a comparable period of time. Finally—and this is a main reason for this book—Palestine itself is a much debated, even contested, notion. The very mention of the name on the one hand constitutes for the Palestinian and his partisans an act of important and positive political assertion, and on the other, for the Palestinian's enemies it is an act of equally assertive but much more negative and threatening denial. We need only recall here that demonstrations on the streets of major American cosmopolitan centers during the late sixties and much of the seventies were led by factions saying either "Palestine *is*" or "There is no Palestine." In Israel today it is the custom officially to refer to the Palestinians as "so-called Palestinians," which is a somewhat gentler phrase than Golda

Meir's flat assertion in 1969 that the Palestinians did not exist.

The fact of the matter is that today Palestine does not exist, except as a memory or, more importantly, as an idea, a political and human experience, and an act of sustained popular will. My subject in this essay will be all those things about Palestine, although I will not for a moment pretend that Palestine, for anyone now living and writing in the West, is not "the question of." Yet even to admit that is already to venture into a relatively unfamiliar field. For too many people who read the press, who watch television and listen to the radio, who pretend to more than a smattering of political knowledge, who confess to expert opinions on international controversy, the Middle East is essentially the Arab-Israeli conflict (dispute, problem, struggle, etc.) and little more. There is a considerable reductiveness in this view, of course, but what is really wrong with it is that most of the time it literally blocks Palestine from having anything to do with the Middle East of today, which since September 1978 seems entirely symbolized by Menachem Begin, Anwar al-Sadat, and Jimmy Carter locked up together at Camp David. A considerable majority of the literature on the Middle East, at least until 1968, gives one the impression that the essence of what goes on in the Middle East is a series of unending wars between a group of Arab countries and Israel. That there had been such an entity as Palestine until 1948, or that Israel's existence—its "independence," as the phrase goes—was the result of the eradication of Palestine: of these truths beyond dispute most people who follow events in the Middle East are more or less ignorant, or unaware.[2] But what is most important is the continuing avoidance or ignorance of the existence today of about four million Muslim and Christian Arabs who are known to themselves and to others as Palestinians. They make up the question of Palestine, and if there is no country called Palestine it is not because there are no Palestinians. There are, and this essay is an attempt to put their reality before the reader.

Much recent history involves the Palestinians, and like their present actuality, it is a history dispersed in likely and unlikely places. No foreign affairs symposium, scholarly book, or moral

attitude taken is complete without some reference to Palestinian (sometimes also known as "Arab") terrorism. Any self-respecting director planning a film on some current, and probably invented, enormity would not pass up the occasion to introduce a Palestinian into his cast as a sort of card-carrying terrorist. Films like *Black Sunday* and *Sorcerer* come immediately to mind. On the other hand, the Palestinians have canonically been associated with all the characteristics of refugees who—depending on the occasion—fester in camps, are a political "football" being used by Arab states, are a breeding ground for communism, tend to procreate like rabbits, and so forth. More analytic and hardheaded commentators have frequently remarked that the Palestinians constitute an elite in the Arab world. Not only do they seem to have the highest educational attainment of any other national group there; they are also well placed in sensitive positions in sensitive places in the overall Arab polity. Such pressure points as oil ministries and installations in the Arabian Gulf, economic and educational advisories, all these plus a large segment of the Arab upper bourgeoisie (bankers, entrepreneurs, intellectuals) are occupied by Palestinians, all of whom are supposed to be hungry for trouble and revenge.

Lastly and most recently, for the first time since 1948, American political debate has turned to the Palestinian problem. Beginning with President Carter, it is no longer considered a sign of rank anti-Semitism to say that Middle Eastern peace must at last take the problem of the Palestinians into serious consideration. A "Palestinian homeland" and the thorny issue of Palestinian representation at proposed peace conferences are enormously important questions now challenging public consciousness. Because of its first post-1948 appearance as an independent item on the United Nations General Assembly agenda in 1974, embodied in Yasir Arafat's controversial appearance there, "the question of Palestine" has irritated and penetrated the general awareness in a new and possibly propitious way, although Palestinian self-determination was first voted on affirmatively at the United Nations in 1969. (General Assembly Resolution 2535B expressed

grave concern "that the denial of [Palestinian] rights has been aggravated by the reported acts of collective punishment, arbitrary detention, curfews, destruction of houses and property, deportation and other repressive acts against the refugees and other inhabitants of the occupied territories," and then went on to "reaffirm the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine." One year later, Resolution 2627C recognized "that the people of Palestine are entitled to equal rights and self-determination, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.")

Despite these unambiguous determinations, the Palestinians remain so *specialized* a people as to serve essentially as a synonym for trouble—rootless, mindless, gratuitous trouble. They will not go away as they ought to, they will not accept the fate of other refugees (who have, apparently, simply resigned themselves to being refugees and therefore are contented as such), they cause trouble. Recent crises involving the Palestinians in Lebanon and Jordan are cited as instances to prove the point. And if the commentator happens to be more sophisticated, he may also allude to the "fact" that the Palestinians are part of what is doubtless a fearsome event, the resurgence of Islam.[3] According to this somewhat paranoiac view, if even the President of the United States refers to the Palestinian problem as an intrinsic part of the Middle East peace, it is because of Muslim oil, Muslim fanaticism, Muslim blackmail.

What all such material partially screens is something totally intractable, something that totally resists any theory, any one-plus-one explanation, any display of feelings or attitudes. I refer to the plain and irreducible core of the Palestinian experience for the last hundred years: that on the land called Palestine there existed as a huge majority for hundreds of years a largely pastoral, a nevertheless socially, culturally, politically, economically identifiable people whose language and religion were (for a huge majority) Arabic and Islam, respectively. This people—or, if one wishes to deny them any modern conception of themselves as a people, this *group* of people—identified itself with the land it tilled and lived on (poorly or not is irrelevant), the more so after an almost wholly

European decision was made to resettle, reconstitute, recapture the land for Jews who were to be brought there from elsewhere. So far as anyone has been able to determine, there has been no example given of any significant Palestinian gesture made to accept this modern reconquest or to accept that Zionism has permanently removed Palestinians from Palestine. Such as it is, the Palestinian actuality is today, was yesterday, and most likely tomorrow will be built upon an act of resistance to this new foreign colonialism. But it is more likely that there will remain the inverse resistance which has characterized Zionism and Israel since the beginning: the refusal to admit, and the consequent denial of, the existence of Palestinian Arabs who are there not simply as an inconvenient nuisance, but as a population with an indissoluble bond with the land.

The question of Palestine is therefore the contest between an affirmation and a denial, and it is this prior contest, dating back over a hundred years, which animates and makes sense of the current impasse between the Arab states and Israel. The contest has been almost comically uneven from the beginning. Certainly so far as the West is concerned, Palestine has been a place where a relatively advanced (because European) incoming population of Jews has performed miracles of construction and civilizing and has fought brilliantly successful technical wars against what was always portrayed as a dumb, essentially repellent population of uncivilized Arab natives. There is no doubt that the contest in Palestine has been between an advanced (and advancing) culture and a *relatively* backward, more or less traditional one. But we need to try to understand what the instruments of this contest were, and how they shaped subsequent history so that this history now *appears* to confirm the validity of the Zionist claims to Palestine, thereby denigrating the Palestinian claims.

In other words, we must understand the struggle between Palestinians and Zionism as a struggle between a presence and an interpretation, the former constantly appearing to be overpowered and eradicated by the latter. What was this

presence? No matter how backward, uncivilized, and silent they were, the Palestinian Arabs *were* on the land. Read through any eighteenth- or nineteenth-century account of travels in the Orient—Chateaubriand, Mark Twain, Lamartine, Nerval, Disraeli—and you will find chronicled there accounts of Arab inhabitants on the land of Palestine. According to Israeli sources, in 1822 there were no more than 24,000 Jews in Palestine, less than 10 percent of the whole, overwhelmingly Arab population. For the most part, it is true, these Arabs were usually described as uninteresting and undeveloped, but at least they were there. Yet almost always, because the land was Palestine and therefore controlled, in the Western mind, not by its present realities and inhabitants but by its glorious, portentous past and the seemingly limitless potential of its (possibly) just as glorious future, Palestine was seen as a place to be possessed *anew* and reconstructed. Alphonse de Lamartine is a perfect case in point. He visited in 1833 and produced a several-hundred-page narrative of his travels, *Voyage en Orient*. When he published the work, he affixed to it a *Resume politique* in the form of a series of suggestions to the French government. Although in the *Voyage* proper he had detailed numerous encounters with Arab peasants and town dwellers in the Holy Land, the *Resume* announced that the territory was not really a country (presumably its inhabitants not "real" citizens), and therefore a marvelous place for an imperial or colonial project to be undertaken by France.[4] What Lamartine does is to cancel and transcend an actual reality—a group of resident Arabs—by means of a future wish—that the land be empty for development by a more deserving power. It is precisely this kind of thinking, almost to the letter, that informed the Zionist slogan formulated by Israel Zangwill for Palestine toward the end of the century: a land without people, for a people without land.

For Palestine has always played a special role in the imagination and in the political will of the West, which is where by common agreement modern Zionism also originated. Palestine is a place of causes and pilgrimages. It was the prize

of the Crusades, as well as a place whose very name (and the endless historical naming and renaming of the place) has been an issue of doctrinal importance. As I said above, to call the place Palestine and not, say, Israel or Zion is already an act of political will. This in part explains the insistence in much pro-Zionist writing on the dubious assertion that Palestine was used only as an administrative designation in the Roman Empire, and never since—except of course during the British Mandate period after 1922. The point there has been to show that *Palestine* too is also an interpretation, one with much less continuity and prestige than *Israel.* But here we see another instance of the same mechanism employed by Lamartine: using a future or past dream to obliterate the realities lying between past and future. The truth is, of course, that if one were to read geographers, historians, philosophers, and poets who wrote in Arabic from the eighth century on, one would find references to Palestine; to say nothing of innumerable references to Palestine in European literature from the Middle Ages to the present. The point may be a small one, but it serves to show how epistemologically the name of, and of course the very presence of bodies, in Palestine are—because Palestine carries so heavy an imaginative and doctrinal freight—transmuted from a reality into a nonreality, from a presence into an absence. My more important point is that so far as the Arab Palestinian is concerned, the Zionist project for, and conquest of, Palestine was simply the most successful and to date the most protracted of many such European projects since the Middle Ages. I say this as a relatively simple historical statement, without at this stage wishing to say anything about the comparative intrinsic merit of Zionism against that of earlier projects.

Palestine became a predominantly Arab and Islamic country by the end of the seventh century. Almost immediately thereafter its boundaries and its characteristics—including its name in Arabic, *Filastin*—became known to the entire Islamic world, as much for its fertility and beauty as for its religious significance. In the late tenth century, for example, we find this passage in Arabic:

> Filastin is the westernmost of the provinces of Syria. In its greatest length from Rafh to the boundary of Al Lajjun (Legio) it would take a rider two days to travel over; and the like time to cross the province in its breadth from Yafa (Jaffa) to Riha (Jericho). Zugar (Segor, Zoar) and the country of Lot's people (Diyar Kaum Lot); Al Jibal (the mountains of Edom) and Ash Sharah as far as Ailah—Al Jibal and Ash Sharah being two separate provinces, but lying contiguous one to the other—are included in Filastin, and belong to its government.
>
> Filastin is watered by the rains and the dew. Its trees and its ploughed lands do not need artificial irrigation; and it is only in Nablus that you find the running waters applied to this purpose. Filastin is the most fertile of the Syrian provinces. Its capital and largest town is Ar Ramlah, but the Holy City (of Jerusalem) comes very near this last in size. In the province of Filastin, despite its small extent, there are about twenty mosques, with pulpits for the Friday prayer.[5]

In 1516, Palestine became a province of the Ottoman Empire, but this made it no less fertile, no less Arab or Islamic. A century later the English poet George Sandys spoke of it as "a land that flowed with milk and honey; in the midst as it were of the habitable world, and under a temperate clime; adorned with beautiful mountains and luxurious vallies; the rocks producing excellent waters; and no part empty of delight or profit."[6] Such reports persist in profusion through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not only in travelers' accounts but, by the end of the nineteenth century, in scientific quarterly reports published by the (British) Palestine Exploration Fund.

Despite the steady arrival in Palestine of Jewish colonists after 1882, it is important to realize that not until the few weeks immediately preceding the establishment of Israel in the spring of 1948 was there ever anything other than a huge Arab majority. For example, the Jewish population in 1931 was 174,606 against a total of 1,033,314; in 1936, Jewish numbers had gone up to 384,078 and the total to 1,366,692; in 1946 there were 608,225 Jews in a total population of 1,912,112.[7] In all these statistics, "natives" were easily distinguishable from the arriving colonists. But who were these natives?

All of them spoke Arabic, and were mainly Sunni Muslims, although a minority among them were Christians, Druzes, and Shiite Muslims—all of whom spoke Arabic too. Approximately 65 percent of the Palestinian Arabs were agricultural people who lived in about 500 villages where ground crops as well as fruits and vegetables were grown. The principal Palestinian cities—Nablus, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Acre, Jaffa, Jericho, Ramlah, Hebron, and Haifa—were built in the main by Palestinian Arabs, who continued to live there even after the encroaching Zionist colonies expanded very close to them. There were also a respectable Palestinian intellectual and professional class, the beginnings of small industry, and a highly developed national consciousness. Modern Palestinian social, economic, and cultural life was organized around the same issues of independence and anti colonialism prevalent in the region, only for the Palestinians there were the legacy of Ottoman rule, then Zionist colonialism, then British mandatory authority (after World War I) to contend with more or less all together. All Arab Palestinians, almost without exception, felt themselves to be part of the great Arab awakening stirring since the last years of the nineteenth century, and it is this feeling that gave encouragement and coherence to an otherwise disruptive modern history. Palestinian writers and intellectuals like Hakam Darwazeh, Khalil Sakakineh, Khalil Beidas, and Najib Nassar, political organizations like the Futtuwa and Najada, the Arab Higher Committees, and the Arab League of Arab National Liberation (which argued that the Palestinian question could only be solved by Arabs and Jews together)[8]—all these formed great national blocs among the population, directed the energies of the "non-Jewish" Palestinian community, created a Palestinian identity opposed equally to British rule and to Jewish colonization, and solidified the Palestinian sense of belonging by whichever continuity of residence to a distinct national group with a language (the Palestinian Arab dialect) and a specific communal sense (threatened particularly by Zionism) of its own.

From the beginning of serious Zionist planning for Palestine (that is, roughly, from the period during and after World War

I), one can note the increasing prevalence of the idea that Israel was to be built on the ruins of this Arab Palestine. At first the idea was stated with a good deal of circumspection, and it was done to fit in with the conceptions of a reconstructing colonialism so crucial to high European imperialism. In 1895, Theodor Herzl noted in his *Diaries* that something would have to be done about the Palestinian natives:

> We shall have to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country.
>
> Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.[9]

Lord Rothschild corresponded on behalf of the Zionists with the British government in the phase that led up to the issuing of the Balfour Declaration. His memorandum of July 18, 1917 speaks of "the principle that Palestine should be re-constituted as the National Home for the Jewish People." Chaim Weizmann was soon to speak of the fact that the British understood how "the Jews alone were capable of rebuilding Palestine and of giving it a place in the modern family of nations." The Chief Rabbi of England, Dr. J. H. Herz, spoke eloquently of British "powerful support to the re-establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people."[10] None of these statements is clear enough about what is at present to be found in Palestine. The country's "re-constitution" and "rebuilding" unmistakably implies, however, that its present constitution—including hundreds of thousands of Arabs—was to be dissolved (how or where this is to be done isn't very clear) *in order that in its place* was to appear a new Jewish state. The style of these declarations of intent is to leave out any unambiguous reference to the doubtless inconvenient fact that the country was already constituted (if only as a colony) and that its inhabitants were most unlikely to be happy about their "reconstitution" by a new colonial force. But the statements themselves are perfectly accurate: Palestine was rebuilt, it was reconstructed, it was reestablished. Just how brutal these acts were is

indicated, I think, in these remarks by Moshe Dayan in April 1969:

> We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish state here. In considerable areas of the country [the total area was about 6 percent] we bought the lands from the Arabs. Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you, because these geography books no longer exist; not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal [Dayan's own village] arose in the place of Mahalul, Gevat—in the place of Jibta, [Kibbutz] Sarid—in the place of Haneifs and Kefar Yehoshua—in the place of Tell Shaman. There is not one place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population. [*Ha-Aretz*, April 4, 1969]

Even Dayan's terminology, frank as it is, is euphemistic. For what he means by "the Arab villages are not there either" is that they were destroyed systematically. One outraged Israeli, Professor Israel Shahak, who reckons almost four hundred villages were thus eliminated, has said that these villages were "destroyed *completely*, with their houses, garden-walls, and even cemeteries and tombstones, so that literally a stone does not remain standing, and visitors are passing and being told that 'it was all desert.' "[11] There is some unpleasant congruity to the fact that after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 the same policy of destruction was carried out there; by the end of 1969, 7,554 Arab houses were razed, and by August 1971, 16,212 houses had been demolished, according to the London *Sunday Times* of June 19, 1977.

Nor was this all. According to the most precise calculation yet made, approximately 780,000 Arab Palestinians were dispossessed and displaced in 1948 in order to facilitate the "reconstruction and rebuilding" of Palestine.[12] These are the Palestinian refugees, who now number well over two million. And finally we should add that the quantity of Arabs held since 1967 inside the Occupied Territories (which Menachem Begin

claims to have "liberated") is 1.7 million; of them half a million are part of pre-1967 Israel. The transformation of Palestine which resulted in Israel has been an extraordinarily expensive project—especially for the Arab Palestinians.

II
Palestine and the Liberal West

All the transformative projects for Palestine, including Zionism, have rationalized the denial of present reality in Palestine with some argument about a "higher" (or better, more worthy, more modern, more fitting; the comparatives are almost infinite) interest, cause, or mission. These "higher" things entitle their proponents not only to claim that the natives of Palestine, such as they are, are not worth considering and therefore nonexistent; they also feel entitled to claim that the natives of Palestine, and Palestine itself, have been superseded definitively, transformed completely and beyond recall, and this even while those same natives have been demonstrating exactly the opposite. Here again the Arab Palestinian has been pitted against an undeniably superior antagonist whose consciousness of himself and of the Palestinian is exactly, *positionally*, superior. Among the many examples of this expressed and demonstrated superiority there is naturally the Balfour Declaration, made in November 1917 by the British Government in the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild (who represented Zionist interests for the occasion), in which the government undertook to "view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." What is important about the declaration is, first, that it has long formed the juridical basis of Zionist claims to Palestine and, second, and more crucial for our purposes here, that it was a statement whose positional force can only be appreciated when the demographic or human realities of Palestine are kept clearly in mind. That is, the declaration was made (a) by a European power, (b) about a non-European territory, (c) in a flat disregard of both the presence and the

wishes of the native majority resident in that territory, and (d) it took the form of a promise about this same territory to another foreign group, so that this foreign group might, quite literally, *make* this territory a national home for the Jewish people.

There is not much use today in lamenting such a statement as the Balfour Declaration. It seems more valuable to see it as part of a history, of a style and set of characteristics centrally constituting the question of Palestine as it can be discussed even today. Balfour's statements in the declaration take for granted the higher right of a colonial power to dispose of a territory as it saw fit. As Balfour himself averred, this was especially true when dealing with such a significant territory as Palestine and with such a momentous idea as the Zionist idea, which saw itself as doing no less than reclaiming a territory promised originally by God to the Jewish people, at the same time as it foresaw an end to the Jewish problem. Balfour himself was quite clear about these matters. Note in the following extract from a memorandum he wrote in August 1919, how as a member of the Cabinet he was well aware of the various contradictory promises made to parties in the Middle East theater, and how what finally counted was not any violation of promises, but *his* (that is, his as a privileged member of a superior political, cultural, and even racial caste) sense of the important priorities:

> The contradiction between the letter of the Covenant [the Anglo-French Declaration of 1918 promising the Arabs of former Ottoman colonies that as a reward for supporting the Allies they could have their independence] is even more flagrant in the case of the independent nation of Palestine than in that of the independent nation of Syria. *For in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country*, though the American Commission has been going through the forms of asking what they are. The four great powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, *of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the*

> 700,000 *Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land. In my opinion that is right.* [Emphasis added][13]

That is, however, no mere expression of an opinion; it was a statement of policy that radically altered the course of history, if not for the whole world, then certainly for the 700,000 Arabs and their descendants whose land was being pronounced upon. Later I shall be discussing the very source of such power in statements like this; now, however, I want to gloss my earlier remark, that the contest has been between an allegedly "higher" and a humble reality.

At roughly the moment that Balfour was writing his memorandum there were facts—and I mean, in this instance, bodies that could be counted (as they were indeed counted by the British Census for Palestine in 1922)—about which there could be no debate on gross numerical issues, even though the *qualitative* issues were subject to interpretation. The census, which is the only reliable source for the demographic realities of that time that we have (and which despite its considerable undercounts has also been used consistently by Israeli historians), makes the 1914 population at "689,272 persons, of whom no more (and perhaps less) than 60,000 were Jews." The census further shows that by 1922 "some 590,890 (78 per cent) were Muslim; 73,024 (9.6 per cent) were Christian, mostly Arab although some British and other Europeans were included; less than 10,000 (1 per cent) were Other; and 83,794 (11 per cent) were Jewish. Of the latter, perhaps two thirds were European immigrants and their offspring—some having arrived late in the nineteenth century, others since the inception of British rule." As I said earlier, by the end of World War II the non-Jewish proportion of the population in Palestine was 70 percent, and of the remaining 30 percent which made up the Jewish population, 70 percent were concentrated not "on the land," where the desert was supposedly being made to bloom, but in cities and villages.[14] Moreover, British policy made Zionism its beneficiary, demographically speaking. The natural increase in population is normally 1.5 percent a year, but the Jews in Palestine between 1922 and 1946 were increasing at an

average of 9.0 percent annually, helped by the British policy of forcing a Jewish majority on the country. In the year 1927 alone the increase reached the figure of 28.7 percent, and in 1934 it reached 25.9 percent.[15]

The only way in which these brute, politically manipulated disproportions between natives and nonnatives could be made acceptable was by the rationale Balfour used. A superior idea to that of sheer number and presence *ought to rule* in Palestine, and that idea—Zionism—was the one given legitimacy right up until 1948, and after. For their part, the Zionists clearly saw themselves as the beneficiaries of this view. Far from the Arab multitudes signifying an already inhabited land, to the early Zionist colonists these people were to be ignored. Different reasons were given, most of them built on an assumption essentially identical with Balfour's. A recent book about the Israelis, written by an Israeli, has described the blindness of the early- and mid-twentieth-century settlers in Palestine, without making the connection back to Balfour and the moral epistemology of imperialism.[16] This blindness was as true of left-wing ideologues and movements like Ber Borochov and Ha'poel Ha'tzair as it was of so-called romantic right-wingers like Vladimir Jabotinsky and his Revisionists (Menachem Begin's political ancestors). At bottom, as Amos Elon has quite accurately shown, the Zionists considered the Arab problem as something either to be avoided completely, or denied (and hence attacked) completely. There is no separating Balfour's ideology from that of Zionism, even though Zionist Jews perforce had a different feeling for, a different history and historical experience of, ideas about Palestine. For all their differences (and they *were* numerous), both the British imperialist and the Zionist vision are united in playing down and even canceling out the Arabs in Palestine as somehow secondary and negligible. Both raise the moral importance of the visions very far above the mere presence of natives on a piece of immensely significant territory. And both visions (as we shall see in Chapter Two) belong fundamentally to the ethos of a European *mission civilisatrice*—nineteenth-century, colonialist, racist even—built on notions about the inequality

of men, races, and civilizations, an inequality allowing the most extreme forms of self-aggrandizing projections, and the most extreme forms of punitive discipline toward the unfortunate natives whose existence, paradoxically, was denied.

I shall have something to say about Zionist projections and discipline as they bore on the Palestinian natives later in the book. Now I want principally to remark that for much of its modern history, Palestine and its native people have been subject to denials of a very rigorous sort. For in order to mitigate the presence of large numbers of natives on a desired land, the Zionists convinced themselves that these natives did not exist, then made it possible for them to exist only in the most rarefied forms. First denial, then blocking, shrinking, silencing, hemming in. This is an enormously complex policy, for it includes not only the policy of the Zionists toward the native Arabs, but also the policy of Israel toward its Arab colonies, and the character of the Israeli occupying forces on the West Bank and Gaza after 1967. These too are matters that will occupy me later in this book. However, it would seem more interesting to inquire here why these aspects of the Palestinian experience are so little known and discussed in the West. Here we find ourselves confronting some special attributes of the Zionist/Palestinian interaction.

If, as I have been saying, Palestine was the site of a contest between a native presence and an incoming, basically European/Western form of advanced culture, then it has followed that a considerable part of the contest was conducted outside Palestine itself. Before 1918, Palestine was a province within the Ottoman Empire. After 1918, it officially entered Britain's sphere of influence. As far as the Jewish minority in Palestine was concerned, Zionism had very little to do with them. Despite the worldwide interest among Jews in the Balfour Declaration, no publicity was undertaken for it in Palestine, in the Jewish community there.[17] This fact was in keeping with the spirit, if not the letter, of Balfour's view that "the present inhabitants" need not be consulted—even though these present inhabitants happened also to include some Jews. Later, during testimony given to the Supreme War Council preparing

for the Paris Peace Conference, Sylvain Lévi (a distinguished French Orientalist—the profession is important for the argument of this book) spoke on behalf of the Zionist delegation; he argued "that, though the work of the Zionists was of great significance from the moral point of view, Palestine was a small and poor land with a population of 600,000 Arabs, and the [incoming] Jews, having a higher standard of living, would tend to dispossess them."[18] According to Weizmann, this embarrassed the Zionists since, as he was later to say, "the world would judge the Jewish state [and presumably the Zionist movement] by what it shall do with the Arabs."[19] For indeed it was the world that made the success of Zionism possible, and it was Zionism's sense of the world as supporter and audience that played a considerable practical role in the struggle for Palestine.

Not all the world had Balfour's callous disregard of natives, although it is also true that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries even anti-imperialists like John Hobson believed in the existence of "subject races" whose opinions did not count very high on a list of priorities. Nevertheless the Zionists and even the British knew that somehow the natives would appear—and by *appear* I mean something little more than that the natives would become physically perceptible, if nothing else, to observers—and by appearing would make their resistance known to the world. It was not lost on the British and the Zionists that according to the finest Arab study of the struggle for independence (*The Arab Awakening* by George Antonius), the Arab renaissance would make Arabs aware of the impossible contradiction between their plans for themselves and for their territory (including Palestine, of course) and the plans advanced by Balfour, the Zionists, and the French. Moreover, most of the Jews of the world, then as now, were not in Palestine but in "the world," defined as the European/American world. The task then became to convert Palestine into a Jewish state, without at the same time making it possible for the world to take seriously (or even later to know about) the natives' protest. The systematic denial of a substantial native Arab presence in Palestine was accompanied, as I

said above, by its destruction, blocking, and confinement in Palestine, and its blocking and confinement in the councils of the world; in addition, the Zionists were able to diffuse their views and their reality *over* the views and reality of the Palestinian Arabs. A negative project—denial and blocking—entailed an equal and opposite positive project—diffusion.

I am not speaking here about mere propaganda, which, were it to have depended principally upon lies about Palestine, would never have brought Zionism to its realization in Israel. What concerns me a great deal more is the *strength* of the process of diffusion whose main focus was the Zionist colonization of Palestine, its successes, its feats, its remarkable institutions; just as today the strength of Israeli information is its admiring self-regard and the celebration of its "pioneering" spirit, which Americans in particular have found it very easy to identify with. An intrinsic aspect of diffusive strength has been a systematic repression of the Arab reality in Palestine. Most accounts of the kibbutz, for example, leave out the facts that even before the state of Israel came into being (and of course after), Arabs were never admitted as members, that cheap (Arab or Oriental Jewish) hired labor is essential to kibbutz functioning, that "socialist" kibbutzim were and are established on land confiscated from Arabs.[20] Rather than attempt in advance to answer the charges that might be made about Zionist policy toward the Arab natives in Palestine, Zionist spokesmen simply said nothing about them. In the case of the kibbutz, therefore, the institution appeared to grow and prosper more or less spontaneously in an uninhabited land, where enterprising Jewish immigrants hit upon the otherwise quite remarkable social unit which was the kibbutz.

And so it went in Palestine with such instruments as Avoda Ivrit (Jewish Labor), whose purpose, according to Amos Elon, was

> aimed at the establishment of a completely separate economic sector for the newcomers [the Jewish arrivals in Palestine as part of the Zionist project]. Native labor must not be "exploited" in the reconstruction of the country by the Jews.

> Jews must do everything themselves. The natives would continue to benefit indirectly from the general improvement and economic upsurge, particularly in trade. But henceforth Jews must try to be self-sufficient and do all the physical work with their hands, including the most difficult, the least paying, and the most menial. If there was no "exploitation" of Arab labor, Arab laborers could not "objectively" be opposed to the Zionists. . . . *Avoda Ivrit* was predicated in part upon a doctrinaire illusion; it was rampant with intellectual inconsistencies. In effect, it created a subculture, free from the demands of the larger society, not parasitic upon it, and above all, enjoying that kind of immunity from "reality"—whether Turkish, British, or Arab—that permitted its members to indulge in their dreams.[21]

The principal and direct benefit to the natives was the loss of their country—but Elon's point in general is a good one; Avoda Ivrit, and the other Zionist devices for alienating the land from the natives, allowed no one to say that there was an *objective* exploitation. "Objective" in this context takes on the most direct and cruellest meaning. It means (and meant) that Zionism would do its preparatory work and win its early battles objectively on its own ground, and not *against* anyone, "anyone" in this case (and henceforward) being defined as non-Jewish. Note that even Elon cannot see the moral distinction between British and Arab "reality" in Palestine. That by virtue of its unbroken existence in Palestine for centuries the native presence had and still has an incomparably greater moral authority than that of the imperial European power, has not occurred to him. And it did not always occur to the Zionists, who after 1948 did their best to eliminate objectively the Arab Palestinians. A typical view of what happened is Weizmann's remark that "it was a miraculous cleaning of the land; the miraculous simplification of Israel's task."[22]

Thus all appeals on behalf of Zionism were international appeals perforce. The site of Zionist struggle was only partially in Palestine; most of the time until 1948, and even after—and Weizmann's own work is the best case in point—the struggle

had to be waged, and fuelled, and supplied, in the great capitals of the West. On the one hand, the native resistance to the Zionists was either played down or ignored in the West; on the other, the Zionists made it their claim that Britain was blocking their greater and greater penetration of Palestine. Between 1922 and 1947 the great issue witnessed by the world in Palestine was not, as a Palestinian would like to imagine, the struggle between natives and new colonists, but a struggle presented as being between Britain and the Zionists. The full irony of this remarkable epistemological achievement—and I use the philosophical term because there is no other one adequate to expressing the sheer blotting out from knowledge of almost a million natives—is enhanced when we remember that in 1948, at the moment that Israel declared itself a state, it legally owned a little more than 6 percent of the land of Palestine and its population of Jews consisted of a fraction of the total Palestinian population. The consistency of this attitude and Avoda Ivrit is almost total: Address the world as the aggrieved, with Britain (a colonial power) as your enemy; ignore the natives, and have nothing said about them, so long, *objectively*, as you cannot be seen directly to be exploiting them.

The diffusion of Zionism in the West, its subsequent replenishment by the West, was spearheaded obviously enough by the Jewish communities in the West. The essence of the Zionist campaign on behalf of the conquest of Palestine was, and remains to this day, an appeal so specific, yet so full of general justification, as to make all opposition to it both impossibly general and generally inadmissible. This had the effect of bringing most of the liberal and enlightened West to its side. Let me give a few examples of what I mean. As Herzl first conceived of it in the nineties, Zionism was a movement to free Jews and solve the problem of anti-Semitism in the West; later elaborations of this idea took Palestine as the place where the conception was to be materially fulfilled (after locations in South America and East Africa had been considered and dropped). In addition to being the place where there existed a spiritual bond in the form of a covenant between God and the

Jews, Palestine had the further advantage of being a backward province in an even more backward empire. Therefore, the effort of all Zionist apologetics from the beginning was to lay claim to Palestine both as a backward, largely uninhabited territory and as a place where the Jews, enjoying a unique historical privilege could reconstitute the land into a Jewish homeland.

Thus to oppose such an idea in the West was immediately to align oneself with anti-Semitism. To support it, on the other hand, was to do a number of far more interesting and acceptable things than merely displace or ignore a basically uninteresting bunch of resident natives. It was once again to solve a specific problem with a specific solution, a prospect—as we shall see—that bore within it not only the ideology of a constructive colonial adventure, but also the *scientific*, disciplined attitude of a positive social solution to a positive social and intellectual issue. Moreover, the idea of a Jewish state in (or a Jewish movement for) Palestine acquired a remarkable aura of moral prestige, the more so since the advent of fascism in Europe. Here was a people identified since ancient times with the land of Israel, identified also with a prodigious history of suffering, moral and intellectual grandeur, and, above all, with dispersion. Palestine was the specific and, it seemed, most liberal of all the answers to their needs.

To oppose this plan, as I said above, was to find oneself with nowhere in the West to stand. This is still more or less true today. Zionism has always sought specific answers: immigration, hospitals, and, later, arms for its defense, money. These answers attract support, since their negation seems principally to be only a negation, and an abstract and general one to boot. Even George Antonius' great book made its argument the *Arab* awakening (not the Palestinian presence), which was to be understood, he said, in terms of the Arabization and the Islamization of the whole Near Orient.[23] Anyone feeling doubts now and then about Zionist conquests in Palestine would inevitably have to face up to the "fact" that what he supported as a result was a general Arab and Islamic bloc. And this bloc, both in its amorphousness and dark abstraction,

made more elegant and attractive the picture of a handful of European Jews hewing a civilization of sweetness and light out of the black Islamic sea (at a reasonable distance from Europe). The Zionists occupied a place that made it possible to interpret Palestine and its realities to the West in terms that the West could understand and easily accept, specifically and generally. Conversely, the refusal to accept the Zionist argument left anyone in the West with the poorest of alternatives: being simply negative, anti-Semitic, or an apologist for Islam and the Arabs. In any of these cases, the alternative to Zionism is, as I said earlier, too general or too outrageous; by way of contrast, Zionism offered the neatness of a specific solution (or answer) to a specific problem. After all, who could say what the Arabs or Islam wanted, were about, were *for?* Even the putting of such a question made it possible then (and now, alas), to argue that "the Arabs" were a whole mass of generally unpleasant things, which when they were presented at all made for a chilling and frightening reception. The fact is that "Arabs" were always *being represented,* never able to speak for themselves; this plus, paradoxically, their more and more evident political visibility, is why they have been so overwhelmingly refused a decent place in actuality—even when they sit on the land. Today, for example, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is recognized by over 100 nations, and of course by *all* Palestinians, as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and yet neither the United States nor Israel concedes that the PLO represents Palestinians. On the contrary, Camp David specifically arrogated the right of Palestinian representation to the United States, Israel, and Egypt.

In making Zionism attractive—that is, making it attract genuine support in the deepest sense—its leaders not only ignored the Arab; when it was necessary to deal with him, they made him intelligible, they represented him to the West as something that could be understood and managed in specific ways. Between Zionism and the West there was and still is a community of language and of ideology; so far as the Arab was concerned, he was not part of this community. To a very great

extent this community depends heavily on a remarkable tradition in the West of enmity toward Islam in particular and the Orient in general. I have documented this tradition in detail elsewhere, and I refer my reader to my study of what I have called Orientalism for details and for an account of a long, consistent history which culminates today in the fact, for example, that practically the *only* ethnic group about whom in the West racial slurs are tolerated, even encouraged, is the Arabs.[24] The Arabs and Islam *represent* viciousness, veniality, degenerate vice, lechery, and stupidity in popular and scholarly discourse. On this collective representation of the Arabs and Islam, Zionism, like its Western ideological parents, drew. *How* it drew and where it stood when it drew deserve attention here, because it is a perfect instance of how propaganda, politicized scholarship, and ideological information have power, implement policy, and, at the same time, can appear to be "objective truth."

First of all, the Zionists took it upon themselves as a partially "Eastern" people who had emancipated themselves from the worst Eastern excesses, to explain the Oriental Arabs to the West, to assume responsibility for expressing what the Arabs were really like and about, never to let the Arabs appear equally with them as existing in Palestine. This method allowed Zionism always to seem both involved in and superior to the native realities of Middle Eastern existence. As an instance, consider this extraordinarily revealing letter of May 30, 1918, from Weizmann to Balfour:

> It is with a great sense of responsibility that I am attempting to write to you about the situation here and about the problems which confront the Zionist Commission. . . .
>
> The Arabs, who are superficially clever and quick witted, worship one thing, and one thing only—power and success. Hence while it would be wrong to say that British prestige has suffered through the military stalemate it certainly has not increased. . . . The British Authorities . . . knowing as they do the treacherous nature of the Arab, they have to watch carefully and constantly that nothing should happen which might give the Arabs the slightest grievance or ground of

complaint. In other words, the Arabs have to be "nursed" lest they should stab the Army in the back. The Arab, quick as he is to gauge a situation, tries to make the most of it. He screams as often as he can and blackmails as often as he can.

The first scream was heard when your Declaration was announced. All sorts of misinterpretations and misconceptions were put on the declaration. The English, they said, are going to hand over the poor Arabs to the wealthy Jews, who are all waiting in the wake of General Allenby's army, ready to swoop down like vultures on an easy prey and to oust everybody from the land. . . .

At the head of the Administration we see enlightened and honest English officials, but the rest of the administrative machinery is left intact, and all the offices are filled with Arab and Syrian employees. . . . We see these officials, corrupt, inefficient, regretting the good old times when baksheesh was the only means by which matters administrative could be settled. . . . The fairer the English regime tries to be, the more arrogant the Arab becomes. It must also be taken into consideration that the Arab official knows the language, habits and ways of the country [which isn't perhaps so unusual, since he is *of* the country, which is Arab after all: note how Weizmann makes it seem that the Arabs possess an unfair advantage by simply being there], is a roué and therefore has a great advantage over the fair and clean-minded English official, who is not conversant with the subtleties of the Oriental mind. So the English are "run" by the Arabs.

The administration in this form is distinctly hostile to Jews . . . the Englishman at the head of affairs is fair and just, and in trying to regulate the relations between the two chief sections of the community [Arabs and Jews: to call them "chief" more or less equally is something of an exaggeration, yet Weizmann does it anyway] he is meticulously careful to hold the balance. But his only guide in this difficult situation is the democratic principle, which reckons with the relative numerical strength, and the brutal numbers operate against us, for there are five Arabs to one Jew. . . .

The present state of affairs would necessarily tend towards the creation of an Arab Palestine, if there were an Arab people in Palestine [here Weizmann uses criteria for "peoplehood" especially designed in the nineteenth century to

> exclude African blacks and Latin American Indians from the right to resist white colonialists, who *were* people]. It will not in fact produce that result because the fellah is at least four centuries behind the times, and the effendi (who, by the way, is the real gainer from the present system) is dishonest, uneducated, greedy, and as unpatriotic as he is inefficient.[25]

Weizmann's candor is instructive. His principal rhetorical device is to identify himself with Balfour as a European who knows the difference between the Oriental and the Occidental mind. From this distinction all sorts of conclusions follow. Arabs are Oriental, therefore less human and valuable than Europeans and Zionists; they are treacherous, unregenerate, etc. Most of all, they do not deserve to own a country, even if their numerical advantage seems otherwise to entitle them to it. Weizmann essentially recapitulates John Stuart Mill's arguments on representative government, by which the Indians were denied the right to rule themselves because they were centuries "behind" the English.[26] Thus the total identification of Zionism with the most reprehensible aspects of European white cultural and racial hegemony is easily made by Weizmann, as is the more useful identification of himself with the expert knowledge of the Orient usually reserved for Orientalists, Eastern experts, Arab Bureau "hands," and the like. The Zionist fuses with the White European against the colored Oriental, whose principal political claim seems only to be quantitative (his brute numbers) and otherwise lacking in quality; and the Zionist also—because he "understands the Eastern mind from within"—represents the Arab, speaks for him, explains him to the European. Both Zionist and European share in common the ideals of fair play, civilization, and progress, none of which the Oriental could understand. As Weizmann explains it, the conflict in Palestine is a struggle to wrest control of land from natives; but it is a struggle dignified by an *idea*, and the idea was everything.

Secondly, Zionism's conflict with the Arabs in Palestine and elsewhere in the region was seen as extending, perpetuating, even enhancing (to the advantage of the West) the age-old

conflict between the West and the Orient, whose main surrogate was Islam. This was not only a colonial matter, but a civilizational one as well. It was perfectly apparent to Western supporters of Zionism like Balfour that the colonization of Palestine was to be made a goal for the Western powers from the very beginning of Zionist planning: Herzl used the idea, Weizmann used it, every leading Israeli since has used it. Israel was a device for holding Islam—and later the Soviet Union, or communism—at bay. Zionism and Israel were associated with liberalism, with freedom and democracy, with knowledge and light, with what "we" understand and fight for. By contrast, Zionism's enemies were simply a twentieth-century version of the alien spirit of Oriental despotism, sensuality, ignorance, and similar forms of backwardness. If "they" didn't understand the glorious enterprise that was Zionism, it was because "they" were hopelessly out of touch with "our" values. It did not seem to matter that the backward Muslim had his own forms of life, to which he was entitled as a human being, or that his attachment to the land on which he lived was as great as and perhaps even greater, by virtue of its investment in centuries of actual habitation, than that of the Jew who yearned for Zion in his exile. All that really mattered were ethnocentric ideals, appropriated by Zionism, valorizing the white man's superiority and his right over territory believed to be consonant with those ideals.

How much these notions have become accepted ideas in the common discourse of enlightened American liberal democracy needs to be documented immediately and decisively. Each of the instances I will cite makes its point about Zionism and Israel in two related ways. One is that Zionism on its own merits is a marvelous, admirable thing which is accountable to no one and nothing mainly because it corresponds so completely with Western ideas about society and man. The other is that the obstacles to Zionism and/or Israel are nefarious, stupid, or morally indecent and—this is crucial—they are not to be heard from directly. Only Zionism can speak for them. Take Reinhold Niebuhr as a first case. So far as I know, he had little to do with the Arab world or Islam to begin with, except as he

appropriated cultural ideas about them unquestioningly. Yet along with six other notables, Niebuhr signed a long letter to *The New York Times* on November 21, 1947, in support of the idea of partitioning Palestine. Here is the core of their argument:

> Politically, we would like to see the lands of the Middle East practice democracy as we do here. Socially and economically, we would want these lands to develop in a manner which would improve local conditions of life and open up both the resources and the markets of the region. In other words, however we look at it, American interests, seen from a long-range view, dictate speedy modernization of the Middle East in all the spheres of human endeavor.
>
> Whoever approaches the Middle East with even a minimum of objectivity has to admit that thus far there is only one vanguard of progress and modernization in the Middle East [note here the appropriation of quasi-Marxist language to promote a fundamentally colonialist scheme], and that is Jewish Palestine. A second factor for progress is Christian Lebanon which, at the moment, is artificially subdued by the Pan-Arabists and Pan-Islamists of the Arab League against the will and sentiments of Lebanon's Christian majority. But for these two islands of Western civilization, Jewish Palestine and Christian Lebanon, the Arab-Moslem Middle East presents a hopeless picture from an American viewpoint.

Niebuhr's intellectual authority has been very great in American cultural life. What he says here, therefore, has the force of that authority. Yet to the Arab Palestinian, insofar as he is the object of that force, Niebuhr's remarks are nothing short of violent. "We would like to see" and "we would want" for these lands—populated by millions of Muslim Arabs when Neibuhr spoke for them—suggest that what these lands want and wish are of little interest. Our wishes *ought to* override their wishes. Our wishes state by irreducible fiat that "there is only one vanguard of progress," constituted by two tiny minorities, one imported, the other native. It never seemed to occur to the signatories of the letter that the wishes of the vast majority of

the people of the Middle East were "natural," and that the "artificiality" of which Niebuhr and his friends spoke could more properly be ascribed to the Zionists and the Maronites. (And how unwittingly prescient of the later troubles in the region, to wit the problems of Israel and of civil-war-torn Lebanon.) These "islands"—had he been less disingenuous, Niebuhr ought to have called them "colonies"—mitigate the otherwise "hopeless" picture presented by the Muslim world. Hopeless for whom and for what? Niebuhr doesn't feel it necessary to say what should be evident to any civilized Westerner. Islam is the enemy of Judaism and Christianity, and therefore "our" policy ought to be to support Jewish Palestine and Christian Lebanon. That there might be real live people in the region for which Niebuhr speaks so imperiously is an unthought-of possibility. The ideological screen literally effacing them, permits him to speak as he and his friends do. Zionism is progress and modernity; Islam and the Arabs are the opposite. Only Niebuhr can speak for all parties; we must not neglect to see a certain condescension even in the partisanship toward Palestinian Jews and Christian Lebanese.

A year earlier, Niebuhr had written an article called "A New View of Palestine" for *The Spectator*. His inflections here were slightly more conciliatory, seeing as "advice or criticism from an American on the Palestinian issue will hardly be welcome in Britain at the present time," the time in question being a crisis over the endless problem of limiting Jewish immigration into Palestine. Even so, Niebuhr feels it incumbent on him to offer if not advice then a new view, or at least a view that will be of help to the British. Unlike the letter in *The New York Times*, here he speaks directly to an imperial authority, as from one imperial agency to another.

> There is, I know, not sufficient consideration in America either of Arab rights or of the embarrassment of Britain in dealing with the Arab world. I find it baffling, on the other hand, that the average person here speaks of Arab "opinion" without suggesting that such opinion is limited to a small circle of feudal overlords, that there is no middle-class in this world

> and that the miserable masses are in such abject poverty that an opinion is an impossible luxury for them. One difficulty with the Arab problem is that the technical and dynamic civilization which the Jews might have helped to introduce and which should have the support of American captial, and which would include river-development, soil-conservation and use of native power, would not be acceptable to the Arab chieftains though beneficial to the Arab masses. It would have therefore to be imposed provisionally, but would have a chance of ultimate acceptance by the masses. [*The Spectator*, August 6, 1946, p. 162]

Whether before this piece was written or after it, Niebuhr could not have been found guilty of discussing, much less supporting, "Arab rights." He simply never did. His opening sentence, therefore, is little more than a rhetorical ploy for making his main point, that Arab opinion doesn't count (for the bogus sociological reasons he gives, as if masses didn't also need some piece of land on which to conduct their ignorance, backwardness, and decadence). Even that is not his *real* intention, which is nothing more than saying that whether they have an opinion or not, Arabs ought not to be allowed to obstruct the "technical and dynamic civilization" being brought into Palestine by the European Jews. It might have been easier to make such a point if, for example, he could directly assert (a) that Arabs are sui generis inferior and (b) that they were simply the creatures, without will or opinion, of a hopelessly decadent, small, feudal class of "overlords" who manipulated the "masses" as so many puppets. Instead, Niebuhr chooses the more culturally valid form of statement, and says that his argument in reality is being made not merely on behalf of the "technical and dynamic civilization" brought in by Zionism, but that it has the Arab masses in mind.

Let us leave aside the fact that Niebuhr could have found many instances in recent Arab Palestinian history of purely spontaneous mass uprising against Zionism, or that he could have found cases of Arab peasants turning in vain to the Zionist settlers for help against Arab absentee landlords. What he does not see—as Marx did not see a hundred years earlier

when he wrote about the British in India—is that there was a *national* right being violated even by a "technical and dynamic civilization" when it made colonial incursions upon "the miserable masses." In addition, and from the viewpoint of a famous Christian theologian, one would have expected (and in later years, expected fruitlessly) some appreciation of the fact that for every Jewish immigrant coming into Palestine there was likely to be an Arab or Arabs displaced, and human rights accordingly suppressed. Finally, we would have expected Niebuhr to have made some effort to hear "the miserable masses" and their wishes, or at least to have assumed that among their more or less natural wishes would have been the desire not to be displaced or so violently "benefited" by a superior civilization.

Had Niebuhr been speaking about the South African situation or about the American South, no such condescension and racial implications would have been tolerated, which is a situation the more to be appreciated when we realized, as I said above, that Niebuhr believes himself to be expressing an advanced, or progressive, liberal view. Well then, we ask, is it possible that Niebuhr did not know what was happening in Palestine, or (as I believe the case to be) that he truly thought that Zionism was culturally superior to Arab "decadence"?

This brings me to my second example, which will illustrate the extent to which support for Zionism, in all its positive and affirmative aspects, entailed not just a grudging acceptance of some Arab reality in Palestine but an affirmative and positive feeling that Zionism had done well in destroying Arab Palestine. No less a spokesman and cultural status figure than Niebuhr, Edmund Wilson was also a remarkably brilliant and catholic critic—of literature, society, history, and morals. Much more than Niebuhr, he exemplified a lifelong project to discriminate between those elements in Western (and world) culture that were (the phrase is a bit mushy, but I use it sincerely) life-enhancing and those that were life-retarding. Whatever else he may have been, Wilson *never* identified with the State, or with anything the slightest bit chauvinistic, or even institutional. Any one of his readers—and he was the

most widely read man of letters produced in this country—will know this about him. Wilson was particularly interested in the Jews, Hebrew, and the Old Testament; when he turned sixty, he wrote in an essay on the Jews that "the culture of no other people [than the English, and then the American Puritans] seems so deeply to have been influenced by these [the phrases and visions of the Hebrew Bible]," [27] and his study of Hebrew as well as his book on the Dead Sea Scrolls testify to the special hold on him of the Jews and Judaism. One can have no problem with such an attitude, of course, except when Israel is in question.

Black, Red, Blond and Olive includes a long, rambling section occasioned by Wilson's visit to Israel. The piece is episodic and given in diary form as a random sampling of his impressions in Israel, most of them triggered by his reading of Hebrew literature and his interest in Judaism. At one point, he comments on the terrorism by which the state came into being, and how there might have been something reprehensible about the whole business. He sees that terrorism "was the result of the Nazi persecutions and of the policy of the British," but adds disapprovingly that in Israel "the terrorist habit has been established" and with it an "element of moral fanaticism." Nevertheless, Wilson does pursue the matter far enough to remark "that the Israelis, in relation to the Arabs, have shown certain signs of returning to the callous intolerance of the Israelites in relation to the people they dipossessed." About the fact of dispossession, Wilson appears to take no particular position, except as in the Bible, *that it happened.* This might suggest a certain historical neutrality on his part toward the occurrence of dispossessions here and there in the world, even though we cannot fail to remember that as he writes, Wilson is in a place where the dispossession and intolerance are actually happening. We realize that he is not speaking about the Bible when, a sentence or so later, he delivers the following description:

> So the position of the Arabs in Israel—especially as one sees them in the country—is rather like that fierce but still

picturesque, pathetically retarded people, cut off from the main community but presenting a recurrent problem. In a large Arab town like Acre, the squalor of the swarming streets inspires in an Israeli the same distaste that it does in the visiting Westerner. For the Jew, who takes family relations so seriously and who, in Israel, has labored so carefully with the orphans from Poland and Germany, and the children of the illiterate Yemenites, the spectacle of flocks of urchins, dirty, untaught, diseased, bawling and shrieking and begging in the narrow and dirty streets, inspires even moral horror. If the restrictions imposed on marriage by the ancient rabbinical law are considered by many too rigid, the facility of divorce for the Arabs, which, together with their nomadic habits, encourages the father of a family simply to abandon his offspring and move on to take a woman in another place, must be felt to be an evil far worse. It is not that a certain contempt for the Arabs is not natural for anyone trained in the West, nor is it that any ruthlessness of Israel is not matched by the rather stupid obstinacy of the Arab refugees in Jordan, who have refused offers of U.N.R.W.A. to accommodate them in other localities and continue to insist on returning to their villages and farms in Israel. I am occupied here solely with bringing out the operation in Israel of a certain Jewish tendency toward exclusiveness—I shall deal later on with the converse of this, the life-giving elements of the Jewish tradition—as a limiting and sometimes destructive influence.[28]

With regard to the Arabs that Wilson describes here, Jewish exclusiveness does not seem like much of an evil. In his brief portrait of them, the Arabs are seen as totally disgusting and unattractive; the reason for their poverty seems less important than its appearance, although the facts about Arabs in Israel would not have been hard for Wilson to get hold of. As for his remarks about the Arab and his sense of family, these can only be understood as one would understand remarks about "Orientals" not having the same regard for human life that "we" do. In other words, Arabs don't care for children, they don't feel love or anger, they are simply quick-breeding animals. The "certain contempt" felt for Arabs extends to finding the Arab Palestinian "stupid" in his obstinacy about being accommodat-

ed elsewhere, but the most maddening dishonesty is found in Wilson's use of the word "exclusiveness" to speak about Zionist treatment of the Arabs who did not leave until 1948. During the time that he was in Israel, the laws applied to Arabs were the Emergency Defense Regulations originally devised and implemented in Palestine by the British to be used against the Jews and Arabs. These laws were openly racist in that they were *never* used in Israel against Jews. When Israel retained them after 1948 for use in controlling the Arab minority, they forbade Arabs the right of movement, the right of purchase of land, the right of settlement, and so forth. Under the mandate the regulations were regularly denounced by the Jews as colonial and racist. Yet as soon as Israel became a state, those same laws were used against the Arabs. Wilson has nothing whatever to say about this. Again there is little excuse for the omission since, as one can ascertain easily from Sabri Jiryis' book *The Arabs in Israel,*[29] there was a great deal of post-1948 *Zionist* writing against the abuses of the former colonial rules as they were administered by Israelis to suppress and manipulate the Arabs.

Over and above everything explicit in Wilson's writing is the implicit verity (so it seems) that anyone, especially an enlightened humanistic liberal, can write, have an expert opinion on, discourse about the situation in the Middle East. This is a very important thing, I think. For if during the nineteenth century the expert scholar-Orientalist was looked to for knowledge about the Orient, the situation changed drastically in the twentieth century. For now a Westerner turns for his evidence of and knowledge about the Orient (and Orientals) to the Zionist. What Wilson sees—and for that matter what the Westerner generally sees—in the Middle East is seen from the Zionist perspective. Israel is the norm, Israelis are the presence, their ideas and institutions the authentically native ones; Arabs are a nuisance, Palestinians a quasi-mythical reality (mainly, the argument goes, a propaganda reality), and so on. Israeli origins are forgotten: Israel simply is a Western democracy now quite gratuitously set upon by anti-Semitic Arabs. The reversal in actuality is complete. This is the

greatest success of what I referred to earlier as the Zionist practice of diffusing "truth." In other words, Wilson's remarks about the Arabs are not inaccurate; they are very accurate as a more or less verbatim copy of what Israelis (as Western colonialists living in a backward area) think about Arabs, their "nomadic" habits, and so forth. But the elision is so complete that one forgets that the relationship between Israelis and Arabs is not a fact of nature but the result of a specific, continuing process of dispossession, displacement, and colonial de facto apartheid. Moreover, one tends to forget that Zionists were *arrivals* in Palestine from Europe.

III
The Issue of Representation

The point I have been trying to make is that such writing as Wilson's can be taken as the perfect symbol of a political reality in what I have been calling the common discourse of enlightened American liberal democracy. It is the complete hegemonic coalescence between the liberal Western view of things and the Zionist-Israeli view. I use the word "hegemonic" advisedly, with all its resonances in Antonio Gramsci, the great Italian Marxist who analyzed the importance of culture and of intellectuals to politics. For in elaborating one of its meanings, Gramsci assigned the notion of consent to *hegemony;* in other words, there is hegemony not by mere domination but by consent, acquiescence. By the middle of the twentieth century, as the examples of Niebuhr and Wilson show, there was a willing identification between Western liberal discourse and Zionism. The reasons for this identification are complex (perhaps there is even an acceptable justification for it), but for the Arab Palestinian the concrete meaning of this hegemonic relationship was disastrous. There are no two ways about it. The identification of Zionism and liberalism in the West meant that insofar as he had been displaced and dispossessed in Palestine, the Arab had become a nonperson as much because the Zionist had himself become the *only* person in Palestine as because the Arab's negative personality (Oriental, decadent,

inferior) had intensified. In Zionism, the liberal West saw the triumph of reason and idealism, and only that (because that is what liberalism wishes principally to see); in liberalism, Zionism saw itself as it wanted itself to be. In both cases, the Arab was eliminated, except as trouble, negation, "bad" values. This is surely a unique instance of ideology overriding simple economics. For to this day on purely economic grounds (and considering the vast amount of aid given to Israel and Zionism), Israel is a disaster, yet its triumph of pioneering reason justifies more and more aid, more and more affirmation—with the grounds for affirmation shrinking gradually.

Niebuhr and Edmund Wilson date from the forties and fifties, respectively. In the decade following the June 1967 war, Israel's borders expanded enormously; a large population of approximately one million Arabs was accumulated as a result. No one, least of all Israelis, could dodge the problem of this new Palestinian actuality. The word "Arab" no longer served to describe everyone who was not Jewish. There were the "old" Arabs in Israel, the new West Bank-Gaza set, the militant liberation fighters (later the PLO), and the various communities scattered in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and the Arabian Gulf. For over ten years now, Israel has been in military occupation of actual territories and people. It is true that the West Bank is designated as "Judea and Samaria," but the people there will not be so easily dissolved, at least not yet. Therefore the new obstacle for Zionism-liberalism is the problem of the occupation. Israel will have it that military occupation really means "living together," a concept congenial enough to *The New York Times* on occasion as to warrant wholesale approval. On May 2, 1976, the paper's lead editorial denounced "Arab propagandists" for all sorts of abominations (chief among them, attacking the occupation of Arab territory), then—echoing the official Israeli line—proclaimed the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as "a model for future cooperation" between Arabs and Jews in former Palestine. In no other context could such a statement be made. A military occupation was taken as representative of good

relations between people, a scheme on which to build a common future, just as "autonomy" was supposed to be what "the Arabs of Eretz Israel" *really* wanted.

Nor was this all. What we must again see is the issue involving *representation*, an issue always lurking near the question of Palestine. I said earlier that Zionism always undertakes to speak for Palestine and the Palestinians; this has always meant a blocking operation, by which the Palestinian cannot be heard from (or represent himself) directly on the world stage. Just as the expert Orientalist believed that only he could speak (paternally as it were) for the natives and primitive societies that he had studied—his *presence* denoting their *absence*—so too the Zionists spoke to the world on behalf of the Palestinians. This has not everywhere and anytime been possible, as every insurgent movement since World War II has learned to its advantage. In an age of mass and sometimes instant communication, sensational guerrilla or terrorist exploits can "speak" directly, can represent directly an otherwise blocked presence. In time, this repressed presence filters through, the more so, as was the case with most Israelis, when it is denied. In the final analysis, this latest denial of the Palestinians has turned out to be the greatest (but most inevitable) mistake made by Zionism since its inception. This is something I shall discuss in the next chapter; here we should detail some recent instances of the hegemonic liberal-Zionist union in order to complete the series of examples I began with Niebuhr and Wilson.

It has been generally true, I think, that one almost infallible index of acceptability and political legitimacy in the United States is who speaks for what. One reason for the powerful (nonetheless highly selective) legitimacy of the NLF in this country was the spectrum of highly placed, highly visible, and otherwise prominent figures speaking against the U.S. enterprise in Vietnam. When Dr. Spock, Jane Fonda, Noam Chomsky, and Senator McGovern all condemn the same thing, they can be taken to be validating the opposite of what they condemn. Conversely in the case of Israel, when speaking warmly for and on behalf of Israel is considered de rigueur for

anyone in either public or intellectual life, the sheer impossibility of finding a space in which to speak for the Palestinians is enormous; indeed, every statement on behalf of Israel intensifies and concentrates pressure on the Palestinian to be silent, to accept repression. Thus it is legitimate and acceptable to be *for* Israel and *against* the Palestinians. The more active principle stemming from this axiom is that you will very often find articles by Israelis about Israel in public circulation, but very rarely articles by Arabs about themselves. This is not only a gross numerical disproportion (which has a great deal to do with the difference in size and, yes, quality between the resident Arab and Jewish communities in this country), but also a qualitative one. During the 1973 war, for example, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* ran an essay one week by a prominent Israeli lawyer on what it felt like to be at war; the next week there was a supposedly symmetrical feature, although it was written by a former U.S. ambassador to Syria. When an Arab voice is heard it is selected in such a way as to make the least impression or, as I said earlier, when a representative Arab view is put forward it is either by a Western expert or it is a quasi-official Arab "statement." Quantity and quality are kept equivalent.

During the decade after 1967 a great many well-known personalities visited Israel, and in the case of the writers among them, wrote their impressions. The most recent instance is Saul Bellow; others include Stephen Spender, Francine Du Plessix Gray, Renata Adler, and Gary Wills. After 1967—unlike the period about which Edmund Wilson wrote—it was not possible to avoid or ignore the occupied territories or the Arabs there. Each account of a visit to Israel therefore includes something about the Palestinians. In each case the Arabs are dealt with through an Israeli Arab expert, usually a worldly wise colonial officer, sometimes an academic figure with a background in military intelligence. In this respect, Bellow and Spender were exactly alike.[30] Their liberal humanity, their concern for the "possible" violation of Israeli democracy by military occupation, was demonstrated by a talk with an expert who represented the Arab "reality" to them, alleviated their concern for

humane values, and reassured them about Israeli democracy. In turn, this view of the Arab Palestinian inside the occupied territories came to stand for what the Arab Palestinian was, what he wanted, how he felt. It would be exactly like sending a white "black affairs" officer to tell a visiting Western intellectual what the South African black majority *really* was, really wanted, really felt. Only, of course, such a misrepresentation would be rejected as incredible. Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back* gets its force precisely from this accepted, legitimated sort of representation.

Not that there was no evidence about what was really happening inside Israel. Many Israelis visiting the United States have remarked on how the main difference between an Israeli and an American pro-Zionist is that the latter is a great deal less candid and open about Israel and its Arab "problem" than the former.[31] For the cause of Israel and of Zionism in the United States (this is now less true of Europe) is virtually sacrosanct; the founding of Israel in 1948 is discussed with the same hushed breath and on the same high plane as the Marshall Plan. Whole segments of the intellectual and academic communities—to say nothing of the entire media industry—observe rituals about Israel and what it is all about that bear no comparison with any other cause. At the drop of a hat in 1974 and 1975, major figures in the arts, in public life, and in politics from UNESCO signed statements protesting Israel's "expulsion," as it was called, and the United Nations' condemnation of Zionism as a form of racism. Only occasionally did anyone—Noam Chomsky being the lone voice, so far as I have been able to determine—say anything about what has been and still was being done to the Palestinian Arab by Zionism and Israel, as the various practices discriminating against the "non-Jew" in Israel were indistinguishable from other forms of racial oppression elsewhere. Instead, one could watch Daniel Patrick Moynihan attacking villainy and defending freedom in the moral and intellectual vacuum reserved for Israel and Zionism.[32]

The sociology of what normally defines a "cause," or perhaps what an issue must be in order to be a cause, breaks

down completely in the case of Israel today, at least insofar as Israel is a subject of discussion of public debate. No liberal would be found silent championing the cause of human rights in the Soviet Union, or Chile, or Africa. Yet when it comes to similar matters in Israel, there is an almost total silence. The subject of military government, its attendant abuses and human rights violations in Israel stubbornly resists any effort at making it a "cause." This is particularly striking in cases when sources cited by the very few critics of Israel are *Israeli* sources. For years now the Israeli League of Human Rights has been diffusing information on such matters as the demolition of Arab houses, the expropriation of Arab lands, the treatment of Arab workers, torture and illegal detention of Arabs—all cases documented principally by translations of articles in Israeli journals and newspapers. None of these items ever sees the light of day in the United States, and not for want of their being sent to editors, television columnists, prominent and (usually) outspoken liberals, etc. There are literally tens of Israeli news services, liberal newsletters, and liberal quarterlies regularly covering treatment of Arab Palestinians both inside pre-1967 Israel and in the Occupied Territories—to say nothing of United Nations reports, accounts written by former UN border and armistice supervisors, reports of international agencies like Amnesty International, the Red Cross, dozens of Arab and Arab-American studies—none of which is ever released for wide distribution and dissemination in the United States. The most recent, and in many ways the most outlandish, such deliberate act of omission concerns the London *Sunday Times* "Insight" Report on torture in Israel (June 19, 1977). Using an exhaustive series of investigative techniques, the *Times* revealed that torture of Arabs is a regular, methodical, and officially sanctioned device in Israel; that hundreds of Arabs are being detained and tortured; that the evidence is wholly convincing that the state condones the practice as a way of intimidating, controlling, and terrorizing the "native" population in the Occupied Territories. With only one known exception (the Boston *Globe*) not a single major American newspaper (or journal, weekly news magazine, or television

news program) carried the report, most of them scarcely even mentioned it, and not one has mentioned the various Amnesty, Red Cross, and other such reports that followed. Of this scandalous informational dereliction, Nicholas Von Hoffman aptly noted:

> At the minimum, the Israeli authorities should study the case assembled against them [by the Sunday *Times* report on torture by Israeli authorities] and come up with something more convincing than the statement released by their embassy in London which simply said: "Allegations of this nature have been repeatedly put out by Arab propaganda sources in recent years and proved to be totally unfounded in the light of detailed and documented investigations." Name-calling and reliance on investigations conducted by Israel for its own exoneration will not do. . . . The grotesque irony of using gas as an instrument of torture ought to have been too much even for those Israeli officials who believe treating human beings this way advances the cause of democracy.
>
> Most Americans will never know any of this. As of [now] . . . only one newspaper (the Boston *Globe*) has seen fit to run the report. The indifference isn't owing to doubt about the caliber of the journalism. The Sunday *Times* "Insight" Team which did the story is universally respected in the business.
>
> The lack of interest on this occasion may be explained by the New York *Times* covering the torture investigation with an 86-word article, appearing on page 13. To some extent all news in America is what the New York *Times* calls news, but even more so with foreign news. . . . So few print or broadcast editors are able to make independent judgments on the news. They simply lack the character and stature to have an opinion of their own and prefer the safety of letting the nation's most prestigious paper do their decision-making for them.
>
> This is particularly easy with an issue like Israel where any adverse publicity is likely to win an editor vociferous abuse from the nation's best-organized lobby. It doesn't work that way abroad, however, where the mass media are giving the publics in the other democracies far less biased accounts.[33]

In the event that an occasional report or column, such as Von Hoffman's, gets published or gets a little attention, its rarity and isolation—which comes from the absence of a context or tradition to set it in—drain it of any effectiveness. The power of a consensus, of a tradition, of a coherent discourse such as exists between Israel and liberal opinion, is that its sheer institutional presence dispels any evidence to the contrary, flicks it away as irrelevant. More: it can convert what one would expect to be devastating challenges to it, into *support* for it. Take as the most recent instance the election of Menachem Begin. For years and years, Begin has been known as a terrorist, and has made no effort to hide the fact. His book *The Revolt* is to be found in any university or medium-sized public library as part of the standard Middle East collection. In this book, Begin describes his terrorism—including the wholesale massacre of innocent women and children—in righteous (and chilling) profusion. He admits to being responsible for the April 1948 massacre of 250 women and children in the Arab village of Deir Yassin. Yet a few weeks after his election in May 1977 he emerged in the press with his terrorism forgotten, as a "statesman" with implied comparison to Charles De Gaulle. Here one cannot say that evidence of Begin's terrorism had been suppressed. It was there, has always been there in front of anyone discussing modern Israel, and has regularly been cited (in distinctions made, for example, between Begin and say, David Ben Gurion or Golda Meir, who were supposed to be statesmanlike). Yet so strong is the consensus decreeing that Israel's leaders are democratic, Western, incapable of evils normally associated with Arabs and Nazis (which, after all, Israel is supposed by its existence to have negated), that even a morsel as normally indigestible as Begin has been transmuted into just another Israeli statesman (and given an honorary LLD by Northwestern University in 1978 and part of a Nobel Peace Prize to cap it all!). Precisely those liberals who discover causes and outrages everywhere simply have nothing to say about Begin, about torture in Israel, or about the literally unstoppable annexationist policies of the Israeli state.

Much the same is true about the Palestinians as refugees. There is some dispute about how many Palestinians were forced out of their country and off their land during 1948 (the figures range between 500,000 and 800,000; even Israeli sources dispute the numbers but not the exodus itself), yet there is total agreement now that refugees exist. Almost thirty years of existence away from their territory, as well as the absence for them of the right of self-determination, "prove" (the word is unfortunate when its human meaning in this context is seen for what it is) some measure of injustice done them. But when one asks by whom or what they were made refugees, when the question of agency is posed, Israel is not only seen as exempt from blame or responsibility (according to President Carter for one, who similarly absolved the United States of responsibility for the devastation of Indochina), Israel (like the United States) is *praised* for its humanity. We are told that the Palestinians were an "exchange" for the Jews who left the Arab countries to come to Israel; that they left in spite of Haganah urgings that they not leave; that those who stayed are better off than their brethren in surrounding Arab countries; that there is only one haven for Jews and there are twenty-odd for Arabs, and why can't Arabs be like Jews and take in their own refugees; that the occupation of more Palestinian territory in 1967 produced in fact a "binational" existence between Arab and Jew; that the West Bank occupation is a fulfillment of biblical prophecies; that there is a Palestine, and that it is in Transjordan; that other refugees (from Muslim India, from Nazi Germany) have resettled elsewhere, and why don't the Palestinians understand this; that the Palestinians are simply a political pawn (or football) used by the Arab regimes, and therefore do not really pose a problem once those regimes are made to see that they cannot get away with such tactics indefinitely. All this of course simply moves around the issue, which seems to have been converted into powerful evidence for Zionism's morality and high standards of conduct.

IV
Palestinian Rights

But here, as with most of the other matters in the question of Palestine, we need to connect things with each other, and see them, not as they are *hidden* (no evidence I cite here and elsewhere is arcane or obscure; most of it is to be found in easily available documents), but as they are ignored or denied. The proper context for dealing with the refugee problem is ready at hand: Do the Palestinian refugees want to be repatriated, or compensated, or resettled elsewhere? Second: Is there international and moral consensus on the theoretical as well as the practical answers to these questions? Third: What mechanism is there in Israel for making European and American Jews into immigrants, then citizens, and how does this mechanism *prevent* Arab Palestinian refugees from benefiting themselves? The answers to all of these questions are moral, of course, but they are interesting and important because of their political reality; these are not academic questions, in other words, but questions that bear directly upon the lives of millions of people, upon states, upon the international order. Let us review these questions dispassionately now.

Before 1948, the majority of the territory called Palestine was inhabited beyond any doubt by a majority of Arabs, who after Israel came into being were either dispersed (they left, or were made to leave) or were enfolded within the state as a non-Jewish minority. After 1967, Israel occupied more Arab Palestinian territory. As a result, there are at present three types of Arab Palestinians: those inside pre-1967 Israel, plus those inside the Occupied Territories, plus those elsewhere outside former Palestine. There has never been a plebiscite conducted among Palestinians as to their wishes: there are obvious reason for it—the sheer fact of their greatly complicated and dispersed presence, under several jurisdictions; the political impossibility of conducting such a plebiscite, especially in countries under whose auspices no elections are held

anyway; the list of reasons can be extended—and all of them add up to the insuperable difficulty at present of conducting such a plebiscite. Nevertheless, this is not to say that there are no other means by which, even in their dispersion and exile, the Palestinians could have expressed themselves. Judging by the great popular appeal and legitimacy of the Palestine Liberation Organization, by the constant resistance to and refusal of Israeli military rule in the Occupied Territories, by the daily demonstrations, strikes, and political gestures of resistance there and among the Arabs inside pre-1967 Israel, by every mass and private organization created by and for Palestinians, there is ample evidence to show that taken altogether as members of a community whose common experience is dispossession, exile, and the absence of any territorial homeland, *the Palestinian people has not acquiesced in its present lot.* Rather the Palestinians have repeatedly insisted on their right of return, their desire for the exercise of self-determination, and their stubborn opposition to Zionism as it has affected them.

This Palestinian insistence is no unique, decontextualized aberration; it is fully supported by every international legal and moral covenant known to the modern world. Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) stipulates that:

> 1. Everyone has a right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
> 2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) further affirms these fundamental rights of people and, since 1976, has been accepted as a document carrying the unique force of a unanimous United Nations General Assembly vote (with only five abstentions). Its Article 12 states:

> 2. Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own. . . .
> 3. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

In addition, the UN Commission on Human Rights asseverates that:

a. Everyone is entitled, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, marriage or other status, to return to his country.
b. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality or forced to renounce his nationality as a means of divesting him of the right to return to his country.
c. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.
d. No one shall be denied the right to return to his own country on the ground that he has no passport or other travel document.[34]

Most arguments attempting to refute these, to Palestinians at least, clear determinations have concentrated on a limited set of arguments. If the Palestinians left in 1948, we are told, they did so because the Arab states urged them to do so in order that after a boasted victory, they could return in triumph. My own experience and all the evidence suggests that the conclusive reason for the Arab Palestinian exodus in 1948 was a different one. But so far as the true argument about Palestinian right of return is concerned, the reason for the flight of the Palestinians is finally irrelevant. *What matters is that they are entitled to return*, as international law stipulates, as numerous United Nations resolutions (voted for by the United States) have averred, and as they themselves have willed. (The first UN General Assembly resolution—Number 194—affirming the right of Palestinians to return to their homes and property, was passed on December 11, 1948. It has been repassed *no less than twenty-eight times* since that first date.) Whereas the moral and political right of a person to return to his place of uninterrupted residence is acknowledged everywhere, Israel has negated the possibility of return, first by a series of laws declaring Arab-owned land in Palestine absentee property, and hence liable to expropriation by the Jewish National Fund (which legally owns the land in Israel "for the whole Jewish

people," a formula without analogy in any other state or quasi state), and second by the Law of Return, by whose provision any Jew born anywhere is entitled to claim immediate Israeli citizenship and residence (but no Arab can, even if his residence and that of his family for numerous generations in Palestine can be proved). These two exclusionary categories systematically and juridically make it impossible, on any grounds whatever, for the Arab Palestinian to return, be compensated for his property, or live in Israel as a citizen equal before the law with a Jewish Israeli.

Another argument is that if so many basically hostile Palestinians were to be allowed to return, what would happen to Israel would be, in fact, political suicide. Moreover, Israel is a state for Jews, and they must always be allowed the infinitely open option of a potential "return" to Zion. Both these arguments have the force, indeed the conviction and intensity, of genuine passion. It is useless for a Palestinian Arab to deny them, just as it is useless to imagine that Israeli Jews would be likely ever to want to return to their places of origin. Much of the despair and pessimism that one feels at the whole Palestinian-Zionist conflict is each side's failure in a sense to reckon with the existential power and presence of *another* people with its land, its unfortunate history of suffering, its emotional and political investment in that land, and worse, to pretend that the Other is a temporary nuisance that, given time and effort (and punitive violence from time to time), will finally go away. The actuality is that Palestinian and Israeli Jews are now fully implicated in each others' lives and political destinies, perhaps not in any ultimate way—which is a subject not easily bracketed in rational discussion—but certainly now and in the foreseeable future. Yet even so, one must be able to discriminate between an invading, dispossessing, and displacing political presence and the presence it invades, displaces, and dispossesses. The two are not equal, nor in the end is one ever going to prevail over and definitively dominate the other. For Zionism to perpetuate a political, juridical, and epistemological system whose immediate and constantly renewed and even long-term goal is to keep Palestine and the Palestinians

out, is therefore something, I believe, to be opposed and subject to serious analysis.

What is the meaning and the form of such opposition? Because of the political and epistemological circumstances that I have been describing, to oppose anything about Israel and Zionism is to seem to be advocating anti-Semitism at least, and genocide at most. Of course to draw such conclusions out of what I hope to show is a principled and discrete platform of opposition, is to do a mischievous and destructive thing; but it is done anyway, and will continue to be done, alas, for years to come. Yet the whole point of rational discussion, in which I strongly believe, is to attempt to change the terms and the perspectives in which insoluble-appearing problems are understood—and Israelis and the Palestinians together constitute such a problem, and together also require such a rational change.

A perfect opportunity for change was at hand when the Soviet Union and the United States issued their joint declaration on October 1, 1977. The notable thing about the declaration was that it spoke of Palestinian rights (and not merely interests) as something to be discussed in any final peaceful settlement of the Middle Eastern problem. The chorus of abuse and hysteria greeting that declaration from organized Jewish opinion was disheartening. Not only was the domestic Jewish-American reaction abusive, it was proudly so, as Jewish leaders boasted of having inundated the White House with thousands of letters and phone calls. The intended lesson was that any perceived threat to Israel (and any perceived deviation from an expected U.S. government line of unconditional acceptance of everything done by Israel) would totally mobilize every Jew and every Israeli supporter against the administration. The meaning of such intimidation is to keep the Middle East as a domestic, and not merely a foreign policy, issue. The other meaning, however, is that it is easy to mobilize people on the basis of fear.

One wonders nevertheless whether fear, repression, and outright intellectual terrorism are warranted, or whether they serve an almost incredibly shortsighted and finally unintelli-

gent interest. Are the only alternatives to discussion of the Palestinians a threat of what amounts to civil war between the American Jewish community and the Administration, and what has been frequently described in the press by Israeli and U.S. officials as a potential war of annihilation waged by Israel against the Arabs? (See, for example, Jim Hoagland in the *Washington Post*, October 26, 1977.) What is the fearful thing provoking so violent a reaction and, more important, can it be made to disappear either by threats of war or war itself?

To speak of the Palestinians rationally is, I think, to stop speaking about war or genocide and to start to deal seriously with political reality. There *is* a Palestinian people, there *is* an Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, there *are* Palestinians under Israeli military occupation, there *are* Palestinians—650,000 of them—who are Israeli citizens and who constitute 15 percent of the population of Israel, there *is* a large Palestinian population in exile: these are actualities which the United States and most of the world have directly or indirectly acknowledged, which Israel too has acknowledged, if only in the forms of denial, rejection, threats of war, and punishment. The history of the past forty years has shown that Palestinians have grown politically, not shrunk, under the influence of every kind of repression and hardship; the history of the Jews has shown too that time only increases attachment to the historically saturated land of Palestine. Short of complete obliteration, the Palestinians will continue to exist and they will continue to have their own ideas about who represents them, where they want to settle, what they want to do with their national and political future.

To criticize Zionism now, then, is to criticize not so much an idea or a theory but rather a wall of denials. It is to say firmly that you cannot expect millions of Arab Palestinians to go away, or to be content with occupation, or to acquiesce to an Israeli, or an Egyptian, or an American, idea for their destiny, their "autonomy," or their physical location. It is also to say that the time has come for Palestinians and Israeli Jews to sit down and discuss all the issues outstanding between them: rights of immigration, compensation for property lost, and so

on, all in the context of a general discussion of future peace, and all too in the intellectual context of a *Zionist* acceptance of the fact that Jewish national liberation (as it is sometimes called) took place upon the ruins of *another* national existence, not in the abstract. It is finally to recognize that the question of Palestine is not simply a hermetic debate between Zionists as to how Zionism and Israel are to comport themselves in theory on the land of what once was Palestine, but a vital political matter involving Arabs and Jews, residents in a commonly significant territory.

In all this discussion, however, one must remember that the issues are perceived and formulated not strictly as local issues between people in the Middle East but, as I have tried to show, as issues involving two communities who consider themselves in exile, communities whose quarrel has engaged the world internationally. The parties are Zionism, the Jewish covenant and Jewish history, the survivors of the most tragic destiny meted out to any people, and, on the other hand, an anti-imperialist and anticolonialist Third World people whose basis for action includes their own dispossession as a people as well as their opposition to racial discrimination, territorial expropriation, and military occupation. These universal matters lock the whole world into some aspect of the struggle, and even though there is always a danger that small quarrels magnified become intractable, it is true that magnification gives one some sense of the whole set of problems and ideas animating a dispute.

But there must be a scaling down of this perhaps too imponderable contest. My belief is that both Palestinians and Jews in Palestine have much to gain—and obviously something to lose—from a human rights view of their common situation, as opposed to a strictly *national* perspective on it. It is too often forgotten that the modern Middle East has almost unquestioningly inherited a terribly divisive political legacy from nineteenth-century colonialism. The Ottoman Empire, as well as those portions of it that came under Western suzerainty, was ruled in principle by minorities whose local interest allied them with the colonial power. Today there are minority govern-

ments in Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Israel, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia: the regional majority is Sunni Islam, although each of these countries is governed either by a non-Sunni group or by a family and/or regional oligarchy not open to the population as a whole. As a result, central state governments in the area are essentially repressive toward the majority people, and this is manifestly true not only in Arab states, but also in Israel. The minority cast of mind, in association with an uncritical admiration of the state for its own sake, has made the lot of the individual citizen a precarious one. In Israel, for example, the state is divided into Jews and non-Jews, and even more discriminately into European and Oriental Jews. Elsewhere in the region, citizen's rights are dependent not on the guarantee of law but on the discretion of a jealously guarded central state power. Therefore, a move toward some equity in, as well as some solution for, the Israeli-Palestinian dispute would be to reconsider the problem between the two groups, to reformulate it as a dispute involving people who hope for the time when rights would be guaranteed for all the proper inhabitants (past and present) of the territory. At such a time, Israel could no longer be the state of the whole Jewish people resident there *or not,* but the state of its *present* Jewish and non-Arab citizens; the same would be true of the other states in the region.

But even so basic a step is practically impossible at this time. The relations between Israelis and Palestinians are so inflamed as to make anything resembling equity and resolution out of the question. But only for the time being. The long-run goal is, I think, the same for every human being, that politically he or she may be allowed to live free from fear, insecurity, terror, and oppression, free also from the possibility of exercising unequal or unjust domination over others. This long-run goal has different meanings for the Palestinian Arabs and for the Israeli Jews. For the latter, it means freedom from the awful historical pressure of anti-Semitism whose culmination was Nazi genocide, freedom from fear of the Arabs, and freedom also from the blindness of programmatic Zionism in its practice against the non-Jew. For the former, the long-run goal is

freedom from exile and dispossession, freedom from the cultural and psychological ravages of historical marginality, and freedom also from inhuman attitudes and practices toward the oppressing Israel. How does one think through the present obstacles to these long-range goals?

The first, perhaps very small, step is an attempt at understanding. I said above that Zionism has been studied and discussed as if it concerned Jews only, whereas it has been the Palestinian who has borne the brunt of Zionism's extraordinary human cost, a cost not only large, but unacknowledged. Therefore it behooves one now to try to come to terms with Zionism as a theory, ideology, program of historico-political action with definite consequences for Palestinian Arabs, as well as for Israeli and other Jews. Once that reality is admitted into debate and rational understanding, then we can begin to understand also what enlivens *Arab* life. In other words, my aim here will be to open the discussion of the question of Palestine to a much-denied, much-suppressed reality—that of the Palestinian Arabs, of whom I myself am one.

As first steps go, this is perhaps not as modest and academic as it may initially seem. The premise of my discussion will be that as much as in Palestine itself as in debate about Palestine, no serious attention has been paid to the full human reality of the Palestinian Arab as a citizen with human rights, someone who is not merely a symbol of the intractable, anti-Semitic terroristic refugee. Providentially, however, there has been no previous occasion when such a discussion could have been fruitful, let alone possible. But with a conciliatory mood appearing intermittently to prevail—although more war and more senseless talk about a "peace process" are equally real now—the necessity for a widespread grasp of the issues seems imperative. In the pages that follow I propose a two-part attempt at comprehension: first, in Chapter Two, a consideration of Zionism as it has affected the Palestinian Arab who was not its beneficiary but its victim; then, in Chapter Three, a descriptive analysis of modern Palestinian experience, including the contemporary actuality of corporate Palestinian life,

culture, political and social institutions. Chapter Four will conclude with discussion of present and past United States policy toward the Middle East, and also a consideration of the problems to be confronted should the processes of peace finally begin in earnest for the Palestinians.

TWO

ZIONISM FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ITS VICTIMS

I

Zionism and the Attitudes of European Colonialism

Every idea or system of ideas exists *somewhere*, is mixed in with historical circumstances, is part of what one may very simply call "reality." One of the enduring attributes of self-serving idealism, however, is the notion that ideas are just ideas, and that they exist only in the realm of ideas. The tendency to view ideas as pertaining only to a world of abstractions increases among people for whom an idea is essentially perfect, good, uncontaminated by human desire or will. Such a view also applies when the ideas are considered to be evil, absolutely perfect in their evil, and so forth. When an idea has become effective—that is, when its value has been proved in reality by its widespread acceptance—some revision of it will of course seem to be necessary, since the idea must be viewed as having taken on some of the characteristics of brute reality. Thus it is frequently argued that such an idea as Zionism, for all its political tribulations and the struggles on its behalf, is at bottom an *unchanging* idea that expresses the yearning for Jewish political and religious self-determination—for Jewish national selfhood—to be exercised on the promised land. Because Zionism seems to have culminated in the creation of the state of Israel, it is also argued that the historical realization of the idea confirms its unchanging essence and, no less important, the means used for its real-

ization. Very little is said about what Zionism entailed for non-Jews who happened to have encountered it; for that matter, nothing is said about where (outside Jewish history) it took place, and from what in the historical context of nineteenth-century Europe Zionism drew its force. To the Palestinian, for whom Zionism was somebody else's idea imported into Palestine and for which in a very concrete way he or she was made to pay and suffer, these forgotten things about Zionism are the very things that are centrally important.

In short, effective political ideas like Zionism need to be examined historically in two ways: (1) *genealogically* in order that their provenance, their kinship and descent, their affiliation both with other ideas and with political institutions may be demonstrated; (2) as practical systems for *accumulation* (of power, land, ideological legitimacy) and *displacement* (of people, other ideas, prior legitimacy). Present political and cultural actualities make such an examination extraordinarily difficult, as much because Zionism in the postindustrial West has acquired for itself an almost unchallenged hegemony in liberal "establishment" discourse, as because in keeping with one of its central ideological characteristics, Zionism has hidden, or caused to disappear, the literal historical ground of its growth, its political cost to the native inhabitants of Palestine, and its militantly oppressive discriminations between Jews and non-Jews.

Consider as a startling instance of what I mean, the symbolism of Menachem Begin, a former head of the Irgun terror organization, in whose past there are numerous (and frequently admitted) acts of cold-blooded murder, being honored as Israeli premier at Northwestern University in May 1978 with a doctorate of laws *honoris causa;* a leader whose army a scant month before had created 300,000 new refugees in South Lebanon, who spoke constantly of "Judea and Samaria" as "rightful" parts of the Jewish state (claims made on the basis of the Old Testament and without so much as a reference to the land's actual inhabitants); and all this without—on the part of the press or the intellectual community—one sign of comprehension that Menachem Be-

gin's honored position came about literally at the expense of Palestinian Arab silence in the Western "marketplace of ideas," that the entire historical duration of a Jewish state in Palestine prior to 1948 was a sixty-year period two millennia ago, that the dispersion of the Palestinians was not a fact of nature but a result of specific force and strategies. The concealment by Zionism of its own history has by now therefore become institutionalized, and not only in Israel. To bring out its history as in a sense it was exacted from Palestine and the Palestinians, these victims on whose suppression Zionism and Israel have depended, is thus a specific intellectual/political task in the present context of discussion about "a comprehensive peace" in the Middle East.

The special, one might even call it the privileged, place in this discussion of the United States is impressive, for all sorts of reasons. In no other country, except Israel, is Zionism enshrined as an unquestioned good, and in no other country is there so strong a conjuncture of powerful institutions and interests—the press, the liberal intelligentsia, the military-industrial complex, the academic community, labor unions—for whom, as I said in Chapter One, uncritical support of Israel and Zionism enhances their domestic as well as international standing. Although there has recently been some modulation in this remarkable consensus—due to the influence of Arab oil, the emergence of countervailing conservative states allied to the United States (Saudi Arabia, Egypt), the redoubtable political and military visibility of the Palestinian people and their representatives the PLO—the prevailing pro-Israeli bias persists. For not only does it have deep cultural roots in the West generally and the United States in particular, but its *negative, interdictory* character vis-à-vis the *whole* historical reality is systematic.

Yet there is no getting around the formidable historical reality that in trying to deal with what Zionism has suppressed about the Palestinian people, one also abuts the entire disastrous problem of anti-Semitism on the one hand, and on the other, the complex interrelationship between the Palestinians and the Arab states. Anyone who watched the spring 1978

NBC presentation of *Holocaust* was aware that at least part of the program was intended as a justification for Zionism—even while at about the same time Israeli troops in Lebanon produced devastation, thousands of civilian casualties, and untold suffering of a sort likened by a few courageous reporters to the U.S. devastation of Vietnam (see, for example, H.D.S. Greenway, "Vietnam-style Raids Gut South Lebanon: Israel Leaves a Path of Destruction," *Washington Post*, March 25, 1978). Similarly, the furor created by the package deal in early 1978 as a result of which U.S. war planes were sold to Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia made the predicament of Arab liberation interlocking with right-wing Arab regimes even more acute. The task of criticism, or, to put it another way, the role of the critical consciousness in such cases is to be able to make distinctions, to produce differences where at present there are none. To write critically about Zionism in Palestine has therefore never meant, and does not mean now, being anti-Semitic; conversely, the struggle for Palestinian rights and self-determination does not mean support for the Saudi royal family, nor for the antiquated and oppressive state structures of most of the Arab nations.

One must admit, however, that all liberals and even most "radicals" have been unable to overcome the Zionist habit of equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. Any well-meaning person can thus oppose South African or American racism and at the same time tacitly support Zionist racial discrimination against non-Jews in Palestine. The almost total absence of any handily available historical knowledge from non-Zionist sources, the dissemination by the media of malicious simplifications (e.g., Jews vs. Arabs), the cynical opportunism of various Zionist pressure groups, the tendency endemic to university intellectuals uncritically to repeat cant phrases and political clichés (this is the role Gramsci assigned to traditional intellectuals, that of being "experts in legitimation"), the fear of treading upon the highly sensitive terrain of what Jews did to *their* victims, in an age of genocidal extermination of Jews—all this contributes to the dulling, regulated enforcement of almost unanimous support for Israel. But, as I. F. Stone recently

noted, this unanimity exceeds even the Zionism of most Israelis.[1]

On the other hand, it would be totally unjust to neglect the power of Zionism as an idea for Jews, or to minimize the complex internal debates characterizing Zionism, its true meaning, its messianic destiny, etc. Even to speak about this subject, much less than attempting to "define" Zionism, is for an Arab quite a difficult matter, but it must honestly be looked at. Let me use myself as an example. Most of my education, and certainly all of my basic intellectual formation, are Western; in what I have read, in what I write about, even in what I do politically, I am profoundly influenced by mainstream Western attitudes toward the history of the Jews, anti-Semitism, the destruction of European Jewry. Unlike most other Arab intellectuals, the majority of whom obviously have not had my kind of background, I have been directly exposed to those aspects of Jewish history and experience that have mattered singularly for Jews and for Western non-Jews reading and thinking about Jewish history. I know as well as any educated Western non-Jew can know, what anti-Semitism has meant for the Jews, especially in this century. Consequently I can understand the intertwined terror and the exultation out of which Zionism has been nourished, and I think I can at least grasp the meaning of Israel for Jews, and even for the enlightened Western liberal. And yet, because I am an Arab Palestinian, I can also see and feel other things—and it is these things that complicate matters considerably, that cause me also to focus on Zionism's *other* aspects. The result is, I think, worth describing, not because what I think is so crucial, but because it is useful to see the same phenomenon in two complementary ways, not normally associated with each other.

One can begin with a literary example: George Eliot's last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876). The unusual thing about the book is that its main subject is Zionism, although the novel's principal themes are recognizable to anyone who has read Eliot's earlier fiction. Seen in the context of Eliot's general interest in idealism and spiritual yearning, Zionism for her was one in a series of worldly projects for the nineteenth-century

mind still committed to hopes for a secular religious community. In her earlier books, Eliot had studied a variety of enthusiasms, all of them replacements for organized religion, all of them attractive to persons who would have been Saint Teresa had they lived during a period of coherent faith. The reference to Saint Teresa was originally made by Eliot in *Middlemarch,* an earlier novel of hers; in using it to describe the novel's heroine, Dorothea Brooke, Eliot had intended to compliment her own visionary and moral energy, sustained despite the absence in the modern world of certain assurances for faith and knowledge. Dorothea emerges at the end of *Middlemarch* as a chastened woman, forced to concede her grand visions of a "fulfilled" life in return for a relatively modest domestic success as a wife and mother. It is this considerably diminished view of things that *Daniel Deronda,* and Zionism in particular, revise upward: toward a genuinely hopeful socioreligious project in which individual energies can be merged and identified with a collective national vision, the whole emanating out of Judaism.

The novel's plot alternates between the presentation of a bitter comedy of manners involving a surprisingly rootless segment of the British upper bourgeoisie, and the gradual revelation to Daniel Deronda—an exotic young man whose parentage is unknown but who is the ward of Sir Hugo Mallinger, a British aristocrat—of his Jewish identity and, when he becomes the spiritual disciple of Mordecai Ezra Cohen, his Jewish destiny. At the end of the novel, Daniel marries Mirah, Mordecai's sister, and commits himself to fulfilling Mordecai's hopes for the future of the Jews. Mordecai dies as the young pair get married, although it is clear well before his death that his Zionist ideas have been passed on to Daniel, so much so that among the newlyweds' "splendid wedding-gifts" is "a complete equipment for travel" provided by Sir Hugo and Lady Mallinger. For Daniel and his wife will be traveling to Palestine, presumably to set the great Zionist plan in motion.

The crucial thing about the way Zionism is presented in the novel is that its backdrop is a generalized condition of

homelessness. Not only the Jews, but even the well-born Englishmen and women in the novel are portrayed as wandering and alienated beings. If the novel's poorer English people (for example, Mrs. Davilow and her daughters) seem always to be moving from one rented house to another, the wealthy aristocrats are no less cut off from some permanent home. Thus Eliot uses the plight of the Jews to make a universal statement about the nineteenth century's need for a home, given the spiritual and psychological rootlessness reflected in her characters' almost ontological physical restlessness. Her interest in Zionism therefore can be traced to her reflection, made early in the novel, that

> a human life, I think, should be well rooted in some spot of a native land, where it may get the love of tender kindship for the face of the earth, for the labours men go forth to, for the sounds and accents that haunt it, for whatever will give that early home a familiar, unmistakable difference amidst the future widening of knowledge.[2]

To find the "early home" means to find the place where originally one was *at home*, a task to be undertaken more or less interchangeably by individuals and by "people." It becomes historically appropriate therefore that those individuals and that "people" best suited to the task are Jews. Only the Jews as a people (and consequently as individuals) have retained both a sense of their original home in Zion and an acute, always contemporary, feeling of loss. Despite the prevalence of anti-Semitism everywhere, the Jews are a reproach to the Gentiles who have long since forsaken the "observance" of any civilizing communal belief. Thus Mordecai puts these sentiments positively as a definite program for today's Jews:

> They [the Gentiles] scorn our people's ignorant observance; but the most accursed ignorance is that which has no observance—sunk to the cunning greed of the fox, to which all law is no more than a trap or the cry of the worrying hound. There is a degradation deep down below the memory that has

> withered into superstition. In the multitudes of the ignorant on three continents who observe our rites and make the confession of the divine Unity, the soul of Judaism is not dead. Revive the organic centre: let the unity of Israel which has made the growth and form of its religion be an outward reality. Looking towards a land and a polity, our dispersed people in all the ends of the earth may share the dignity of a national life which has a voice among the peoples of the East and the West—which will plant the wisdom and skill of our race so that it may be, as of old, a medium of transmission and understanding. Let that come to pass, and the living warmth will spread to the weak extremities of Israel, and superstition will vanish, not in the lawlessness of the renegade, but in the illumination of great facts which widen feeling, and make all knowledge alive as the young offspring of beloved memories.[3]

"The illumination of great facts which widen feeling" is a typical phrase for Eliot, and there is no doubt that her approbation for her Zionists derives from her belief that they were a group almost exactly expressing her own grand ideas about an expanded life of feelings. Yet if there is a felt reality about "the peoples of the West," there is no such reality for the "peoples of the East." They are named, it is true, but are no more substantial than a phrase. The few references to the East in *Daniel Deronda* are always to England's Indian colonies, for whose people—as people having wishes, values, aspirations—Eliot expresses the complete indifference of absolute silence. Of the fact that Zion will be "planted" in the East, Eliot takes no very detailed account; it is as if the phrase "the people of the East and the West" covers what will, territorially at least, be a neutral inaugural reality. In turn, that reality will be replaced by a permanent accomplishment when the newly founded state becomes the "medium of transmission and understanding." For how could Eliot imagine that even Eastern people would object to such grand benefits for all?

There is, however, a disturbing insistence on these matters when Mordecai continues his speech. For him, Zionism means that "our race takes on again the character of a nationality . . . a labour which shall be a worthy fruit of the long anguish

whereby our fathers maintained their separateness, refusing the ease of falsehood." Zionism is to be a dramatic lesson for mankind. But what ought to catch the reader's attention about the way Mordecai illustrates his thesis is his depiction of the land:

> [The Jews] have wealth enough *to redeem the soil from debauched and paupered conquerors;* they have the skill of the statesman to devise, the tongue of the orator to persuade. And is there no prophet or poet among us to make the ears of Christian Europe tingle with shame at the hideous obloquy of Christian strife *which the Turk gazes at* [the reference here is to the long history of European disputes about the Holy Land] *as at the fighting of beasts to which he has lent an arena?* There is a store of wisdom among us *to found a new Jewish polity, grand, simple, just like the old*—a republic where there is equality of protection, an equality which shone like a star on the forehead of our ancient community, *and gave it more than the brightness of Western freedom amid the despotisms of the East.* Then our race shall have an organic centre, a heart and brain to watch and guide and execute; *the outraged Jew shall have a defence in the court of nations,* as the outraged Englishman or American. And the world will gain as Israel gains. For there will be a community in the van of the East which carries the culture and the sympathies of every great nation in its bosom; *there will be a land set for a halting-place of enmities, a neutral ground for the East as Belgium is for the West.* Difficulties? I know there are difficulties. But let the spirit of sublime achievement move in the great among our people, and the work will begin. [Emphases added][4]

The land itself is characterized in two separate ways. On the one hand, it is associated with debauched and paupered conquerors, an arena lent by the Turk to fighting beasts, a part of the despotic East; on the other, with "the brightness of Western freedom," with nations like England and America, with the idea of neutrality (Belgium). In short, with a degraded and unworthy East and a noble, enlightened West. The bridge between those warring representatives of East and West will be Zionism.

Interestingly, Eliot cannot sustain her admiration of Zionism except by seeing it as a method for transforming the East into the West. This is not to say that she does not have sympathy for Zionism and for the Jews themselves: she obviously does. But there is a whole area of Jewish experience, lying somewhere between longing for a homeland (which everyone, including the Gentile, feels) and actually getting it, that she is dim about. Otherwise she is quite capable of seeing that Zionism can easily be accommodated to several varieties of Western (as opposed to Eastern) thought, principal among them the idea that the East is degraded, that it needs reconstruction according to enlightened Western notions about politics, that any reconstructed portion of the East can with small reservations become as "English as England" to its new inhabitants. Underlying all this, however, is the total absence of any thought about the actual inhabitants of the East, Palestine in particular. They are irrelevant both to the Zionists in *Daniel Deronda* and to the English characters. Brightness, freedom, and redemption—key matters for Eliot—are to be restricted to Europeans and the Jews, who are themselves European prototypes so far as colonizing the East is concerned. There is a remarkable failure when it comes to taking anything non-European into consideration although curiously all of Eliot's descriptions of Jews stress their exotic, "Eastern" aspects. Humanity and sympathy, it seems, are not endowments of anything but an Occidental mentality; to look for them in the despotic East, much less find them, is to waste one's time.

Two points need to be made immediately. One is that Eliot is no different from other European apostles of sympathy, humanity, and understanding for whom noble sentiments were either left behind in Europe, or made programmatically inapplicable outside Europe. There are the chastening examples of John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx (both of whom I have discussed in *Orientalism*)[5], two thinkers known doctrinally to be opponents of injustice and oppression. Yet both of them seemed to have believed that such ideas as liberty, representative government, and individual happiness must not be applied in the Orient for reasons that today we would call racist. The

fact is that nineteenth-century European culture was racist with a greater or lesser degree of virulence depending on the individual: The French writer Ernest Renan, for instance, was an outright anti-Semite; Eliot was indifferent to races who could not be assimilated to European ideas.

Here we come to the second point. Eliot's account of Zionism in *Daniel Deronda* was intended as a sort of assenting Gentile response to prevalent Jewish-Zionist currents; the novel therefore serves as an indication of how much in Zionism was legitimated and indeed valorized by Gentile European thought. On one important issue there was complete agreement between the Gentile and Jewish versions of Zionism: their view of the Holy Land as essentially empty of inhabitants, not because there were no inhabitants—there were, and they were frequently described in numerous travel accounts, in novels like Benjamin Disraeli's *Tancred*, even in the various nineteenth-century Baedekers—but because their status as sovereign and human inhabitants was systematically denied. While it may be possible to differentiate between Jewish and Gentile Zionists on this point (they ignored the Arab inhabitants for different reasons), the Palestinian Arab was ignored nonetheless. That is what needs emphasis: the extent to which the roots of Jewish *and* Gentile Zionism are in the culture of high liberal-capitalism, and how the work of its vanguard liberals like George Eliot reinforced, perhaps also completed, that culture's less attractive tendencies.

None of what I have so far said applies adequately to what Zionism meant for Jews or what it represented as an advanced idea for enthusiastic non-Jews; it applies exclusively to those less fortunate beings who happened to be living on the land, people of whom no notice was taken. What has too long been forgotten is that while important European thinkers considered the desirable and later the probable fate of Palestine, the land was being tilled, villages and towns built and lived in by thousands of natives who believed that it was *their* homeland. In the meantime their actual physical being was ignored; later it became a troublesome detail. Strikingly, therefore, Eliot sounds very much like Moses Hess, an early Zionist idealist

who in his *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862) uses the same theoretical language to be given to Mordecai:

> What we have to do at present for the regeneration of the Jewish nation is, first, to keep alive the hope of the political rebirth of our people, and, next, to reawaken that hope where it slumbers. When political conditions in the Orient shape themselves so as to permit the organization of a beginning of the restoration of the Jewish state, this beginning will express itself in the founding of Jewish colonies in the land of their ancestors, to which enterprise France will undoubtedly lend a hand. France, beloved friend, is the savior who will restore our people to its place in universal history. Just as we once searched in the West for a road to India, and incidentally discovered a new world, so will our lost fatherland be rediscovered on the road to India and China that is now being built in the Orient.[6]

Hess continues his paean to France (since every Zionist saw one or another of the imperial powers as patron) by quoting at some length from Ernest Laharanne's *The New Eastern Question*, from which Hess draws the following passage for his peroration:

> "A great calling is reserved for the Jews: to be a living channel of communication between three continents. You shall be the bearers of civilization to peoples who are still inexperienced and their teachers in the European sciences, to which your race has contributed so much. You shall be the mediators between Europe and far Asia, opening the roads that lead to India and China—those unknown regions which must ultimately be thrown open to civilisation. You will come to the land of your fathers decorated with the crown of age-long martyrdom, and there, finally, you will be completely healed from all your ills! Your capital will again bring the wide stretches of barren land under cultivation; your labor and industry will once more turn the ancient soil into fruitful valleys, reclaiming it from the encroaching sands of the desert, and the world will again pay its homage to the oldest of peoples."[7]

Between them, Hess and Eliot concur that Zionism is to be carried out by the Jews with the assistance of major European powers; that Zionism will restore "a lost fatherland," and in so doing mediate between the various civilizations; that present-day Palestine was in need of cultivation, civilization, reconstitution; that Zionism would finally bring enlightenment and progress where at present there was neither. The three ideas that depended on one another in Hess and Eliot—and later in almost every Zionist thinker or ideologue—are (a) the nonexistent Arab inhabitants, (b) the complementary Western-Jewish attitude to an "empty" territory, and (c) the restorative Zionist project, which would repeat by rebuilding a vanished Jewish state and combine it with modern elements like disciplined, separate colonies, a special agency for land acquisition, etc. Of course, none of these ideas would have any force were it not for the additional fact of their being addressed to, shaped for, and out of an *international* (i.e., non-Oriental and hence European) context. This context was the reality, not only because of the ethnocentric rationale governing the whole project, but also because of the overwhelming facts of Diaspora realities and imperialist hegemony over the entire gamut of European culture. It needs to be remarked, however, that Zionism (like the view of America as an empty land held by Puritans) was a colonial vision unlike that of most other nineteenth-century European powers, for whom the natives of outlying territories were *included* in the redemptive *mission civilisatrice*.

From the earliest phases of its modern evolution until it culminated in the creation of Israel, Zionism appealed to a European audience for whom the classification of overseas territories and natives into various uneven classes was canonical and "natural." That is why, for example, every single state or movement in the formerly colonized territories of Africa and Asia today identifies with, fully supports, and understands the Palestinian struggle. In many instances—as I hope to show presently—there is an unmistakable coincidence between the experiences of Arab Palestinians at the hands of Zionism and the experiences of those black, yellow, and brown people who

were described as inferior and subhuman by nineteenth-century imperialists. For although it coincided with an era of the most virulent Western anti-Semitism, Zionism also coincided with the period of unparalleled European territorial acquisition in Africa and Asia, and it was as part of this general movement of acquisition and occupation that Zionism was launched initially by Theodor Herzl. During the latter part of the greatest period in European colonial expansion, Zionism also made its crucial first moves along the way to getting what has now become a sizeable Asiatic territory. And it is important to remember that in joining the general Western enthusiasm for overseas territorial acquisition, Zionism *never* spoke of itself unambiguously as a Jewish liberation movement, but rather as a Jewish movement for colonial settlement in the Orient. To those Palestinian victims that Zionism displace, it *cannot have meant anything by way of sufficient cause* that Jews were victims of European anti-Semitism and, given Israel's continued oppression of Palestinians, few Palestinians are able to see beyond their reality, namely, that once victims themselves, Occidental Jews in Israel have become oppressors (of Palestinian Arabs and Oriental Jews).

These are not intended to be backward-looking historical observations, for in a very vital way they explain and even determine much of what now happens in the Middle East. The fact that no sizeable segment of the Israeli population has as yet been able to confront the terrible social and political injustice done the native Palestinians is an indication of how deeply ingrained are the (by now) anomalous imperialist perspectives basic to Zionism, its view of the world, its sense of an inferior native Other. The fact also that no Palestinian, regardless of his political stripe, has been able to reconcile himself to Zionism suggests the extent to which, for the Palestinian, Zionism has appeared to be an uncompromisingly exclusionary, discriminatory, colonialist praxis. So powerful, and so unhesitatingly followed, has been the radical Zionist distinction between privileged Jews in Palestine and unprivileged non-Jews there, that nothing else has emerged, no perception of suffering human existence has escaped from the

two camps created thereby." As a result, it has been impossible for Jews to understand the human tragedy caused the Arab Palestinians by Zionism; and it has been impossible for Arab Palestinians to see in Zionism anything except an ideology and a practice keeping them, and Israeli Jews, imprisoned. But in order to break down the iron circle of inhumanity, we must see how it was forged, and there it is ideas and culture themselves that play the major role.

Consider Herzl. If it was the Dreyfus Affair that first brought him to Jewish consciousness, it was the idea of overseas colonial settlement for the Jews that came to him at roughly the same time as an antidote for anti-Semitism. The idea itself was current at the end of the nineteenth century, even as an idea for Jews. Herzl's first significant contact was Baron Maurice de Hirsch, a wealthy philanthropist who had for some time been behind the Jewish Colonization Association for helping Eastern Jews to emigrate to Argentina and Brazil. Later, Herzl thought generally about South America, then about Africa as places for establishing a Jewish colony. Both areas were widely acceptable as places for European colonialism, and that Herzl's mind followed along the orthodox imperialist track of his period is perhaps understandable. The impressive thing, however, is the degree to which Herzl had absorbed and internalized the imperialist perspective on "natives" and their "territory."[9]

There could have been no doubt whatever in Herzl's mind that Palestine in the late nineteenth century was peopled. True, it was under Ottoman administration (and therefore already a colony), but it had been the subject of numerous travel accounts, most of them famous, by Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Flaubert, and others. Yet even if he had not read these authors, Herzl as a journalist must surely have looked at a Baedeker to ascertain that Palestine was indeed inhabited by (in the 1880s) 650,000 mostly Arab people. This did not stop him from regarding their presence as manageable in ways that, in his diary, he spelled out with a rather chilling prescience for what later took place. The mass of poor natives were to be expropriated and, he added, "both the expropriation and the

removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly." This was to be done by "spirit[ing] the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country." With uncannily accurate cynicism, Herzl predicted that the small class of large landowners could be "had for a price"—as indeed they were. The whole scheme for displacing the native population of Palestine far outstripped any of the then current plans for taking over vast reaches of Africa. As Desmond Stewart aptly says:

> Herzl seems to have foreseen that in going further than any colonialist had so far gone in Africa, he would, temporarily, alienate civilised opinion. "At first, incidentally," he writes on the pages describing "involuntary expropriation," "people will avoid us. We are in bad odor. By the time the reshaping of world opinion in our favor has been completed, we shall be firmly established in our country, no longer fearing the influx of foreigners, and receiving our visitors with aristocratic benevolence and proud amiability."
>
> This was not a prospect to charm a peon in Argentina or a fellah in Palestine. But Herzl did not intend his Diary for immediate publication.[10]

One need not wholly accept the conspiratorial tone of these comments (whether Herzl's or Stewart's) to grant that world opinion has not been, until during the sixties and seventies when the Palestinians forced their presence on world politics, very much concerned with the expropriation of Palestine. I said earlier that in this regard the major Zionist achievement was getting international legitimization for its own accomplishments, thereby making the Palestinian cost of these accomplishments seem to be irrelevant. But it is clear from Herzl's thinking that that could not have been done unless there was a prior European inclination to view the natives as irrelevant *to begin with*. That is, those natives already fit a more or less acceptable classificatory grid, which made them sui generis inferior to Western or white men—and it is this grid that Zionists like Herzl appropriated, domesticating it from the general culture

of their time to the unique needs of a developing Jewish nationalism. One needs to repeat that what in Zionism served the no doubt justified ends of Jewish tradition, saving the Jews as a people from homelessness and anti-Semitism and restoring them to nationhood, also collaborated with those aspects of the dominant Western culture (in which Zionism institutionally lived) making it possible for Europeans to view non-Europeans as inferior, marginal, and irrelevant. For the Palestinian Arab, therefore, it is the collaboration that has counted, not by any means the good done to Jews. The Arab has been on the receiving end not of benign Zionism—which has been restricted to Jews—but of an essentially discriminatory and powerful culture, of which, in Palestine, Zionism has been the agent.

Here I must digress to say that the great difficulty today of writing about what has happened to the Arab Palestinian as a result of Zionism, is that Zionism has had a large number of successes. There is no doubt in my mind, for example, that most Jews do regard Zionism and Israel as urgently important facts for Jewish life, particularly because of what happened to the Jews in this century. Then too, Israel has some remarkable political and cultural achievements to its credit, quite apart from its spectacular military successes until recently. Most important, Israel is a subject about which, on the whole, one can feel positive with less reservations than the ones experienced in thinking about the Arabs, who are outlandish, strange, hostile Orientals after all; surely that is an obvious fact to anyone living in the West. Together these successes of Zionism have produced a prevailing view of the question of Palestine that almost totally favors the victor, and takes hardly any account of the victim.

Yet what did the victim feel as he watched the Zionists arriving in Palestine? What does he think as he watches Zionism described today? Where does he look in Zionism's history to locate its roots, and the origins of its practices toward him? These are the questions that are never asked—and they are precisely the ones that I am trying to raise, as well as answer, here in this examination of the links between Zionism and European imperialism. My interest is in trying to record

the effects of Zionism on its victims, and these effects can only be studied genealogically in the framework provided by imperialism, even during the nineteenth century when Zionism was still an idea and not a state called Israel. For the Palestinian now who writes critically to see what his or her history has meant, and who tries—as I am now trying—to see what Zionism has been for the Palestinians, Antonio Gramsci's observation is relevant, that "the consciousness of what one really is . . . is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory." The job of producing an inventory is a first necessity, Gramsci continued, and so it must be now, when the "inventory" of what Zionism's victims (*not* its beneficiaries) endured is rarely exposed to public view.[11]

If we have become accustomed to making fastidious distinctions between ideology (or theory) and practice, we shall be more accurate historically if we do not do so glibly in the case of the European imperialism that actually annexed most of the world during the nineteenth century. Imperialism was and still is a political philosophy whose aim and purpose for being is territorial expansion and its legitimization. A serious underestimation of imperialism, however, would be to consider territory in too literal a way. Gaining and holding an *imperium* means gaining and holding a domain, which includes a variety of operations, among them constituting an area, accumulating its inhabitants, having power over its ideas, people, and of course, its land, converting people, land, and ideas to the purposes and for the use of a hegemonic imperial design; all this as a result of being able to treat reality appropriatively. Thus the distinction between an idea that one *feels* to be one's own and a piece of land that one claims by right to be one's own (despite the presence on the land of its working native inhabitants) is really nonexistent, at least in the world of nineteenth-century culture out of which imperialism developed. Laying claim to an idea and laying claim to a territory—given the extraordinarily current idea that the non-European world was there to be claimed, occupied, and ruled by Europe—were considered to be different sides of the same,

essentially constitutive activity, which had the force, the prestige, and the authority of *science*. Moreover, because in such fields as biology, philology, and geology the scientific consciousness was principally a reconstituting, restoring, and transforming activity turning old fields into new ones, the link between an outright imperialist attitude toward distant lands in the Orient and a scientific attitude to the "inequalities" of race was that both attitudes depended on the European *will*, on the determining force necessary to change confusing or useless realities into an orderly, disciplined set of new classifications useful to Europe. Thus in the works of Carolus Linnaeus, Georges Buffon, and Georges Cuvier the white races became scientifically different from reds, yellows, blacks, and browns, and, consequently, territories occupied by those races also newly became vacant, open to Western colonies, developments, plantations, and settlers. Additionally, the less equal races were made useful by being turned into what the white race studied and came to understand as a part of its racial and cultural hegemony (as in Joseph deGobineau and Oswald Spengler); or, following the impulse of outright colonialism, these lesser races were put to direct use in the empire. When in 1918, Georges Clemenceau stated that he believed he had "an unlimited right of levying black troops to assist in the defense of French territory in Europe if France were attacked in the future by Germany," he was saying that by some scientific right France had the knowledge and the power to convert blacks into what Raymond Poincaré called an economic form of gunfodder for the white Frenchman.[12] Imperialism, of course, cannot be blamed on science, but what needs to be seen is the relative ease with which science could be deformed into a rationalization for imperial domination.

Supporting the taxonomy of a natural history deformed into a social anthropology whose real purpose was social control, was the taxonomy of linguistics. With the discovery of a structural affinity between groups or families of languages by such linguists as Franz Bopp, William Jones, and Friedrich von Schlegel, there began as well the unwarranted extension of an idea about language families into theories of human types

having determined ethnocultural and racial characteristics. In 1808, as an instance, Schlegel discerned a clear rift between the Indo-Germanic (or Aryan) languages on the one hand and, on the other, the Semitic-African languages. The former he said were creative, regenerative, lively, and aesthetically pleasing; the latter were mechanical in their operations, unregenerate, passive. From this kind of distinction, Schlegel, and later Renan, went on to generalize about the great distance separating a superior Aryan and an inferior non-Aryan mind, culture, and society.

Perhaps the most effective deformation or translation of science into something more accurately resembling political administration took place in the amorphous field assembling together jurisprudence, social philosophy, and political theory. First of all, a fairly influential tradition in philosophic empiricism (recently studied by Harry Bracken)[13] seriously advocated a type of racial distinction that divided humankind into lesser and greater breeds of men. The actual problems (in England, mainly) of dealing with a 300-year-old Indian empire, as well as numerous voyages of discovery, made it possible "scientifically" to show that some cultures were advanced and civilized, others backward and uncivilized; these ideas, plus the lasting social meaning imparted to the fact of color (and hence of race) by philosophers like John Locke and David Hume, made it axiomatic by the middle of the nineteenth century that Europeans always ought to rule non-Europeans.

This doctrine was reinforced in other ways, some of which had a direct bearing, I think, on Zionist practice and vision in Palestine. Among the supposed juridical distinctions between civilized and noncivilized peoples was an attitude toward land, almost a doxology about land, which noncivilized people supposedly lacked. A civilized man, it was believed, could cultivate the land because it meant something to him; on it, accordingly, he bred useful arts and crafts, he created, he accomplished, he built. For an uncivilized people, land was either farmed badly (i.e., inefficiently by Western standards) or it was left to rot. From this string of ideas, by which whole native societies who lived on American, African, and Asian

territories for centuries were suddenly denied their right to live on that land, came the great dispossessing movements of modern European colonialism, and with them all the schemes for redeeming the land, resettling the natives, civilizing them, taming their savage customs, turning them into useful beings under European rule. Land in Asia, Africa, and the Americas was there for European exploitation, because Europe understood the value of land in a way impossible for the natives. At the end of the century, Joseph Conrad dramatized this philosophy in *Heart of Darkness*, and embodied it powerfully in the figure of Kurtz, a man whose colonial dreams for the earth's "dark places" were made by "all Europe." But what Conrad drew on, as indeed the Zionists drew on also, was the kind of philosophy set forth by Robert Knox in his work *The Races of Man*,[14] in which men were divided into white and advanced (the producers) and dark, inferior wasters. Similarly, thinkers like John Westlake and before him Emer de Vattel divided the world's territories into empty (though inhabited by nomads, and a low kind of society) and civilized—and the former were then "revised" as being ready for takeover on the basis of a higher, civilized right to them.

I very greatly simplify the transformation in perspective by which millions of acres outside metropolitan Europe were thus declared empty, their people and societies decreed to be obstacles to progress and development, their space just as assertively declared open to European white settlers and their civilizing exploitation. During the 1870s in particular, new European geographical societies mushroomed as a sign that geography had become, according to Lord Curzon, "the most cosmopolitan of all the sciences."[15] Not for nothing in *Heart of Darkness* did Marlow admit to his

> passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces [populated by natives, that is] on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all

> look like that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there.[16]

Geography and a passion for maps developed into an organized matter mainly devoted to acquiring vast overseas territories. And, Conrad also said, this

> . . . conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to . . . [17]

Conrad makes the point better than anyone, I think. The power to conquer territory is only in part a matter of physical force: there is the strong moral and intellectual component making the conquest itself secondary to an idea, which dignifies (and indeed hastens) pure force with arguments drawn from science, morality, ethics, and a general philosophy. Everything in Western culture potentially capable of dignifying the acquisition of new domains—as a new science, for example, acquires new intellectual territory for itself—*could* be put at the service of colonial adventures. And *was* put, the "idea" always informing the conquest, making it entirely palatable. One example of such an idea spoken about openly as a quite normal justification for what today would be called colonial aggression, is to be found in these passages by Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, a leading French geographer in the 1870s:

> A society colonizes, when having itself reached a high degree of maturity and of strength, it procreates, it protects, it places in good conditions of development, and it brings to virility a new society to which it has given birth. Colonization is one of the most complex and delicate phenomena of social physiology.

There is no question of consulting the natives of the territory where the new society is to be given birth. What counts is that a modern European society has enough vitality and intellect to be "magnified by this pouring out of its exuberant activity on the outside." Such activity must be good since it is believed in, and since it also carries within itself the healthy current of an entire advanced civilization. Therefore, Leroy-Beaulieu added,

> Colonization is the expansive force of a people; it is its power of reproduction; it is its enlargement and its multiplication through space; it is the subjugation of the universe or a vast part of it to that people's language, customs, ideas, and laws.[18]

Imperialism was the theory, colonialism the practice of changing the uselessly unoccupied territories of the world into useful new versions of the European metropolitan society. Everything in those territories that suggested waste, disorder, uncounted resources, was to be converted into productivity, order, taxable, potentially developed wealth. You get rid of most of the offending human and animal blight—whether because it simply sprawls untidily all over the place or because it roams around unproductively and uncounted—and you confine the rest to reservations, compounds, native homelands, where you can count, tax, use them profitably, and you build a new society on the vacated space. Thus was Europe reconstituted abroad, its "multiplication in space" successfully projected and managed. The result was a widely varied group of little Europes scattered throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas, each reflecting the circumstances, the specific instrumentalities of the parent culture, its pioneers, its vanguard settlers.[19] All of them were similar in one other major respect—despite the differences, which were considerable—and that was that their life was carried on with an air of *normality*. The most grotesque reproductions of Europe (South Africa, Rhodesia, etc.) were considered appropriate; the worst discrimination against and exclusions of the natives were thought to be normal because "scientifically" legitimate;

the sheer contradiction of living a foreign life in an enclave many physical and cultural miles from Europe, in the midst of hostile and uncomprehending natives, gave rise to a sense of history, a stubborn kind of logic, a social and political state decreeing the present colonial venture as *normal,* justified, good.

With specific reference to Palestine, what were to become institutional Zionist attitudes to the Arab Palestinian natives and their supposed claims to a "normal" existence, were more than prepared for in the attitudes and the practices of British scholars, administrators, and experts who were officially involved in the exploitation and government of Palestine since the mid-nineteenth century. Consider that in 1903 the Bishop of Salisbury told members of the Palestine Exploration Fund that

> Nothing, I think, that has been discovered makes us feel any regret at the suppression of Canaanite civilisation [the euphemism for native Arab Palestinians] by Israelite civilisation. . . . [The excavations show how] the Bible has not misrepresented at all the abomination of the Canaanite culture which was superseded by the Israelite culture.

Miriam Rosen, a young American scholar, has compiled a spinetingling collection of typical British attitudes to the Palestinians, attitudes which in extraordinary ways prepare for the *official* Zionist view, from Weizmann to Begin, of the native Palestinian. Here are some citations from Ms. Rosen's important work:

Tyrwhitt Drake, who wrote in a survey of Western Palestine:

> The fear of the *fellahin* that we have secret designs of re-conquering the country is a fruitful source of difficulty. This got over, remains the crass stupidity which cannot give a direct answer to a simple question, the exact object of which it does not understand; for why should a Frank wish to know the name of an insignificant wady or hill in their land?
>
> The *fellahin* are all in the worst type of humanity that I have come across in the east. . . . The *fellah* is totally destitute of all moral sense. . . .

The Dean of Westminster, on the "obstacles" before the Palestine Exploration Fund Survey:

> And these labours had to be carried out, not with the assistance of those on the spot, but in spite of the absurd obstacles thrown in the way of work by that singular union of craft, ignorance and stupidity, which can only be found in Orientals.

Lord Kitchener on the Survey of Galilee:

> We hope to rescue from the hands of that ruthless destroyer, the uneducated Arab, one of the most interesting ruins in Palestine, hallowed by footprints of our Lord. I allude to the synagogue of Capernaum, which is rapidly disappearing owing to the stones being burnt for lime.

One C. R. Conder in his "Present Condition of Palestine":

> The native peasantry are well worth a few words of description. They are brutally ignorant, fanatical, and above all, inveterate liars; yet they have qualities which would, if developed, render them a useful population. [He cites their cleverness, energy, and endurance for pain, heat, etc.]

Sir Flinders Petrie:

> The Arab has a vast balance of romance put to his credit very needlessly. He is as disgustingly incapable as most other savages, and no more worth romancing about than Red Indians or Maoris. I shall be glad to return to the comparatively shrewd and sensible Egyptians.

Charles Clermont-Ganneau's reflections on "The Arabs in Palestine":

> Arab civilization is a mere deception—it no more exists than the horrors of Arab conquest. It is but the last gleam of Greek and Roman civilization gradually dying out in the powerless but respectful hands of Islam.

Or Stanley Cook's view of the country:

> . . . rapid deterioration, which (it would seem) was only temporarily stopped by the energetic Crusaders. Modern travellers have often noticed the inherent weakness of the characters of the inhabitants and, like Robinson, have realized that, for the return of prosperity, "nothing is wanted but the hand of the man to till the ground."

Or, finally, R. A. S. Macalister:

> It is no exaggeration to say that throughout these long centuries the native inhabitants of Palestine do not appear to have made a single contribution of any kind whatsoever to material civilization. It was perhaps the most unprogressive country on the face of the earth. Its entire culture was derivative . . . [20]

These, then, are some of the main points that must be made about the background of Zionism in European imperialist or colonialist attitudes. For whatever it may have done for Jews, Zionism essentially saw Palestine as the European imperialist did, as an empty territory paradoxically "filled" with ignoble or perhaps even dispensable natives; it allied itself, as Chaim Weizmann quite clearly said after World War I, with the imperial powers in carrying out its plans for establishing a new Jewish state in Palestine, and it did not think except in negative terms of "the natives," who were passively supposed to accept the plans made for their land; as even Zionist historians like Yehoshua Porath and Neville Mandel have empirically shown, the ideas of Jewish colonizers in Palestine (well before World War I) always met with unmistakable native resistance, not because the natives thought that Jews were evil, but because most natives do not take kindly to having their territory settled by foreigners;[21] moreover, in formulating the concept of a Jewish nation "reclaiming" its own territory, Zionism not only accepted the generic racial concepts of European culture, it also banked on the fact that Palestine was actually peopled not by an advanced but by a backward people, over which it *ought*

to be dominant. Thus that implicit *assumption* of domination led specifically in the case of Zionism to the practice of ignoring the natives for the most part as not entitled to serious consideration.[22] Zionism therefore developed with a unique consciousness of itself, but with little or nothing left over for the unfortunate natives. Maxime Rodinson is perfectly correct in saying that Zionist indifference to the Palestinian natives was

> an indifference linked to European supremacy, which benefited even Europe's proletarians and oppressed minorities. In fact, there can be no doubt that if the ancestral homeland had been occupied by one of the well-established industrialized nations that ruled the world at the time, one that had thoroughly settled down in a territory it had infused with a powerful national consciousness, then the problem of displacing German, French, or English inhabitants and introducing a new, nationally coherent element into the middle of their homeland would have been in the forefront of the consciousness of even the most ignorant and destitute Zionists.[23]

In short, all the constitutive energies of Zionism were premised on the excluded presence, that is, the functional absence of "native people" in Palestine; institutions were built deliberately shutting out the natives, laws were drafted when Israel came into being that made sure the natives would remain in their "nonplace," Jews in theirs, and so on. It is no wonder that today the one issue that electrifies Israel as a society is the problem of the Palestinians, whose negation is the most consistent thread running through Zionism. And it is this perhaps unfortunate aspect of Zionism that ties it ineluctably to imperialism—at least so far as the Palestinian is concerned. Rodinson again:

> The element that made it possible to connect these aspirations of Jewish shopkeepers, peddlers, craftsmen, and intellectuals in Russia and elsewhere to the conceptual orbit of imperialism was one small detail that seemed to be of no importance: Palestine was inhabited by another people.[24]

II
Zionist Population, Palestinian Depopulation

I have been discussing the extraordinary unevenness in Zionism between care for the Jews and an almost total disregard for the non-Jews or native Arab population in conceptual terms. Zionism and European imperialism are epistemologically, hence historically and politically, coterminous in their view of resident natives, but it is how this irreducibly imperialist view worked in the world of politics and in the lives of people for whom epistemology was irrelevant that justifies one's looking at epistemology at all. In that world and in those lives, among them several million Palestinians, the results can be detailed, not as mere theoretical visions, but as an immensely traumatic Zionist effectiveness. One general Arab Palestinian reaction toward Zionism is perfectly caught, I think, in the following sentence written by the Arab delegations's reply in 1922 to Winston Churchill's White Paper: "The intention to create the Jewish National Home is to cause the disappearance or subordination of the Arabic population, culture and language."[25] What generations of Palestinian Arabs watched therefore was an unfolding design, whose deeper roots in Jewish history and the terrible Jewish experience was necessarily obscured by what was taking place before their eyes as well as to those in Palestine. There the Arabs were able to see embodied

> a ruthless doctrine, calling for monastic self-discipline and cold detachment from environment. The Jews who gloried in the name of socialist worker interpreted brotherhood on a strictly nationalist, or racial basis, for they meant brotherhood with Jew, not with Arab. As they insisted on working the soil with their own hands, since exploitation of others was anathema to them, they excluded the Arabs from their regime. . . . They believed in equality, but for themselves. They lived on Jewish bread, raised on Jewish soil that was protected by a Jewish rifle.[26]

The "inventory" of Palestinian experience that I am trying to take here is based on the simple truth that the exultant or (later) the terrorized Jews who arrived in Palestine were seen essentially as foreigners whose proclaimed destiny was to create a state for Jews. What of the Arabs who were there? was the question we must feel ourselves asking now. What we will discover is that everything positive from the Zionist standpoint looked absolutely negative from the perspective of the native Arab Palestinians.

For they could never be fit into the grand vision. Not that "vision" was merely a theoretical matter; it was that and, as it was later to determine the character and even the details of Israeli government policy toward the native Arab Palestinians, "vision" was also the way Zionist leaders looked at the Arabs in order later (and certainly at that moment) to deal with them. Thus, as I said earlier, I have in mind the wholè dialectic between theory and actual day-to-day effectiveness. My premise is that Israel developed as a social polity out of the Zionist thesis that Palestine's colonization was to be accomplished simultaneously for and by Jews *and* by the displacement of the Palestinians; moreover, that in its conscious and declared ideas about Palestine, Zionism attempted first to minimize, then to eliminate, and then, all else failing, finally to subjugate the natives as a way of guaranteeing that Israel would not be simply the state of its citizens (which included Arabs, of course) but the state of "the whole Jewish people," having a kind of sovereignty over land and peoples that no other state possessed or possesses. It is this anomaly that the Arab Palestinians have since been trying both to resist and provide an alternative for.

One can learn a great deal from pronouncements made by strategically important Zionist leaders whose job it was, after Herzl, to translate the design into action. Chaim Weizmann comes to mind at once, as much for his extraordinary personality as for his brilliant successes in bringing Zionism up from an idea to a conquering political institution. His thesis about the land of Palestine is revealing in the extent to which it repeats Herzl:

> It seems as if God has covered the soil of Palestine with rocks and marshes and sand, so that its beauty can only be brought out by those who love it and will devote their lives to healing its wounds.[27]

The context of this remark, however, is a sale made to the Zionists by a wealthy absentee landlord (the Lebanese Sursuk family) of unpromising marshland. Weizmann admits that this particular sale was of *some,* by no means a great deal, of Palestine, yet the impression he gives is of a *whole* territory essentially unused, unappreciated, misunderstood (if one can use such a word in this connection). Despite the people who lived on it, Palestine was therefore *to be made* useful, appreciated, understandable. The native inhabitants were believed curiously to be out of touch with history and, it seemed to follow, they were not really present. In the following passage, written by Weizmann to describe Palestine when he first visited there in 1907, notice how the contrast between past neglect and forlornness and present "tone and progressive spirit" (he was writing in 1941) is intended to justify the introduction of foreign colonies and settlements.

> A dolorous country it was on the whole, one of the most neglected corners of the miserably neglected Turkish Empire. [Here, Weizmann uses "neglect" to describe Palestine's native inhabitants, the fact of whose residence there is not a sufficient reason to characterize Palestine as anything but an essentially empty and patient territory, awaiting people who show a proper care for it.] Its total population was something above six hundred thousand, of which about eighty thousand were Jews. The latter lived mostly in the cities. . . . But neither the colonies nor the city settlements in any way resembled, as far as vigor, tone and progressive spirit are concerned, the colonies and settlements of our day.[28]

One short-term gain was that Zionism "raised the value of the . . . land," and the Arabs could reap profits even if politically the land was being cut out from underneath them.

As against native neglect and decrepitude, Weizmann

preached the necessity of Jewish energy, will, and organization for reclaiming, "redeeming" the land. His language was shot through with the rhetoric of voluntarism, with an ideology of will and new blood that appropriated for Zionism a great deal of the language (and later the policies) of European colonialists attempting to deal with native backwardness. "New blood had to be brought into the country; a new spirit of enterprise had to be introduced." The Jews were to be the importers of colonies and colonists whose role was not simply to take over a territory but also to be schools for a Jewish national self-revival. Thus if in Palestine "there were great possibilities," the question became how to do something about the fact that "the will was lacking. How was that to be awakened? How was a cumulative process to be set in motion?" According to Weizmann, the Zionists were saved from ultimate discouragement only because of "our feeling that a great source of energy was waiting to be tapped—the national impulse of a people held in temporary check by a misguided interpretation of historic method."[29] The "method" referred to was the Zionist tendency hitherto to rely on great foreign benefactors like the Rothschilds and "neglect" the development of self-sustaining colonial institutions on the land itself.

To do this, it was necessary to visualize and then to implement a scheme for creating a network of realities—a language, a grid of colonies, a series of organizations—for converting Palestine from its present state of "neglect" into a Jewish state. This network would not so much attack the existing "realities" as ignore them, grow alongside them, and then finally blot them out, as a forest of large trees blots out a small patch of weeds. A main ideological necessity for such a program was acquiring legitimacy for it, giving it an archeology and a teleology that completely surrounded and, in a sense, outdated the native culture that was still firmly planted in Palestine. One of the reasons Weizmann modified the conception of the Balfour Declaration from its favoring the establishment of a Jewish National Home to favoring a "reestablishment" was precisely to enclose the territory with the oldest and furthest reaching of possible "realities." The colonization of

Palestine proceeded always as a fact of repetition: The Jews were not supplanting, destroying, breaking up a native society. That society was itself the oddity that had broken the pattern of a sixty-year Jewish sovereignty over Palestine which had lapsed for two millennia. In Jewish hearts, however, Israel had always been there, an actuality difficult for the natives to perceive. Zionism therefore reclaimed, redeemed, repeated, replanted, realized Palestine, and Jewish hegemony over it. Israel was a return to a previous state of affairs, even if the new facts bore a far greater resemblance to the methods and successes of nineteenth-century European colonialism than to some mysterious first-century forebears.

Here it is necessary to make something very clear. In each of the projects for "reestablishing" Jewish sovereignty over Palestine there were always two fundamental components. One was a careful determination to implement Jewish self-betterment. About this, of course, the world heard a great deal. Great steps were taken in providing Jews with a new sense of identity, in defending and giving them rights as citizens, in reviving a national "home" language (through the labors of Eliezer Ben Yehudah), in giving the whole Jewish world a vital sense of growth and historical destiny. Thus "there was an instrument [in Zionism] for them to turn to, an instrument which could absorb them into the new life."[30] For Jews, Zionism was a school—and its pedagogical philosophy was always clear, dramatic, intelligent. Yet the other, dialectically opposite component in Zionism, existing at its interior where it was never *seen* (even though directly experienced by Palestinians) was an equally firm and intelligent boundary between benefits for Jews and none (later, punishment) for non-Jews in Palestine.

The consequences of the bifurcation in the Zionist program for Palestine have been immense, especially for Arabs who have tried seriously to deal with Israel. So effective have Zionist ideas about Palestine been for Jews—in the sense of caring for Jews and ignoring non-Jews—that what these ideas expressed to Arabs was *only* a rejection of Arabs. Thus Israel itself has tended to appear as an entirely negative entity,

something constructed for us for no other reason than either to keep Arabs out or to subjugate them. The internal solidity and cohesion of Israel, of Israelis as a people and as a society, have for the most part, therefore, eluded the understanding of Arabs generally. Thus to the walls constructed by Zionism have been added walls constructed by a dogmatic, almost theological brand of Arabism. Israel has seemed essentially to be a rhetorical tool provided by the West to harass the Arabs. What this perception entailed in the Arab states has been a policy of repression and a kind of thought control. For years it was forbidden ever to refer to Israel in print; this sort of censorship led quite naturally to the consolidation of police states, the absence of freedom of expression, and a whole set of human rights abuses, all supposedly justified in the name of "fighting Zionist aggression," which meant that any form of oppression at home was acceptable because it served the "sacred cause" of "national security."

For Israel and Zionists everywhere, the results of Zionist apartheid have been equally disastrous. The Arabs were seen as synonymous with everything degraded, fearsome, irrational, and brutal. Institutions whose humanistic and social (even socialist) inspiration were manifest for Jews—the kibbutz, the Law of Return, various facilities for the acculturation of immigrants—were precisely, determinedly inhuman for the Arabs. In his body and being, and in the putative emotions and psychology assigned to him, the Arab expressed whatever by definition stood *outside, beyond* Zionism.

The denial of Israel by the Arabs was, I think, a far less sophisticated and complex thing than the denial, and later the minimization, of the Arabs by Israel. Zionism was not only a reproduction of nineteenth-century European colonialism, for all the community of ideas it shared with that colonialism. Zionism aimed to create a society that could never be anything but "native" (with minimal ties to a metropolitan center) at the same time that it determined not to come to terms with the very natives it was replacing with new (but essentially European) "natives." Such a substitution was to be absolutely economical; no slippage from Arab Palestinian to Israeli

societies would occur, and the Arabs would remain, if they did not flee, only as docile, subservient objects. And everything that did stay to challenge Israel was viewed not as something *there,* but as a sign of something *outside* Israel and Zionism bent on its destruction—from the outside. Here Zionism literally took over the typology employed by European culture of a fearsome Orient confronting the Occident, except that Zionism, as an avant-garde, redemptive Occidental movement, confronted the Orient *in* the Orient. To look at what "fulfilled" Zionism had to say about the Arabs generally, and Palestinians in particular, is to see something like the following, extracted from an article printed in *Ma'ariv*, October 7, 1955. Its author was a Dr. A. Carlebach, who was a distinguished citizen and not a crude demagogue. His argument is that *Islam* opposes Zionism, although he does find room in his argument for the Palestinians.

> These Arab Islamic countries do not suffer from poverty, or disease, or illiteracy, or exploitation; they only suffer from the worst of all plagues: Islam. Wherever Islamic psychology rules, there is the inevitable rule of despotism and criminal aggression. The danger lies in Islamic psychology, which cannot integrate itself into the world of efficiency and progress, that lives in a world of illusion, perturbed by attacks of inferiority complexes and megalomania, lost in dreams of the holy sword. The danger stems from the totalitarian conception of the world, the passion for murder deeply rooted in their blood, from the lack of logic, the easily inflamed brains, the boasting, and above all: the blasphemous disregard for all that is sacred to the civilized world . . . their reactions—to anything—have nothing to do with good sense. They are all emotional, unbalanced, instantaneous, senseless. It is always the lunatic that speaks from their throat. You can talk "business" with everyone, and even with the devil. But not with Allah. . . . This is what every grain in this country shouts. There were many great cultures here, and invaders of all kinds. All of them—even the Crusaders—left signs of culture and blossoming. But on the path of Islam, even the trees have died. [This dovetails perfectly with Weizmann's

observations about "neglect" in Palestine; one assumes that had Weizmann been writing later he would have said similar things to Carlebach.]

We pile sin upon crime when we distort the picture and reduce the discussion to a conflict of border between Israel and her neighbors. First of all, it is not the truth. The heart of the conflict is not the question of the borders; it is the question of Muslim psychology. . . . Moreover, to present the problem as a conflict between two similar parts is to provide the Arabs with the weapon of a claim that is not theirs. If the discussion with them is truly a political one, then it can be seen from both sides. Then we appear as those who came to a country that was entirely Arab, and we conquered and implanted ourselves as an alien body among them, and we loaded them with refugees and constitute a military danger for them, etc. etc. . . . one can justify this or that side—and such a presentation, sophisticated and political, of the problem is understandable for European minds—at our expense. The Arabs raise claims that make sense to the Western understanding of simple legal dispute. But in reality, who knows better than us that such is not the source of their hostile stand? All those political and social concepts are never theirs. Occupation by force of arms, in their own eyes, in the eyes of Islam, is not all associated with injustice. To the contrary, it constitutes a certificate and demonstration of authentic ownership. The sorrow for the refugees, for the expropriated brothers, has no room in their thinking. Allah expelled, Allah will care. Never has a Muslim politician been moved by such things (unless, indeed, the catastrophe endangered his personal status). If there were no refugees and no conquest, they would oppose us just the same. By discussing with them on the basis of Western concepts, we dress savages in a European robe of justice.

Israeli studies of "Arab attitudes"—such as the canonical one by General Harkabi[31]—take no notice of such analyses as this one, which is more magical and racist than anything one is likely to encounter by a Palestinian. But the dehumanization of the Arab, which began with the view that Palestinians were either not there or savages or both, saturates everything in Israeli society. It was not thought too unusual during the 1973

war for the army to issue a booklet (with a preface by General Yona Efrati of the central command) written by the central command's rabbi, Abraham Avidan, containing the following key passage:

> When our forces encounter civilians during the war or in the course of a pursuit or a raid, the encountered civilians may, and by Halachic standards even must be killed, whenever it cannot be ascertained that they are incapable of hitting us back. Under no circumstances should an Arab be trusted, even if he gives the impression of being civilized.[32]

Children's literature is made up of valiant Jews who always end up by killing low, treacherous Arabs, with names like Mastoul (crazy), Bandura (tomato), or Bukra (tomorrow). As a writer for *Ha'aretz* said (September 20, 1974), childrens' books "deal with our topic: the Arab who murders Jews out of pleasure, and the pure Jewish boy who defeats 'the coward swine!' " Nor are such enthusiastic ideas limited to individual authors who produce books for mass consumption; as I shall show later, these ideas derive more or less logically from the state's institutions themselves, to whose other, benevolent side falls the task of regulating Jewish life humanistically.

There are perfect illustrations of this duality in Weizmann, for whom such matters immediately found their way into policy, action, detailed results. He admires Samuel Pevsner as "a man of great ability, energetic, practical, resourceful and, like his wife, highly educated." One can have no problem with this. Then immediately comes the following, without so much as a transition. "For such people, going to Palestine was in effect going into a social wilderness—which is something to be remembered by those who, turning to Palestine today, find in it intellectual, cultural and social resources not inferior to those of the Western world."[33] Zionism was all foregrounding; everything else was background, and it had to be subdued, suppressed, lowered in order that the foreground of cultural achievement could appear as "civilizing pioneer work."[34] Above all, the native Arab had to be seen as an irremediable

opposite, something like a combination of savage and superhuman, at any rate a being with whom it is impossible (and useless) to come to terms.

> The Arab is a very subtle debator and controversialist—much more so than the average educated European—and until one has acquired the technique one is at a great disadvantage. In particular, the Arab has an immense talent for expressing views diametrically opposed to yours with such exquisite and roundabout politeness that you believe him to be in complete agreement with you, and ready to join hands with you at once. Conversation and negotiations with Arabs are not unlike chasing a mirage in the desert: full of promise and good to look at, but likely to lead to death by thirst.
>
> A direct question is dangerous: it provokes in the Arab a skillful withdrawal and a complete change of subject. The problem must be approached by winding lanes, and it takes an interminable time to reach the kernel of the subject.[35]

On another occasion, he recounts an experience which in effect was the germ of Tel Aviv, whose importance as a Jewish center derives in great measure from its having neutralized the adjacent (and much older) Arab town of Jaffa. In what Weizmann tells the reader, however, there is only the slightest allusion to the fact of Arab life already existing there, on what was to be the adjacent future site of Tel Aviv. What matters is the production of a Jewish presence, whose value appears to be more or less self-evident.

> I was staying in Jaffa when Ruppin called on me, and took me out for a walk over the dunes to the north of the town. When we had got well out into the sands—I remember that it came over our ankles—he stopped, and said, very solemnly: "Here we shall create a Jewish city!" I looked at him with some dismay. Why should people come to live out in this wilderness where nothing would grow? I began to ply him with technical questions, and he answered me carefully and exactly. Technically, he said, everything is possible. Though in the first years communications with the new settlement would be difficult, the inhabitants would soon become self-supporting and self-

> sufficient. The Jews of Jaffa would move into the new, modern city, and the Jewish colonies of the neighborhood would have a concentrated market for their products. The Gymnasium would stand at the center, and would attract a great many students from other parts of Palestine and from Jews abroad, who would want their children to be educated in a Jewish high school in a Jewish city.
>
> Thus it was Ruppin who had the first vision of Tel Aviv, which was destined to outstrip, in size and in economic importance, the ancient town of Jaffa, and to become one of the metropolitan centers of the eastern Mediterranean. . . . [36]

In time, of course, the preeminence of Tel Aviv was to be buttressed by the military capture of Jaffa. The visionary project later turned into the first step of a military conquest, the idea of a colony being later fleshed out in the actual appearance of a colony, of colonizers, and of the colonized.

Weizmann and Ruppin, it is true, spoke and acted with the passionate idealism of pioneers; they also were speaking and acting with the authority of Westerners surveying fundamentally retarded non-Western territory and natives, planning the future *for them.* Weizmann himself did not just think that as a European he was better equipped to decide for the natives what their best interests were (e.g., that Jaffa *ought to be* outstripped by a modern Jewish city), he also believed he "understood" the Arab *as he really was.* In saying that the Arab's "immense talent" was "in fact" for never telling the truth, he said what other Europeans had observed about non-European natives elsewhere, for whom, like the Zionists, the problem was controlling a large native majority with a comparative handful of intrepid pioneers:

> It may well be asked how it is that we are able to control, with absurdly inadequate forces, races so virile and capable, with such mental and physical endowments. The reply is, I think, that there are two flaws to be found: —the mental and moral equipment of the average African. . . . I say that inherent lack of honesty is the first great flaw. . . . Comparatively rarely can one African depend upon another keeping his

> word. . . . Except in very rare instances it is a regrettable fact that this defect is enlarged rather than diminished by contact with European civilization. The second is lack of mental initiative. . . . Unless impelled from the outside the native seldom branches out from a recognized groove and this mental lethargy is characteristic of his mind.[37]

This is C. L. Temple's *Native Races and Their Rulers* (1918); its author was an assistant to Frederick Lugard in governing Nigeria and, like Weizmann, he was less a proto-Nazi racist than a liberal Fabian in his outlook.

For Temple as for Weizmann, the realities were that natives belonged to a stationary, stagnant culture. Incapable therefore of appreciating the land they lived on, they had to be prodded, perhaps even dislocated by the initiatives of an advanced European culture. Now certainly Weizmann had the additional rationalizations behind him of reconstituting a Jewish state, saving Jews from anti-Semitism, and so on. But so far as the natives were concerned, it could not have mattered initially whether the Europeans they faced in the colony were Englishmen or European Jews. Then too, as far as the Zionist in Palestine or the Britisher in Africa was concerned, he was realistic, he saw facts and dealt with them, he knew the value of truth. Notwithstanding the "fact" of long residence on a native territory, the non-European was always in retreat from truth. European vision meant the capacity for seeing not only what was there, but what *could* be there: hence the Weizmann-Ruppin exchange about Jaffa and Tel Aviv. The specific temptation before the Zionist in Palestine was to believe—and plan for—the possibility that the Arab natives would not *really* be there, which was doubtless a proven eventuality (a) when the natives would not acknowledge Jewish sovereignty over Palestine and (b) when after 1948 they became legal outsiders on their land.

But the success of Zionism did not derive exclusively from its bold outlining of a future state, or from its ability to see the natives for the negligible quantities they were or might become. Rather, I think, Zionism's effectiveness in making its

way against Arab Palestinian resistance lay *in its being a policy of detail*, not simply a general colonial vision. Thus Palestine was not only the Promised Land, a concept as elusive and as abstract as any that one could encounter. It was a specific territory with specific characteristics, that was surveyed down to the last millimeter, settled on, planned for, built on, and so forth, *in detail*. From the beginning of the Zionist colonization this was something the Arabs had no answer to, no equally detailed counterproposal. They assumed, perhaps rightly, that since they lived on the land and legally owned it, it was therefore theirs. They did not understand that what they were encountering was a discipline of detail—indeed a very culture of discipline by detail—by which a hitherto imaginary realm could be constructed on Palestine, inch by inch and step by step, "another acre, another goat," so Weizmann once said. The Palestinian Arabs always opposed a *general* policy on general principles: Zionism, they said, was foreign colonialism (which strictly speaking it was, as the early Zionists admitted), it was unfair to the natives (as some early Zionists, like Ahad Ha'am, also admitted), and it was doomed to die of its various theoretical weaknesses. Even to this day the Palestinian political position generally clusters around these negatives, and still does not sufficiently try to meet the detail of Zionist enterprise; today there are, for example, seventy-seven "illegal" Zionist colonies on the West Bank and Israel has confiscated about 27 percent of the West Bank's Arab-owned land, yet the Palestinians seem virtually powerless physically to stop the growth or "thickening" of this new Israeli colonization.

The Palestinians have not understood that Zionism has been much more than an unfair colonialist master against whom one could appeal to all sorts of higher courts, without any avail. They have not understood the Zionist challenge as a policy of detail, of institutions, of organization, by which people (to this day) enter territory illegally, build houses on it, settle there, and call the land their own—with the whole world condemning them. The force of that drive to settle, in a sense *to produce*, a Jewish land can be glimpsed in a document that Weizmann

says "seemed to have anticipated the shape of things to come" as indeed it did. This was an "Outline of Program for the Jewish Resettlement of Palestine in Accordance with the Aspirations of the Zionist Movement"; it appeared in early 1917, and it is worth quoting from:

> The Suzerain Government [that is, any government, Allied or otherwise, in command of the territory] shall sanction a formation of a Jewish company for the colonization of Palestine by Jews. The said Company shall be under the direct protection of the Suzerain Government [that is, whatever went on in Palestine should be legitimized not by the natives but by some outside force]. The objects of the Company shall be: a) to support and foster the existing Jewish settlement in Palestine in every possible way; b) to aid, support and encourage Jews from other countries who are desirous of and suitable for settling in Palestine by organizing immigration, by providing information, and by every other form of material and moral assistance. The powers of the Company shall be such as will enable it to develop the country in every way, agricultural, cultural, commercial and industrial, and shall include full powers of land purchase and development, and especially facilities for the acquisition of the Crown lands, building rights for roads, railway harbors, power to establish shipping companies for the transport of goods and passengers to and from Palestine, and for every other power found necessary for the opening of the country.[38]

Underlying this extraordinary passage is a vision of a matrix of organizations whose functioning duplicates that of an army. For it is an army that "opens" a country to settlement, that organizes settlements in foreign territory, that aids and develops "in every possible way" such matters as immigration, shipping, and supply, that above all turns mere citizens into "suitable" disciplined agents whose job it is to be on the land and to invest it with their structures, organization, and institutions.[39] Just as an army assimilates ordinary citizens to its purposes—by dressing them in uniforms, by exercising them in tactics and maneuvers, by disciplining everyone to its

purposes—so too did Zionism dress the Jewish colonists in the system of Jewish labor and Jewish land, whose uniform required that only Jews were acceptable. The power of the Zionist army did not reside in its leaders, nor in the arms it collected for its conquests and defense, but rather in the functioning of a whole system, a series of positions taken and held, as Weizmann says, in agriculture, culture, commerce, and industry. In short, Zionism's "company" was the translation of a theory and a vision into a set of instruments for holding and developing a Jewish colonial territory right in the middle of an indifferently surveyed and developed Arab territory.

The fascinating history of the Zionist colonial apparatus, its "company," cannot long detain us here, but at least some things about its workings need to be noted. The Second Zionist Congress meeting in Basel, Switzerland (August 1898) created the Jewish Colonial Trust Limited, a subsidiary of which was founded in Jaffa in 1903 and called the Anglo-Palestine Company. Thus began an agency whose role in the transformation of Palestine was extraordinarily crucial. Out of the Colonial Trust in 1901 came the Jewish National Fund (JNF), empowered to buy land and hold it in trust for "the Jewish people"; the wording of the original proposal was that the JNF would be "a trust for the Jewish people, which . . . can be used exclusively for the purchase of land in Palestine and Syria." The JNF was always under the control of the World Zionist Organization, and in 1905 the first land purchases were made.

From its inception as a functioning body the JNF existed either to develop, buy, or lease land—only for Jews. As Walter Lehn convincingly shows (in a major piece of research on the JNF, on which I have relied for the details I mention here),[40] the Zionist goal was to acquire land in order to put settlers on it; thus in 1920, after the Palestinian Land Development Company had been founded as an agency of the JNF, a Palestine Foundation Fund was created to organize immigration and colonization. At the same time, emphasis was placed institutionally on acquiring and holding lands for "the Jewish

people." This designation made it certain that a Zionist state would be unlike any other in that it was not to be the state of its citizens, but rather the state of a whole people most of which was in Diaspora. Aside from making the non-Jewish people of the state into second-class citizens, it made the Zionist organizations, and later the state, retain a large extraterritorial power in addition to the vital territorial possessions over which the state was to have sovereignty. Even the land acquired by the JNF was—as John Hope Simpson said in 1930—"extraterritorialized. It ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future." There was no corresponding Arab effort to institutionalize Arab landholding in Palestine, no thought that it might be necessary to create an organization for holding lands "in perpetuity" for the "Arab people," above all, no informational, money-raising, lobbying work done—as the Zionists did in Europe and the United States—to expand "Jewish" territory and, paradoxically, give it a Jewish presence and an international, almost metaphysical status as well. The Arabs mistakenly thought that owning the land and being on it were enough.

Even with all this sophisticated and farsighted effort, the JNF acquired only 936,000 dunams* of land in the almost half-century of its existence before Israel appeared as a state; the total land area of mandate Palestine was 26,323,000 dunams. Together with the small amount of land held by private Jewish owners, Zionist landholding in Palestine at the end of 1947 was 1,734,000 dunams, that is, 6.59 percent of the total area. After 1940, when the mandatory authority restricted Jewish land ownership to specific zones inside Palestine, there continued to be illegal buying (and selling) within the 65 percent of the total area restricted to Arabs. Thus when the partition plan was announced in 1947 it included land held illegally by Jews, which was incorporated as a *fait accompli* inside the borders of the Jewish state. And after Israel announced its statehood, an impressive series of laws legally assimilated huge tracts of Arab land (whose proprietors had become refugees, and were pronounced "absentee landlords"

*A dunam is roughly a quarter of an acre.

in order to expropriate their lands and prevent their return under any circumstances) to the JNF. The process of land alienation (from the Arab standpoint) had been completed.

The ideological, profoundly political meaning of the "company's" territorial achievements illuminates the post-1967 controversy over the fate of Arab land occupied by Israel. A large segment of the Israeli population seems to believe that Arab land can be converted into Jewish land (a) because the land had once been Jewish two millennia ago (a part of Eretz Israel) and (b) because there exists in the JNF a method for legally metamorphosing "neglected" land into the property of the Jewish people.[41] Once Jewish settlements are built and peopled, and once they are hooked into the state network, they become properly extraterritorial, emphatically Jewish, and non-Arab. To this new land is added as well a strategic rationale, that it is necessary for Israeli security. But were these things simply a matter of internal Israeli concern, and were they sophistic arguments intended only to appeal to an Israeli constituency, they might be analyzed dispassionately as being no more than curious. The fact is, however, that they impinge—as they always have—on the Arab residents of the territories, and then they have a distinct cutting edge to them. Both in theory and in practice their effectiveness lies in how they Judaize territory coterminously with de-Arabizing it.

There is privileged evidence of this fact, I think, in what Joseph Weitz had to say. From 1932 on, Weitz was the director of the Jewish National Land Fund; in 1965 his diaries and papers, *My Diary, and Letters to the Children*, were published in Israel. On December 19, 1940, he wrote:

> . . . after the [Second World] war the question of the land of Israel and the question of the Jews would be raised beyond the framework of "development"; amongst ourselves. *It must be clear that there is no room for both peoples in this country.* No "development" will bring us closer to our aim, to be an independent people in this small country. If the Arabs leave the country, it will be broad and wide-open for us. And if the Arabs stay, the country will remain narrow and miserable.

> When the War is over and the English have won, and when the judges sit on the throne of Law, our people must bring their petitions and their claim before them; and the only solution is Eretz Israel, or at least Western Eretz Israel, *without Arabs. There is no room for compromise on this point!* The Zionist enterprise so far, in terms of preparing the ground and paving the way for the creation of the Hebrew State in the land of Israel, has been fine and good in its own time, and could do with "land-buying"—but this will not bring about the State of Israel; that must come all at once, in the manner of a Salvation (this is the secret of the Messianic idea); and there is no way besides transferring the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, *to transfer them all;* except maybe for Bethlehem, Nazareth and Old Jerusalem, *we must not leave a single village, not a single tribe.* And the transfer must be directed to Iraq, to Syria, and even to Transjordan. For that purpose we'll find money, and a lot of money. And only with such a transfer will the country be able to absorb millions of our brothers, and the Jewish question shall be solved, once and for all. There is no other way out. [Emphases added][42]

These are not only prophetic remarks about what was going to happen; they are also policy statements, in which Weitz spoke with the voice of the Zionist consensus. There were literally hundreds of such statements made by Zionists, beginning with Herzl, and when "salvation" came it was with those ideas in mind that the conquest of Palestine, and the eviction of its Arabs, was carried out. A great deal has been written about the turmoil in Palestine from the end of World War II until the end of 1948. Despite the complexities of what may or may not have taken place, Weitz' thoughts furnish a beam of light shining through those events, pointing to a Jewish state with most of the original Arab inhabitants turned into refugees. It is true that such major events as the birth of a new state, which came about as the result of an almost unimaginably complex, many-sided struggle and a full-scale war, cannot be easily reduced to simple formulation. I have no wish to do this, but neither do I wish to evade the outcome of struggle, or the determining elements that went into the

struggle, or even the policies produced in Israel ever since. The fact that matters for the Palestinian—and for the Zionist—is that a territory once full of Arabs emerged from a war (a) essentially emptied of its original residents and (b) made impossible for Palestinians to return to. Both the ideological and organizational preparations for the Zionist effort to win Palestine, as well as the military strategy adopted, envisioned taking over territory, and filling it with new inhabitants. Thus the Dalet Plan, as it has been described by the Zionist historians Jon and David Kimche, was "to capture strategic heights dominating the most likely lines of advance of the invading Arab armies, and to fill in the vacuum left by the departing British forces in such a way as to create a contiguous Jewish-held area extending from the north to the south."[43] In places like Galilee, the coastal area from Jaffa to Acre, parts of Jerusalem, the towns of Lydda and Ramla, to say nothing of the Arab parts of Haifa, the Zionists were not only taking over British positions; they were also filling in space lived in by Arab residents who were, in Weitz' word, being "transferred."

Against the frequently mentioned propositions—that Palestinians left because they were ordered to by their leaders, that the invading Arab armies were an unwarranted response to Israel's declaration of independence in May 1948—I must say categorically that *no one has produced any evidence of such orders sufficient to produce so vast and final an exodus.*[44] In other words, if we wish to understand why 780,000 Palestinians left in 1948, we must shift our sights to take in more than the immediate events of 1948; rather, we must see the exodus as being produced by a relative lack of Palestinian political, organizational response to Zionist effectiveness and, along with that, a psychological mood of failure and terror. Certainly atrocities, such as the Deir Yassin massacre of 250 Arab civilians by Menachem Begin and his Irgun terrorists in April 1948, had their effect. But for all its horror, even Deir Yassin was one of many such massacres which began in the immediate post-World War I period and which produced conscious Zionist equivalents of American Indian-killers.[45] What probably counted more has been the machinery for keeping the

unarmed civilian Palestinians away, once they had moved (in most cases) to avoid the brutalities of war. Before as well as after they left there were specific Zionist instrumentalities for, in effect, obliterating their presence. I have already cited Weitz in 1940. Here he is on May 18, 1948, narrating a conversation with Moshe Shertok (later Sharett) of the Foreign Ministry:

> Transfer—*post factum;* should we do something so as to transform the exodus of the Arabs from the country into a fact, so that they return no more? . . . His [Shertok's] answer: he blesses any initiative in this matter. His opinion is also that we must act in such a way as to transform the exodus of the Arabs into an established fact.[46]

Later that year, Weitz visited an evacuated Arab village. He reflected as follows:

> I went to visit the village of Mu'ar. Three tractors are completing its destruction. I was surprised; nothing in me moved at the sight of the destruction. No regret and no hate, as though this was the way the world goes. So we want to feel good in this world, and not in some world to come. We simply want to live, and the inhabitants of those mud-houses did not want us to exist here. They not only aspire to dominate us, they also wanted to exterminate us. And what is interesting—this is the opinion of all our boys, from one end to the other.[47]

He describes something that took place everywhere in Palestine but he seems totally unable to take in the fact that the human lives—very modest and humble ones, it is true—actually lived in that wretched village meant something to the people whose lives they were. Weitz does not attempt to deny the villagers' reality; he simply admits that their destruction means only that "we" can now live there. He is completely untroubled by the thought that to the native Palestinians he, Weitz, is only a foreigner come to displace them, or that it is no more than natural to oppose such a prospect. Instead, Weitz and "the boys" take the position that the Palestinians wanted to "exterminate" them—and this therefore licenses the de-

struction of houses and villages. After several decades of treating the Arabs as if they were not there at all, Zionism came fully into its own by actively destroying as many Arab traces as it could. From a nonentity in theory to a nonentity in legal fact, the Palestinian Arab lived through the terrible modulation from one sorry condition to the other, fully able to witness, but not effectively to communicate, his or her own civil extinction in Palestine.

First he was an inconsequential native; then he became an absent one; then inside Israel after 1948 he acquired the juridical status of a less real person than any individual person belonging to the "Jewish people," whether that person was present in Israel or not. The ones who left the country in terror became "refugees," an abstraction faithfully taken account of in annual United Nations resolutions calling upon Israel—as Israel had promised—to take them back, or compensate them for their losses. The list of human indignities and, by any impartial standard, the record of immoral subjugation practiced by Israel against the Palestinian Arab remnant is blood-curdling, particularly if counterpointed with that record one hears the chorus of praise to Israeli democracy. As if to pay that wretched 120,000 (now about 650,000) for its temerity in staying where it did not belong, Israel took over the Emergency Defense Regulations, used by the British to handle Jews and Arabs during the mandate period from 1922 to 1948. The regulations had been a justifiably favorite target of Zionist political agitation, but after 1948 they were used, *unchanged*, by Israel against the Arabs.

For example, in those parts of Israel that still retain an Arab majority, an anachronistic but no less effective and detailed policy of "Judaization" goes on apace. Thus just as Ruppin and Weizmann in the early days foresaw a Tel Aviv to "outstrip" Arab Jaffa, the Israeli government of today creates a new Jewish Nazareth to outstrip the old Arab town. Here is the project described by an Israeli in 1975:

> Upper Nazareth, which was created some fifteen years ago, "in order to create a counterweight to the Arab Nazareth,"

> constitutes a cornerstone of the "Judaization of the Galilee" policy. Upper Nazareth was erected upon the hills surrounding Nazareth as a security belt surrounding it almost on all sides. It was built upon thousands of acres of lands which were expropriated high-handedly, purely and simply by force, from the Arab settlements, particularly Nazareth and Rana. The very choice of the name "upper" Nazareth, while the stress is upon *upper,* is an indicator of the attitude of the authorities, which give the new town special privileges according to their policy of discrimination and lack of attention regarding the city of Nazareth, which is, in their eyes, at the very bottom of the ladder. The visitor to Nazareth can acknowledge with his own eyes the neglect and lack of development of the city, and if from there he goes "up" to upper Nazareth, he will see over there the new buildings, the wide streets, the public lights, the steps, the many-storied buildings, the industrial and artisan enterprises, and he will be able to perceive the contrast: development up there and lack of care down there; constant government building up there, and no construction whatever down there. Since 1966 the [Israeli] Ministry of Housing has not built a single unit of habitation in old Nazareth. [Yoseph Elgazi in *Zo Hadareh,* July 30, 1975]

The drama of a ruling minority is vividly enacted in Nazareth. With all its advantages, upper—that is, Jewish—Nazareth contains 16,000 residents; below it, the Arab city has a population of 45,000. Clearly the Jewish city benefits from the network of resources for Jews. Non-Jews are surgically excluded. The rift between them and the Jews is intended by Zionism to signify a state of absolute difference between the two groups, not merely one of degree. If every Jew in Israel represents "the whole Jewish people"—which is a population made up not only of the Jews in Israel, but also of generations of Jews who existed in the past (of whom the present Israelis are the remnant) and those who exist in the future, as well as those who live elsewhere—the non-Jew in Israel represents a permanent banishment from his as well as all *other* past, present, and future benefits in Palestine. The non-Jew lives a meager existence in villages without libraries, youth centers,

theaters, cultural centers; most Arab villages, according to the Arab mayor of Nazareth, who speaks with the unique authority of a non-Jew in Israel, lack electricity, telephone communications, health centers; none has any sewage systems, except Nazareth itself, which is only partly serviced by one; none has paved roads or streets. For whereas the Jew is entitled to the maximum, the non-Jew is given a bare minimum. Out of a total work force of 80,000 Arab workers, 60,000 work in Jewish enterprises. "These workers regard their town and villages as nothing but places of residence. Their only prosperous 'industry' is the creation and supply of manpower."[48] Manpower without political significance, without a territorial base, without cultural continuity; for the non-Jew in Israel, if he dared to remain after the Jewish state appeared in 1948, there was only the meager subsistence of being *there,* almost powerless except to reproduce himself and his misery more or less endlessly.

Until 1966, the Arab citizens of Israel were ruled by a military government exclusively in existence to control, bend, manipulate, terrorize, tamper with every facet of Arab life from birth virtually to death. After 1966, the situation is scarcely better, as an unstoppable series of popular riots and demonstrations testify; the Emergency Defense Regulations were used to expropriate thousands of acres of Arab lands, either by declaring Arab property to be in a security zone or by ruling lands to be absentee property (even if, in many cases, the absentees were present—a legal fiction of Kafkaesque subtlety). Any Palestinian can tell you the meaning of the Absentee's Property Law of 1950, the Land Acquisition Law of 1953, the Law for the Requisitioning of Property in Time of Emergency (1949), the Prescription Law of 1958. Moreover, Arabs were and are forbidden to travel freely, or to lease land from Jews, or ever to speak, agitate, be educated freely. There were instances when curfews were suddenly imposed on villages and then, when it was manifestly impossible for the working people to know of the curfew, the "guilty" peasants were summarily shot; the most wantonly brutal episode took place at Kafr Kassim in October 1956, during which 49 unarmed peasants were shot by the frontier guard, a particu-

larly efficient section of the Israeli army. After a certain amount of scandal the officer in charge of the operation was brought to trial, found guilty, and then punished with a fine of one piaster (less than one cent).

Since occupying the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, Israel has acquired approximately a million more Arab subjects. Its record has been no better, but this has not been surprising.[49] Indeed, the best introduction to what has been taking place in the Occupied Territories is the testimony of Israeli Arabs who suffered through Israeli legal brutality before 1967. See, for instance, Sabri Jiryis' *The Arabs in Israel* or Fouzi al-Asmar's *To Be an Arab in Israel* or Elia T. Zurayk's *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism.* Israel's political goal has been to keep the Arabs pacified, never capable of preventing their continued domination by Israel. Whenever a nationalist leader gains a little stature, he is either deported, imprisoned (without trial), or he disappears; Arab houses (approximately 17,000) are blown up by the army to make examples of nationalist offenders; censorship *on everything written by or about Arabs* prevails; every Arab is directly subject to military regulations. In order to disguise repression and to keep it from disturbing the tranquility of Israeli consciousness, a corps of Arab experts—Israeli Jews who understand the Arab "mentality"—has grown up. One of them, Amnon Lin, wrote in 1968 that "the people trusted us and gave us a freedom of action that has not been enjoyed by any other group in the country, in any field." Consequently,

> Over time we have attained a unique position in the state as experts, and no one dares to challenge our opinions or our actions. We are represented in every department of government, in the Histadrut and in the political parties; every department and office has its "Arabists" who alone act for their minister among the Arabs.[50]

This quasi government interprets, and rules the Arabs behind a facade of privileged expertise. When, as I noted in Chapter One, visiting liberals wish to find out about "the Arabs," they

are given a suitably cosmetic picture.[51] Meanwhile, of course, Israeli settlements on occupied territories multiply (over ninety of them since 1967); the logic of colonization after 1967 follows the same pattern, resulting in the same displacements of Arabs as before 1948.[52]

There are Zionism and Israel for Jews, and Zionism and Israel for non-Jews. Zionism has drawn a sharp line between Jew and non-Jew; Israel built a whole system for keeping them apart, including the much admired (but completely apartheid) kibbutzim, to which no Arab has ever belonged. In effect, the Arabs are ruled by a separate government premised on the impossibility of isonomic rule for both Jews and non-Jews. Out of this radical notion it became natural for the Arab Gulag Archipelago to develop its own life, to create its own precision, its own detail. Uri Avneri put it this way to the Knesset:

> A complete government . . . was created in the Arab sector, a secret government, unsanctioned by law . . . whose members and methods are not known . . . to anyone. Its agents are scattered among the ministries of government, from the Israel Lands Administration to the ministry of education and the ministry of religions. It makes fateful decisions affecting [Arab] lives in unknown places without documents and communicates them in secret conversations or over the telephone. This is the way decisions are made about who goes to the teachers' seminar, or who will obtain a tractor, or who will be appointed to a government post, or who will receive financial subsidies, or who will be elected to the Knesset, or who will be elected to the local council—if there is one—and so on for a thousand and one reasons.[53]

But from time to time there have been inadvertent insights into government for Arabs in Israel given to watchful observers. The most unguarded example was a secret report by Israel Koenig, northern district (Galilee) commissioner of the ministry, written for the then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on "handling the Arabs in Israel." (The full text was subsequently leaked to *Al-Hamishmar* on September 7, 1976.) Its contents make chilling reading, but they fulfill the assumptions of

Zionism toward its victims, the non-Jews. Koenig frankly admits that Arabs present a demographic problem since unlike Jews, whose natural increase is 1.5 percent annually, the Arabs increase at a yearly rate of 5.9 percent. Moreover, he assumes that it is national policy for the Arabs to be kept inferior, although they may be naturally susceptible to nationalist restlessness. The main thing, however, is how to make sure that in areas like Galilee the density of the Arab population, and consequently its potential for trouble, be reduced, contained, weakened. Therefore, he suggested that it is necessary to

> expand and deepen Jewish settlement in areas where the contiguity of the Arab population is prominent, and where they number considerably more than the Jewish population; examine the possibility of diluting existing Arab population concentrations. Special attention must be paid to border areas in the country's northwest and to the Nazareth region. The approach and exigency of performance have to deviate from the routine that has been adopted so far. Concurrently, the state law has to be enforced so as to limit "breaking of new ground" by Arab settlements in various areas of the country.

The quasi-military strategy of these suggestions is very near the surface. What we must also remark is Koenig's unquestioning view of the Zionist imperatives he is trying to implement. Nothing in his report intimates any qualms about the plainly racial end his suggestions promote; nor does he doubt that what he says is thoroughly consistent with the history of Zionist policy toward those non-Jews who have had the bad luck to be on Jewish territory, albeit in disquietingly large numbers. He goes on to argue—logically—that any Arab leaders who appear to cause trouble should be replaced, that the government should set about to "create" (the word has an almost theological tone very much in keeping with Jewish policy toward Arabs) "new [Arab] figures of high intellectual standard, figures who are equitable and charismatic," and completely acceptable to the Israeli rulers. Moreover, in "dissipat-

ing" the restless nationalist leaders, whose main sin seems to be that they encourage other natives to chafe at their enforced inferiority, the government should form "a special team . . . to examine the personal habits of . . . leaders and other negative people and this information should be made available to the electorate."

Not content then with "diluting" and manipulating the Arab citizens of Israel, Koenig goes on to suggest ways for economically "neutralizing" and "encumbering" them. Very little of this can be effective, however, unless there were some method of somehow checkmating the "large population of frustrated intelligentsia forced by a mental need to seek relief. Expressions of this are directed against the Israeli establishment of the state." Koenig appeared to think it natural enough for Arabs to be kept frustrated, for in reading his suggestions there is little to remind one that Arabs are people, or that his report was written not about Jews by a Nazi during World War II, but in 1976 by a Jew about his Arab co-citizens. The master stroke of Koenig's plan comes when he discusses the social engineering required to use the Arab's backward "Levantine character" against itself. Since Arabs in Israel are a disadvantaged community, this reality must be enhanced as follows:

> a) The reception criteria for Arab university students should be the same as for Jewish students and this must also apply to the granting of scholarships.
>
> A meticulous implementation of these rules will produce a natural selection [the Darwinian terminology speaks eloquently for itself] and will considerably reduce the number of Arab students. Accordingly, the number of low-standard graduates will also decrease, a fact that will facilitate their absorption in work after studies [the plan here is to make certain that young Arabs would easily be assimilated into menial jobs, thus ensuring their intellectual emasculation].
>
> b) Encourage the channeling of students into technical professions, the physical and natural sciences. These studies leave less time for dabbling in nationalism and the dropout rate is higher. [Koenig's ideas about the incompatibility

between science and human values go C. P. Snow one better. Surely this is a sinister instance of the use of science as political punishment; it is new even to the history of colonialism.]

c) Make trips abroad for studies easier, while making the return and employment more difficult—this policy is apt to encourage their emigration.

d) Adopt tough measures at all levels against various agitators among college and university students.

e) Prepare absorption possibilities in advance for the better part of the graduates, according to their qualifications. This policy can be implemented thanks to the time available (a number of years) in which the authorities may plan their steps.

Were such ideas to have been formulated by Stalinists or Orwellian socialists or even Arab nationalists, the liberal outcry would be deafening. Koenig's suggestions, however, seem universally justified by the logic of events pitting a small, valiant Western population of Jews against a vast and amorphous, metastasizing and ruinously mindless Arab population. Nothing in Koenig's report conflicts with the basic dichotomy in Zionism, that is, benevolence toward Jews and an essential but paternalistic hostility toward Arabs. Moreover, Koenig himself writes from the standpoint of an ideologist or theorist as well as from a position of authority and power within Israeli society. As a ruler of Arabs in Israel, Koenig expresses both an official attention to the well-being of Jews, whose interests he maintains and protects, and a paternalistic, managerial dominance over inferior natives. His position is therefore consecrated by the institutions of the Jewish state; licensed by them, he thinks in terms of a maximum future for Jews and a minimal one for non-Jews. All of these notions are perfectly delivered in the following paragraph from his report:

> Law enforcement in a country with a developing society like that of Israel is a problem to be solved with flexibility, care and much wisdom. At the same time, however, the administrative and executive authority in the Arab sector must be aware of the existence of the law and its enforcement so as to avoid erosion.[54]

Between Weizmann and Koenig there exists an intervening period of several decades. What was visionary projection for the former became for the latter a context of actual law. From Weizmann's epoch to Koenig's, Zionism for the native Arabs in Palestine had been converted from an advancing encroachment upon their lives to a settled reality—a nation-state—enclosing them within it. For Jews after 1948, Israel not only realized their political and spiritual hopes, it continued to be a beacon of opportunity guiding those of them still living in Diaspora, and keeping those who lived in former Palestine on the frontier of Jewish development and self-realization. For the Arab Palestinians, Israel meant one essentially hostile fact and several unpleasant corollaries. After 1948 every Palestinian disappeared nationally and legally. Some Palestinians reappeared juridically as "non-Jews" in Israel; those who left become "refugees" and later some of those acquired new Arab, European, or American identities. No Palestinian, however, lost his "old" Palestinian identity. Out of such legal fictions as the nonexistent Palestinian in Israel and elsewhere, however, the Palestinian has finally emerged—and with a considerable amount of international attention prepared at last to take critical notice of Zionist theory and praxis.

The outcry in the West after the 1975 "Zionism is racism" resolution was passed in the United Nations was doubtless a genuine one. Israel's Jewish achievements—or rather its achievements on behalf of European Jews, less so for the Sephardic (Oriental) Jewish majority—stand before the Western world; by most standards they are considerable achievements, and it is right that they not sloppily be tarnished with the sweeping rhetorical denunciation associated with "racism." For the Palestinian Arab who has lived through and who has now studied the procedures of Zionism toward him and his land, the predicament is complicated, but not finally unclear. He knows that the Law of Return allowing a Jew immediate entry into Israel just as exactly prevents him from returning to his home; he also knows that Israeli raids killed thousands of civilians, all on the acceptable pretext of fighting terrorism,[55] but in reality because Palestinians as a race have become

synonymous with unregenerate, essentially unmotivated terrorism; he understands, without perhaps being able to master, the intellectual process by which his violated humanity has been transmuted, unheard and unseen, into praise for the ideology that has all but destroyed him. *Racism* is too vague a term: Zionism is Zionism. For the Arab Palestinian, this tautology has a sense that is perfectly congruent with, but exactly the opposite of, what it says to Jews.

Burdened with a military budget draining off 35 percent of its Gross National Product, isolated except for its few and increasingly critical Atlantic friends, beset with social, political, and ideological issues it can deal with only by retreating from them entirely, Israel today faces a grim future. President Sadat's mission of peace has at last occasioned the semblance of opposition to Begin's fossilized theological madness, but it is doubtful whether in the absence of a conceptual, much less institutional, apparatus for coming humanely to terms with the Palestinian actualities, any decisive change will come from that quarter. The powerfully influential American Jewish community still imposes its money and its reductive view of things on the Israeli will. Then, too, one must not overlook the even more redoubtable U.S. defense establishment, more than a match for the business sector's hunger over oil-bloated Arab markets, as it continues to heap advanced weapons on an Israel and now an Egypt primed daily to combat "radicalism," the Soviet Union, or any other of the United States' geopolitical bugbears. The net effect in unrestrained Israeli militarism is accurately indicated by a *Ha'aretz* article (March 24, 1978) celebrating the Lebanese adventure in the following terms:

> What has happened last week, has shown to everyone who has eyes in his head, that the Israeli defense force is today an American Army both in the quantity and quality of its equipment: the rifles, the troop-carriers, the F-15's, and even the KFIR planes with their American motors, are a testimony that will convince everybody.

But even this paean to what its author calls Israel's "overflowing military equipment" is equaled in pernicious influence

by Western and Israeli intellectuals who have continued to celebrate Israel and Zionism unblinkingly for thirty years. They have perfectly played the role of Gramsci's "experts in legitimation," dishonest and irrational despite their protestations on behalf of wisdom and humanity. Check the disgraceful record and you will find only a small handful—among them Noam Chomsky, Israel Shahak, I. F. Stone, Elmer Berger, Judah Magnes—who have tried to see what Zionism did to the Palestinians not just once in 1948, but over the years. It is one of the most frightening cultural episodes of the century, this almost total silence about Zionism's doctrines for and treatment of the native Palestinians. Any self-respecting intellectual is willing today to say something about human rights abuses in Argentina, Chile, or South Africa, yet when irrefutable evidence of Israeli preventive detention, torture, population transfer, and deportation of Palestinian Arabs is presented, literally nothing is said. The merest assurances that democracy is being respected in Israel are enough to impress a Daniel Moynihan or a Saul Bellow, for instance, that all is well on the moral front. But perhaps the true extent of this state-worship can only be appreciated when one reads of a meeting held in 1962 between Martin Buber and Avraham Aderet, published in the December 1974 issue of *Petahim*, an Israeli religious quarterly. Aderet is extolling the army as a character-building experience for young men, and uses as an instance an episode during the 1956 war with Egypt when an officer ordered a group of soldiers simply to kill "any Egyptian prisoners of war . . . who were in our hands." A number of volunteers then step forward and the prisoners are duly shot, although one of the volunteers avers that "he closed his eyes when he shot." At this point Aderet says: "There is no doubt that this test can bring a confusion to every man of conscience and of experience of life, and even more so to young boys who stand at the beginning of their lives. The bad thing which happened is not the confusions in which those young men were during the time of the deed, but in the internal undermining which took place in them afterwards." To this edifying interpretation, Buber—moral philosopher, humane thinker, former

binationalist—can say only: "This is a great and true story, you should write it down." Not one word about the story's horror, or of the situation making it possible.

But just as no Jew in the last hundred years has been untouched by Zionism, so too no Palestinian has been unmarked by it. Yet it must not be forgotten that the Palestinian was not simply a function of Zionism. His life, culture, and politics have their own dynamic and ultimately their own authenticity, to which we must now turn.

THREE

TOWARD PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION

I

The Remnants, Those in Exile, Those Under Occupation

There are now between 3½ million and 4 million Palestinian Arabs scattered throughout the world. About 650,000 of them are what is called Israeli Arabs, 1 million live on the West Bank and Gaza under Israeli military occupation, another 1 million or so live in Jordan, approximately 450,000 live in Lebanon, and the balance are dispersed through the Arabian Gulf states, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, and in considerably smaller numbers in Europe and North and South America. Any one of these people, I am sure, would say that he or she is in exile, although it is perfectly clear that the conditions and the type of exile vary greatly. Nevertheless, behind every Palestinian there is a great general fact: that he once—and not so long ago—lived in a land of his own called Palestine, which is now no longer his homeland. No nuances are necessary for a Palestinian to make such a statement; very few conditions or qualifications seem attached to it. Yet as Tolstoy said about families, that happy ones were all the same and unhappy ones were each different in their unhappiness, the individual Palestinian trauma seems like one out of 3½ million variations on the same theme. Here is one variation, told about events in a small Arab village in western Galilee which fell to Zionist forces in the spring of 1948. The speaker is an elderly peasant

woman who now lives in a refugee camp in Lebanon; her story was recorded in 1973.

> We slept in the village orchards that night. The next morning, Umm Hussein and I went to the village. The chickens were in the streets, and Umm Hussein suggested that I go and bring some water. I saw Umm Taha on my way to the village courtyard. She cried and said: "You had better go and see your dead husband." I found him. He was shot in the back of the head. I pulled him to the shade and went to bring Umm Hussein to help me bury him. I did not know what to do. I could not dig a grave for him. We carried him on a piece of wood to the cemetery and buried him sideways in his mother's grave . . . . Until today I worry and pray that I buried him in the right way, in the proper position. I stayed in Kabri [her village] six days without eating anything. I decided to leave and join my sister, who had fled earlier with her family to Syria. I asked Abu Ismail 'Arkeh, an elderly man, to accompany me to Tarshiha, and he did. We left the others in the village. I do not know what happened to them. Abu Ismail remained with his son in Tarshiha, and I proceeded to Syria.[1]

One could not have read such a narrative in English before the middle or late sixties. For twenty years after Israel appeared, the world knew vaguely and generally of "Palestinian refugees," or more commonly it heard about "Arab refugees." One of the standard American social science texts on the Middle East produced in the fifties, *Social Forces in the Middle East*, edited by Sydney N. Fisher (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1955), spoke of the Palestinians in a separate chapter, but there was no indication to the reader that these people existed except as a minor irritant to "progress" in the region, or as statistics on the United Nations agenda for refugees in general. (A similar academic and "intelligence" failure exists about Iranian opposition to the shah, which when it erupted in 1979 caught everyone by surprise: not because the opposition did not exist, but because no one considered it a challenge to the shah's stability!)

Another problem, in a sense keeping the Palestinian from

himself and from the outside world, was the twenty-year-old split in the community: There were those Palestinians who were manifestly in exile, and those living a secluded internal exile within Israel. The former tended to see themselves in terms of Arab politics, or to try to become assimilated to their new places of residence; the latter were cut off from the Arab world, as they tried to shape their lives as much as they could within the small space provided them by Israel's domination. In both cases, the missing ingredient for a long time was some coalescing political force sufficient to make the Palestinian experience more than a passive nightmare located somewhere in an irretrievable history.

Of course the main thing missing was a country, which until the time that Palestine was supplanted by Israel had been predominantly Arab (Muslim and Christian) in character. The Zionist and Western attitude toward this fact is what I have tried to describe in Chapters One and Two, but for any Palestinian, there was no doubt that his country had its own character and identity. True, Palestine had been part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I, and true also that in any accepted sense it had not been independent. Its inhabitants referred to themselves as Palestinians, however, and made important distinctions between themselves, the Syrians, the Lebanese, and the Transjordans. Much of what we can call Palestinian self-assertion was articulated in response to the flow of Jewish immigrants into Palestine since the 1880s, as well as to ideological pronouncements made about Palestine by Zionist organizations. Under the constantly felt sense of foreign invasion, Palestinian Arabs grew together as a community during the interwar years. The things that had been taken for granted—the structure of the society, village and family identity, customs, cuisine, folklore, dialect, distinctive habits and history—were adduced as evidence, to Palestinians by Palestinians, that even as a colony the territory had always been their homeland, and that they formed a people. Sixty percent of the population was in agriculture; the balance was divided between townspeople and a relatively small nomadic group. All these people believed themselves to belong in a land

called Palestine, despite their feelings that they were also members of a large Arab nation; and for all of the twentieth century, they referred to their country as Filastinuna (our Palestine).

The truism now is that because they are at the core of the "Middle East crisis," the Palestinians must be involved in resolving that crisis. While the argument of this book obviously supports that truism, it tries to do more than make the case convincingly. My contention is that precisely because there is a widespread *general* (and recent) acceptance of Palestinian political identity, there is also a set of dangers that a general solution might miss, indeed *destroy*, the *specific*, detailed reality of the Palestinians. What I have tried to insist on in this essay, therefore, is the richness of "the question of Palestine," a richness often obscured, ignored, or willfully misrepresented. I have taken it for granted that groups of human beings—particularly those directly involved in the Palestinian/Zionist struggle—act out of passionate, or at least committed, conviction. This is as true of the way Jews feel about Zionism and Israel as it is of Palestinians. The asymmetry between common understanding of Zionism and of the Palestinians, however, has in general suppressed the values and the history of troubles animating the Palestinians throughout this century, since most Americans seem unaware that the Palestinians actually lived in Palestine before Israel came into existence. Yet only if those values and history are taken account of, can we begin to see the bases for compromise, settlement, and finally, peace. My task is to present the Palestinian story; the Zionist one is much better known and appreciated.

I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that despite the sudden attention being paid to them, the Palestinians are still perceived—even at times by themselves—as a collection of basically negative attributes. This being the case, the process toward full Palestinian self-determination is an extraordinarily difficult one since self-determination is only possible when there is some clearly seen "self" to determine. Exile and dispersion make the problem immediately apparent. For much of this century the Palestinians made their world-historical

appearances largely in the form of refusals and rejections. They have been associated with opposition to Zionism, with being the "heart" of the Middle East problem, with being terrorists, with being intransigent—the list is a long and unflattering one. They have had the extraordinarily bad luck to have a good case in resisting colonial invasion of their homeland combined with, in terms of the international and moral scene, the most morally complex of all opponents, Jews, with a long history of victimization and terror behind them. The absolute wrong of settler-colonialism is very much diluted and perhaps even dissipated when it is a fervently believed-in Jewish survival that uses settler-colonialism to straighten out its own destiny. I do not doubt that every thinking Palestinian, or those like myself whose trials have been cushioned by good fortune and privilege, knows somehow that all the real parallels between Israel and South Africa get badly shaken up in his consciousness when he reflects seriously on the difference between white settlers in Africa and Jews fleeing European anti-Semitism. But the victims in Africa and Palestine are wounded and scarred in much the same sort of ways, although the victimizers are different. The bond between non-European oppressed peoples, however, has alienated the Jews who have unreservedly opted for the West and its methods in Palestine.

So far the battery of difficulties is formidable; curiously, their very existence has given the Palestinian part of his durability and his ability to survive—despite the fact that most of these difficulties have been manipulated by forces eager to see the Palestinians disappear. More curious still has been the total ignorance of basic human psychology in those Zionists and others (many Arabs also) who have had to deal with the Palestinians. Here the blindness of politics and the coarseness of oppressive power appear in almost textbook form. Both on a theoretical and a practical level, the Zionist-Jewish colonizers in Palestine hoped perhaps that the Arabs would go away or not bother them if *they*, the Palestinians, were ignored, left alone, sidestepped. Later, they thought that punishing the Palestinians with bloody noses and terrorism would incline them to an acceptance of Zionism. After 1948 the state of

Israel used the native Arab population to efface its own human traces, attempting to reduce it to a class of mindless, barely mobile, completely obedient objects. After 1967, more ferocity was loosed on the occupied Arabs of the West Bank, the Golan Heights, Sinai, and the Gaza Strip. Nothing was spared the Arabs, from torture to concentration camps, deportation, razed villages, defoliated fields (e.g., the decimation of wheat fields by chemicals dropped from a Piper Cub on April 28, 1972, in the West Bank village of Akraba, as reported in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, July 3, 1972), destroyed houses, confiscated lands, "transferred" populations numbering well into the thousands. Still the Palestinians have not disappeared, even if they function in the world's eyes only as a phrase—"the Palestinian issue"—symbolizing, we are told, the last unbridgeable gap between Israel and the Arab states.

The form of Palestinian survival is what concerns me. Take the principal difficulties first: a divided, dispersed community with no territorial sovereignty of its own, encountering constant Zionist oppression and worldwide indifference, cast in (without being consulted) the role of absent or wholly negative interlocutor, playing an unwilling part in inter-Arab dynamics, Great Power competition, and miscellaneous regional ideological power struggles. On every side, subordination and suppression threaten the Palestinians, yet in the present unhappy circumstances there cannot be—except through rhetoric, acts of individual and mostly disconnected will or desperation, deliberate and ultimately risky full-face confrontation with one or another host country—a completely unified Palestinian self-assertion. There is not, except for the collective historical calamity that I mentioned a moment ago, a comprehensive Palestinian situation, although I think one could speak of a collective Palestinian position. In Lebanon, for example, there is a large armed Palestinian presence symbolized by the authority there of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Yet Lebanon is really controlled (and checkmated) by Syria, so in some sense the PLO situation in Lebanon is mediated by Syria. The Palestinians in Jordan are entitled to Jordanian citizenship, yet there, too, the necessary mediation

of Jordan (which exercises the prerogative of sovereign states over their resident populations) is troublesome to the Palestinian awareness by virtue of Jordan's anti-Palestinian war of 1970–71. Palestinians in Iraq and the Arabian Gulf states, prominent though many of them may be, are subject to the same laws making full civil freedom impossible even for native citizens. West Bankers, Gazans, and so-called Israeli Arabs live in a grid of laws and domination that makes their collective situation hard to square with that of their brother and sister Palestinians in Jordan or Lebanon.

Each Palestinian community must struggle to maintain its identity on at least two levels: first, as Palestinian with regard to the historical encounter with Zionism and the precipitous loss of a homeland; second, as Palestinian in the existential setting of day-to-day life, responding to the pressure in the state of residence. Every Palestinian has no state as a Palestinian even though he is "of," without belonging to, a state in which at present he resides. There are Lebanese Palestinians and American Palestinians, just as there are Jordanian, Syrian, and West Bank Palestinians; their numbers increase proportionately higher than those of Israeli Jews or other Arabs, as if the multiplication of complications extends even into the multiplication of bodies. Palestinian children today are born in such places as New York or Amman; they still identify themselves as being "from" Shafa'Amr or Jerusalem or Tiberias. These claims are almost meaningless except as they add to a genealogy of paradoxically Palestinian presence that sets itself against the logic of history and geography. For Palestinians have a sense of detail and reality through using the patterns of an acutely concrete space-time conflation. The pattern begins in Palestine with some real but partly mythologized spot of land, a house, a region, a village, perhaps only an employer, then it moves out to take in the disappearance of a collective national identity (even while remaining inside the old Palestine), the birth of concrete exile, always, always a head-on (later a more subtle) collision with laws designed specifically for the Palestinian, finally some recent sense of revived hope, pride in Palestinian achievements. And there is

hostility everywhere. A child born since 1948, therefore, asserts the original connection to lost Palestine as a bit of symbolic evidence that the Palestinians have gone on regardless: He or she *would* have been born there but for 1948. That is the sentimental aspect. The other is that a post-1948 child records all the parents' wanderings and tribulations, and still is an individual able to express both our movement toward the future as well as his or her own way of *being* that future.

Other dispossessed people in history cannot be compared, except in a few obvious ways, with the twentieth-century Palestinians. This is not a matter of who suffered more, or who lost more; such comparisons are fundamentally indecent. What I mean is that no people—for bad or for good—is so freighted with multiple, and yet unreachable or indigestible, significance as the Palestinians. Their relationship to Zionism, and ultimately with political and even spiritual Judaism, gives them a formidable burden as interlocutors of the Jews. Then their relationships to Islam, to Arab nationalism, to Third World anticolonialist and anti-imperialist struggle, to the Christian world (with its unique historical and cultural attachment to Palestine), to Marxists, to the socialist world—all these put upon the Palestinian a burden of interpretation and a multiplication of selves that are virtually unparalleled in modern political or cultural history—a fact made more impressively onerous in that it is all filtered through negation and qualifications. We Palestinians are clearly struggling for our self-determination but for the fact that we have no place, no agreed-upon and available physical terrain on which to conduct our struggle. We are clearly anticolonialist and antiracist in our struggle but for the fact that our opponents are the greatest victims of racism in history, and perhaps our struggle is waged at an awkward, postcolonial period in the modern world's history. We clearly struggle for a better future but for the fact that the state preventing us from having a future of our own has already provided a future for its own unhappy people. We are Arab, and yet not simply Arab. We are exiles, and yet tolerated guests in some countries of our exile. We can speak at the United Nations of our own problems, yet only as

observers. Of no unambiguously deprived people could a U.S. president say cautiously (in this era of interest in human rights and Wilsonian self-determination) that we *should participate in determining our future* (the clumsy ballet steps around the phrase *self-determination* are grotesque) at the same time that he has almost certainly never met and spoken with a real live Palestinian, or that his government has pursued policies that entail precluding Palestinian voices from being heard directly on the question of Palestinian self-determination. On no national group has its oppressor spoken so long and loud about its political and cultural nonexistence, even while this "non-people" demonstrates, declaims, fights its oppressor daily. For the Palestinian, the categories of "too much," "not at all," and "almost but for" fade imperceptibly into one another, at his expense.

These are not *psychological* difficulties primarily. They have psychological consequences, but I am speaking here of real *historical*, material difficulties. This is what makes the oppressed Palestinian's lot so unusual. His history and contemporaneity are cubistic, all suddenly obtruding planes jutting out into one or another realm, culture, political sphere, ideological formation, national polity. Each acquires a problematic identity of its own—all real, all claiming attention, all beseeching, demanding responsibility. Today this wildly multiple Palestinian actuality includes a capacity agenda whose individual items make sense perhaps, but whose totality is a political scientist's nightmare. Leaving aside for the moment the incipient but separate problems of the West Bank/Gaza Palestinians and those inside Israel, there are daily decisions to be made on PLO relations with Saudi Arabia, China, and the Soviet Union; there are decisions on relations with each Arab country, Syria and Egypt among them, where there is a considerable Palestinian political interest at stake; there is the question of PLO matters at the United Nations, and its subsidiary organizations; every day in Lebanon, for example, many thousand people must be fed, schooled, armed, trained, and informed, and this involves run-ins with the Syrian army, with the Lebanese right wing, with local allies; somehow also

the various Palestinian communities, each with its own defined priorities, must be kept in touch with one another, tensions reduced or eliminated, alliances promoted. And on top of all this there is always the goal of maintaining the pressure on Israel, whose borders, to the Palestinian exiles, seem far and hard to get to. Thus whatever psychological problems we may wish to discover in the Palestinian psyche—a new object for scrutiny among Palestinians and other "experts" in national character analysis—will, I think, seem relatively ephemeral alongside this string of competing material imperatives for action.

In a very literal way the Palestinian predicament since 1948 is that to be a Palestinian at all has been to live in a utopia, a *nonplace*, of some sort. In an equally literal way, therefore, the Palestinian struggle today is profoundly topical, and it illustrates what I shall say later about the change in Palestinian politics, from fantasy to effectiveness. One redeeming feature of the cubistic form of Palestinian life is that it is focused on the goal of getting a place, a territory, on which to be located nationally. The mere retrospective fact of having been in such a place once, or the contemporary fact of being nonpersons in that place now, no longer supply Palestinians with righteousness or wrath enough to go on fighting. The 1967 war and, ironically, the additional acquisition of Palestinian territory by Zionism put the exiled and dispersed Palestinians in touch with their *place*. From an esoteric policy of dealing with Palestinians as if they were not there, utopian beings whose brutish presence could be distributed and made to disappear in a maze of regulations forbidding their national presence, Israeli Zionism came out into the open in 1967. Here now were many hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and there explicitly on top of them, militarily ruling over them in full view of a world that immediately grasped the meaning of military occupation, was Israel. The Palestinian quest for peace took on a concrete meaning, which was to get Israeli occupation ended, out of that place. Within the framework of possible solutions to the whole regional imbroglio, Palestinian self-determination has come to

rest by and large on the need for an independent state on a liberated part of the original territory of Palestine.

Were that to be the Palestinian question now, however, it would be a far more tractable issue. There is a larger inter-Arab and international (to say nothing of an inter-Palestinian) dimension to Palestine as a rallying cry. No one who has given his energies to being a partisan has ever doubted that "Palestine" has loosed a great number of other issues as well. The word has become a symbol for struggle against social injustice: During the Egyptian student demonstrations of the early seventies a frequent slogan was: "We are all Palestinians." Iranian demonstrators against the shah in 1978 identified themselves with the Palestinians. There is an awareness in the nonwhite world that the tendency of modern politics to rule over masses of people as transferable, silent, and politically neutral populations has a specific illustration in what has happened to the Palestinians—and what in different ways is happening to the citizens of newly independent, formerly colonial territories ruled over by antidemocratic army regimes.[2] The idea of resistance gets content and muscle from Palestine; more usefully, resistance gets detail and a positively new approach to the microphysics of oppression from Palestine. If we think of Palestine as having the function of both a place to be *returned to* and of an *entirely new* place, a vision partially of a restored past and of a novel future, perhaps even a historical disaster transformed into a hope for a different future, we will understand the word's meaning better.

To Palestinians themselves, the oscillation in their political struggle between return (to their land, to some contact with their heritage, history, culture, to political reality) and novelty (the birth of a new pluralistic and democratic society, the end of religious and/or racial discrimination as a basis of government, the acquisition not only of genuine political independence but also of representative, responsible government) neatly answers the basic pattern of their present geographical locations. Those Palestinians in manifest exile want to return; those in internal exile (inside Israel or under military occupa-

tion) want independence and freedom and self-government where they are. A refugee from Galilee or Jaffa who now lives either in Lebanon or in Kuwait thinks primarily in terms of what he lost when he left in 1948 or later; he wants to be put back, or to fight his way back, into Palestine. He wants return. Conversely, the present Palestinian resident of Gaza, Nazareth, or Nablus faces or in some way daily rubs up against an occupying power, its symbols of authority, its basically unchecked domination over him; he wants to see that power removed or, in the case of the Arab Israeli citizen, he no longer wishes to be known and treated negatively as a "non-Jew." He wants novelty. One Palestinian wants to move, the other to stay; both want a pretty radical change. But are these wants, which are rooted in urgently material circumstances, complements of each other? Is there an implicit concert of Palestinian political aspirations?

A quick "yes" would be too rhetorical, too general an answer. The traces of lived history—whose inventory I have been trying to take—have riven the Palestinian community very deeply. Take only some simple basics about Palestinian history in this past generation, and you will find striking differences appearing between the exiles and those who remained. Even if we begin by granting that 1948 meant the same thing to us all, here is the kind of detail to be reckoned with. Inside Israel after 1948 the Palestinian's horizon was supplied by Zionist legality. He defined himself as best he could in the context of Israeli political parties like Mapai, in Knesset debates, in the law courts, on land whose title was in almost continual dispute, but whose identifiable presence and solidity for him never were. The opportunities for education inside Israel were (and still are) poor in comparison with those for Jews. Compulsory education for Arab schoolchildren is not really enforced by the state; the dropout rate is high. There is a dramatic shortage of teachers, and those that are employed are almost all untrained; only in 1956 did the state open a training college for teachers in Jaffa, and even so the problems of keeping the level of Arab education up are not seriously

remedied. Perhaps such a policy of benign neglect may seem justifiable, since Israel is a state for Jews, not non-Jews, but the positive harm done the Arabs in Israel has had the ascertainable political effect of isolating and depressing the Arab citizens of Israel.

Inside Israel the Arab has traditionally been regarded as somebody to be prevented from ever acquiring a national consciousness. The curriculum is changed suddenly, Arab schools and school facilities are in noticeably bad shape, and in all possible ways the Arab is taught to live with his inferiority and his abject dependence on the state. By the early seventies there were still only 500 university graduates among the over 400,000 Arabs inside Israel. This figure must be put alongside the fact that the number of Palestinian university students *outside* Israel at the same time is 11 in each 1,000 of the refugee population. Vocational school graduates were most numerous, but there too, as Sabri Jiryis notes, the lack of proportion between Jews and non-Jews is maintained by design: "19 vocational training schools with an attendance of 1,048 pupils in the Arab sector and 250 schools and 53,847 pupils in the Jewish sector." Throughout the school and university system, Hebrew is favored over Arabic, much greater attention is paid to Jewish history than to Arab ("32 hours, out of a total of 416 hours set aside during the four year program in the [university] arts division . . . are spent on the history of the Arabs, without touching on Moorish Spain [whereas] . . . Jewish history is taught broadly at every stage," and when Arab subjects are taught, they are always presented within a perspective emphasizing Arab decline, corruption, or violence; a survey of recent examination questions reveals nothing asked about Mohammed, Harun al-Rashid, or Saladin. Jiryis gives more details of how the Israeli government's education policies for Arabs aim to produce "loyalty to the state" and an awareness "underlining the isolation of the Arabs in Israel"—as a government committee for modifying the curriculum for Arabs put it in an article that appeared in *Ha'aretz*, March 19, 1971. Jiryis says:

> Extensive political themes are interwoven, especially in the Arabic and Hebrew history and language programs. Even a cursory study of the history program will show that it is geared to celebrating the history of the Jews and presenting it in the best possible light, whereas the view of Arab history is warped to a point bordering on falsehood. Arab history is represented as a series of revolutions, killings, and continuous feuds, in such a way as to obscure Arab achievements. Similarly, the time devoted to the study of Arab history is meager. In the fifth grade, for example, ten-year-olds spend ten hours (or periods) learning about the "Hebrews" and only five on the "Arabian peninsula." And even while studying the Arabian peninsula, attention is drawn to Jewish communities there, as stipulated in the program. In the sixth grade, thirty out of sixty-four history periods are spent on "Islamic History," from its beginnings to the end of the thirteenth century, including a study of Moses, Maimonides and the Spanish Jewish poet Ibn Gabirol. There is no mention of Arab history in seventh grade, but a sixth of the history periods are devoted to studying relations between the Jews of the Diaspora and Israel. In the eighth grade, there are thirty hours for studying "the state of Israel" and only ten for the history of the Arabs from the nineteenth century to the present. This leaves a gap of five centuries in the history of the Arabs. Among the subjects covered in the eighth grade are the religious crises in Syria and Lebanon and the feud between the Druze and the Maronites in 1860.[3]

Such a policy has worked until recently not only to isolate Israeli Arab citizens from other Arabs and Palestinians; it has also made it a good deal harder for other Arabs and Palestinians to come to terms with the Arab Palestinians inside Israel. One striking political result has been the sense of uncertainty going both ways. Israeli Arab citizens carry Israeli passports; it has been very difficult for them to visit the Arab world, and when meetings have occurred between exiles and so-called Arab Israelis, there is a considerable mutual suspicion to be dissolved before confidence can become the basis for exchange. Inevitably, an exile nourished on a diet of longing for

his homeland, combined with a heavy dose of Arab nationalist ideology, will wonder whether his compatriot from Nazareth will have become converted into an Israeli agent; his counterpart inside Israel will have had recourse in his loneliness to Hebrew literature or Israeli law, and he will sense the genuine alienation separating him from developments in indigenous Arab culture.

In such circumstances, then, the ways open to Palestinians inside Israel for self-improvement and later for struggle against their abuse by the state were always hemmed in by Israeli legality, which is heavily weighted against non-Jews. Since Israel has no constitution (the juridical basis of the state's authority is a set of "basic laws"), Palestinian opposition inside Israel depended first on the courageous initiatives taken by the Communist Party (with a Jewish and an Arab membership) and second by nationalist groups whose horizons were drawn by Israeli legality. During the middle to late fifties groups like the Popular Front emerged inside Israel to defend against the more unacceptable encroachments on Palestinians by the state. But perhaps the most significant nationalist Palestinian political force to appear was Usrat al-Ard. It was founded by a group of young Palestinian nationalists in 1958, and even though its history was a short one, it catalyzed the discontent of the native community inside Israel. (Here we should keep in mind the exiled community's political response to its fate, the Palestine Liberation Organization.) Usrat al-Ard means "family of the land" in Arabic, a name that perfectly captured the concerns of the remnant community. The group's *raison d'être* was the Palestinian's right to be in Palestine; from the beginning, it sought to do its work not by emphasizing liberation but by trying to develop an independent Palestinian Arab political presence *within* Israeli hegemony. Its major achievement, I think, was a negative one. Al-Ard demonstrated the impossibility of equality for non-Jews in Israel: By the early sixties, even though it had always sought to do its work legally, it had fallen victim to laws forbidding the publication of its newspapers, the running of its presses, or even its being

registered as a legal political party. Al-Ard was the first Palestinian Arab political group to call for a separate Palestinian state.

I shall return to the development of the Palestinians inside Israel a little later. What I wish to emphasize now is the special structure of their identity as that identity functions politically toward independence and freedom from oppression. The irreducible reality for these Palestinians was their precarious presence on the land inside a state that considered them to be an unwelcome, but temporarily unavoidable, nuisance. The fundamental stability of their lives comes from the land or, paradoxically, from the absence of any viable legitimacy for their tie to the land as non-Jews inside Israel. (To a considerable degree there is a similar kind of identity for Palestinians living on the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, although those Palestinians have had a long history of connections to the outside Arab world.) One of the most striking poems written by a member of the remnant community is Tawfiq Zayyad's "*Baqun*" ("We Shall Remain"), whose language of sheer, bone-basic staying-on is meant to remind Israelis that Palestinians are like "glass and the cactus/In your throats." Palestinian consciousness is expressed on one level as a set of "twenty impossibles"; on another, Zayyad sees his indignities (washing dishes in hotels, serving "drinks to the masters") as ennobling him because

> Here—we have a past
> a present
> and a future.
>
> Our roots are entrenched
> Deep in the earth.
> Like twenty impossibles
> We shall remain.[4]

The exact opposite sentiment is felt by Palestinians in exile. Their lives have been made unbearable because they have *no* roots where they are now. Their horizons are formed by

international agencies like the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), by refugee camps in one or another Arab country, by their immediate (and widely differing) circumstances. To describe or briefly to characterize the exiled community, the *ghurba* as it is called, is virtually impossible because as a whole it has reflected and contributed to sociopolitical consciousness—in all its variety—of modern Arab life.[5] There are Palestinian camp dwellers, intellectuals, engineers, workers, landless peasants in most Arab countries today; the class lines follow the main structures of the host countries, but inevitably they have also been subordinated (particularly since 1967) to some overriding concept of a Palestinian political personality. One can, I think, legitimately speak of Palestinian Nasserites, Palestinian Baathists, Palestinian Marxists, a Palestinian bourgeoisie; each in its own, sometimes peculiar way has formulated a theory, if not always a practical plan of return. I shall return to the political ideas and parties a little later.

The day-to-day workings of Palestinian life in exile, unlike that inside Israel, have obviously been distributed unevenly between the host country, the international apparatus for dealing with refugee operations, and the Palestinians themselves. 1967 was a watershed year. It symbolized the failure of the conventional Arab setup, and in some measure the assertion of Palestinian self-help, self-responsibility, self-identity, in the form of consensus political organizations, can be traced back to 1967. Until then each of the Arab countries supported Palestinians in a style congruent not so much with Palestinian aspirations but with a reason of state and, it must also be said, with a view to satisfying the genuinely popular sense of nationalist involvement in the Palestinian tragedy. International agencies like UNRWA had been set up to help with the specific problem of Palestinian refugees in their main places of exile, although the main goal has always been survival for Palestinians just short of political independence; UNRWA policy has been in harmony with the annual UN General Assembly resolution calling upon Israel to take back the refugees, but the call has been issued on more or less neutral

humanitarian grounds, again just short of acknowledgment that the Palestinians and the Israelis are opposed to each other on national, political grounds.

The ambivalence of Palestinian feeling toward UNRWA is a complex subject in itself, and I do not mean to study it here. What does concern me, however, is the constantly latent dissatisfaction with UNRWA's role. One should remember first of all that it did not take long for the refugees to become (as they have remained) a highly politicized group. As against an explicit national self-consciousness in its Palestinian wards, UNRWA stood for a nonpolitical paternalism represented by doled-out food, clothing, as well as medical and educational facilities. UNRWA's charitable concern for the Palestinians' political disaster seemed reducible to sterile figures—how many mouths to feed, how many bodies to clothe and treat, etc. I think it is correct to say that the Palestinian living in the political cocoon that UNRWA was supposed to be providing could not determine whether he would ever break through into genuine self-determination. Since the UNRWA view was that refugees were in transition between eviction and resettlement somewhere and sometime, the temporariness of existence coupled with the obvious fear that transition would lead to worse alternatives made Palestinian uneasiness with UNRWA inevitable. Then, too, since the UNRWA schools were staffed by Palestinians, another set of tensions developed out of what was taught in the schools about Zionism and Palestine. As more and more children moved through the schools, they saw the unpleasant disparity between their history and their actuality; for its pains, the UNRWA absorbed the unpleasantness, even hostility.

Some UNRWA staff members were international civil servants; a good many were Palestinians. Although no one has studied this phenomenon, it is probably true that those Palestinians who worked in UNRWA were important to the shift that took place in Lebanon and Jordan, countries with the heaviest concentration of refugee camps. In both countries, Palestinians gradually assumed responsibility for social services, a transition that was formally completed (even though

UNRWA continues its work) on a political level with the rise of PLO, a programmatically *national* organization that took on quasi-governmental supervision of Palestinians both inside and outside the camps. Yet the partial replacement of UNRWA by the PLO cannot be separated from another phenomenon, the increasingly abrasive relationship of Palestinians to their host countries, again mainly Jordan and Lebanon.

I have said that the 1967 war was a momentous event. Not only did it discredit the conventional Arab approach to Israel; it also made clear to most Palestinians that their quarrel with Zionism could not be resolved on their behalf by proxy armies and states. The crucial fact about the large numbers of Palestinians in Lebanon and Jordan is that almost all of them were refugees from pre-1967 Israel. As soon as Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza, the effort to end Israeli occupation took for part of its focus the territories over which the Jordanian and Lebanese Palestinians had no special claims. They could not ask to be repatriated to territories from which they did not originally come; this was why the so-called "rejectionists" among them opposed the idea of a West Bank Palestinian state. Moreover, their plight, in two countries immediately adjacent to Israel, crystallized the problem of Palestinian dispersion, and the need for some kind of Palestinian return, whether to a West Bank state or to the whole of Palestine. As more and more support came from exiled communities elsewhere, the Palestinian presence in Jordan and Lebanon seemed to challenge the authority of the regimes in each of those countries, particularly as the emergence of a credible and armed Palestinian force filled the vacuum left by the defeated Arab armies. From the late sixties, then, Palestinians encountered the triple problem raised by their dispersion: their aspiration to self-determination, absence of a secure and possible territorial base, and the need to set up a Palestinian authority which if possible would not get involved in struggles with the local authority. Every one of the Palestinian difficulties since 1967 until the present can be traced to these three challenges.

And much of what may appear eccentric about the Palestine

Liberation Organization can be explained if the three are kept in mind. It is certainly true that originally the PLO was founded by the Arab League in 1964 as a way of institutionalizing (perhaps even containing) Palestinian energies. I think it is wrong to say, however, that Palestinians had no say in the matter. They did, but the organization was not so much a political as a rhetorical apparatus early on, and it attracted functionaries, not policy makers. In time, as I shall be trying to demonstrate a bit later, the PLO attracted to it militants for whom such an organization (unlike UNRWA) looked like one that might become genuinely national, responsible, *and* governmental. Yet unlike other national liberation organizations, or provisional governments, the PLO had no native territory on which to operate; this was perhaps the tragic flaw in its makeup as a liberation movement of exiles, not mainly of natives fighting their oppressors *in situ*. In a sense the PLO was an international-national grouping. Early on it achieved an *international* national legitimacy, even as on the ground it ran into problems with sovereign governments. It has not to this day resolved the question of whether it is really a national independence or a national liberation movement. Yet it managed to create quite advanced social services for its constituency, it organized and mobilized exiled Palestinians with spectacular success, and over the years it has gained the commitment of the overwhelming majority of Palestinians exiled, occupied, or inside Israel.

One of the most important contributions to the PLO has been made by the strong nationalist tradition kept alive in exile. In 1956 a number of small Palestinian groups had been formed to attack the Israelis after they occupied Gaza. By 1960 or 1961, there may have been about forty Palestinian organizations in exile, all dedicated to the idea of return and hostility to Israel. An enormous quantity of literature—poems, political tracts, history, journalism—appeared almost from the moment the first refugee left Palestine. Much of this output was encouraged by the Arab states, but a substantial portion of it was of Palestinian initiative. The Arab world was going through an important period of national self-assertion, and to

this the exiled Palestinians brought their distinctive talents, as well as their unique testimony. If the fifties and sixties were dominated by Gamal Abdel Nasser, it must be remembered that Nasser's ideas of Arab unity, anti-imperialism, and revolutionary struggle owed a profound debt to his Palestinian experiences.

In adversity and exile, national groups *in nuce* become national groups in fact. The circumstances of dispersion in so many different countries prevented the Palestinians from becoming a socially homogenous people. Even the camp dwellers slowly entered the societies around them; the more fortunate went to universities, founded business, became professionals. But the fact of loss—even the commonly suppressed fact of loss—created an authentic community set apart from the host society. My own experiences were typical of some exiles in that for a long time the general Arab umbrella covered my specific history, adequately it seemed; but at some point I, like more and more Palestinians, saw our lives and our present circumstances apart from everything else in the Arab world. What all Palestinians refer to today as the Palestinian Revolution is not the negative distinction of being unlike others, but a positive feeling of the whole Palestinian experience as a disaster to be remedied, of Palestinian identity as something understandable not only in terms of what we lost, but as something we were forging—a liberation from nonentity, oppression, and exile.

As a mainly expatriate organization, the PLO has historically been concerned with return as the chief result and benefit of liberation. Here the contrast with the goals of the Palestinian community inside Israel is an important one. Typically the remnant saw itself in the language and the tactics suggested by the organization of Usrat al-Ard, "Family of the Land"; inside Israel, its course of action was informed by the imperative of remaining on the land, strengthening the community's cohesion, accommodating itself to, and yet fighting for equal rights in, the Israeli polity. In other words, the Palestinians saw themselves as having their own national identity, which, by virtue of what was obviously a material fact, they had

redefined to take account of Israel. Still, the contradistinction of being a non-Jew in a Jewish state was not faced head-on, nor were the specifically exclusionary politics arising from Zionism dealt with. Conversely, the exiles—perhaps with something of the expatriate's romantic idealism—expressed their politics in holistic terms: They were exiled not from parts of Palestine but from all of it, and therefore all of it had to be liberated. Because of what it had done and was doing to the native 3b 24 Palestinian Arabs, Zionism was neither justifiable as a movement nor morally acceptable as a society. What the exiles did not adequately explain or take into account was the support Israel had gotten from its Jewish citizens and from a part of the world community; more crucial was the Palestinian neglect of how, to its chosen citizens, Israel had acquired a legitimacy and coherence that made it a state (although to its non-Jewish citizens, and its exiles, a wicked state).

At this point we can properly appreciate the importance to the Palestinian struggle of its latest ingredient, the third segment of the population, those who suddenly found themselves under Israeli occupation in 1967. Until that time the inhabitants of the West Bank were considered by Jordan to be Jordanian citizens; those in Gaza were under Egyptian administration, and of course the Gazans and the West Bankers had been separated from each other. Both (those in Gaza more) acquired a common burden in the form of Israeli military government. Except for the residents of East (that is Arab) Jerusalem, who found their city functionally annexed by Israel, the other Palestinians started reliving the experiences of the Arabs inside Israel, and also experiencing some of the difficulties of exile. Any Palestinian in Nablus or Ramallah could be deported, and many were; thousands of families had their houses destroyed for any number of "suspected" offenses (mostly of the sort that any occupied population feels entitled to perform against the occupiers); thousands of people were "transferred" from one place to another (this was painfully true of about 20,000 Beduins in Gaza, and many others elsewhere as well); above all, Palestinian residents of the occupied territories were denied any of the privileges of

citizenship in their own land. They were neither Jordanians nor Israelis; they became refugees in a sense, but unlike the first 780,000, *they stayed* on the land. And unlike the earlier refugees, these Palestinians led their lives in full view of a world public that could actually see Israeli soldiers in jeeps patrolling through unarmed Arab villages and towns, occasionally killing, usually beating Arabs. In addition, a world consensus condemned the occupation, and dozens of illegal Israeli settlements whose rationale was an anachronistic biblical argument.

Military conquest also has a marked effect on society, a fact that has not been lost on Palestinians. Israel became an occupying power, and not simply a Jewish state. Some Israelis for the first time faced the Palestinian problem as central to any accommodation that Israel would seriously have to make with the whole region, and of course with the world. Renewed contact between Israeli Arabs and Gaza/West Bank residents stimulated a sudden jump in political awareness, just as those two segments of the Palestinians began to look at the exiled third as organizationally linked to them, despite distance and the barriers enforced by Israel. In addition, Israeli policy on the West Bank and Gaza was stupidly shortsighted. As colonial administrators have done everywhere in Asia and Africa, the Israelis believed it was possible to stamp out the slightest sign of "native" resistance to military rule; any Palestinian who appeared to be even a potential leader of Palestinian nationalism was deported or jailed. "Restlessness" or collaboration with supposed enemies of Israel were punishable by administrative detention for Palestinians. For the first time in its history, Israel literally produced, manufactured a new class of person, not so much "the Arab" (who had been caught in a legal net created by Israel for its "non-Jewish" citizens after 1948, but who was never considered apart from a legality reserved exclusively for Arabs) as the "terrorist."

For this "terrorist," Israel seemed to have only a very narrow, and singularly unimaginative definition—he was supposed to be an enemy of the state's security—but the important

thing about him was that he kept turning into a nationalist patriot. One difference between Arabs under Israeli law before 1967 and those under Israeli occupation after 1967, is that the former were taken care of epistemologically by Zionism well before Israel became a state; the new Arabs could not be accommodated under the old dispensation, and therefore they could not be made neatly to disappear into a maze of well-oiled regulations for non-Jews (or nonpersons). Every *ad hoc* measure adopted by Israel to administer the new territories seemed improvised, clumsy, even self-defeating, as the popular swell of Palestinian nationalist sentiment mounted impressively. And the more Israel identified the PLO with "terrorism" inside the Occupied Territories, the more Palestinians considered the PLO their only political hope. Before 1948, colonizing Palestine and subduing the natives was a legitimate enterprise, it seemed, yet the thesis that after 1967 the job could be extended beyond Israel's agreed-upon international boundaries became expansionism, not civilizing or even redeeming the land. In a generation the Israelis had been transformed from underdogs into overlords. And for a change the Palestinian, as a Palestinian, appeared.

I do not think that except for a small percentage of the population, Israelis have been able to accept the idea of a Palestinian as a sui generis political reality, but at least he has gained the status of a *demographic* reality. The official Israeli line about the Palestinians is adequately conveyed in the phrases used to describe them by recent prime ministers. In 1969, Golda Meir said that there were no Palestinians (while her information departments as well as her academic Arabists spun out the line about Palestinians being really "South Syrians"); Yitzhak Rabin always referred to them as "so-called" Palestinians (while his occupation authorities counseled open borders with Jordan, and a policy making the Palestinian really a Jordanian); Menachem Begin refers to them as the Arabs of Eretz Israel, Israel's "own" blacks (and offers them self-rule, under Israeli military protection). All three have been particularly single-minded about politically destroying the Palestinians; all three have sanctioned large-

scale state terrorism against Palestinian civilians outside Israel, and an absolute indifference to Israel's history of dispossessing the native population of Palestine. The most discouraging aspect of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians everywhere is an almost total official triumph of ideology over reason and even common sense. To deny the existence of Palestinians makes sense epistemologically if one believes that Palestine is still an empty desert waiting to be cured of its neglect. To believe such nonsense when the contrary is plainly evident is to deny reason a role in one's policy; furthermore, the idea that Israel is entitled to hold on to territory for biblical and security reasons (even after that same territory proved especially vulnerable in war) defies even the credulity of Israel's warmest allies.

The stunning international successes of the PLO, and the organization's continuing success in all parts of the Palestinian community, can be traced to the negative aspects of Israeli policy and the popular Palestinian will coalescing around alternatives to Israeli positions. The Palestinians were the first Arab community to take up the problem of a multiethnic population. No other group took as advanced a position as the one proposing a secular-democratic state for Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Palestine. No other political organization, Arab or Jewish, in the region was as responsive to the dramatically changed realities of the post-1967 era. First the PLO consciously undertook to be responsible for all Palestinians—those in exile, those under occupation, those inside Israel. This was the first attempt ever made by a Palestinian leadership to treat the almost impossibly fragmented population within the lines of a catholic vision, which theoretically at least provided for the presence of an important Jewish presence (society, constituency, polity). Concretely, the PLO took over schooling, arming, protecting, feeding, and generally providing for Palestinians, wherever it could. Second, the PLO used its international authority to *interpret* the Palestinian reality, which had been obscured from the world for almost a century, to the world and, more important, to Palestinians themselves. An independent Palestinian diploma-

tic identity appeared, as did an impressive informational and research apparatus, including study centers, research institutes, and publishing houses. This complex of interpretive agencies finally put the Palestinians collectively in touch with other colonized peoples in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and to a certain extent Zionism lost (for Palestinians and other Arabs) its bewildering, hermetic force. The Zionist settler in Palestine was transformed retrospectively and actually from an implacably silent master into an analogue of white settlers in Africa; attitudes to him quickly formed themselves into mobilizable force. Third, the PLO as a political organization was decisively opened on all sides to admit the entire community to its ranks. Indeed it is not too much to say that the PLO made being a Palestinian not only a possible thing (given the community's catastrophic fragmentation) but a meaningful thing for every Palestinian, no matter where his place of residence, no matter what his final ideological commitment. It has been the PLO's genius to turn the Palestinian from a passive into a participating political being; it has also been a source of perhaps dangerous incoherence, as I shall be discussing later.

The best overview of how all these disparate parts of the Palestinians' history and development can be considered together is found, I think, in a recent analysis by Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, who is one of the clearest Palestinian thinkers. Immediately after 1948 the Palestinian exiles and those remaining inside Israel adopted, he says, "a politics of accommodation"—although depoliticized, the former were able to take part in *Arab* (not Palestinian) politics, largely because there was no alternative and because unlike Zionism, Arabism was not exclusionary; the remnant submitted to the Israeli polity, and held on to traditional Palestinian ways of conducting politics within the framework imposed on them by Zionism. In the fifties "the exiles and the remnant engaged in what might be called the politics of rejection," of which the form inside Israel was the Usrat al-Ard enterprise, and for the exiles, a refusal of depoliticization combined with criticism of "fraternal Arab" policies toward "the liberation of Palestine."

> It took the shock of the June War of 1967 to usher in the politics of revolution and hope. For the exiles it meant engagement in the resistance, withdrawal from involvement in Arab politics and more open Palestinian assertion eventually embodied in the Palestine Liberation Organization and its program. For the remnant, it meant greater militancy within the system and further support to the Communist Party and its stand for two states in Palestine while affirming the unity of the Palestinian people irrespective of fragmentation. Both segments affirmed their cultural affinities with the Arab "nation" but minimized the Arab political program of unification. To some extent, we are witnessing today a convergence in the approaches of these two segments [although I think one would have to add a third segment to the two Abu-Lughod mentions: the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories].[7]

But "the politics of revolution and hope" have not been without their anguish and setbacks. The density of this contemporary period, however, deserves close attention, and to this I must now turn. My focus will be the growth of a genuinely unified Palestinian political self-consciousness minutely involved in contemporary history, minutely attuned to the community's slow progress toward self-determination.

II
The Emergence of a Palestinian Consciousness

It scarcely needs to be said that in discussing a subject as sensitive to history as national self-consciousness, one ought to be willing to sacrifice abstract clarity to concrete accuracy. At present the situation of the Palestinians is deeply embroiled, and any further account that I might give of what represents their past and future sense of themselves, their sense of historical and political identity, must also reckon with what on the one hand this sense has produced in their fortunes and, on the other, what it has had to deal with in actuality. But that is not the only issue. There is the additional complication of discussing the intricate and troublesome situation of the Palestinian people against a background of the utmost turbu-

lence and even confusion. The Lebanese War of 1975–77, for example, was not simply the stage setting for the Lebanese-Syrian-Palestinian drama. In fact, the war itself was a microcosm of international politics, Great Power interests, the history of minorities in the Arab world, sociopolitical revolution, and the whole tragic legacy of Western colonialism and imperialism in the Near East. The main thing to be done now is to provide the barest sketch of these matters as a prelude to the central matter I want to address, the problems of Palestinian survival and the articulation of Palestinian national identity in the post-1967 era.

Consider Lebanon first. An astute historian of the Arab Near East would immediately note the fact that what took place in Lebanon, were it not for the Palestinians and the Syrians there, was a repetition of what took place there in 1845 and 1860. Two of the principal Lebanese communities—the Maronites and the Druzes—found themselves in bitter opposition. Then as now we find Great Power involvement, as well as social and political conflict between the two communities, which, it must be said, do not now, and did not then, define themselves exclusively on religious grounds. But there, I believe, useful analogy between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ends. Since World War II there have been a number of crucial, not to say determining, shifts in and additions to what a citizen in the area has felt about himself and about his sense of political belonging. The first of these is that there has been a considerable increase in the feelings people attach to their nation-state. There are of course varying degrees of intensity in this attachment to a nation-state, just as there are varying degrees and types of emotion generated when the independence or territorial entity of nation-states is threatened. What is undoubtedly true from another point of view is that the state and the apparatus of the state have acquired impressive authority since World War II; again, the kind of authority varies from state to state, but today there is an altogether different kind of authority from the one with which the Ottoman Empire, for example, formerly endowed itself; this is true across the board.

The second major change in the twentieth century is that so far as political thought is concerned there is a much greater likelihood that purely local questions will be grasped, dealt with, analyzed, fought over, in large, global generalities. Certainly that was true of the way the Zionists conducted the struggle for Palestine. It has also been common, for example, for Maronite zealots in the twentieth century to see their position as embodying the essence of Western civilization warding off barbarian hordes who hammer at the gates. Similarly the Palestinians since 1967 have tended to view their struggle in the same framework that includes Vietnam, Algeria, Cuba, and black Africa. This change in focus is partly due to a heightened worldwide political consciousness, formed as a result of the wide dissemination of ideas about freedom and knowledge and as a result of the universal struggle against colonialism and imperialism. In addition, the influence of the mass media has brought widely separated regions of the globe and even more widely separated groups of ideas close together, sometimes indiscriminately, sometimes justly. If one adds the generalizing tendency to the tendency of the media and of minds to simplify and dramatize, the consequence in feedback will be a gross political rhetoric, inflating, italicizing, and theologizing issues and action. No one has been free of this.

It has probably always been true that human beings view their differences from one another as matters of interpretation. To have said that there was a characteristically French or British attitude to something in the nineteenth century is to have said—however vaguely—that there was a characteristically French or British way of dealing with reality. Such a statement also includes the realization that there were such things as genuinely French or British material interests upon which attitudes were based. In the present circumstances similar statements are made about the Middle East and about its peoples, yet because of the two changed realities I mentioned, such statements have acquired a rather dangerous amount of interpretive leeway. When we speak today of the Arabs, or the Lebanese, or the Jews, or the Israelis, we seem to be speaking about stable entities whereas in reality we are

talking about interpretations that are highly volatile and even more highly speculative. True, there are states to which one can point with certainty, but—and here the second major twentieth-century change conflicts with the first—these states are caught up in a political vocabulary and inhabit a political domain whose ground seems constantly to be shifting. The effect of this phenomenon on political transactions and processes is unmistakable. What, after the 1976 Syrian invasion of Lebanon, is the meaning of such unifying phrases as "the Arabs"? What is the meaning of such phrases as "radical Arab states"? What is the exact meaning of demands, such as Israel and the United States have made, inquiring whether the Arabs will "recognize" Israel or not, especially since it isn't clear which Israel the "Arabs" are being asked to consider—the Israel of 1948, of 1967, or the Israel whose patrol boats have either blockaded or bombarded the southern Lebanese coast (sometimes in conjunction with Syrian boats)?

It seems to me perfectly possible to argue that such problems as these have been a regular feature of political life, and that whatever seems eccentric in the Middle East now is actually not so eccentric. My response is that precisely because there has been such an intense recent premium placed upon the necessity and the importance of states and state structures in the area, and precisely also because the very definition of states is so confusingly bound up with generalities of an almost cosmic ambition, the eccentricity of the modern Near East is accentuated. If one were to add to this set of problems the unique structural position in them of the Palestinians, the anomalies multiply further. Before any other indigenous group in the Near East, the Palestinians faced the question of Arab nationalism both in its large, general, and interpretive form and in the much more concrete form of the demand for statehood. In the encounter of the Palestinian Arabs with the colonization of Palestine by the Zionist movement, there was a double demand placed upon them: (1) the need to identify their resistance with the post-Ottoman Arab struggle for political independence and statehood, and (2) the need to

confront the demand for a specifically Jewish statehood, which seemed to—and later did—exclude them as a whole.

To a certain degree the Palestinians and the region to which they belong share similar predicaments with other parts of the former colonial world. Yet, as I indicated in Chapter One, an extraordinarily important aspect of the history of the Near East has been the presence in it of active, articulate, not to say quarrelsome, interpretive agencies—usually embodied in minority governments—each of which has not only ventured but at one time or another also struggled (like Israel) to impose its own vision of things on the world of which it is a part. Adding this element to the twentieth-century changes that I have mentioned, along with the natural predilection of minorities to have outside powers sponsor their efforts, will give us a much better idea of what now takes place in the Near East. These minorities have retained their peculiar self-consciousness, which Albert Hourani has described as follows:

> On the whole, these groups formed closed communities. Each was a "world," sufficient to its members and exacting their ultimate loyalty. The worlds touched but did not mingle with each other; each looked at the rest with suspicion and even hatred. Almost all were stagnant, unchanging, and limited; but the Sunni world, although torn by every sort of internal dissension, had something universal, a self-confidence and sense of responsibility which the others lacked. They were all marginal, shut out from power and historical decision.[8]

Already small and numerous, Middle Eastern minorities seem smaller to their members, and in addition they tend to act in ways that make them even smaller. Minorities separate themselves from their human surroundings, and internally they almost always subdivide. This has been true of Israel, in which Oriental and European Jews (to say nothing of Arabs) subdivide the country significantly. Middle Eastern Christians, commonly called Eastern or Oriental Christians, even in countries like Lebanon where they have by no means been a

cowering or invisible group, seem to care about their distinctions, one sect as opposed to another, with as much chauvinism and skill as they do about their great rift with Islam. The Lebanese conflagration has seemed to pit "Muslims" against "Christians," but what has been obscured is that it is the Maronites, a special variety of Oriental Christianity, who at the start of the war opposed the Sunni Muslims, themselves not in alliance with the populous Shiite Muslims; and the fierce Maronite struggle has not at all included the Greek Orthodox or Protestant or Armenian or Greek Catholic communities with nearly as much unanimity as one would have expected. Then, too, there has been the active Israeli role in egging on the Maronites, providing them with arms, supplies, and political support. Israeli policy in Lebanon has partly been governed not by sympathy for "the Christians" but by a common minority cause with the Christian right-wing ambition to destroy the Palestinians. Even before World War II (at the Congress of the World Council of Po'ale Zion, July 29 to August 7, 1937), David Ben Gurion spoke of how "the vicinity of Lebanon constitutes a tremendous political support for the Jewish state. Lebanon is the natural ally of Jewish Eretz Israel. The Christian people of Lebanon faces a destiny similar to that of the Jewish people."

I think it must also be said that militant minorities in the Near East have almost always been aggressors against what Hourani called the universality, self-confidence, and sense of responsibility of Sunni—that is, majority—Islam. Take the history of Muslim-Christian relations in the region. It is reported on by Norman Daniel in his book *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image.*[9] For a contemporary Oriental Christian, or for an Israeli Arabist who believes Islam or Arab "mentality" to be his enemy, Daniel's book is frequently a source of acute discomfort. What he shows is that it was the Syrian Christians, among them Saint John of Damascus (c.675–c.749) and the ninth-century philosopher Al-Kindi, who first provided European Christianity with the theological and (usually scurrilous) doctrinal materials with which to attack Islam and Mohammed. These materials subsequently

found their way into the mainstream of Occidental culture, where they are still to be found. Most of the common stereotypes about Mohammed as a whoremonger, as a false prophet, as a hypocritical sensualist, come from the Syrian Christians who, because they knew Arabic and one or another ecclesiastical language, were able to give nasty myths much currency. Their motives were understandable: Islam was a proselytizing and conquering religion, and as Christian holdouts the Syrians felt it was their duty to lead an attack on Islam that would win them powerful European allies. It is out of this long-forgotten background that many of the grudges felt by Christians and Muslims in Lebanon today spring. And to this unedifying legacy, many Zionists have made themselves subscribers. In Palestine and generally among contemporary Palestinians, on the other hand, because there was never the presence of one dominant, unchanging Christian community, and because also since 1880 there was a common Arab enemy in the first European Zionist colonists, such myths were never part of one's education as a Christian.

When minority consciousness allies itself to a habit of ambitious political generalization, and when those two together are forced into the unique sovereignty of political statehood, trouble—in the form of divisive separatism—usually ensues. In most of the states of the Middle East today, Israel included, there is a smoldering and unabated conflict between the tendency to political self-isolation on the one hand and, on the other, the tendency to political self-generalization. In Egypt, for example, the drive toward Arab unity is locked in combat with a complex ideological strain of specifically *Egyptian* national identity, most dramatically in evidence during President Sadat's "sacred mission." What has caused divisiveness has been the more or less natural likelihood that the state would ally itself with the exclusivism, separatism, and lack of self-confidence of minority consciousness as well as with the indiscriminate jumps of political generality. If one thinks of the dialectic between Arab nationalism in Syria and the various withdrawals from Arab nationalism for reasons of state—as in Lebanon at this very moment—my point will be clear. I hope it

will also be clear that the dialectic depends very heavily upon differing interpretations of the ideas of sovereignty, Arab unity, and the like. The ironies of this world of conflicting interpretations become clearer than when in his July 21, 1976, speech, President Hafez el-Assad of Syria justified his Lebanese policy and his attack upon the PLO by claiming to be doing what he was doing on behalf of Arab nationalism and the Palestinian revolution. What was even more ironic was that Syrian policy was based not upon Arab interests, but upon *raisons d'état.*

The curious fate of the twentieth-century Arab Palestinians is that, unlike every other of the native inhabitants of the region, they have not had a *patrie* of their own, at least since the postwar period. Their fate was made even more acute by the concreteness of their political deprivation and also by the fact that from the very beginning of the struggle against what to them was clearly a foreign occupation of their land, they opposed Zionism on the grounds that it was both foreign, so far as the region was concerned, and a minority political culture. Similarly, it is worth recalling that the earliest forms of Jewish life in Palestine took the road of minority provincialism with regard to the surrounding majority. This tendency has continued in the Israeli state ever since. Perhaps because it had no organic ties with the Sunni Arab majority in the region, Zionism became even more of a self-enclosed world than did the other minority communities in the area. There was thus an exact (and troubling) symmetry between the concrete form of Israeli-Jewish statehood and the concrete form of Arab Palestinian selfhood in exile, which came to be based ideologically upon the fact of deprivation.

As I have been saying, the principal tenets of Palestinian identity therefore are now built upon the need for the repossession of the land and for the realization of Palestinian statehood. Zionism has always denied not only the legitimacy of these needs but also their reality. The greater the Palestinian insistence, the deeper the Zionist denial and the more concretely articulated the minority consciousness of Israel, which

obviously increases during periods of conflict. About a year before the 1967 war a well-known Israeli military figure and "Arabist" wrote as follows:

> The question arises: what of theirs [the Arabs'] is appropriate for us to imitate? This does not mean that there are no fine characteristics and manifestations among the Arabs, but these do not constitute a basis for a political programme. As for a way of life and organization, the Arabs tend to try to abandon their traditional ways and turn to the West, and it would be odd if we were to adopt what they are abandoning. Also, from the cultural aspect, I am not sure that the two sides have much to offer one another. It is a vague assumption that Arab culture, whose principal assets are of the Middle Ages [sic], would enchant the twentieth century man, but it is doubtful that it contains something to guide and inspire him and to answer questions that press upon him. For a generation which has reached the moon, it is difficult to be impressed by the desert poetry of the Mu'allaqat or the style of the Maqamat, or even the philosophical meditations of the great Arab thinkers like al-Ghazali, whose spiritual climate is so different from today's. I do not think that it is much different with respect to our culture vis-à-vis the Arabs. European culture has so much more to offer.[10]

Extended logically, this argument says that because Americans have walked on the moon, Shakespeare has been outdated. But what is more to the point perhaps is that a Zionist response to the specific Palestinian grievance against Israel is couched in terms of minority cultural superiority; no comment is made about the concrete act of Palestinian dispossession and exclusion. There is only the largest general thesis offered, and that cannot—or perhaps will not—take in the specific complaint addressed by the Palestinians to Zionism.

There is something else in the passage that must be noted. We must ask how a painfully real Palestinian deprivation has been transmuted by an Israeli polemicist into an overall "Arab" hostility to Zionism? For this expert, Israel has been

metamorphosed from a state into a symbol of progressive European culture (à la George Eliot), just as the Palestinians have gone from being an impoverished and inconsequential peasantry to being the very symbol of *Arab* cultural inferiority. I need not again indicate the common origins of Zionism and European colonialism, nor is it necessary to allude to how easily the early Jewish settlers in Palestine ignored the Arabs in exactly the same way that white Europeans in Africa, Asia, and the Americas believed the natives of those places to be nonexistent and their lands uninhabited, "neglected," and barren. What I want to stress now is the *Palestinian* quest for political and ideological haven in the generality of Arab culture, and the subsequent exploitation of this quest both by Israel and by the other Arabs. How and why did the shift from accommodation to rejection, revolution, and hope take place?

The existential Palestinian predicament has been the felt need for political survival combined with the tangible consequences of territorial as well as political alienation. Even the sense of community between the Palestinian Arab and his Islamic and/or Arab compatriots elsewhere in the Near East carries the distorting imprint of this predicament. For the Palestinian, the other Arabs are fraternal on one level, and on another they are separated from the Palestinian by an unbridgeable gap. This paradoxical relationship takes place, so to speak, in the present, for it is the problem of the present, the problem of contemporaneity that brings together and separates the Palestinian and the other Arabs. There is for the Palestinian an Arab past and a common Near Eastern and Arab future; yet it is now, in the present, that the instability of community and the dangers of its dissolution are enacted.

There is no more concrete and eloquent example of this difficult relationship that I can point to than the opening scene of a novella, *Rijal fil Shams (Men in the Sun)* by the Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani. Kanafani remained inside Israel until the early sixties; thereafter he went into exile, became a militant journalist and writer, and in 1972 was assassinated by the Israelis in Beirut. Here is the passage:

Abu Qais lay his chest on the dirt wet with dew. Immediately the earth began to throb: a tired heart's beats, flooding through the sand grains, seeping into his very innermost being . . . and every time he threw his chest against the dirt he felt the same palpitation, as if the earth's heart had not stopped since that first time he lay himself down, since he tore a hard road from the deepest hell towards an approaching light, when he once told of it to his neighbor who shared the cultivation of a field with him, there on the land he had left ten years ago. His reply was derision:

"What you hear is the sound of your own heart plastered to the earth." What tiresome malice! And the smell, how does he explain that? He inhaled it, as it swam through his brow, then passed fadingly into his veins. Every time he breathed as he lay supine he imagined himself drinking in the smell of his wife's hair as she had stepped out after bathing it in cold water. . . . That haunting fragrance of a woman's hair, washed in cold water, and, still damp, spread out to dry covering her face . . . the same pulse: as if a small bird was sheltered between your cupped palms. . . . [11]

The scene continues as Abu Qais slowly awakens to a realization of his exact surroundings, somewhere near the estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; he is there awaiting arrangements to be made for him to be taken illegally into Kuwait, where he hopes to find work. As in the passage quoted, he will "understand" his location, and the scene's setting in the present, by way of a recollection out of his past: his teacher's voice in a Palestinian village schoolhouse before 1948 intoning the geography lesson, a description of the estuary. Abu Qais' own present, therefore, is an amalgam of disjointed memory with the gathering force of his difficult situation now; he is a refugee with a family, forced to seek employment in a country whose blinding sun signifies the universal indifference to his fate. We will discover that the approaching light is a proleptic reference to the novella's final episode: Along with two other Palestinian refugees, Abu Qais is being smuggled into Kuwait in the empty belly of a tanker

truck. The three of them are left in the truck for too long as the border inspection is being negotiated. Under the sun, the three men die of suffocation, unable even to give a sign of their presence.

This passage is one of the numerous scenes into which the work is divided. In almost every one the present, temporally speaking, is unstable and seems subject to echoes from the past, to synesthesia as sight gives way to sound or smell and as one sense interweaves with another, to a combination of defensiveness against the harsh present and the protection of some particularly cherished fragment of the past. Even in Kanafani's style (which seems clumsy in my translation, but I thought it important to render the complex sentence structure as exactly as I could), one is unsure of the points in time to which the center of consciousness (one of the three men) refers. In the passage I have quoted, "every time" blends into "since that first time," which also seems to include, obscurely, "there on the land he had left ten years ago." Those three clauses are dominated figuratively by the image of tearing a road out of darkness toward the light. Later, during the main part of the novella, we will remark that much of the action takes place in the dusty street of an Iraqi town where the three men, independently of one another, petition, plead, bargain with "specialists" to take them across the border. The main conflict in the book turns about that contest in the present; impelled by exile and dislocation, the Palestinian must carve a path for himself in existence, which is by no means a "given" or stable reality for him, even among fraternal Arabs. Like the land he left, his past seems broken off at the moment just before it could bring forth fruit; yet the man has family, responsibilities, life itself to answer to, in the present. For not only is his future uncertain; even his present situation increases in difficulty as he barely manages to maintain his balance in the swirling traffic of the dusty street. Day, sun, the present—those are at once there, hostile, and goads to him to move on out of the sometimes misty, sometimes hardened protection of memory and fantasy. When the men finally move out of their spiritual desert into the present, toward the future, they

reluctantly but necessarily choose, they will die—invisibly, anonymously, killed in the sun, in the same present that has summoned them out of their past and taunted them with their helplessness and inactivity.

Thus Kanafani comments on the rudimentary struggles facing the Palestinian in the early days of his dispossession. The Palestinian must *make* the present since the present is not an imaginative luxury but a literal, existential necessity. A scene barely accommodates him and becomes a provocation: The paradox of contemporaneity for the Palestinian is very sharp indeed. If the present cannot be "given" simply (that is, if time will not allow him either to differentiate clearly between his past and his present or to connect them because the 1948 disaster, unmentioned except as an episode hidden within episodes, prevents continuity), it is intelligible only as an achievement. Only if the men can manage to pull themselves out of limbo into Kuwait, can they *be* in any sense more than mere biological duration, in which earth and sky are an uncertain confirmation of *general* life. Because they must live—in order ultimately to die—the present prods them into action, which in turn will provide writer and reader with the material for "fiction."

In this connection, I must mention the other really first-rate Palestinian fiction, Emile Habibi's *Al Waqa' il Ghareeba Fi Ikhtifa' Said Abi Nahs Al-Mutasha'il (Strange Truths Concerning the Disappearance of Said Abi Nahs Mutasha'il)*. Habibi is a resident of Haifa, was a Knesset member for over twenty years, and is one of the leading Palestinian voices inside Israel. His epistolary novel is unique in Arabic literature in that it is consistently ironic, exploiting a marvelously controlled energetic style to depict the peculiarly "outstanding" *and* "invisible" condition of Palestinians inside Israel. Along with Kanafani's work, Habibi sketches the complete picture of Palestinian identity as no purely political tract can. Both writers record the Kafkaesque alternation between being and not-being *there* for Palestinians, whether inside Israel or in the Arab world. (For a brilliant account of much contemporary Palestinian literature, see Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi, *Contem-*

porary Palestinian Literature Under Occupation, Birzeit University Publications, Birzeit, West Bank, 1976.)

I have spoken about Palestinian writing here at length because, I think, it accurately and poignantly dramatizes the precise nature of Palestinian survival in the Arab/Islamic setting. As the symbol of Arab defeat in 1948 and 1967, the Palestinian represents a form of political memory which is not easy to dismiss. In his wanderings, in his ubiquitous presence, above all in his own self-conscious awareness that he and his writing are the theme of much modern Arab culture, he is a figure of a worrying, a displacing sort of urgency. When he can be accommodated to the emphasis of Arab independence, all is well. As things begin to go badly, he is considered to be a threat to the stabilities—whether of states, parties, governments, or sects—that exist alongside him, despite his extraterritorial homelessness. In the years since 1967 his involvement in the going enterprise of rhetorical Arab/Islamic pluralism has always reminded the other Arabs that such a pluralism cannot have a real meaning unless he, the Palestinian, the victim of virulent exclusivism, can be reintegrated into and reunited with his natal soil. Thus in time the Palestinian has become at once a representative Arab and an outcast.

Since 1967 the ironic tension between the Palestinian and the other Arabs has increased, as is reflected in such oddities as the diplomatic prestige of the PLO, a tremendous "rediscovery" of the Palestinians, and a relative subsidence of interest in the general Arab picture. Similarly, Palestinian institutions contain and indeed typify the paradox of Palestinian autonomy, while Arab state support for the Palestinian cause does not seem to be diminished by the periodic explusions of Palestinians from one or another Arab state. For despite everything, the Palestinian does not construct his life outside Palestine; he cannot free himself from the scandal of his total exile; all his institutions repeat the fact of his exile. This is manifestly true also among the Palestinian Arabs now subject on the West Bank and in Gaza to Israeli domination and to those who reside in Israel. Every Palestinian achievement is flawed by this paradoxical truth, that any survival outside Palestine is ruined

in a sense by its impermanence, its groundlessness, its lack of a specifically Palestinian sovereign will over the future of the Palestinian, despite the extraordinary symbolic successes of the PLO. Every achievement therefore risks the loss of its identity, risks the danger of being swallowed up in the generality of the Arab community, as indeed the freedom of the PLO is impinged upon continuously by the Arab states. Conversely, every Palestinian achievement can be interpreted as a specific criticism of the general Arab community, which has learned to live with the consequences of defeat, except the *major* consequences of defeat, in this case the Palestinians.

As a consequence, much of what Palestinians do, and much of what they think about, concerns Palestinian identity. I am hesitant to call this introspection, because it has not been exclusively a matter of self-examination, but largely a political question of the first moment. On the other hand, the specific travail and the concrete hardships of being Palestinian have exercised the talents of all of our writers, so much so that Arabic literature (which does not have an ample secular tradition of autobiographical or confessional writing) now boasts a genre of Palestinian, so-called "resistance" writing, which means a writing of self-assertion and of resistance to anonymity, political oppression, and so on. If there is anything written by a Palestinian that can be called a national poem, it would have to be Mahmoud Darwish's short work "*Bitaqit Hawia*" ("Identity Card"). The curious power of this little poem is that at the time it appeared in the late sixties, it did not *represent* as much as *embody* the Palestinian, whose political identity in the world had been pretty much reduced to a name on an identity card. Darwish took this fact and in a sense read it off the card, amplified it, gave it a voice—without being able to do much more than that. The entire poem is governed by the imperative *Sajil*!—*Record*!—which is repeated periodically, as if to an Israeli police clerk who can only be addressed in the impoverished framework provided by an identity card, but who must be reminded that the card's language doesn't do full justice to the reality it supposedly contains. The irony is crucial to Darwish's poem. It opens as follows:

Record!
I am an Arab
And my Identity Card
is number fifty thousand
I have eight children
and the ninth
    is coming in midsummer
Will you be angry?

Two stanzas later, he says:

Record!
I am an Arab
without a name—without title
patient in a country
with people enraged

The middle part of the poem is taken up with recording the narrator's private genealogy, a litany of misfortunes and losses, but the poem ends with what will become the standard motif in much literature by and about Palestinians during the seventies: the Palestinian emergence.

Therefore!
Record on top of the first page:
I do not hate man
Nor do I encroach
But if I become hungry
The usurper's flesh will be my food
Beware—beware—of my hunger
and my anger!

In "Identity Card" a Palestinian emergence is threatened; a few years later it would be the most constantly reiterated actuality in Arab political life, not as a threat but as a presence and, most of the time, as a hope. Significantly, the leading novelist in the Arab world, Nagib Mahfouz, whose novels had always been profoundly Egyptian in their every detail, made the Palestinian emergence the climax of his 1973 novel of

no-war, no-peace Egypt, *Hub taht al Mattar (Love in the Rain)*. The last scene introduces us to Palestinian guerrilla Abu'l Nasr al Kabir (Father of Great Victory), whose views on the most recent "American initiative," which beguiles and confuses the nervous Egyptian protagonists, are that one must take a long view of events happening now. An unregenerate ironist, Mahfouz was remarking two things simultaneously: how armed Palestinians had suddenly acquired the role of revolutionary spokesman for Arabs, and how revolutionary promises and rhetoric had already become parodies of themselves. The father of victory was still only a father *in potens*, although Mahfouz did not try to minimize (nor could his readers) the fact that any political reckoning now would have to include the Palestinians.

Another irony in Mahfouz's novel, no less than in the Arab world of the early seventies, is that so far as everyone was concerned, Palestinian identity seemed to have sprung up assertively *outside* Palestine. Abu'l Nasr, Mahfouz's Palestine guerrilla, lives in Cairo, not Nazareth or Nablus. And so far as anyone knew, Darwish's identity-card existence inside Israel was as unsatisfactory and unhappy as before. Until 1975 or 1976 the Israeli Palestinian Arabs lost out to the glamour of the exiles. And *their* emergence was as important for its essential irony as for its record of concrete achievements; let us consider them now.

III
The PLO Rises to Prominence

So far as I know there is no completely satisfactory analytic explanation, no entirely logical step-by-step report of how, from being refugees, the exiled Palestinians became a political force of estimable significance. But this is true of all popular movements that seem to be much more than the mathematical sum of their elements. The narrative sequence of this Palestinian transformation is, I think, misleadingly simple. Al-Fateh began its existence in 1965 with a small raid into Israel. Thereafter the number of militant Palestinian organizations

increased, as did the set of militarily important clashes with (and inside) Israel. Until March 1968, however, the Palestinian effort is best seen as enclosed by the general Arab (specifically Nasserist or Baathist) national development. In March 1968, more particularly after the June War of 1967, the Palestinian movement acquired a new suit which politically and symbolically set it apart from the Arab setting. The importance of the date is that it marked the first post-1967 and post-1948 battle between regular Israeli forces, which had crossed the Jordan River to raid a Palestinian town called Karameh inside Jordan, and Palestinian irregular forces. The Palestinian fighters were backed up later in the day-long battle by Jordanian army regulars, but (the Palestinian account goes) the brunt of the fighting was Israeli-Palestinian. Not only did the Karameh defenders stay and fight; they inflicted much damage and many casualties on the Israeli armored columns, who until that time had been accustomed (e.g. in the West Bank village of as-Sammu) to amble in with impunity, destroy property, kill Arabs, and leave pretty much unscathed.

Karameh was the beginning of the phase of the quickest Palestinian growth; volunteers poured in from all parts of the Arab world, and within a year Palestinian *fedayeen* were the force to be reckoned with in Jordan. But during this period there took form what was to be, as I alluded to it earlier, the besetting Palestinian—or more properly, the besetting PLO—vacillation between a revolutionary direction (liberation) and one that seemed to transform the structures of Palestinian power into those of an Arab state (national independence). Both are necessary results of the paradoxical Palestinian "situation" I have been describing in this book. These two possibilities need not in theory be opposed, yet within the whole problem of Palestinian *identity* they were in conflict with each other. Even when a clear choice was made, the problems the two alternatives raised did not end. Because they acquired a great deal of arms and began rapidly to organize themselves into political and military groupings, and of course because this always took place not in Palestine, but in a fraternal Arab state, the new militant Palestinians appeared to be a challenge

to the central state authority. Even as in time it became clear that Palestinian self-determination had compromised on the original goal of a state on *part* of Palestine, the PLO in the meantime ran a quasi state for Palestinians inside a host Arab state. And this state, first in Jordan and later in Lebanon, came into collision with the larger one. On the other hand, the great political and ideological strength of the Palestinian movement was, first, its ability to attract almost every element in the region that was avant-garde. "Palestinian" in a certain sense was synonymous with novelty in the best sense of the word.

It is also synonymous with politics. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that *every* significant political movement or current of ideas or debate in the Arab world since 1948 has in some way been dominated by the question of Palestine. How much more so this is true of Palestinian debate, discussion, organization, is immediately obvious. The net result is rich indeed. In recent years, Palestinian politics have been conducted in terms of organizations—of which the most prominent are those grouped together in the PLO, namely, Fateh, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (an offshoot of the PFLP), Saiqa (a Syrian-sponsored grouping), and a slew of considerably smaller units—and in terms of philosophies, tendencies, actual paid-for loyalties that connect the specific Palestinian issues with Arab politics, Third World politics, and other assorted interests. At times, Palestinian politics are dizzyingly incoherent—for reasons that I will discuss in a moment—at times bloody, at other times perfectly clear. Yet there is surprising unanimity always on the necessity for Palestinian self-determination and independence with, even more remarkable, a completely unbroken record of refusal to sell out, to give up the struggle, to accept tutelage or occupation without protest.

The largest Palestinian grouping is Fateh, which is dominated by Yasir Arafat and a set of cadres whose lines of strength, influence, and political thinking involve by far the largest number of Palestinians in exile and in the Gaza-West Bank region. Fateh's (and indeed Arafat's) models are basically

Nasserite, although unlike Nasser, Fateh and Arafat have made it a practical matter not to get too involved in the local politics of any one Arab state (Lebanon and Jordan being the two costly—but in a sense inevitable—exceptions). By Nasserite politics I mean not only that there is an always visible symbol of authority—the *za'im*, Arafat, also known as "the old man," whose mere continuous presence guarantees the existence of the Palestinian cause—but that there is basically a centrist nationalist philosophy guiding the movement. This is a drawback in one sense, because it has meant that political organization is kept to a minimum except where fighting Zionism is concerned, and thus Arafat and Fateh as a whole can be identified readily only as Arab and Palestinian. In another sense it is good because it has meant (a) that Fateh tacitly encourages a real democracy in political idea and style, and (b) that no one has ever been able to prove that despite Fateh's connections, say, with Saudi Arabia, Libya, the Soviet Union, or the German Democratic Republic, it is not independent of them, and hence above all, Palestinian. Most important, Fateh represents the bottom-line fact of being an oppressed Palestinian, without necessarily involving every Palestinian in a theory of people's war or class analysis.

But that is not all that Fateh stands for. Fateh has many supporters, a comparatively long history of struggle, a lot of resources (thousands of trained fighters, officers, etc.), and, above all, a relatively optimistic view of the world. This last statement may seem a peculiar one to make, but it fairly defines the confidence, the easy familiarity, the essentially positive way with which Fateh interacts politically with the world. In part this is because it has grafted itself not only onto the main line of Arab nationalist politics established by Gamal Abdel Nasser, but it has done little to mask its (actually very progressive) Sunni Islamic *cultural* ethos. It is in short a majority group, and it considers itself (rightly, I think) to speak for the Palestinian Question; hence, also, its domination of the PLO as a whole. Yet a good deal of what Fateh is and stands for is defined, in a sense, negatively—by what its political rivals say about it and by what *they* claim to contribute to

the world of Palestinian politics. Here there are some important points to be made.

If it is true that the history of Palestinian politics has been characterized by a frequent refusal to join in schemes for Palestine designed elsewhere (from the Balfour Declaration to the Partition Plan of 1947 to Camp David), then Fateh is less of a refusing (or to use the current term, rejectionist) political party than any other. Because it deals from an increasing sense of mass strength, Fateh, in other words, is the most likely Palestinian political group ever to be able to come to a responsible political settlement with its enemies. Fateh and Arafat, in particular, are pragmatic, which means, one supposes, that much time, attention, and skill are given to maneuvering and tactics, much less to ideology and disciplined strategy. Fateh's rivals, principally the Popular Front and later the impressive Popular Democratic Front, from the outset have had a much more problematized awareness than Fateh seemed to have of the difficulties, the context, and the ideological issues surrounding the question of Palestine. The Popular Front, for example, called for an Arab revolution as a way of regaining Palestine, and has been categorical in its refusal to consider any sort of political (as opposed to military) settlement with Israel, the United States, or "Arab reaction." The Democratic Front (DPF), which has formed the nucleus of what is now one of the leading Marxist-Leninist groupings in the region, argues a more subtle political line, and it has traditionally been the vanguard of *progressive* change in collective Palestinian positions since its birth in 1969. It was the DPF that first articulated the transitional program adopted by the PLO in 1974 as an immediate goal considerably short of liberating all of Palestine. The program, refined further in 1977, accepted the idea of a Palestinian national authority (now a state) to be set up on any part of Palestine evacuated by Israel.

But the real challenge of the rejectionists (which include small organizations financed by Libya and Iraq) and the DPF (not a rejectionist group) is that they are critics of Fateh's more or less improvisatory, in some cases even family-style, politics.

For them, the criticisms are ideological, organizational, strategical. What exactly are the supposed links between the PLO and Saudi Arabia or Syria to be? How do we conduct ourselves with Jordan, which demographically has a Palestinian majority? Why and with what specific ends in mind were meetings held in the fall of 1976 between members of the PLO and certain Israeli public figures? Why was there no blanket condemnation of Sadat after his trip to Jerusalem? What is the Fateh vision of the future Palestinian society? Why is there no clear Fateh determination on the problems of imperialism, a determination, that eliminates once and for all every kind of flirtation with the United States and its allies? Above all, how long can Palestinian politics led by Fateh continue to get away with a little bit here, a little bit there, one leader saying X, the other saying Y, bureaucracy and slogans doing the work of revolutionary organization and consciousness-raising, patronage as a substitute for getting work done, follow-the-leader instead of serious accountability?

At times these debates consume more energy than fighting Zionism. On occasion, a crucial decision on something of the utmost importance to the whole Palestinian people—say the PLO position in late 1977 on UN Resolution 242—is formulated in a couple of quick sentences, whereas an issue involving a transitory quarrel between a rejectionist in one office and a Fateh cadre in the office next to him will fill many pages of closely argued (and usually opaque) prose. The sense of skewed priorities, of the incoherence I spoke of a moment ago, is a function not only of the political philosophies at war with one another, but also of the cubistic form of Palestinian existence. With no territory underneath one's feet it is patently hard to know with certainty what, in an abstract sense, is the best course to steer. Then there is the often hopeless amalgam of political loyalties and affiliations which, like a tangle of half-loose umbilical cords, connects Palestinians to each other and to the countries in which they are resident. In the Arab world alone, each state or regime feels it necessary to assure itself of some sort of influence, proxy voice, or an actual party at work in Palestinian politics, so powerful is the cachet of

legitimacy and authority given Arab politicians by a connection with the Palestinian struggle. Thus nearly every Palestinian sometimes consciously, sometimes not, conducts his politics with a considerable freight of Iraqi, Egyptian, Syrian, Saudi (or whatever) intellectual and material baggage on his back. Arafat has been something of a genius at containing all this, even using it to advantage (like Nasser), but at times it has resulted in bloody internecine war, e.g., the conflict between Fateh and Iraqi-sponsored rejectionists during the first half of 1978. But by and large—and this is perhaps a little paradoxical—Palestinian politics tend toward accommodation rather than toward conflict. This is one way of annotating the fact that, in comparison with the Vietnamese and Algerian liberation movements, the Palestinian movement has not been characterized by violent factional struggles, where rivals vie with and attempt to liquidate one another. Some critics believe this to be a serious defect in the movement, suggesting that Palestinians (and Fateh in particular) do not think power comes from the barrel of a gun, but by outsmarting your opponents in an argument. Others recognize this truth in order to criticize the PLO for mere militarism without sufficient political and revolutionary will.

Too many Palestinians, in my opinion, have been misled into believing that the galvanizing energy of the movement was its philosophy of armed struggle; that is supposed to be the novel concept introduced by the Palestinian groups, that and the general theory of people's war. For certainly during the late sixties only the Palestinian dared still conceive of Arab struggle in anti-imperialist terms; after 1967, by and large, Nasser and the Baathists had accepted the inevitability of the world view inspired by UN Resolution 242, a sign of which was the acceptance of the Rogers Plan in 1970. The actual significance of Palestinian armed struggle was complex, but on at least one level it also represented the end of liberation struggle and the beginning of a nationalist effort, in which arms (and armies) were used to protect a central national authority. This is what UN Resolution 242 did to Nasserism and Baathism, for it converted the army from a revolutionary anti-imperialist force

(in theory) to a necessarily conservative defender of the status quo. To that extent, therefore, Palestinian arms were less likely to be revolutionary than they were to be the arms of a state in the making.

In the battles between the Jordanian army and the PLO, Palestinian weapons therefore defended an independent Palestinian identity, as it were. The weapons could not make revolutionary headway because within the context of the Jordanian state, guns at best could challenge the monopoly on violence held by the state and do so on the basis of protecting a separate institutionalized Palestinian interest within the state. Yet what mired the Palestinians in the Jordanian morass in one way, gave them a remarkable freedom in another. For had armed struggle and the philosophy of people's war been all there was to the Palestinian movement, the movement's force would have ended in Jordan. It clearly didn't, because of the fact that the Palestinian vision, what I have elsewhere called "the Palestinian idea," and the values it entailed have transcended the momentary inter-Arab squabbles as well as the bloody inter-Arab violence. First espoused by the PLO, the idea of a secular, democratic state in Palestine represented the true novelty and the revolutionary force of the movement; and this idea advanced the democratic values it implied for a region still shackled by so many kinds of reaction and oppression, and also promised much more than the vision of a lot of brandished weapons, or even of an angry, restorative revenge on history.

Thus during the post-Karameh period the Palestinian movement alternated between revolutionary vision and practical nationalist maneuvering. On the whole, despite a series of military setbacks that culminated in being driven out of Jordan, the PLO emerged as far more powerful than the arithmetical aggregate of its offices, cadres, fighters, and supporters. One of the things that Western analysts of the movement have regularly misunderstood is that the PLO did not get its popularity, or its supporters, or even the volunteers who joined up, because it was a made-up "device" to terrorize the world.[12] Rather, what the organization represented, *was* the workings of a general Palestinian consensus sensitive to

Palestinian history and aspirations. If at times the PLO seemed to be chaotic in its overall business, that too was in part a function of its peculiar genius for conscripting Palestinians from many directions at once. Certainly the various political factions within the PLO—the Popular Front, the Democratic Front, and the other groups—were buffeted by, and in their turn buffeted, Palestinian (as well as other Arab) currents of ideas; but the deep and abiding legitimacy of the PLO remained constant. Indeed, since 1974 the bedrock of support has been strengthened.

Again the reasons are not strictly reducible to simple elements. I myself am greatly impressed with the generous presence in the PLO of values, ideas, open debate, revolutionary initiative—human intangibles whose role, I think, has far exceeded, and has commanded more loyalty than the routine organization of a militant party might have. Even the development of a Palestinian bureaucracy within the PLO has been accompanied by these intangibles. Consider that as recently as the late sixties, Palestinians still led their lives entirely within the political framework offered by the Arab states. Within a decade a startingly active array of Palestinian organizations sprang up, all managed in some sense by a consensus-sensitive PLO. There are numerous students' organizations, women's groups, trade unions, schools, veterans welfare and assistance programs of an amazingly sophisticated and caring sort, a vast health and supply network—the list is greatly extendable and, what is more, is always being refined, as more and more Palestinian needs are responded to. In sum, the PLO's role is to represent the Palestinians as no other organization can (and here too, the PLO immediately makes a place for any Palestinian anywhere; this has been its most important achievement) and also, despite the shortcomings of its policies or its leadership, to keep the Palestinian cause alive, something greater than provisional organizations or policies.

There are two more factors to be mentioned, neither of which has received as much discussion as it deserves. The first is the generally successful sherpherding and husbanding of Palestinian resources by the main leaders, chief among them Yasir Arafat, a much misunderstood and maligned political

personality. It would not, I think, be impertinent to say about Arafat that he is the first Palestinian leader to do two completely essential things: (1) maintain a really intelligent grasp of all the major factors affecting the Palestinians everywhere (inter-Palestinian problems, Arab and regional ones, international currents), and (2) hold an equally astonishing sway over the *detail* of Palestinian life. This is why he has occupied a place of such centrality with such skill for so long a time. During the period of the British mandate, there had been a leadership of sorts but there had also been an oligarchical cast to it, and, perhaps more damaging to its effectiveness, it could not assume central as well as broadly based quasi-governmental *responsibility* for what it did. This is what Arafat and Fateh have done, through attention to detail and sensitivity to the whole, without at the same time ever appearing to be despotic or capricious. The second factor, which is much harder analytically to deal with, is money. Let me describe it briefly.

Exiled Palestinians contribute regularly to the Palestinian National Fund. Like all Palestinian agencies, including the PLO itself, the fund is accountable to the Palestinian National Council, which fulfills the function of a parliament or legislative branch. The council sets forth broad policy, the responsibility of implementing which falls to the PLO and to its various agencies. In time the Palestinian budget has grown to the extent that it effectively pays for services, supplies, training, and armaments for approximately a million people. Supplementing the money voluntarily given by Palestinians has been an annually fluctuating sum garnered from various Arab states, including among them Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other oil-rich countries. In addition, Syria and Egypt have commanded influence by virtue of their contributions, which have depended more on their prestige than on their material size. The point about all this is that like Palestinian educational development, it belies the population's politically and territorially disadvantaged situation. The classic analysis of a Third World people's movement, which turns continued alienation and poverty into the movement's main constant, breaks down here. A substantial portion of the Palestinian population is still

destitute, but a large minority is educated and has available to it impressive resources. Such a contradiction sharply dramatizes certain problems. The conflict between social ideals and institutions by nature more, rather than less, conservative is one. Another is the likelihood that Arab state conventions for doing political business will war overtly with the progressive currents often propelling Palestinian development. Finally, there is the dangerous prospect of Palestinian *embourgeoisement*. It can be argued, of course, that this prospect will healthily accentuate, and then explicitly cause, open class conflict among Palestinians; to the extent that such a conflict will result in a working-class victory, then so much the better for the Revolution.

But such an argument avoids the whole substantive matter of what it means to have internecine conflict *in exile*. Insofar as the Palestinian quest is for national self-determination, anything deflecting that quest is probably going to be harmful rather than beneficial. On the other hand, the conservative version of the Palestinian quest is both historically and morally intolerable: the idea that we can all go back to 1948, to our property, to an Arab country, presumably ruled by traditional Arab despots. Such a quest flies in the face of the Palestinian vision as it has attracted so many victims of injustice everywhere. But there is the unpleasant truth that the accumulation of property and success in exile breed a retrograde vision of the future. So the problem is to acknowedge the usefulness (and in this instance, the inevitability) of a period of unparalleled Arab wealth without falling prey to its highly probable corruptions.

To a very great extent, however, any extreme cause pulling the exiles apart, polarizing the community, and thereby paralyzing it has so far been counteracted by internal bonds holding the Palestinians together. One must never minimize the effect of exile upon even the most successful bourgeoisie. Moreover, the concrete history of the post-1967 period has effectively knit the community together as, spiritually at least, it has been held together since the early part of this century. After the catastrophic defeat of 1967 it became inescapably obvious that the Arab states could not settle their dispute with

Israel militarily. Political settlement was the new order of the day, part of which was a dramatic resurgence of U.S. influence in the region. Before he died in 1970, Gamal Abdel Nasser had himself made the ideological shift from Arab unity and anti-imperialist liberation struggle to political accommodation with the United States, respect for the integrity of each state in the area, and limited political objectives, all of them indicating acceptance (where there had once been refusal) of Israel. The effects of this shift on the Palestinians have included the Jordanian and Lebanese crises of 1970–71 and 1975–76, respectively.

I do not think it is an exaggeration to say, as I did above, that these two crises with their awful toll in human life were inevitable, just as it has been inevitable that their paradoxical result has been an *increase* in the nationalist authority of the PLO. The 1974 Rabat Conference decision to designate the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people was a result of the Jordanian-Palestinian clash in 1970 and 1971. One result of the Lebanese conflagration was an almost total rallying of all segments of the Palestinian community (including those in the Occupied Territories and Israel) around the PLO. In an expectable way, therefore, the Palestinians were assaulted for their extraterritorial presence in Jordan and Lebanon—however different the particular circumstances—and confirmed variously in their circumscribed nationalist aspirations. Once again we see pressure on the need for some workable definition of Palestinian identity, as well as a Palestinian response to that pressure and to the rapidly changing political actualities.

Between the two great crises in Jordan and Lebanon, the 1973 war intervened as if in its own way to intensify the idea of political accommodation, even after the Rogers Plan and the Jarring Mission had so dismally failed in the prior two years. What President Sadat, and less clearly the Syrians and the Jordanians, offered in 1971 was what Sadat offered in 1973, and again what he seemed to have offered when he went to Jerusalem in late 1977: peace with Israel and a Palestinian state, contingent upon a complete and unambiguous Israeli

withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. To a great degree the Palestinian position had moved with that offer. After the 1974 Palestine National Council meeting, and more affirmatively after the 1977 meeting, the Palestinians had resolved upon a state, although a minority position (with great emotional appeal) still argued for complete liberation. What swayed the PLO finally, I think, was a strong new constituency for its central nationalist line: the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians who, in the municipal elections of 1976, and after almost a decade of harsh Israeli rule, had come out with strong support of the PLO as their representative. In addition, the Palestinians inside Israel had welcomed the PLO in much the same way; their means (true to their history of struggle) had been the Day of the Land (Yom al-Ard) on March 30, 1976. Since then there have been literally dozens of Palestinian manifestations, declarations, and demonstrations of support for the PLO. Never before has one Palestinian political organization stood so centrally and strongly for and with its people as does the PLO now.

IV
The Palestinians Still in Question

The fundamental Palestinian difficulty persists, however, and grimly history has consolidated and piled up its ironies around that difficulty. I have been saying throughout that the Palestinian lives a curious destiny; at no time more than now has this been more painfully true. Punished for his presence in Palestine at the time of the land's colonial settlement by Zionism, he has been punished afterwards for his absence from Palestine. As outcast, as transnational, extraterritorial being, as oppressed nonentity inside Israel, the Palestinian is confirmed as central to, or at the core of, the Middle East problem. In 1974 over a hundred nations in the United Nations accepted the PLO as the Palestinians' representative; yet those nations most intimately concerned with the Palestinians challenge that notion, as well as the very existence of Palestinian identity. Even as he is denied the basic national and legitimate

recognition given internationally to any society, the Palestinian lives at a level of visible prominence, success, development, greater than at any time in his history. Moreover, he has never been as politically united with his compatriots through the PLO as now; and yet geographical and demographic fragmentation has never been as acutely difficult an obstacle to overcome as now.

But the paradoxes and ironies that *surround* him are no less severe. Consider that since the 1967 and 1973 wars the Arab world has come around to the idea of peace with Israel, and yet never has there been more inter-Arab violence. The Palestinian cause is highest on every Arab government's agenda, but the number of Palestinian dead at Arab government hands is appallingly high. There is supposed to be superpower parity in the region, at least as enshrined in the machinery of peace; the United States and the Soviet Union are co-chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference, for example, even though the latter is confined to a marginal role as arms supplier, while the former dominates the area with impunity. The word has gone out to the world now that Palestinians must be involved in the peace process; but if you were to look for a Palestinian so involved you would not find one. Instead the leaders of Egypt, Israel, the United States, and others speak for the Palestinian, formulating his goals for him, his norms of conduct. One senses that all doors are open to the Palestinian in theory, none in reality. For a concrete instance of this contradiction, let us consider the general and recent U.S. response to the Palestinians and the Middle East.

In the months since the Sinai agreements of 1974 and 1975, Henry Kissinger's U.S. policy in the area emphasized gradualism and bilateralism; it ate away at the large, often illusory, structures of Arab unity and concentrated in a short-sighted way upon retaining the jealously maintained barriers *separating* states in the area. Few commentators have remarked that the whole trend in U.S. thinking about the area, revealed in the Interim Agreements of 1975 between Israel and Syria and Egypt, encouraged thought neither about the past nor the future but only the present, that is, the (historically very

unstable) status quo. The essence of this trend, whose climax was the Camp David agreements, has been to shrink the unit of political attention and importance; instead of seeing things in their dynamic wholeness, regimes in the region were encouraged by the United States to see them frozen in their present discreteness. The continuity between things, and the coherence of human life, has been abruptly ruptured as a result. The relations between states, between cohabiting communities, between the problems of the present and those of the past and future—all these seemed to be declared null and void. Only the knitting together of "agreements" by a peripatetic U.S. matchmaker, another Kissinger perhaps, seemed to matter. The United States took it upon itself to mediate between the states, the people, and the institutions, making its interests—its own highly marketable view of things—the substitute for regional cooperation between states and communities.

In the Middle East today, common interests have come therefore to be perceived as part not of a larger integrated picture, but of a narrow bilateralism allying minorities—minority governments and small communities of minorities—with one another, for their own preservation. The old Ottoman millet system, and the encrusted thought behind it, has become the order of the day. And to be sure, the one transnational community, the Palestinians, was the odd man out. Thus the Palestinians are being made to pay the full price of their exile over and over again, and Lebanon's unresolvable dilemma is the concrete embodiment of this. Because they have been scattered and without a territory of their own, their survival is now seen by all the states in the area as the question touching and aggravating all the others.

Yet the conceptual vocabulary for situating the Palestinian and formulating the issue of his survival (even the words used to describe him), testify to an efficient, aphasic system for schematizing his presence and making his needs, his history, culture, and political reality, unpronounceable words. In the West, Palestinians are immediately associated with terrorism, as Israel has seen to it that they are. Stripped of its context, an act of Palestinian desperation looks like wanton murder—as in

fact, I have thought, many acts of individual adventure (hijacking, kidnapping, and the like) *were* acts of unbalanced, finally immoral, and useless destruction. But we should note that at least since the early seventies, the PLO has avoided and condemned terror. What is too often scandalously ignored and unreported in the United States is that events like the Maalot incident in May 1974 were preceded by weeks of sustained Israeli napalm bombing of Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon.[13] Similarly, the planting of bombs in Israel or the West Bank and Gaza must be understood in the context of day-to-day coercion and the brutality of a long military occupation. Besides, there is nothing in Palestinian history, absolutely nothing at all to rival the record of Zionist terror against Arabs, against other Jews, against United Nations officials, against the British. Moreover, the history of Zionist involvement in the internal affairs of Arab countries (Lebanon being only the latest and the least hidden such case), of Israeli oppression of Palestinians, of state-sanctioned torture, of international lawlessness (refusal to abide by UN resolutions, violations of the Geneva Conventions in dealing with civilian populations, unwillingness to sign the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, Israeli assassination of Arabs in European countries, to say nothing of repeated incursions against Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon), all this makes Palestinian "terror" a very pale and incompetent thing. But I would not wish it otherwise.

For Israel, then, the Palestinian is either a "terrorist" or he is an essentially nonpolitical (because non-Jewish) item fleshing out Israeli statistics, or he is a docile, useful subject. Today a work force of about 80,000 to 100,000 Arabs from the West Bank and Gaza fill the ranks of the Israeli labor market, although all these Arabs are, so to speak, hewers of wood and drawers of water.[14] The adjective "Arab" in common Israeli parlance is synonymous with dirty, stupid, and incompetent. Whereas any other such history of exploitation—done to all intents and purposes on the basis of race—would have been universally condemned in the liberal democratic West, Israel's record is not only pardoned, it is praised. Why? Because Israel

has succeeded in shutting its own and the world's eyes to what has been done to the Palestinians. Worse, a whole phalanx of intellectuals and thinkers in the West (for example the distinguished figures summoned to Israel's side when UNESCO's condemnation of Israel's practices in Jerusalem was issued) lauds achievements whose dark underside, in human and national terms, has blighted the existence of an entire people.

The recent emergence of a group of Israeli "doves,"[15] willing to risk something for peace and understanding, is encouraging, but it is still disheartening that the old arguments about Israeli security and Arab threats regularly sweep all alternatives before them. Nor is the situation a great deal better for the Palestinian among the Arab states, for whom his existence is viewed as a satellite of each state's proper interests. No Arab state misses the chance to take a stand on the Palestinian issue, most often as an abstraction whose "sacredness" provides the regime of the day with a modicum of added respectability. Yet internationally this respectability has not been perceived as such; rather, the pro-Palestinian rhetoric is too often construed as anti-Semitism, and even the best political intentions, which are often religious as well as cultural, lose their credibility. Who can be sure now that Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria really want the same Palestinian self-determination that the Palestinians want? How sure can one be that the struggle on behalf of Palestinian rights really means that the Arabs have come to terms with Israel?

Even this cursory survey of what impedes the achievement of Palestinian self-determination gives one an unmistakable sense of the discouraging political context. Not the least obstacle is the relative infrequency of a sustained Palestinian affirmation of what self-determination *positively* is all about. I mean by this the following: Because the Palestinians are a dispossessed and politically alienated people, and because (as I have been saying) one of the major factors in Israeli Zionism's success is its power of effective self-affirmation, the exiled Palestinians, as much as those under Israeli rule, have often been limited to denying their nonentity. And for this rejecting,

resisting, opposing stance there is, in Palestinian political culture today, a powerful tradition. The international achievement of Zionism is in having taken hold of Palestine from within Palestine and, no less important, in having made the native Palestinian population seem like the outsider. Most of the time thereafter, Palestinians have found themselves in the situation of someone outside looking in, and finding that fact of banishment to be the main defining characteristic of existence. To affirm a prior belonging, a long historical *patriation*, has involved for us a prolonged denial of what we have now become, disinherited outsiders. And the more we deny this, the more we confirm it—unless we cease being outsiders and can exercise our national self-determination. Then we immediately encounter the difficulties I have just been listing. How does one rise beyond the limiting circumstances, beyond negativity, into a positive affirmation of what we are and want? But this is not just a matter of will, it is also a matter of finding the right modality, the right mixtures of forces to harness, the right rhetoric and concepts by which to mobilize our people and our friends, the right goal to affirm, the right past to drop away from, the right future to fight for.

We are, I think, beginning to get hold of all these things, although as I have said, not sufficiently yet with enough *effective* and sustained power. The forces arrayed against us are still very formidable, and our entanglements with Arab states, superpowers, friendly and sometimes too exigent allies—to say nothing of the confusions of contemporary history—are acutely limiting. Still it seems to me that a few essential truths are now a part of Palestinian actuality, and by virtue of those we are undertaking to build our future. Unlike the Israelis, I think, most Palestinians fully realize that their Other, the Israeli-Jewish people, is a concrete political reality with which they must live in the future. An equally intense realization is that the question of Palestinian self-determination includes *all* Palestinians, not just those on the West Bank and Gaza. This sense of won community, of course, is the main achievement of the PLO, and it arises out of the events of the post-1967 and 1973 wars. But if there is a holistic feeling about the Palesti-

nians, and if it is embodied concretely in the workings and the composition of the PLO, there is also a precisely articulated understanding of the new future for Palestinians. In having undergone the change from a goal of general liberation to particular liberation—that is, from the hope of a secular democratic state in all of Palestine to a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza—the Palestinian community has retained its goal of self-determination as well as its values. I think that for most of us there will always remain the sense of deep, haunting loss, that Jaffa, Haifa, and the Galilee will not once again be as they were in 1948, that thousands of us have lost what we have lost forever. Yet we would have gained a kind of equal sovereignty in Palestine, where in fact we had none; and even if the compromise on behalf of a ministate, a passport, a flag, a nationality is made, there is no doubt that the larger ideal, that men and women should be neither defined nor confined by race or religion, will continue to have its influence.

My own belief—which I shall argue more fully in the last chapter of this book—is that an independent and sovereign Palestinian state is required at this stage to fulfill our history as a people during the past century. The inventory of what we are and what we have done and what has been done to us can never be completely justified, or even embodied, in a state. The converse of this view, that a state *can* rectify, defend against, and embody the memory of a past history of suffering, has seemed to Palestinians to account for Israeli theorizing, and for Zionist practice in creating a state apart for Jews. Both inside Israel and in the Diaspora, Jews lose a great deal when they shut themselves off from the Palestinian problems they have largely caused. Surely they have missed the possibility of engaging with another people in a common quest, on a now common territory, for a common (as opposed to an exclusionary) future. I am very far from alone in working for a Palestinian *patrie* now because I believe that that is the positive meaning of our history in this century. Yet I also have many partners in believing that such a *patrie* would be the first, and perhaps the most important, step toward peace between Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews. For peace between neigh-

of 1977 I participated as a member in the deliberations of the Palestinian National Council, which is the Palestinian parliament in exile. Meeting in Cairo, in the Arab League building, the council numbered about 290 delegates; about 150 West Bank members were not present because Israel would not have let them return to their homes if they attended the meeting. Nevertheless the council was broadly representative of every Palestinian community and of every Palestinian individual. For the week of open discussion that took place before resolutions were formulated and debated, the pattern of discussion was a survey of recent events involving the Palestinians; the real subject was how well the PLO did, the PLO being in this case the executive to the council's legislative branch. Many events of considerable importance had occurred since the council's last meeting in 1974: There had been the Lebanese war, numerous diplomatic and political changes, and a great number of internal Palestinian shifts in attitudes, principal among them the decisions to opt for a state alongside Israel and to begin to meet with the Israeli (in this case Zionist) doves who had expressed support for Palestinian rights.

It has since amazed me that of the huge corps of reporters and media representatives, there was not a single one who had the perspicacity to see what momentous things were happening in Cairo. This failure was no less true in the months following the council meeting of the vast body of Middle Eastern "experts" in Europe and the United States. For the first time in recent memory there was a broadly representative national body in the Arab world actually debating important matters in a totally democratic way. The PLO came in for heavy criticism; its executive committee, Yasir Arafat, and the rest were subjected to minute, critical scrutiny. There is no Arab country in which such things can go on, in which the leadership's accountability is searched and its responsibility gone over openly, discussed, analyzed, resolved upon in an orderly way. It is necessary to bear in mind that the men and women assembled in Cairo were exiles, all without a territory of their own, all residents in one or another country in varying, but essentially limited, conditions of political freedom. Yet the

main burden of the council's activities, as I saw them, despite the predictable foolishness of many speeches, was a collective will to understand in detail everything that affected the Palestinian question. I doubt that anyone was deluded into casual optimism or even momentary encouragement by the sheer fact of having a Palestine National Council at all, or a PLO with social, military, and diplomatic programs. All these were of importance for a community denied its existence by the very people that had ejected it from it its homeland, a community so complicated in its dispersion (there were Palestinians there from North and South America, from Europe, from Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Libya—and none actually resident in Palestine), a community still extremely far from having achieved its minimally acceptable goal of getting Israeli troops out of the barest third of its original national homeland. Everyone there wanted to know how the struggle could be carried on, in every possible or available detail. Moreover—and this is the impressive thing—an attempt was being made to deal with Israel and the Jews not as an ultimately avoidable, yet temporarily unavoidable, political fact, but as something essential to an understanding of the Palestinian political destiny. The Zionist movement that had been built upon a total denial of the Palestinian presence could not boast of so painstaking a recognition of its total reality as the one that took place in Cairo.

The political distance between these two quintessentially Palestinian experiences is formidable. It is not a question of having become "realistic" in some vulgar, perhaps opportunistic way that the distance can be measured. In both instances, back then in the forties and now in the seventies, the Palestinians spoke from the standpoint of a people *losing* its political and human rights. The contemporary Palestinian, however, was regaining his sense of what was probable and possible for him, and central to that was an acute grasp of effectiveness, an awareness of what one was, where one stood, how one conducted one's struggle in the present which was viewed both as the product of the past and as the producer of a new future. To a very large degree, of course, the Palestinian's

reality today is dominated by what he has suffered directly at the hands of Zionism. There is no evading that history and that actuality, just as there can be no Palestinian future without a transcendence of it. Therefore a generous portion of the Cairo debate centered on the specific reality that was Israel, and how that reality has affected and, to a certain extent, shaped the Palestinian responses.

Thus the major step *up*, so to speak, in Palestinian consciousness has been a collective national and detailed understanding, a chronicling, a coming to terms with, a seeing of the day-to-day effectiveness of Zionism and Israel in oppressing the native population of Palestine. Vision and recognition in this Palestinian way dialectically answer Zionist blindness. Together these visions and recognitions in the making have enabled the Palestinian to formulate a critique of and an alternative for Zionism *as a practice* of incorporating Jews and discriminating against non-Jews. No such alternative would be possible without a careful critique based on real historical experience. And so a principal platform of the current Palestinian political program—and I speak here of a broad consensus not adequately represented (or representable for that matter) by one or another document, or one or another discrete public pronouncement by one or another Palestinian leader or intellectual—is that reality must first of all be defined historically as the precise effect of Zionism on its victims, even as the successes of Zionism for its chosen beneficiaries are also recognized. In those terms, then, the Palestinian political actuality has shifted from a program of resistance by tough villagers armed with sticks, to resistance whose starting point is an incorporating and revising of Zionist effectiveness against the native Arab Palestinian. Thus a *Palestinian* effectiveness slowly emerges.

Quite literally, the irreducible and functional meaning of being a Palestinian has meant living through Zionism first as a method of acquiring Palestine, second as a method for dispossessing and exiling Palestinians, and third as a method for maintaining Israel as a state in which Palestinians are treated as non-Jews, and from which politically they remain

exiles despite (in the case of the 650,000 Israeli-Palestinian citizens) their continued presence on the land. In all these instances, Zionism was premised on the evacuation of Palestine by its majority native inhabitants. As I have said before, there is no minimizing this stark truth, and every Zionist leader of note has faced it squarely. To found a state in Asia and people it with a largely immigrant population drawn initially from Europe means depopulating the original territory. This has been a simple *desideratum* of Zionism, with very complicated ramifications. Yet for the native Arab Palestinian and for the immigrant Jew who took his place, the mere fact of substitution has never really varied. And it is this fact with which the search for peace in the Middle East must begin, and with which it has not yet even begun to deal.

FOUR

THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION AFTER CAMP DAVID

I

Terms of Reference: Rhetoric and Power

It is to be expected that discussions about the Middle East and the Arab world should now be dominated either by anxious questions about what is or is not going to happen next—especially to the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the Palestinians—or by spellbound accounts, positive or negative, of the new era begun at Camp David, or of Iran after the shah. Ever since the Carter Administration came to office, events in the Middle East have been disorienting in their dramatic confusion, even if patterns beginning to emerge after the Iranian revolution with greater and greater clarity seem to set the stage for definitive change. Many analysts in the West argue that the profoundly felt, almost sublime energies of anti-imperialist and liberationist sentiment feeding Arab political life since World War II seem to have grown weaker.[1] Old, respected demarcations, observed pieties, stable communities, have receded in importance as a result. And I think it is true that there is a tighter, less generous nationalism—one might even call it factionalism—in the Arab air. In President Sadat's astonishing overture to and subsequent peace with Israel, the Arab world watched theatrical action for once outstripping theatrical gesture and rhetoric. The American influence has now become not simply a current but an institution, guaranteed by international agreements signed and sealed in Wash-

ington and in the Maryland hills, as far away as possible from the Sinai battlefields, the Palestinian orange groves and plains, the Syrian heights. Lebanon, once the intellectual center of Arab cultural and political debate, is today scarcely an entity, its cities and villages ravaged, its citizens punished beyond acceptable limits, its ideals a cluster of sarcastic memories. Everywhere else one looks there are the facts of extraordinary Arab wealth, extraordinary Arab confusion, extraordinary Arab repression. They sit beside one another with hardly a transition among them. And yet, despite and beyond the so-called death of Arabism, one also sees the collective potential of a great Arab nation which, even though it seems now to be passing through a phase of disunity, can still mobilize the hearts and minds of its people, provided the vision is a true and authentic one. This is a reality one should never underestimate.

Yet with all the tremendous attention paid in recent months to the Middle East, there has been no particular *analytic* quality to that attention. In the United States, the press, the experts, the intelligentsia, above all, the government publicists, have treated the Middle East as a spectacle about which one was supposed to be excited. American interests were involved, there were frequent allusions to the region's strategic and civilizational importance, there were the frequent headline bursts of pomp and drama—a deposed monarch here, a theatrical summit there, a flotilla of warships or unarmed F-15s making a sudden appearance. What was the framework of all this? How, with the continued conflict still in full swing, could one make sense of the Palestinian problem in the new settings provided by the Israeli-Egyptian-American treaty, the Iranian events, the Baghdad summit in November 1978, the Afghani, Ethiopian, Yemeni, and far-Eastern situations, SALT talks, and what one journal called "the new world (dis)order"?[2]

One can begin by saying that the Eastern Arab world, unlike China, unlike Cuba, unlike Vietnam, unlike even Algeria, occupies a curiously middle, mixed place in history, geography, and culture. The Arab world is like and unlike many regions of the Third World. Thus there are numerous possible

analogies between Algerian and Palestinian resistance, but ultimately they break down. Similarly, while in its treatment of the native Arab population it is true that Israel is a colonial settler-state and resembles South Africa, it is also manifestly the case, as I said earlier, that any total similarity between Jews and Afrikaaners is simply not a true one. The Arab world is neither like India, China, or Japan in its relative capacity for shutting itself off from East or West, nor like those countries in the relative autonomy of some of its institutions. All these things add up to the perhaps untidy truth that the Arab world is both ahead and behind, both like and unlike, both different from and similar to, the rest of the Third World. Thus because of the disjunctions, the ruptures, the discontinuities of time and space, any grand idea—like the ideas of Islam or of Arabism or of national liberation, for instance—do not and cannot easily apply. To use such ideas one must redefine them not in terms of restoring a mythological past, but in terms of living an actuality and a possible future. This problem of redefinition and of political application has been a major problem equally in modern Arab culture and in Western analyses of the region. Ideological labels with an immense miasmic power get substituted for concrete analysis, as much in the heat of Arab debate as in the supposedly cool atmosphere of U.S. policy—or academic—analysis.

Concretely, what does it mean to see the Arab world accurately? Mainly it means that although one can call the Arab region a separate part of the world with its own historical coherence and cultural identity, the Arab world is still in the world, and is a part of Asia and Africa, and in a sense, even of Europe. Yet if one listens to most Arab ideological debate, or looks at recent Arab sociocultural thought, one notices that a lot of it is concerned with separating the Arab world from everything else in order to reassert Arab or Islamic uniqueness, a peculiar Arab type of virtue or sin, a peculiar destiny. In these Panglossian undertakings there has been no shortage of *Western* experts willing to go on and on about such chimeras as the Islamic or Arab "mind-set," the Asiatic personality, or the return to "Islam" (as if all those were monolithic, simple

concepts capable of explaining everything). Therefore both Westerners and Arabs have often found themselves in the position of refusing to deal with any argument or any reality that does not conform to one reductive idea. As a result, arguments and thoughts seem sometimes to be enclosed in hermetic packages. But the irony is that these watertight packages make less political sense, put analysis less in the world, make it less independent than one would like. For instead of understanding the precise way in which every national experience or cultural grouping is different from and yet related to the rest of the world, the way in which times change and people change, the Middle East as a whole has often been vulnerable either to facile generalizations (and policies) that makes it seem like other cultures and nations in ways that are flattering and easy to grasp, or to mere expressions of self-approval which suggest that one can have history on one's own terms exclusively.

This is especially true of the idea of liberation and, related to it, the ideas of modernization, peace, independence, development, and revolutionary progress. There is a very good case to be made for the motion that it has been the failure to distinguish between merely borrowed ideas about liberation and genuinely earned ones that has brought the Arabs collectively to their present pass. One purpose of Sadat's initiative, which has culminated in peace with Israel on American terms, is to have asked the question whether talk about liberation, the beating of liberation drums—along with repression at home and failures either to perform well on the battlefield or to appear on the battlefield at all—is better than openly confessing defeat and incapacity to fight if by doing so one is able to get occupied territory from Israel plus huge amounts of American aid. The other alternative to what Sadat did still remains, however, although it seems unlikely to be adopted. Everyone knows what it means to fight a national war: it means full mobilization, it means sacrifice, it means leaders who are genuine leaders with vision and courage. There are very few instances of such leaders, and of such national struggles, today. Too often they exist only in a

bor states will mean common borders, regular exchange, mutual understanding. In time, who cannot suppose that the borders themselves will mean far less than the human contact taking place between people for whom differences animate more exchange rather than more hostility?

Yet even the *type* of those differences has changed extraordinarily, and with it the *quality* of the progress toward Palestinian self-determination. It has become clear to us, therefore, that Israel was and is the culmination of a politics of a certain kind of effectiveness. This is true equally for the Israeli Jew today and for the Arab Palestinian, one as the unambiguous beneficiary, the other as loser. Seeing this for the Arab Palestinian has been one thing, *knowing* it quite another. I can cite two dramatically different and contrasting experiences from my life as to what these two things have meant for the Arabs. As a boy during the mid-forties in Palestine, I often used to listen to the political discussions of adults. I was particularly struck by, and have never forgotten, one occasion when an elderly family friend—a lawyer who was prominent in the Jerusalem Arab community, and who was exactly aware of the increasingly strong and institutional Zionist presence in the country—delivered himself of a confident observation. Until then the discussion's mood had been discouraging. "They're so well organized," was the chorus line. "They're training, they're armed to the teeth, they obviously have designs on our property," and so on. Then he spoke, as from above: "When it comes to an actual battle between us and them, we will bring out a group of Khalilis [Arab residents of Hebron, who were proverbial for their somewhat mindless but always belligerent strength] and they'll chase all the Zionists away with sticks."

For years that blissfully stupid remark about Zionism in Palestine remained with me as an epitome of the Palestinian response to the struggle for the land. Nevertheless I can also see that my critical attitude to it has been somewhat unfair. The confusions, the pressures, the conflicting problems facing the Arab Palestinians in this century have been enormous, and very little in their history or society prepared them for their ordeal. Palestinian society was organized along feudal and

tribal lines; this is not to say, however, that it did not have its own coherence. It did, but its national integrity could not easily cope with the three powerful strains placed on it mainly after the World War I: the British mandate, the Zionist colonial effort, and the beginning of modernization. To successfully deal with one or perhaps even with two of these strains would have been an achievement for any society starting to think in terms of its independence after four centuries of Ottoman rule. But if there was national solidarity on Zionism, there was occasional confusion (and no clear anti-imperialist ideology) governing Arab policies toward the British mandate government that controlled Palestine until 1948. Moreover, the fissures created in the society between a traditionalist leadership of "notables," British and Zionist opposition to it, Arab peasant and working-class loyalty to it, as well as economic and social alienation from it—all these imposed divisions that reflected themselves in a disastrously imperfect Arab awareness of what one could (or was able to) do effectively to go on as a society in Palestine.

Yet the idea of that society, if not the society itself, *has* gone on. This is something that is little short of amazing. The Palestinians have not given up on the desire for return; nor have they for any significant length of time considered the alternative of fading indiscriminately into the surrounding Arab ocean. No Arab community has in so short a period of time—a little less than a generation—reflected so deeply and so seriously *as a community* on the meaning of its history, the meaning of a pluralistic society given the dismal fate of multiethnic communities in the world, the meaning of national independence and self-determination against a background of exile, imperialist oppression, colonialist dispossession. But all these indexes of collective Palestinian maturity were enabled by, and indeed grounded in, the Palestinian approach to political effectiveness, which is a new phenomenon in people's history.

This brings me to the second experience, the one illustrating the dramatically grasped knowledge of (as opposed to a silent testimony to) what political effectiveness means. In the spring

watertight rhetoric, in an inflated and, I have always thought, a melodramatic vocabulary.

The present time impresses upon the Arab world a need to ask *what sort of liberation* it struggles for (or even if liberation is what *is* struggled for) as well as what Arabs are to do when they are "liberated." Once again, imported answers based on false analogies will not serve, although for a brief period (when ranting and making pompous threats will pass for answers to present dilemmas) they will do. In any case, as Gerard Chaliand has argued in his rather bitter book *Revolution in the Third World*,[3] it is a sobering thought that most liberation struggles in the Third World have produced undistinguished regimes, dominated by state worship, unproductive bureaucracies, and repressive police forces. Even if one assumes that the Arab world at this moment is a considerable distance from achieving liberation, there is still merit in deciding now what is to be avoided in the future as well as what is desired. But any such reflection will immediately produce the realization that, surprisingly enough, there has not been enough discussion about human community in Arab contemporary political and social culture. Neither has any serious attention been paid to the nature of the postcolonial state. This failure can dramatically be brought home by juxtaposing two very different works, Hisham Sharaby's *Muqadimat li dirasit al mujtama' al 'araby* and Murray Bookshin's study of the Spanish anarchist movement between 1868 and 1936.[4] Let me explain what I am trying to say in terms of these two different books.

Sharaby's book attempts to dissect Arab society in order to show that what is wrong with it is its hopelessly patriarchal, authoritarian, and atavistic family structure. Whether or not one agrees with Sharaby's diagnosis, one still finds oneself asking at the end of the book what it is that Sharaby, who is a well-known and prestigious Arab intellectual teaching in the United States, proposes to replace this family with. There one comes up against an almost total blank. True, there are vague suggestions about the freedom, democracy, and modernity that Arabs would get if the traditional family were destroyed, but no more than a suggestion here and another there. Why?

For the simple reason that Sharaby has not thought about, and indeed our own modern social thought—at least in its academic forms—seems inadequately to have provided him with any specific ideas about what sort of human community Arabs are to struggle for. And here Bookshin's moving study of the Spanish anarchist movement from the 1860s until 1936 seems to me to provide an important insight. Anarchism gave expression to the desire of millions of essentially poor and backward Spanish peasants and workers to provide communities for themselves that were free of repression, centralized bureaucracies, and authoritarian government. No other country in Europe had such a movement, although it was obviously related to all those movements in the West that were influenced by utopianism and Marxism. My point is that with the two exceptions of the now almost forgotten Palestinian attempt to speak about a new form of social organization, and the effort of the Lebanese National Movement that emerged during the 1975–1977 civil war to provoke discussion about new forms for Lebanese society, there have been hardly any concrete social forms for which people, intellectuals, and societies in the Arab world have concretely struggled, except for vaguely worded and hermetically sealed pronouncements about liberation and the Arab nation. My other point is that as a result one looks around fruitlessly for terms in which to open a discussion of this sort, whether about the state, the structure of society, or the actual forms of modern Arab life.[5] Most of all, one finds two sorts of rhetoric: the rhetoric of negative criticism, rejection, and denunciation on the one hand and, on the other, the rhetoric of Arab self-glorification, self-admiration, self-approbation. Both of these languages have very little in the final analysis to do either with history or with politics; they are too self-enclosed for one or the other. And they simply guarantee that in the future the Arab world will seem to be a place to which things have happened, a place, in other words, where its men and women have not done enough to make changes in it according to ideas and values about human community for which they have struggled.

The general Arab failures reflected in the present situation

are complemented by what for want of a better phrase one can call the U.S. vision of things in the Arab and Middle Eastern worlds. There is some diversity of opinion in the American press, the government, the academic intelligentsia; but the gross imprint of U.S. policy and its conception of U.S. interests is to be found everywhere. It is not an exaggeration to say of this policy that getting oil and setting up armed alliances in opposition to popular and/or national currents form the principal imperatives. This is a crude reversion to the John Foster Dulles view of the world. The clearest statement of current U.S. policy was made on June 12, 1978, by Assistant Secretary of State Harold H. Saunders in testimony before the House Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East. Saunders listed the "basic catalogue of interests" in general as including a U.S. wish to prevent conflict, an "irrevocable commitment to the security, strength and well-being of Israel," a recognition of the importance of the Arab world (in particular "the strength and moderation of the major Arab countries"), and "a moral and humane commitment to the people of the Middle East to help end a conflict that has caused a generation of suffering." Consistent with these interests, Saunders outlined four premises about U.S. policy:

> First: Because each of our interests in the Middle East is important, the only viable national policy is one which enables us to pursue all of those interests at the same time. . . .
>
> Second: The experience of the past four years has shown that we are best able to pursue all of those interests simultaneously in circumstances where there is progress toward a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. . . .
>
> Third: There has been a significant shift toward the West in the relations between principal Middle Eastern nations and the major powers outside the Middle East over the last several years. . . .

Here Saunders listed the end of USSR ascendancy in the region, and the realization that Middle Eastern nations preferred "the West [which] offers the technology and managerial skills needed to develop their countries." He went on to cite

the no less important point that "moderate Arab leaders have turned to the U.S. for cooperation in achieving peace and development. Their success will limit the role of radical forces. . . ."

> Fourth: Without in any way detracting from our other commitments, a definition of U.S. interests in the Middle East must take serious account of the new dimensions of U.S. economic relations with the area.

A little later in his testimony, Saunders asserted that it had become U.S. policy after the Sadat visit to turn the United States into something more than "postman between the two sides." Three issues—the nature of peace, Israeli withdrawal "and the security measures that would accompany withdrawal," as well as the "role of the Palestinians"—made up the focus of U.S. discussions with Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, although the United States had important agreements and disagreements on these issues with both the Arab states and with Israel. On one point, Saunders was (or at least seemed to be) categorical: "In our view the future of the West Bank and Gaza lies in close association with Jordan and that an independent Palestinian state harboring irredentist feeling in this truncated territory would not be a realistic or durable solution."[6]

All of Saunders' testimony is organized around "peace and moderation," a phrase obviously designed to put outside the pale "radicalism," nationalism, and popular opposition to the military, social, and economic status quo. More important, I think, is the implied view that any conflict—just or unjust, reasonable or unreasonable, real or unreal—is bad for the United States, since what matters for "us" is the absence of change, the accessibility of Middle Eastern oil and the vast consumer market to U.S. corporations, and the bilateral links between the U.S. government and every major "moderate" Middle Eastern regime. Thus a reduction in the level of Arab-Israeli conflict has to come about not by way of solving the problems out of which the conflict derives, but by way of

the United States—as simply as that. If in the process territorial, military, and diplomatic issues can also be resolved, that is all to the good. This is clearly what the Israeli-Egyptian treaty was designed to do, in addition to giving the United States what Saunders called "a national presence—not just a governmental one." But the highest priority was reserved for setting up military convergences favorable to the United States and optimally unfavorable to the radicals, the nationalists, the popular movements, that saw things differently. The net result is that for their compliance, Egypt and Israel have become completely dependent clients of the U.S. arms industry.

Let us unpack U.S. policy interests a little further. Underlying the significance of oil and geopolitics is a will not simply to oppose nationalism and radicalism (which are never spelled out) but to identify with their logical opponents, and hence to proclaim unconditional U.S. enmity to forces, like the Iranian and Palestinian movements, opposing a U.S. alliance. What is more, the United States actively identifies itself as an opponent of any effort to transform client regimes (no matter how oppressive and unpopular), despite the much-touted official interest in human rights.[7] In Iran, this not only meant that the United States stood by the shah, it meant supplying the army with oil during January 1979, after the shah had left the country, in hopes that the military would stage a coup against the Khomeini forces. It meant going through with a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in the face of Jordanian, Saudi, and Kuwaiti opposition. It meant continuing to align U.S. interests with isolated and repressive regimes whose major virtues, in the cases of Israel and Egypt, were that they were willing recipients of U.S. arms, loan services, technical expertise of the kind that would further transistorize and render politically illiterate the vast majority of the people, whose interests could never be served by imports of Kentucky Fried Chicken franchises, Coca-Cola, Detroit automobiles, and Marriott hotels. And for every demonstrated failure of this policy—from Vietnam to Iran, to Ethiopia, to Afghanistan, to Pakistan, to Jordan—there was a renewed, a firmer and more expensive commitment to it, as if the United States had an

infinite capacity for readdicting itself to failures like the shah and Haile Selassie.

True, so long as the United States had eager customers like Sadat and Begin, U.S. policy would be set irresistibly in their favor. But again, one wonders what lessons were learned after Iran, where billions of dollars and U.S. arms and numerous warm declarations of support for the shah (and his intelligence and police apparatus) failed to save the throne from an essentially unarmed, essentially popular opposition. Perhaps what was learned is directly embodied in the Israeli-Egyptian treaty, where the United States makes itself one of, and is interchangeable with, those regional governments which say unequivocally that they are willing to go to war to hold onto economic resources owned by others, which are willing to attack any movement not immediately subservient to imported ideas of peace, moderation, and progress, which are anxious to suspend the popular good in deference to what the United States anticipates the Soviet Union might or might not do.

The real difficulty of analyzing, indeed even of stating, the shortcomings of such policy visions in the present context is that the media and the liberal intelligentsia—egged on by a government whose interests are being served free of charge—have reserved such concepts as peace, moderation, modernization, and progress for the peculiar strategies of the United States and its allies. Even fiercely independent commentators like I. F. Stone found it hard to resist the arrangements made at Camp David, harder still to avoid speaking of President Carter except as an epic hero.[8] The idea was, as other liberal columnists went on to argue after September 1978—Anthony Lewis being particularly passionate on this point—that Camp David "was all we had," and that any other ideas about Middle Eastern peace were therefore essentially violent, spoiling, mischievous. Indeed, it seemed that the agreement between Begin and Sadat was a step forward; didn't it also mean that there would be no war between Israel and the largest, most formidable Arab country? Didn't it also mean that those other Arabs who opposed Camp David were anti-American, anti-peace, anti-Semitic? Best of all, wasn't it true that for the first

time there was a public international agreement on the existence of, even the way of settling, the Palestinian question? Didn't Camp David have the additional virtue of excluding communism and providing for the peace and prosperity of nice Arabs? Wouldn't it now be the case that instead of devoting their energies to useless war, the Arabs and the Jews could finally begin to build new, progressive, prosperous societies under American auspices?

Along with such arguments, and such—in those terms—unanswerable questions went an absolute silence, an ahistorical, shockingly stiff-necked refusal to see what else Camp David entailed, especially on the Palestinian question. No one commented that Camp David failed to deal with—failed even to mention—the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Gaza, and the Golan Heights. It went without a comment that during the Knesset debate on Camp David, Begin's presentation was made explicitly to depend on an exchange, a deal, which was better for Israel than for Egypt and "the Arabs": Sinai would be returned to Egypt while Israel would keep the other territories. No one suggested that the PLO, as well as every single Palestinian, had a reason for denouncing the so-called autonomy plan. It was not even a deception, but an *overt* plan to put the Palestinians under Israeli military authority forever in a Bantustan, the whole principle of which in Africa, for example, the United States had denounced as being inconsistent with self-determination. True, the suggestion was made during and after the Camp David negotiations (appearing coyly in what were clearly authorized "backgrounders" staged for the press) that the autonomy plan was the first step in an "irreversible" process leading ultimately to Palestinian self-determination. And yet the Camp David documents, and Sadat, the self-styled Palestinian champion himself, made no mention of this in the text of the agreements, but only in a set of letters adjunct to the accords, letters canceled out by Israeli letters nullifying the West Bank and Palestinian hopes for independence.[9] (A pattern which began during Sadat's visit to Israel had crystallized: his acting foreign minister had been told by Dayan during the car ride from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem to

delete any mention of the PLO from his Knesset speech.[10] During the signing ceremonies on March 26, 1979, Sadat simply left out of his spoken comments any mention of the Palestinians for fear that it might "irritate" the Israelis.) Wherever there was clarity on what the autonomy plan was supposed to be for the Palestinians, it was *Israeli* clarity and, much more conclusively, Israeli action on the ground. On the day that "peace" was being signed, Israel announced twenty new settlements on the West Bank, which was already dotted with seventy-seven such settlements.

I shall return to Israeli policy on the Occupied Territories in a moment. The question to ask here is why, for the government as much as for the press and the liberal intelligentsia, no connections were being made between what the "peace process" was actually doing to the Palestinians and what the Palestinians (and for that matter, most of the rest of the world) were saying or experiencing. On the day after the peace treaty was signed in Washington, *The New York Times* carried a story by Jonathan Kandell about Halhoul on the West Bank, a town undergoing collective punishment for demonstrating against the treaty on March 15, during which a twenty-one-year-old laborer and a seventeen-year-old schoolgirl had been killed by Israeli soldiers. A twenty-three-hour curfew was imposed on the 8,000 inhabitants, telephones were cut, school, business, and farm activities were suspended, and, Kandell continued,

> no visits by outsiders are permitted. For an hour a day, under the watchful eyes of armed Israeli soldiers, the residents are let out of their homes: women to purchase food, children to exercise, and forcibly idled men to gossip.
>
> "Do not speak to him!" shouted an Israeli soldier to a reporter who approached an old man on the main road at the edge of town during the one-hour break. "No one is allowed to speak to them!" [March 27, 1979]

When the State Department's 1978 report on human rights abuses was published, the *Times* carried an editorial attacking the government for daring to confuse issues (peace with

"allegations" of torture), as if to say that items like the one reported by Kandell, which violate every known human rights convention, were minor irrelevancies. What has been worse, I think, is the assumption underlying discourse about the "peace process" that the Palestinians, never consulted, never represented, never considered, ought to be content with what was so munificently put before them, for their own good. And this at exactly the same time that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians under occupation, the PLO, Palestinians literally everywhere, rejected the autonomy plan, affirmed support for their goals of self-determination and independence, made their voices heard around the world. The question is why no one in the United States asked out loud how is it that approximately 4 million people, dispersed more or less everywhere, have still continued to fight for their inalienable rights to end exile and occupation, unless it was that they really meant what they said, and really felt that what was being suggested for them was unacceptable.

Instead, Palestinians were told by Zbigniew Brzezinski that their organization, the PLO, was finished: "Bye-bye PLO." President Carter, who had magnanimously affirmed that Palestinians had the right to participate in the determination of their own future (a not inconsiderable concession after all was said and done), also argued that the PLO was "to us" an organization like the American Nazi Party, the Ku Klux Klan, the Communist Party, and "we wish it would go away." In the years since he took office, President Carter has expressed his views on the Palestinians on numerous occasions, yet so far as is known has never so much as met a Palestinian, let alone talked with Palestinian representatives. As for liberals, dovish American Jews, civil rights leaders, figures of moral authority in this society—not one of them has taken a public stand on the question of Palestinian rights, as if the Palestinians were a figure of speech to be avoided in polite company, as if those Palestinian civilians systematically being abused by Israel—by Israeli admission—were not the very same people who had been displaced and dispossessed by an invading Zionism that still sought to colonize their last remnants. When

Menachem Begin met the press, he was never asked how it was that he was elected on a platform promising to annex the West Bank *as well as* the East Bank, or how he squared his moral zeal about Zionism with the destruction of Palestinian society. But when Yasir Arafat appeared, the press always asked him about driving Jews into the sea, about recognizing Israel, about the PLO covenant—without even a hint that he and the Palestinians he represented were in fact being attacked daily by a state dedicated to Palestinian annihilation.

It is not too much to say that the rhetoric of Middle Eastern peace used today without dissent by the United States is coterminous with the desire to trim down, and perhaps even to make disappear, the question of Palestine. And it is this final solution, whether in fact planned for or not, that the Palestinian people now resist. There ought to be no surprise, then, that "peace" as it is thus defined has found no willing Palestinian participants, a fact the more marvelous when it is also remembered that during one hundred years of struggle against Zionist colonization the Palestinian people have produced not a single quisling, no "representative" willing to accept Palestinian subordination to an overwhelming phalanx of hostile forces officially sanctified by the Western powers. In a very real sense, peace in the Middle East seems achievable by two possible roads, and in an equally real sense the difference between them is at present irreconcilable. One begins at Camp David and ends with an "autonomy" over which Israel, Egypt, and the United States will rule indefinitely. The result is certainly continued conflict, greater and greater arms supplies (and use), more and more popular forces standing against the United States and its clients. That road is premised on the hope that power is persuasive enough to break the Palestinian will to self-determination; it is as simple as that. No matter how the fact is prettified with promises of modernization, progress, and American aid, there can be no mitigating the essential bargain, which is that in return for compliance, Palestinians are being promised their continued national nonindependence.

The signs on that road are easy enough for every Palestinian to read, although few enough Americans, for example, have

been afforded a proper guide to its symbolism. But when it is remembered that in the few years since 1970 Palestinians have had to fight four major wars (conducted by Syria, Jordan, Israel, and the Lebanese right wing) with the frequently explicit support of the United States, which still cannot bring itself to declare itself for Palestinian self-determination (a not completely unreasonable idea given the mounting expense to the region of making the Palestinians disappear), then Palestinian militancy is slightly less difficult to understand. In the light of what happened after a similar policy in Iran—where the United States allied itself with a repressive puppet against the vast majority of the Iranian people—the consequences of taking such a road again, at much greater *direct* American expense, are dire. In addition, Israel has its separate peace with an Egypt quite obviously happy at being set loose against Libya and freed from political and social obligations which its leaders have renounced for the Pax Americana. Prepared for more aggression against the Palestinians and what remains of Arab nationalism, supplied with almost limitless arms by the United States, oblivious to its people's real need at some point soon to come to terms with the Arab world, Israel now faces the future.

How all this is supposed to lead to a comprehensive Middle Eastern peace defies analysis. Any honest appraisal would certify the road I have been describing as what Eqbal Ahmad, the brilliant Pakistani intellectual affiliated with the Washington Institute for Policy Studies, has recently called an "instance of inherited instincts blinding leaders to historical processes" (*The New York Times*, March 26, 1979). Is the American leadership's opposition to anything that smacks of popular nationalism so blind, so uncritically accepted after Vietnam and Iran, that it cannot respond except by further efforts to sell more arms and finance more schemes like the Egyptian-Israeli treaty?

This obstinacy is especially disheartening, and is fed to the American people in a rhetoric that insults the intelligence, at a time when other opportunities—the second road of which I spoke above—plainly exist. I shall detail the actualities of that

road in subsequent pages; here I want only to underscore the fact that every Arab state has accepted United Nations Resolution 242 as a basis for peace in the region; the PLO has indicated that in return for a U.S. declaration of support for Palestinian self-determination culminating in an independent state it will formulate very concrete proposals on peace. Moreover for the first time in modern Palestinian history there have emerged (a) a legitimate Palestinian leadership, (b) a Palestinian national consensus, (c) a capability in both instances not only of defining the shape of its self-determination (along lines spelled out in the last three Palestinian National Council meetings of 1974, 1977, 1979) but also of changing its position in such a way as to actively promote peace. If one adds to all this the obvious "moderation" of the Arab leadership with regard to future relations with the United States, and the willingness of this same leadership, after a generation of U.S. opposition to Arab nationalism, to still hold some ideals about the United States, then the attractiveness of a larger, less paranoid U.S. policy for Americans ought to be irresistible.

The question now is how long the United States will continue to speak the language of good will and peace while pursuing goals in flat contradiction to that language. President Jimmy Carter, like many of his predecessors, is trying to convince everyone that narrowness, militarism, factionalism, interventionism, can at some point be translated into a just and comprehensive peace. My point is that such a transmutation cannot occur so long as those limiting terms are held to, because the transformation is predicated, as historically it has always been, upon the Palestinians giving up their national existence. Until *that* unacceptable "linkage" is understood, the illusions, and the violence and human waste, will continue.

II

Egypt, Israel, and the United States: What Else the Treaty Involved

As they stood together in Washington on March 26, 1979, hands clasped jubilantly, ready for a peace that supposedly

augured the end of trouble in the Middle East, Jimmy Carter, Anwar al-Sadat, and Menachem Begin appeared in that instant to obliterate the awful, tortuous history that had put them so triumphantly at the center of the world stage. This image, which purported to be the end of the line of conflict and hostility, was immensely powerful. But it did not, indeed it could not, do more than impose a kind of television commercial on a continuing dialectic against which, for the first time officially, the United States now committed its enormous power directly. At that very moment a hundred or so U.S. military advisers were in North Yemen helping that country's regime battle South Yemen. Elsewhere in the region the United States silently moved to bolster (or, as was the case with Jordan and Saudi Arabia, to cajole) everything that stood against popular "disorder," instability, the so-called crescent of crisis. The U.S. position could not have meant any less than a wholehearted unwillingness to encourage those Middle Eastern processes of history to which, in its own history, the United States paid homage: the struggle for independence, human rights, freedom from tyranny. With the popular mind additionally stirred to fear and disgust at Islamic insurrection—how often did one read articles about the threat to Western civilization emanating out of the Islamic Orient?—and with resentment mounting at Arab oil prices, the administration's effort to pass off the Israeli-Egyptian treaty as a good thing ran into fairly commonsensical opposition. A CBS-*New York Times* poll conducted in late March 1979 revealed that most people were unimpressed with the treaty. It cost too much, was the popular assessment; there was widespread disapproval at the amount of arms being promised Egypt and Israel (estimates varied from $5 billion to $15 billion dollars); over 70 percent of the respondents disapproved of the American promise to supply Israel with oil for the next fifteen years.[12]

Yet, as I have said many times, there was a paradox which it would be dishonest merely to dismiss. Jimmy Carter was the first president to have spoken seriously, albeit rather abstractly, of the Palestinian people. Members of the Israeli opposition like Shimon Peres had also begun, for the first time, to speak of

Palestinian rights and/or interests, and this suggested a notable difference from the past. Thus it was acknowledged that the Palestinians were a presence to be dealt with seriously, even though one must also say that politically their position was so threatened and their existence so constantly in jeopardy, that they found it difficult to communicate the substance of their position and needs beyond the Arab world. But given this new atmosphere, why did the treaty scant them as much as it did? What else was going on to which not enough attention was being paid?

Let us start with Egypt. There has been so polemical an attitude to Sadat (against him in the Arab world, for him in the West) that he too has become an image stripped of history and political meaning. As early as 1971, during Gunnar Jarring's UN mission to the Middle East, Sadat promised Israel recognition and normalization of relations in return for territory; the Palestinian compartment of his politics has always been an annex to his central Egyptian bulwark. In this attitude, of course, he was unlike Abdel Nasser and also unlike the Syrian Baathists, who were competing with Egypt for influence in the Arab world.[13] Both of their philosophies, however, were quickly matched for ascendancy by two new, non-Arab-nationalist camps, Sadatian Egypt and oil-rich Saudi Arabia. During the seventies, then, for the first time in this century the Arab world began also to be fought over by states, and indeed by the Arab state system, not exclusively by transnational, pan-Arab political philosophies. Sadat conducted the 1973 war against Israel as an Egyptian political war, designed at a carefully chosen moment to involve the United States directly in subsequent events. When Sadat later said that the principal barriers between Egypt and Israel were psychological ones, he was saying in effect that no Arab in this century had undertaken to deal with Zionism on *its* territory, that is, the psycho-cultural terrain it held unchallenged *in the West*, unchallenged because the Arabs never ventured there. That Sadat should want to encounter Zionism there, to win support for himself away from Israel in the Western consciousness, was his achievement, and the 1973 war was the first important move

that would finally lead to Jerusalem and then Washington. But Sadat squandered his most creative move.

His program was entirely an Egyptian one, of course, and it was no accident that a major part of it was a theatrical dismantling of Abdel Nasser's programs, legacy, and position in the Arab world. The effectiveness of Sadat's strategy was not to fight Israel directly, but to attack Israel's monopoly of support in the United States. His reasoning was that insofar as he could always retain the initiative and keep things moving on the world stage, Israel would react by trying to hold onto what it had, with the result that he would be making inroads on Israel's position. To the extent it was obvious that Israel could not fight a war without *direct* U.S. support, it was also obvious that the more Sadat tied Israel, Egypt, and the United States together, the stronger his position would be and the weaker Israel's. To this end, he completely ended his relationship with the Soviet Union.

There is no gainsaying the fact that Sadat was the first Arab leader to make Zionism retreat from previously held positions; that has been his strategy all along. The Saudi Arabians, in comparison, were too hamstrung by their enormously cumbersome wealth, and by the disparity between their wealth and their political-military power, to do anything but hold the fort, to restrict the oppositional tide in the Arab world—by massive across-the-board support to conflicting forces, such as the right wing in Lebanon *and* the PLO. Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia thus found themselves opposed to the still intense fires of Arab nationalism, which the conflict in Lebanon kindled and fanned. The crucial year, therefore, was 1975, for it began the parting of the ways between Egypt and Syria, the 1973 war allies, and conclusively widened the rift separating them from one another. Sinai II did the former; the Lebanese war, the latter. Sadat took the steps he did in Sinai II in order to begin to regain *his* territory, whereas Syria saw the predicament of lost territory in *Arab* terms—to be retrieved after a comprehensive settlement. Their positions are opposed on this point to this day, and Syria's present involvement in Lebanon indicates (to its partisans) the importance of Arab internationalism, whereas to

its opponents Lebanon proved the policy's quagmire-like results. For the Syrian-Baathist line was that Arab nationalism took precedence over any attempts made to break out of the collective Arab fold (which Baathism oversaw). Syria was prepared equally to confront Egyptian particularism or even, as was the case in June 1976, Palestinian nationalism—the most sacred Arab cause of all—which Syrian president Assad believed the PLO had betrayed when his army attacked it in Lebanon.

The political agreement that was hammered out during the Riyadh conference in October 1976 put Egypt, the PLO, and Syria back in touch with one another, very temporarily, under Saudi auspices. Then Jimmy Carter came to office. To an Arab world uniformly unable to assess, or to deal with, his sudden pronouncements about the Palestinians and a comprehensive peace, his arrival precipitated important changes. For one, it seemed almost certain that Carter—whether by temperament or by analysis—found himself closer to the Arab nationalist (i.e., Syrian Baathist) argument on a solution to the conflict. Everything up to mid-November 1977 pointed inevitably toward acceptance of the Syrian line. Not only did Carter in May say that he was greatly impressed with Assad after they met in Geneva, but the United States appeared anxious to coordinate Arab approval of a Geneva peace conference, as well as the presence there of the Palestinians, and, most important, the cooperation of the Soviet Union. By early October there was no doubt that a Geneva conference organized along Arab versus Israeli lines was going to take place. This signaled the end of Henry Kissinger's policy of bilateralism, but this frightened Egypt and Israel, who saw that the possibility now arose of a political settlement uniting most of the Arabs with the Palestinians and the two superpowers against Israel.

No less than the Israelis, therefore, Sadat opposed the joint U.S.-USSR statement of October 1, 1977. Not only did the statement put the Palestinian question on a par with the return of Egyptian territory, it also meant a clear victory for Syrian pan-Arabism. After the frightening Egyptian food riots in

early 1977, Sadat could not risk (a) the postponement of getting back land and ending the state of war, (b) opening Egypt politically to the broadly progressive and adversarial currents that the riots unleashed, which were, he thought accurately, connected explicitly with such political tendencies as Palestine, or (c) neglecting the disastrous economic and social disintegration of his country. Everything he did during 1977—for example, his attack on Libya in July—was designed to assure him of U.S. attention and pleasure, although until he announced his trip to Jerusalem on November 17, he did not have the United States' undivided and serious gaze upon him. His announcement changed everything.

The administration claimed that his announcement came as a complete surprise. I do not think this is true because everything Sadat had been doing for at least seven years prior to late 1977 indicated his complete (his critics argued that it was a shameless) willingness to make peace with Israel unilaterally. Be that as it may, the United States quickly adjusted to the new situation, reordering priorities so as to suit a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. The first item to be dropped was the question of Palestine as it had evolved through the United Nations; after that the U.S.-USSR joint statement, and agreed-upon Palestinian representation at the Geneva conference, were also dropped. Sadat himself lost little time in detaching himself from the PLO—he was known privately to have said that Arafat could not "deliver" on anything—and from what remained of Arab nationalism. The entire nationalist opposition inside Egypt was silenced, the Palestinian cause was rephrased (so to speak) in order to make it seem as if Sadat were its champion, and no concession to Israel and the United States seemed impossible for Egypt to make. Sadat counted shrewdly on the fact that his opponents (except for the PLO) were either too unpopular in their own countries to risk adventures against him, or too weak (Saudi Arabia and Jordan) to do anything but refuse abjectly and toothlessly to join his initiative.

I do not doubt that Sadat had been in touch with the Israelis well before November, and that one of the first things they

agreed upon was the economic benefits to both countries of a joint alliance blessed by the United States, an alliance they all believed the Saudis would implicitly favor as a kind of mutual coprosperity sphere. Aside from its immediate benefits to the military and consumer sectors of the two economies, the alliance would have the advantage of dividing the Middle East into "haves" and "have-nots," the latter camp being the one in which what was left of radicalism and Arabism would be confined, then snuffed out. Furthermore, Sadat could focus his energies upon Africa—there were already covert Egyptian involvements in Chad, Zaire, and Somalia—and upon transforming Egypt into part of the new trilateral world. By August of 1978 he had even gone as far as making his western desert available to Austria and France as a site for dumping nuclear waste. By the time of the Camp David meetings in September, the Iranian events had stiffened Sadat's resolve to conclude his peace with the United States and Israel, although it was also obvious that the Baghdad summit (especially the impending union of Syria and Iraq, after ten years of hostility) plus the Iranian insurrection and the incipient PLO-Iranian alliance severely tested his resolve. Despite the furious surface rhetoric, every Arab state was in touch with every other state between September 1977 and March 1979. Each one seemed to be trying to impress every other one with its strength and sense of responsibility; in this way too, the point could be made for the United States and Israel. The idea was to appear to be offering the United States other attractive alternatives to a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace. No Arab state made any bones about its willingness to live alongside Israel, nor about its willingness to shuck the Soviet Union in return for U.S. aid and friendship. This was true of nearly every Arab state.

Still the United States clung to its more and more narrowly defined priority of an Egyptian-Israeli peace, which it argued could be the firm first step toward a comprehensive settlement. Whether it intended to or not, the United States in fact supported everything that was intransigent and regressive about Egypt and Israel in the interim. Most disastrously, I think, this single-mindedly inflexible U.S. policy alienated the

Palestinians, the Arab masses, and the rest of the Third World, which viewed U.S. policy as a defensive, backward-looking reaction to the Iranian revolution. I do not think this was an incorrect interpretation. To independent-minded Europeans, and of course to most Arabs, it seemed that Sadat had succeeded in thrusting himself upon the American consciousness as a dedicated and loyal *American* in the Third World. And this, it seemed, played into the United States' fatal habit of being taken in by the likes of Marshall Ky, Chiang Kai-shek, and the Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlevi, to the exclusion of more genuinely popular, and representative, leaders. Most disastrously of all, the United States seemed blind to the results of its support for such leaders as Sadat, Begin, and the shah: namely that the United States was fortifying their resolve to consider only what suited their immediate (usually their most unpopular) goals, which had to do mainly with keeping their present power intact.

Nowhere was this more true than in Israel. The first and in my opinion the most ominous sign was the quickness with which Menachem Begin was rehabilitated from his extremism and terrorism, and accommodated to the Sadat/U.S. process. To his credit, Begin made no substantive concessions to anyone: he believed in keeping the Occupied Territories, he saw the Palestinian Arabs as Israel's coolie class, and he made no bones about wanting to keep Israel the superior Western state in the region. During his tenure as prime minister, Begin effectively changed Israel's position on Resolution 242. The man who was later to become his U.N. representative argued before a House committee in 1977 that Israel had every right to keep the territories, and that what it did on the territories contravened no Geneva or any other conventions, which in any case did not, and never would, apply there.[14] In the meantime Israel tightened its links with South Africa, Chile, and Nicaragua, while its military leaders repeatedly took the position that Israel was a *conquering state* and its policy toward Arabs (especially Palestinians) was to reconquer them indefinitely. On January 19, 1979, when the chief of staff was asked about Jewish settlements in "Judea and Samaria" (the West Bank),

he responded that not only was Israel planning to hold onto them, but that those Arabs who lived in the Galilee (which is inside pre-1967 Israel, and a region with the highest concentration of Israeli Palestinians) were "engaged in a process of conquest of the land, conquest of the work, illegal immigration, terror." It is important to realize that General Eytan was describing Palestinians who have simply remained there (in fairly abject conditions) for the last thirty years, not new arrivals. But this was not enough for him. He had to reaffirm the fact that "before the State of Israel existed we came here to conquer this country, and for this purpose the state was established" (*Yediot Aharonot*, January 19, 1979).

Since Israel had no real territorial conflict with Egypt, it was relatively easy to promise to return a demilitarized Sinai to Sadat, with the additional, easy benefits to Israel of things that Zionism has sought for one hundred years—legitimacy, the neutralization of the largest Arab state and its political isolation from the entire Arab world, a blanket "security" arrangement with the United States, an assured oil supply for fifteen years, approximately $15 billion in arms and aid, a large, extremely vulnerable Arab market to exploit, and a huge pool of unskilled, cheap Egyptian labor. But where territory was an issue, the most extraordinary measures were taken to make sure that Israel would always control it. The American press, with only a few exceptions, has paid very little attention to what Israel said and what it was doing on the West Bank, and this may be one of the most scandalous omissions in the history of journalism. For by making it appear that the "autonomy" being offered the Palestinians bore some resemblance to the meaning of that word, the U.S. press performed prodigies of legitimation for continuing Israeli repression, settlement, and consolidation in the West Bank and Gaza. Worse still, the total absence of criticism, whether in the press or in the text of the Camp David accords, of Israeli policy on the Occupied Territories made Palestinian and Jordanian refusal to participate in setting up "autonomy" or "self-rule" appear irrational and gratuitous. Given U.S. and Egyptian willingness to go along tacitly with what was occur-

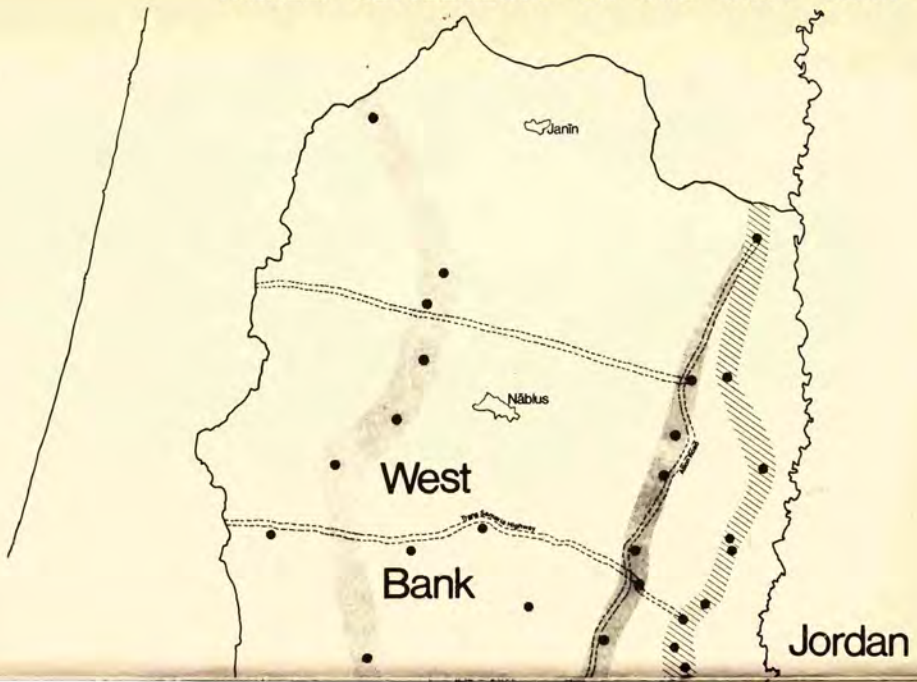
ring in the West Bank and Gaza, Israel consequently had a free hand not only in saying and planning what it was going to do, but—as Palestinians living under Israel's oppressions knew at first hand—*doing* those things.

Historically, it has always been the case with Zionism that details count for a great deal more than general principles. Covering those details both with force and with juridical "facts" has assured for Zionism the permanence of new "created realities." For such a program, therefore, Begin brought his particular legal skills to add to what Labor governments before him had done. His policy was different from General Rabin's, for instance, only in that Begin trusted much less to mere force and/or improvisation. The Occupied or Administered Territories became known as the "liberated" territories and, coupled with the admission he wrung from Sadat in Ismailia on December 26, 1977, that Israel's 1967 attack on the Arabs was defensive (an argument that found willing echoes not only among American right-wingers, but at the very heart of the left-liberal establishment),[15] this enabled Begin to consider the acquisition of Arab territory as *legally justified.* It should be noted here that when David Ben-Gurion declared the birth of the State of Israel in 1948, he deliberately left out of his declaration any statement about Israel's borders.[16] Begin took the much neater step of securing the legality of those ever-expanding borders. Moreover, when he delivered his plan for Palestinian autonomy, he was careful to make the distinction between self-rule for inhabitants and sovereignty over the land on which they lived. Like Vladimir Jabotinsky, his ideological master, Begin was acknowledging the undesirability (indeed, the positive harm) for Jews in having to worry about an inferior race, at the same time that he retained for Israel the right to power and settlement over whatever God had said (somewhere or other) was Jewish territory. About this combination of theology, legal refinement, and pure casuistry the U.S. press, together with the liberal academic community, has had very little to say, even as it has delivered many expressions of proper dismay at Islamic excesses in Iran. At the same time that endless, mostly ignorant, hand-wringing disqui-

sitions were being spun out on the possible meaning of Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic republic, there was not the slightest effort to understand Begin's theocratic view of things, much less note in detail what he meant when he spoke of autonomy for people but not for the land on which they lived.

To their credit, Israeli journalists and political figures were very forthcoming on these matters. Always, of course, actions spoke a great deal more forcefully than words. Right after the Camp David conference, Begin started to press for more settlements, a project he left in the capable hands of General Arik Sharon, minister of agriculture and the country's most outspoken superhawk, whose record includes several murderous raids on Palestinian civil settlements.[17] By the end of 1978 Israel had seventy-seven settlements on the West Bank alone, and it had confiscated approximately 27 percent of the land. While it is true that the Camp David "framework" specified "a reduction" in the number of Israeli troops to be left on the ground during the five-year transitional period, there was the much more significant fact of a growing Israeli settler population whose vanguard was Gush Emunim, a collection of fanatics whose zeal and violence makes the "Islamic" hordes seem positively gentle. Including Arab Jerusalem, the number is reliably given as 90,000, with plans for several hundred thousand more being made.

No doubt was seriously left in Palestinian minds that the autonomy could never become anything more than a carefully regulated, minutely controlled reservation for confining them and, as an authority on Palestinian nationalism who taught the subject at Tel Aviv University put it, "for eliminating their national aspirations."[18] On the ground in the West Bank, several important things were being done to assure this.[19] According to the double-backbone theory, Israel east of the green line (pre-1967 border) would be vulnerable to attack unless the West Bank itself were to be reconstituted as a military backbone paralleling the structure of Israel proper. To this end the West Bank would be—and already has been—divided into segments by a series of north-south and east-west roads (see map). These would be military access roads (thanks


ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK
Jenin
Nablus
West
Bank
Jordan


Jericho
Jerusalem
Israel
Bethlehem
Dead
Sea
Hebron
existing highway
Israeli lateral roads
Israeli colonies
Israeli residential colonies
seized land since Oct.78
Likud belt
Labour Valley belt
Labour Highlands belt
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 km
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 mi
3030x

to the generosity of presidents Carter and Sadat, allowed by the Camp David "framework") as well as making up the outer boundaries for a set of quadrants in which the Palestinian population would be concentrated. Thus surrounding every sizeable group of Palestinians there would be roads assuring Israeli military control of the area; in addition, the roads themselves would be reinforced by Israeli settlements. As Sharon put it in an interview in *Ma'ariv* on January 26, 1979: "Not only [should there be] settlements: there should be roads which will ensure the territorial continuity between the towns and settlements. And not only roads: a wide infrastructure of army camps and military training belts." Thus continuity for Zionism, discontinuity for Palestinians.

Since approximately 30 percent of Israel's water supply comes from the West Bank, the water sources are to be secured for Israel's use, autonomy or no autonomy. Hence the water supply grid now functions quite separately from West Bank municipal authority. The present security situation on the West Bank and in Gaza gives the military governor power to censor everything written; to deport, detain, and destroy the houses of suspected subversives; to take virtually any action whose purpose is to protect the state of Israel. But what is certain, as Zeev Schiff put it in *Ha'aretz* on January 14 and 16, 1979, is that Palestinian autonomy will give the Israeli government and army the right to continue this state of affairs more or less indefinitely. Under the Camp David provisions, Israel has the right to fight political "subversiveness," the purpose of which, as Schiff said quite plainly, is anything that might advance the likelihood of a Palestinian state coming into being. Thus detention, deportation, and collective punishment will continue since the army will remain on the West Bank. Here is how Schiff foresaw the "security operations" in the autonomy, whose ruling council is made up of Palestinian, Israeli, Jordanian, and Egyptian representatives:

> The general security authorities [on the West Bank and Gaza] succeeded in spreading a good and complicated intelligence

network. One can assume that this situation will continue to exist under the autonomy. But the problem is not in collecting information. The question is, what should be done with this information. Will they be able to act freely, or will they be restricted to registering the information and knowing the situation?

In order to ensure the right use of intelligence information so as to fight terrorists [Schiff uses the standard Israeli code word for Palestinian nationalists who want independence], there is a need for special conditions, which touch upon other aspects. A strong local police force, as mentioned in the Camp David agreement, is not enough; consultation between Palestinian police officers and Israeli security authorities is not enough. It is clear from the security point of view that anyone who wants to fight the terrorists cannot leave the right of arresting people suspected of terrorism or hostility in the hands of others.

A Palestinian police officer, who will receive from the Israeli securities information about people suspected of terrorist acts, will not last long if he won't let the suspects know that they are in danger. Therefore the cooperation of the local [i.e. the Palestinian] police in such arrests should only be formal. And there is no question that interrogation in security matters should be left in the future as well in the hands of the Israeli general security authorities. This is a fundamental condition if we want to succeed in fighting the terrorists in the autonomy and in Israel. The situation is different concerning legal prosecution of terrorists. In this matter there can be full cooperation between Israel and the ruling authorities of the autonomy. There can also be cooperation in the judicial area, but this is a more delicate subject than prosecution. In this subject Israel should have some priority and the same goes for the Israeli representatives on the committee which is to let refugees in and it is clear that they shall act according to the directions laid down by the general [Israeli] security authorities. [*Ha'aretz*, January 16, 1979]

As in much else that Israel foresees about its rule over the autonomy that is supposed to satisfy demands for Palestinian

self-determination,[20] Schiff concludes that Israel's security apparatus will therefore "touch upon all aspects of Palestinian life." One can well understand how this projected view of the autonomy coincides with Israeli hostility to the Palestinians, but what one looks for in vain is a rationale for showing this plan to be acceptable to the Palestinians who would have to experience its rigors. Nothing in Israel (certainly nothing in what Begin has said) allows Palestinians any hope that "autonomy" would be anything more than continued military domination. Remember, too, that autonomy and self-rule are to apply only to those Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza; provisions for repatriation of refugees deal only with Palestinians who originally resided in Gaza or the West Bank, that is, approximately 150,000 people who were driven out in 1967. Since even those "legitimate" claimants for repatriation are to be screened by Israel, it is manifestly impossible for the over 2 million Palestinians who are not from Gaza or the West Bank, and who now live in exile, to be taken in. According to Moshe Dayan, those Palestinians are expected to remain where they are. Thus, as one distinguished Palestinian writer described it, autonomy in the Camp David framework means precisely—and not at all vaguely—the following:

> A fraction of the Palestinian people (under one-third of the whole) is promised a fraction of its rights (not including the national right to self-determination and statehood) in a fraction of its homeland (less than one-fifth of the area of the whole); and this promise is to be fulfilled several years from now, through a step-by-step process in which Israel is to exercise a decisive veto power over any agreement. Beyond that, the vast majority of Palestinians is condemned to permanent loss of its Palestinian national identity, to permanent exile and statelessness, to permanent separation from one another and from Palestine—to a life without national hope or meaning.[21]

The Egyptian-Israeli treaty consecrates this situation without any ambiguity at all. The liberal U.S. argument is that: (a)

under present circumstances this is the most that Palestinians have ever been given, and is therefore to be accepted; (b) besides, once the process of self-rule gets under way—with elections, normalized political life, etc.—things will *probably* evolve into a Palestinian state. Like Topsy, such a state would just grow: this was implied in a sympathetic article "And Now the Palestinians" on March 26, 1979, by Anthony Lewis in *The New York Times*. But what all such arguments simply do not take into account are the three factors that have made the question of Palestine precisely the problem that it is: (1) the reality of Zionism as a systematic practice *for* Jews and *against* non-Jews; (2) the reality of Palestinian history, which is not a miscellaneous collection of haphazard occurrences but a coherent experience of dispossession by Zionism as well as an answering dialectic of fighting progress toward self-determination; (3) the real conflict between Zionism and the Palestinians, a conflict which is not a misunderstanding, but a real opposition between opposed forces, furthermore a conflict embedded in a specific region, having a concrete history, and bringing into play a conjunction of many different regional, international, and cultural factors. There is an almost desperate irony in the contrast between the matted density of these three factors and the optimism expressed on occasion by well-intentioned policy makers. The irony is considerably sharpened when the success of Palestinian self-rule is obviously made to depend upon the demise—or at least the disappearance—of the PLO, and the convenient appearance in its place of "reasonable" Palestinian quislings eager to negotiate their indefinite political emasculation. None has yet turned up, although of course there can be no guarantee of continued resistance.

We must now ask what—apart from unanimously refusing the kind of arrangement spelled out in the Camp David framework and the Israeli-Egyptian treaty—the Palestinians have themselves done and said. It is to that little-known drama that I now turn.

III
Palestinian and Regional Actualities

When I spoke earlier of the Middle East as a mixed, middle place, I had in mind the eccentricity of the Palestinian problem as well as the peculiarities of the region in which, culturally, politically, and historically, it is set. In other words, even though for the Palestinians it is certain that their dispossession has come about at the hands of an invading settler colonialism, such a view corresponds only to what has happened to them as victims; it takes in neither the real horrors of European anti-Semitism, nor, in the present context, does it speak to the facts that Israel is a state with, for Jews, real accomplishments, that it has the commitment of its people and many parts of the world, that Israeli Zionism and Palestinian resistance do not have the pristine, relatively uncomplicated characteristics of the black majority versus the white minority struggle in southern Africa. Then too there is the problematic fact that the Arab liberation struggle, unlike most other such struggles, is relatively well financed; the sheer presence and availability of almost unlimited capital bears very oddly on even the idea of liberation. It goes without a great deal of argument, I think, that the same problem—qualitatively not as acute—obtains in talking about the "Arab liberation struggle," as it is commonly referred to. In that rhetorical context, one need only ask for a precise meaning of Arab liberation (when, at the same time, Arab oil states have been willingly coopted by the Western economies, when their political life is eminently unliberated, and when even the radicals among them have shown at best a flawed inclination to support the Palestinian struggle) for the point to be made efficiently.

Even so, I must again repeat what I have said in this book and in *Orientalism:* that discussion of the Arab world in general, and of the Palestinians in particular, is so confused and unfairly slanted in the West that a great effort has to be made to see things as, for better or worse, *they actually are* for Palestinians and for Arabs. The danger is that in trying fairly to

represent the complex circumstances of the Palestinian-Zionist conflict, I may not be doing enough to dispel the massive accumulation of lies, distortions, and willful ignorance surrounding the reality of our struggle. Perhaps there is no simple formula for letting the truth emerge in such cases, and certainly I would add that in my own case I have the strongest belief that the historical and moral sufficiency of the Palestinian cause will finally outlast and outstrip any attempts to misrepresent it. In the end, of course, it is the struggle of a people, and not only of writers about that people, which determines its history. Nevertheless writing does count for something, and so certain points have to be made.

The first point is that despite all the talk about Palestinians there has been a political, journalistic, even a cultural tendency always to postpone serious discussion of them. I take it that this is the point being made by intelligent establishment figures like George Ball (see his Op-Ed piece in *The New York Times*, April 1, 1979, entitled "The Mideast Challenge"). In its understandable zeal to protect and sanctify the Israeli-Egyptian peace, the U.S. government is more than probably going to be supporting the tendency to postponement. Why else does the government continue to hold onto the absurd notion that the PLO can be bypassed, when it is obvious (as senior administration officials have been saying privately) that the PLO *is* the Palestinian question, and equally obvious too that there is not the remotest chance that any alternative Palestinian leadership will ever emerge; the PLO is too legitimate and representative a body for that to happen. According to the terms of Sinai II and to the agreement made between Henry Kissinger and the Israelis, the United States will not recognize or speak to the PLO unless the latter accepts Resolution 242 and recognizes Israel. This extremely academic and rigid condition, which ties a major power indecently to the petulant whims of a client state, and restricts the Palestinian matter exclusively to a refugee problem has withheld legitimacy for the PLO, and consequently for the Palestinians, in the American political arena. Of course this has contributed to the postponement of which Ball has spoken. And of course it has

encouraged Israel and its intransigent supporters in the United States to go on associating the PLO (and the Palestinians as a whole) with terrorism, radicalism, and irresponsibility.

This is not just a question of rhetorical strategy. For one, the press and the intellectual community have gone along with this view with only occasional exceptions. When a major television network recently took the giant step of actually showing a not unsympathetic prime-time portrait of the Palestinians, it was done in the form of a film about why "the terorists" are terrorists (i.e., they have some reason to be terrorists). The narrator made an unprecedented speech assuring the audience that *he* did not condone terrorism. And not least, the program was shown without commercial sponsorship. I think it is a simple fact that most Americans who feel they must declare their support for Israel as a state have no idea that the Palestinians lived where Israel now is, and are refugees not because they are anti-Semites, but because the Zionists simply kicked many of them out. This circumstance has served Zionist propaganda well, and it has kept any dissenting view from being heard, much less taken seriously. Therefore to speak of Palestinian rights is to be forced either to accept the Camp David prison framework, or defensively to explain the PLO covenant, or why it is that "Arabs" like to kill Jews, or why democratic Israel has to put up with a lot of medieval, repressive Muslims. In the meantime the government can go on using Palestinian "radicalism"—to say nothing of continuing to isolate states like Iraq and Libya—as a way of promoting the policies in which it has invested so recklessly, or of keeping alive the option of a military attack on the Palestinians, the Libyans, or the Iraqis.

Such demons serve a useful purpose. How else is one to understand the total silence of the United States and of its liberal intelligentsia on the criminal enormity of Israel's March 1978 raid into south Lebanon? U.S. allies were being allowed to launch massive "preventive" wars with U.S. weapons like cluster bombs against civilians so that "radicalism" and

"terrorism" could be shown to be punished. Whereas when U.S. allies like Israel sponsor naked genocidal wars (another example Indonesia's sustained slaughter of civilians in East Timor), nothing is said about it. The main result has been to keep Israel associated with politically "good" causes like Jewish dissent in the Soviet Union, and to further the elimination of Palestinian nationalism.

The circle of discussion, policy formation, and cultural debate grows smaller and smaller, with one constricting tendency feeding off and reinforcing another. The main casualty has been the question of Palestine, which has been one of the most powerful factors in modern Middle Eastern and Arab politics.[22] At no point has the slenderization, the impoverishment of debate been more disastrous than now—for reasons that scarcely need mention here. What I shall try then to do in the pages that follow is to provide some sense of the processes involving the Palestinians and the Arabs. In this way perhaps the reader may be helped to understand matters a little as they are seen by a huge majority of people in the Middle East, and a broader, more accurate framework of discussion and debate may gradually evolve. At least some human and political urgency may be restored to issues that are usually treated as reified, conventionalized slogans. Above all, I should like to continue what I have tried to do throughout this book: communicate an account of the Palestinian question as something that for genuine human reasons has moved a great many people, as something lived and not merely happening, dynamic and historical at the same time.

I want especially to develop two ideas, which, given what I have just been saying, are so important as usually *not* to be considered in analyses of the post-Camp David period. Yet they must be understood if one is to get a grip on political actualities in the Middle East. The first idea is that there have been some very important changes and developments in the Palestinian position since 1967, and these have been expressed—although they have never been given the political weight they so urgently deserve. The second is that only if the

Palestinian question is seen in its affiliations with major historical processes in the Middle East, can its genuine centrality and power be assessed or appreciated.

I began this book by discussing the difference between Palestine as a historical reality (which no longer exists) and as a present political cause, a process toward self-determination for Palestinians who have no state or proper national existence. Between the time that Palestine disappeared and its cause reemerged as a political factor on the world scene, a great deal of history had to occur, not least within the Palestinian community itself. For those Palestinians who actually lost Palestine—my parents' generation, in terms of our political leaders—Palestine was Arab Palestine, *Filastin Arabiyah*. In no significant way could this generation accept the fact that Palestine had become Israel, or that it would never again in this lifetime be a predominantly Arab country. Much in the political and cultural life of the Arab world in the period between 1948 and 1967 reflected similar views. Israel, at once the unmentionable cause of all our ills and the least known of our realities, absorbed Arab national energies to a remarkable degree. Israel defined the limits of Arabism, it set our enemies for us (imperialism, the West, etc.), and it legitimized regimes in more or less everything they did in the name of fighting "Zionism." The history of those years—in the perspective of institutions already skewed and diverted by colonialism and skewed still further by the unequal battle between Israel and incompetent repressive military regimes—has yet to be written.[23] But nothing in that history offered much to Palestinians except philosophies and political parties based upon a new, glorious return to the "Arab nation" and to an Arab Palestine.

I say all of this because of what so dramatically followed after 1967. Nasserism, Baathism, the Arab nationalist movement, Islamic fundamentalism, as well as almost the whole gamut of left-wing parties, foundered dramatically after the June war. They have not recovered from that defeat, although in some cases they continue to lead a privileged existence. My opinion is that most of these movements were just partially in touch with the sociopolitical and cultural realities they ad-

dressed; for the rest, they were philosophies borrowed from different parts of the world, different periods of history, undigested and not sufficiently reformulated for the contemporary roles they had been assigned. In none of the eastern Arab countries (not even Egypt) had there been a decisive rupture between the colonial and postcolonial periods. Certainly this is clear when Algeria is compared with, say, Syria, Egypt, or Iraq. Every change in regime brought mainly a change in personnel; even though class structure, cultural formations, and economic institutions went through profoundly important developments, they did not quite reach the point of revolutionary transformation. In this way, too, the Arab Middle East remained a middle place, at a kind of equidistance from the overall bourgeois stability of the Atlantic world and the cataclysmic revolutions of the postwar Third World.

Abdel Nasser was the only leader of his generation to take seriously the idea of Third World anti-imperialism, but even his interest in the left and in the Soviet Union came after he had been rebuffed by the West. This fact, I think, always shaped his politics; it made him a great leader in one way and a very limited figure in another. Like his many followers in the ranks of the Arab political elite, he subordinated the development of a genuinely oppositional national culture at the popular level to the development of a top-heavy national security state whose main opponents included an abstraction called "Zionism," the Egyptian left, the United States (which Egypt longed to attract), and any Arab leader who did not accept Egyptian hegemony willingly. That is why Marxism never got a strong foothold in Egypt, although it is an interesting fact that during the Nasser years it was Egyptian and Arab culture generally that played a vanguard political role far in advance of the regimes.[24] Nevertheless Nasser was a gigantic figure who despite his flaws awakened Arab national energies from their long quiescence. In the process he made Egypt the focus of the Arab world, whereas in having lost its Arab aura, Sadat's Egypt has become a large, nondescript country rather like Nigeria or Brazil.

As I said previously, Palestinian politics went through

phases of development until 1967 that paralleled and were greatly influenced by currents in the Arab world. When the Palestinian resistance movement gathered strength after 1967, it emerged as the first political movement in the Arab world to confront in an immediate way the presence of Jews in Palestine. During Jordan's rule over the West Bank between 1948 and 1967, Palestinian nationalism continued to flourish,[25] but the Israeli occupation placed the whole question of Palestine in a massively direct adversarial position vis-à-vis Israeli Zionism. This had never happened before. In 1948 Palestinian opposition to Zionism had been neither politically coherent nor effective; the loss of the country was esteemed mainly as an *Arab* loss, and Zionist policies, as I said earlier, were designed principally to empty the country and not to rule over Arabs. After 1967 this situation changed.

Despite dispersion and exile, the Palestinian resistance movement (which later became known as the PLO) formulated an idea and a vision for the Middle East that broke sharply with all past ideas. This was the idea of a secular democratic state in Palestine for Arabs and Jews. Even though it has become almost a habit to deride this idea, there can be no serious way of minimizing its tremendous importance. It accepted what generations of Arabs and Palestinians had never been able to accept—the presence of a community of Jews in Palestine who had gained their state by conquest—but it went further than mere acceptance of Jews. The Palestinian idea posited what is still, to my mind, the only possible and acceptable destiny for the multicommunal Middle East, the notion of a state based on secular human rights, not on religious or minority exclusivity nor, as had been the case with the Syrian nationalists, on an idealized geopolitical unity. Out of confessional and civil conflict was to come a new basis for organizing social life in a region whose politics had been determined either by colonialism or by religion. The ghetto state, the national security state, the minority government, were to be transcended by a secular democratic polity, in which communities would be accommodated to one another for the greater good of the whole.

There were many problems with this Palestinian vision. At bottom few people were ready for the idea, and certainly no one had the exact means to bring it about. But much of its work was done in its mere formulation. For the first time the idea of an Arab Palestine underwent historical acculturation. For the first time in the region's modern history—and this is what I find of immense value—an attempt was made to grapple with the human and political material for which in the past imported, absolutist philosophies (like Zionism and Arabism) had served. With almost no exceptions at all, political commentators in the West have not grasped the meaning of this change.

No one inside the Zionist establishment has grasped it either. Consequently the idea has long gone without so much as a footnote in present political discussion about Middle East peace. Palestinians were supposed to be ignorant terrorists; their convenant supposedly demonstrated an unchanging determination to exterminate Jews and Zionism, it became a habit to equate the secular-democratic-state idea with genocide.[26] In the meantime, Israel still referred to Palestinians as non-Jews, or—an important development—as "the Arabs of Eretz Israel." As Israel continued its colonization of the rest of Palestine, and as hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were ruled by military authorities, the Western liberal intelligentsia had little to say about Israeli exploitation of Palestinian children, or the way in which Palestinians working inside Israel were locked up in their places of work at night, or how torture was regularly used in interrogation, or how special laws applied only to Arabs and not to Jews in Israel and the Occupied Territories.[27] On the contrary, it was respectable cant to speak about Israel's benign occupation, or to animadvert on the economic benefits to Palestinians of the Israeli occupation. And as Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon were routinely bombed, strafed, or napalmed by Israeli jets, one learned to accept these rigors of war as the "cleaning up of terrorist concentrations."

As one thinks back over the history of the past ten years, it is difficult to know what exactly was expected of the Palestinians.

Their friends and allies wanted some restitution of Palestinian rights, but certainly there was only limited support forthcoming for more than what Resolution 242 seemed to imply. The PLO therefore faced the problem of having to lead a constituency of exiles whose main bulk was from neither the West Bank nor Gaza (most of the several hundred thousand Palestinians in Lebanon, for example, are from Haifa, Jaffa, and the Galilee) at the same time that the West Bank and Gaza seemed to be the likeliest place for Palestinian nationhood. Yet the more pressure the Palestinians produced in pursuit of their national goals, the more counterpressure was applied against them, and the more they drew conflict toward them. Jordan and Lebanon were the two most costly instances of such conflict. Every passing day brought evidence that Palestinian self-determination would require the improbable coordination of Palestinian independence with Arab support, the one often violently at odds with the other.

At the same time Israel controlled Palestine and was drawn, sometimes as a matter of policy, sometimes because extremists simply took the initiative, to the old idea of turning occupied territory into settled territory. Ruling the West Bank and Gaza produced colonial institutions, to which over the years each government seemed more committed. There is no doubt, too, that for the first time in its history Israel had to contend with Jewish citizens who recognized the Palestinians as a problem that had to be treated. In Israel, in Europe, in the United States, concerned Jews (for all sorts of different reasons) awakened to the reality of Palestinians. Doubtless Palestinian resistance and aggressiveness (to the point of terror) played a role, but so also did the reality of seeing Palestinians as bodies prodded by Israeli soldiers or rounded up by Jewish security personnel. Nothing was as important in my opinion as the sheer persistence of the Palestinians; they would not go away, not even after they had been dispersed, driven out, conquered. They still called themselves Palestinians, they still believed that they had the right to return to Palestine, they still felt uncomfortable with the idea of an Israeli (or even an Arab) overlord, no matter how many rewards were offered. Just

because Zionism had historically ignored the Palestinians, Palestinian politics during the late sixties and seventies seemed to Israelis always to be a function of the frightening *number* of Palestinians. To accept the idea of Palestinians was one thing; to offer practical suggestions as to what could be done with them—which meant finding a place where they could be put without encroaching upon Israel—was something else.

It must be granted that if Israelis and their supporters have been eloquent and persuasive about the need for Jews to have a state, they have not been a fraction as understanding about why it is that Palestinians have been unwilling to just go away and not bother anyone. The fact is that as the Palestinians continued to be there, their simply being there made claims on Israel. To admit the existence of Palestinians with a national claim even to a part of Palestine meant contesting Zionist claims; and, as the franker Gush Emunim zealots said on occasion, to allow that Jews had no right to settle in Nablus or Hebron *could* mean that Palestinians would start to ask about settling in Jaffa or Haifa. Even "dovish" Zionists who had qualms about Israeli settlements on the West Bank, and who felt a genuine need to make amends to the Palestinians, felt uneasy about saying that Palestinians could have the West Bank and Gaza to set up a state there. Judea and Samaria were not the Sinai desert; if they were admitted to be Palestinian, wouldn't Israel then become more glaringly a fact of conquest and supplantation? Nothing, except individual conscience and far-left politics, in Israel or Zionist political life, could make room for the Palestinians; no territory, no political, no social space could be cleared for them. Even the West Bank and Gaza—fairly obvious candidates to the rest of the world—seemed a "security" risk. Although it was usually hinted that a Palestinian state there would be a guerrilla base for attacking Israel, the really obstinate fact being covered up was that Zionism had always denied the existence of a competing national right in Palestine. A Palestinian state was a grave *political* risk, and so was Palestinian nationalism or simply Palestinians.

Talk about terrorism was often a diversion from the dilem-

ma. Even Israeli and Western campaigns trying to identify Palestinians with terrorism could not conceal the fact that (a) Palestinian terror inflicted minimal casualties and (b), as General Gur put it in May 1978, official Israeli military policy has been to attack Arab civilians en masse. In 1974, however, the Palestinian leadership came to an important conclusion. For once it was evident at the same time that Arab Palestine could not be restored, but that after the 1973 war, some combination of Arab military and political pressure could make inroads on Israeli hegemony. Moreover the Rabat conference confirmed what had already been evident—the PLO was the only possible representative for all the Palestinians. Thus when Yasir Arafat came to the United Nations in November 1974, any idea of a purely military solution to the question of Palestine had been given up. For the first time in their history the Palestinians entered more or less consciously the international political arena where the Zionists had preceded them for almost a century.

On occasion after occasion the PLO stated its willingness to accept a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Two meetings of the National Council, in 1974 and again in 1977, committed the whole national community to this idea, and with the idea, an implicit recognition of Israel as a neighbor. But these changes came about with much difficulty. Arafat was asking the majority of his constituency to start thinking not in terms of the homes and property and rights they had lost irrevocably to Israel, but in terms of new political gains—statehood, nationality, government, rights Palestinians had been denied. His opponents argued that he had capitulated to "Zionist imperialism"; the Rejection Front called for unending revolutionary struggle everywhere, as if to prove that everything Arafat did shrank Palestinian ambitions, while rejectionism expanded them. Zionists ignored the political offers Arafat and the PLO were making. The official line simply continued adamantly: the Palestinians didn't exist, the PLO was a Nazi band, Arafat was a murderer of children. Israeli doves attempted to accept the PLO on one level, yet moved away from it on others. Demands were made for a prior recognition

of Israel by giving up armed struggle, Arafat was asked to perform concessionary gestures, and so forth. There was no appreciation of what the PLO had in point of fact changed to, nor of what it might further do if there were some answering move on the other side. In the meantime Israel continued its policy of "thickening" settlements on the West Bank and in Gaza, while desultory efforts were made to create an "alternative" Palestinian leadership in both areas.

During the three years between 1974 and 1977 the United States played an astonishingly destructive and irresponsible role. Henry Kissinger and the two presidents he served gave Israel more arms in a shorter period of time than ever in its history. U.S. policy was deliberately to ignore the Palestinians, to try to whittle down Arab nationalist sentiment in the region, to force political movement into bilateral, step-by-step processes. Always a domestic U.S. issue, the question of Palestine seemed transmuted into a question of how Palestine could be made to disappear into Egyptian or Syrian or Saudi policy. There have been hints that Kissinger's ideas went as far as using the CIA to escalate the Lebanese war so long as that would consume the PLO.[28] Iran was the bulwark of U.S. policy in the east, with Israel's defense capabilities in the West expanded enormously to complement the shah's. In this way the United States was planning a long period of banning the Soviet Union and creating stability for itself, with death by choking for the nationalist and radical movements still threatening unpopular regimes.[29]

Palestinian signals to the world community and to the United States were deliberately tossed aside. Armed with UN Resolution 3236 (November 22, 1974), which guaranteed its international right to press for self-determination and to be the Palestinians' sole legitimate representative, the PLO with greater confidence now attempted to be a U.S. interlocutor. In Lebanon, for example, the PLO did everything possible in 1975 and 1976 to protect American citizens. On January 22, 1976, the PLO openly supported a Security Council resolution which restated the provision that "the Palestinian people should be enabled to exercise its inalienable right to self-

determination, including the right to establish an independent state in Palestine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations." The resolution further went on to state explicitly that all states in the area had the right to live in peace, territorial integrity, and independence—a completely unambiguous statement about Israel's right to exist. With a particularly idiotic and bombastic speech, U.S. Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan vetoed the resolution.

When President Carter came to office, and after he made his important "Palestinian" declarations in March 1977 at Clinton, Mass., the PLO response was extremely positive. The Palestinian National Council was meeting in Cairo at the time, and Arafat's main speech before that body carefully stated Palestinian reciprocity for Carter's statements. The whole tone of the meeting edged the Palestinians closer to a dialogue with the United States which, it must be remembered, had traditionally been an opponent of Palestinian aspirations. Later that year matters seemed even more propitious. Kissinger had written into the United States–Israeli annex to Sinai II a clause stating that the United States would not recognize or even talk to the PLO unless it accepted Resolution 242, a political document that could never be acceptable to Palestinians. To accept 242 was to deny the *national* dimension of the Palestinian question, for 242 spoke only of "refugees." Yet by the late summer of 1977, through Saudi, Egyptian, and Syrian intermediaries, the United States and the PLO had come to some agreement about 242. The PLO would accept it, but with "a reservation"—a clause specifying that 242 did not touch Palestinian national rights, which were inalienable. In return, the United States would recognize the PLO, talk to it, and say something definite about Palestinian self-determination. At the last minute, in late August, it was made known to the PLO that the United States would go no further than a "dialogue." Thus the reward for swallowing 242 was not to be self-determination, but only the not unqualified benefit of getting to talk to the United States.

Obviously the PLO could not accept the resolution on this basis because it meant conceding every political gain, reducing

the Palestinian national question to a new refugee problem —going back to square one. In the month before Sadat traveled to Jerusalem, indirect PLO-United States contacts struggled to find ways of making possible Palestinian participation at a Geneva conference, but these efforts were canceled abruptly on November 19.

And still Arafat persisted with gestures. On many occasions he affirmed Palestinian willingness to accept a state, to recognize Israel de facto, to deal directly with the United States so long as, he told me on one occasion, "impossible things are not asked of me." Arafat told Anthony Lewis of *The New York Times* in May 1978 that he could accept a state and thereafter live peacefully next to Israel; he told Congressman Paul Findley the same thing in January 1979. But still impossible things were the order of the day. Recognize Israel in advance; amend the PLO covenant; give up your arms; disband the PLO; accept Sadat's offer and go to Cairo with no preconditions. At every juncture, Arafat's people were under constant attack—in Lebanon, elsewhere in the Arab world, in the West Bank and Gaza, in the United States. During the summer of 1978, then again in early 1979, a murder campaign was conducted against his personal aides in the movement; he faced 30,000 Israeli troops in South Lebanon; Arab political support went from rhetoric to nonrhetoric. And still President Carter went on about the "Palestinian question in all its aspects," as if "its aspects"—or its main substance, for that matter—were somewhere in outer space, waiting to come in for a landing.

Nothing in the Camp David framework sufficed to tempt Palestinians, or King Hussein of Jordan, to be encouraged. With Israeli settlements clotting the territory in question, with Sadat effectively removed from any serious role outside Egypt (the treaty totally isolated him from the Arab world, a consequence that must surely have been foreseen by Israel and the United States) it was the better part of strategy to stand on rejection—which of course was no policy at all. The situation now has all the traits of tragicomic irony. On the one hand, Sadat blusters about regaining Palestinian rights, without

perhaps realizing that without the Soviet Union, without Arab support, without U.S. support beyond his limited treaty with Israel, his leverage would be verbal at best. The United States, on the other hand, seems uncertain how to go about defining its future role, or the temptations either for or against interventionism, or its hope that Saudi Arabia and Jordan at least will finally come around, or its by now institutionalized commitment to "the Palestinian question in all its aspects." Moreover there is a demonstrably apparent Palestinian willingness to move toward peace (after all, what people can be so committed to its own misery as not to think seriously about alleviating misery?) with less and less ground—literally and figuratively—on which to stand. At odds with one another, the United States, Egypt, and the PLO struggle to Israel's advantage.

In this country the organized Jewish constituency has welcomed the treaty grudgingly and criticized it guardedly (see Theodore Draper's "How Not to Make Peace in the Middle East," *Commentary*, March 1979). The grounds for accepting it are that it neutralizes Egypt and gives Israel some respite, whereas it is attacked because it just might open the door to Palestinian self-determination, an assumption now held by American Zionists. But this community has far more uncritical views of Israel's policy than any but the very far right in Israel, which also tends to view anything connected with Palestinians—even their very existence—as an unmitigated disaster. Aside from such a view's being utterly irrational, it is, when advanced by magazines like *The New Republic* and *Commentary* (the first surprisingly more stubbornly than the second), intellectually vindictive. What does it urge the Palestinians to do in response? Merely say "Yes, you drove us out with your guns, we now accept you, we are no longer Palestinians, only miscellaneous Arab refugees whose claims are canceled out by Jews from Arab lands, you are marvelous, we hereby withdraw from the field forever"? Or does the *Commentary/New Republic* view unanswerably say to the Palestinians: "We have taken note of your complaints, but that is too bad; you were driven out (omelets can't be made without

breaking eggs) but you left, after all; you are a backward, terroristic people and you ask for too much; if we give you an inch you will ask for a mile; we cannot admit that you exist, because we risk losing too much moral credibility on the world scene and, worse, within our community; you must be content always with what we give you, which will never amount to anything at all really"?

And that is also where, so far as the official United States is concerned, the matter now rests. Some time ago it would have been possible to remind President Carter that he came to office with, among other things, the famous Brookings Report of 1975[30] high on the agenda. After all, national security advisor Brzezinski was on the panel that wrote the report, and Brzezinski's assistant, William Quandt, was a member too. But that is now a forgotten relic of an earlier time. The drapery produced by the Israeli-Egyptian treaty curtains off Syria, Iraq, the PLO, even Saudi Arabia and Jordan. All the indications that Zionism has finally gained what for sixty years it has wanted, legitimacy from one Arab regime and that regime's subsequent isolation, seem lost on the United States, which assumes that heaping the region with arms and many promises about "the peace process" will turn Camp David miraculously from lukewarm water into sparkling wine.[31]

As for the region itself, what are the important actualities? In the first place, there is now the possibility that for the first time since 1967 a genuinely popular Arab nationalist response might develop to the United States and to its allies in the treaty, and that portends a wave of extraordinary upheaval in the area. The Palestinian issue, as I suggested earlier, has become far more than an irredentist question: it has turned into the symbolical nexus of nearly every Arab, Islamic, and Third World popular (in the literal sense of that word) issue in the region. One of the main questions now is whether Arafat and the PLO will be willing indefinitely to contain the question. The Iranian response to the Palestinians after February is one index of what I mean; others have been no less powerful. The Kuwaiti parliament was closed down in late 1976 because the Palestinian issue had crystallized there as

something uniting opposition to the regime. The PLO did not exploit this situation, but obviously could have. The press in most of the area is muzzled, but Palestine has become the acceptable trope for bringing criticism to bear on state authority, and this trope galvanizes opposition very acutely. The March 1979 meeting of the Baghdad Conference was united in opposition to Sadat, Israel, and the United States, but it was the PLO that brought the whole ungainly Arab bolus to the forefront. More and more hidden currents are released every day: regional sectarianism, nationality questions, numerous (often pitifully simple-minded) forms of Islamic revivalism, and always, burning questions of unequal distribution of wealth, sometimes linked to sexual and ethnic oppression.

The danger in all this is not revolutionary change as such; it is protracted incoherence, and for the PLO, now a concrete national reality, a protracted postponement of achieving its national claims on the question of Palestine. Neither the immediate nor the medium-term answer to the question of Palestine can be found in an ostrich-like pact between Israel and Egypt which shuts the Palestinians out completely. Both countries, each according to its peculiar internal dynamics, will in such a context harden their military, ideological, and political apparatus *against* the region—and thereby become less a part of it and more a lonely fortress, isolated and vulnerable in ways we cannot at present imagine.

The imperatives are clear; let me outline them here very briefly:

The question of Palestine is, as I have tried to show in this book, a matter with a detailed history traced in the lives of every one of the 4 million Palestinians. It is not something that can be made, whether by legal, military, cultural, or psychological means, to go away. Yet, and this is the positive point I want to insist on, the question of Palestine is a concrete historical one that can be comprehended in human terms; it is not a gigantic, psychological monster poised to threaten the entire world. But this is precisely how it has been represented. Zionism first refused to acknowledge the existence of native inhabitants in Palestine, and when it did, it recognized only

native inhabitants with no political or national rights; insofar as those natives claimed rights, the West was instructed systematically in equating the struggle for those rights with terrorism, genocide, anti-Semitism. This is not only nonsense; it is also license to extend a century of violence against Palestinians for another long period of time, and to refuse more or less indefinitely to settle with history and with truth. Worse still, such an attitude simply ensures the recurrence of more violence, more suffering, more waste, more futile "security arrangements."

The almost total impossibility of talking rationally about the Palestinian question in the United States today is of service neither to this country nor to Jews. On every level, it seems to me an incontrovertible fact that an attitude of negation, of denial, of fear—which is what Zionist and U.S. perseverance against the Palestinians has meant—will only produce more fear, less peace. Is there not an astonishing irony in a state of affairs by which the United States does not permit members of the Palestine Liberation Organization to speak or travel freely in this country,[32] while at the same time saying that the Palestinian question is at the center of the whole Middle East conflict? In the end there has to be a realization that the Palestinians are not going to disappear; in addition, the United States must officially recognize that fear of the Palestinians and their unanimously acknowledged representatives cannot be allayed simply by pretending that together they do not amount to anything very serious.

I do sympathize with, I understand as profoundly as I can, the fear felt by most Jews that Israel's security is a genuine protection against future genocidal attempts on the Jewish people. But it is necessary to remark that there can be no way of satisfactorily conducting a life whose main concern is to prevent the past from recurring. For Zionism, the Palestinians have now become the equivalent of a past experience reincarnated in the form of a present threat. The result is that the Palestinians' future as a people is mortgaged to that fear, which is a disaster for them and for Jews. I have tried here to present the Palestinians as *representable*—in terms of our collective

experience, our collective sense of things, our collective aspirations, above all, as a real and present (because historical) reality. Nothing that I have said in this book must be understood except as an acknowledgment of Palestinian and of Jewish history—in fierce conflict with each other for periods of time, but fundamentally reconcilable if both peoples make the attempt to see each other within a common historical perspective. Better fully acknowledged conflict than hidden and unstated fears, rigidly theologized fantasies about the Other.

I would not have gone into as much detail about the Palestinian experience of Zionism if I did not believe that the Palestinian national movement has today crystallized into and around a specific set of national aspirations. My aim therefore was not to resurrect the past, but to see it clearly in order to get beyond it. Palestinian national aspirations derive intimately and urgently from our concrete experience as a people, and they are, I think, achievable aspirations given our history, the reality of Israel, the reality of the rest of the Arab world, and international political configurations.

It is no exaggeration to say that for the first time in our struggle against Zionism the West appears ready to hear our side of the story. Therefore we must tell it; we must stand in the international theater created out of our struggle against Zionism, and there we must diffuse our message dramatically. In the West especially our aim should be first to engage the liberal Zionist establishment (Jewish and non-Jewish alike) that has for so long turned its back on Zionism's victims. Every day Israeli occupation practices on the West Bank and in Gaza, as well as Israeli attacks on civilians in Lebanon, pass without so much as a gesture of disapproval from Jewish intellectuals who have traditionally been in the forefront of human rights causes. This community of writers, intellectuals, scholars, and professionals has betrayed its human mission. Why, for example did not the mass expulsion of 250,000 civilians from their homes in South Lebanon by Israeli forces using cluster bombs during the spring of 1978 elicit a single public expression of condemnation? The outrages go on every day, yet no one says anything. Can this silence be adequately explained by the argument that

an Israel besieged by terrorists can do no wrong, or at least nothing to provoke a word of criticism by responsible Jews? Second, we must enter the political and cultural debate about the Middle East peace in full force; we cannot any longer be pacified with observer status, nor with empty repetitions of how the Palestinian problem is (or is not) the center of the Middle East conundrum.

We have made good progress in both these tasks already. It is a matter of national pride that today's Palestinian is better schooled in the ways of political democracy than any other Arab, and this despite dispersion and exile. More Palestinians than ever speak today in *positive* detail of what the future must bring for Jews and Arabs alike. No Arab community understands the processes of political history more intimately than the Palestinian, and no community is more likely than ours to continue direct democratic participation in national life. This is why one facet of the Palestinian mission is to demonstrate the poverty of institutional and ideological domination, and how even the most oppressed and the most dominated can envision a generous political state of affairs. In recent years leading Palestinians have occasionally spoken from the depths of their exile and misery of a time when Palestine would become the site of two societies existing together, side by side, in peace and harmony. In time, perhaps, such a thing will be inevitable. Now of course it seems very far away. But if more Palestinians, more Jews and Americans, in short, if more people take up the question of Palestine as a matter for the common good of Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews, then the day will come soon enough.

As far as I am concerned, the Palestinian mission is a mission of peace. I am sure that this is true for the vast majority of our people. We are not just a population of exiles seeking restitution and national self-determination; we have recreated ourselves as a people out of the destruction of our national existence, and our national organization, the Palestine Liberation Organization has symbolized both the loneliness of our vision and the wonderful power of our faith in it. Certainly when the PLO is compared with the Israeli army or air force,

and when our civilians in refugee camps support the PLO while willingly exposing themselves to Israeli bombers, it is clear that the Palestinian cause means a choice of peace and human will over steel and sheer force. Our presence on the political stage, as poets, writers, intellectuals, militants, has invigorated the entire Arab and Third Worlds as none of its political ideologies has. In the end the Palestinian mission comes down to individuals—whether it be a leader like Yasir Arafat, or a poet like Samih al Qassem, or anyone of thousands of dedicated men and women in Lebanon, Gaza, Nazareth, or Detroit—who by standing before the world and before Zionism can ask the question, are you going to eradicate me to make way for someone else, and if so what right do you have to do so? Why is it right for a Jew born in Chicago to immigrate to Israel, whereas a Palestinian born in Jaffa is a refugee? The real strength of the Palestinian is just this insistence on the human being *as a detail*—the detail likely to be swept away in order for a grandiose project to be realized. The Palestinian therefore stands on a small plot of land stubbornly called Palestine, or an idea of peace based neither on a project for transforming people into nonpeople nor on a geopolitical fantasy about the balance of power, but on a vision of the future accommodating both the peoples with authentic claims to Palestine, not just the Jews.

I must be blunt about the alternative. The Middle East is more heavily armed, more politically mobilized for war than any other region of the world. At present Israel is helping South Africa with its nuclear program, and has not signed the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. There are at least half a dozen states whose regimes are seriously threatened both by internal and external forces. The United States is committed to the region in ways that its citizenry—or its government for that matter—can scarcely comprehend. There is oil, there are markets, there are geopolitical "interests," there are nuclear options at stake. The Soviet Union interlocks with the United States in the Middle East, thus doubling the problems. To this huge mound of imponderables it has been customary to bring political analysis armed mainly with ideological clichés of a

frightening, blinding simplicity. Israel, for example, has still not taken the step of scrapping its official division of its own population into "Jews" and "non-Jews." Rarely have the concepts of justice, realism, and compassion played any role, much less any serious role, in attempts to think about the Middle East, which has been commanded by outdated generalities like coarse nationalism and great-power interests, rarely by ideas about individual human rights. In the end, it is finally the humblest and the most basic instrument that will bring peace, and certainly that instrument is not a fighter plane or a rifle butt. This instrument is self-conscious rational struggle conducted in the interests of human community. It is, for the Middle East, for the United States, and for the world, *really asking* the question of Palestine, going to great lengths to seek answers, speaking, writing, acting together with others to make sure that the just and right answers are the ones settled upon. Avoidance, force, fear, and ignorance will no longer serve.

IV
Uncertain Future

Two things are certain: the Jews of Israel will remain; the Palestinians will also remain. To say much more than that with assurance is a foolish risk. I have little doubt that the United States will press on with negotiations between Israel and Egypt over Palestinian autonomy, or that in the short run Jordan will not join in, Begin will take harder and harder positions, or that no Palestinian or any consequence will participate in the unpleasant process. But consider the variables:

Egypt is a huge question mark. Will opposition to Sadat increase? Can the regime long survive its isolation from the Arab world? Saudi Arabia and Jordan are in a peculiarly acute position at present, and that too is bound to change. Can either or both of them continue to resist U.S. pressure; will their ruling houses outlast their internal problems; will the effect of Iran's revolution make itself more strongly felt? Iran itself will continue to go through upheaval for months to come, with

enormous consequences for the region, the world economy, and geopolitics. Syria and Iraq may or may not play the role in Arab politics that their forecast union seems to promise. Each country has so peculiarly individual a sense of its regional priorities (contrast the Syrian role in Lebanon with Iraq's attitude toward Iran) as to make the outcome of the Baghdad alliance impossible to determine.

Saudi behavior in the years ahead is of major importance. I do not think that the royal family (internally divided as it now is) will precipitate total breaks with any Arab state or grouping;* the question is how hard the Saudis will push economically for one or another political line in the region. About such mercurial regimes as the Libyan, it is even more difficult to be precise. Certainly there can be no ruling out the possibility that Libya will be under severe attack, perhaps by Sadat, perhaps from other quarters, but its oil wealth will not easily be handed over to Egypt, which in the present U.S. scheme of things is better kept economically insecure. There is a disturbing probability too that Jordan's uncertain status quo might tempt Israel to a strike, especially if by doing so the Hashemites could be made to give way to some sort of Palestinian polity on the East Bank.

Israeli politics—no less than American policy—seem rather more fixed and determinate than they may really be. Personalities like Moshe Dayan have been gesturing toward Syria and the PLO, but the chorus of protest (in the United States and in Israel) has been deafening. Such initiatives can continue indefinitely without significant change in the official Israeli position. After the spring 1978 Israeli attack on south Lebanon, there has been serious thought given to a "final solution" for the Palestinians; to Palestinian partisans, Camp David is the political design lending credence to that pessimistic view. How far the views on Palestinian self-determination of Israel and the United States converge is the main question now. An added complexity is Egypt's role, both with Israel and, to a certain extent, against it.

Economic issues of vast importance and social revolution—the region is inherently rife with both—are certain to influence

the future of peace in the Middle East. The United States, for example, has gone on record as being willing to invade an oil country if energy supplies seem threatened; and certainly since the shah's fall both Israel and Egypt have been advertising themselves as willing gendarmes. The crucial point, which may be an irrational one, is what power is going to tolerate what level of economic or political provocation. Will one protest movement turn insurrectionary; will another regime move against a neighbor; will the simmering anarchy of Lebanon (e.g., continued Israeli support for renegade Christian militants in the south) or the continuing revolution in Iran tempt an intelligence service to some plot or other; will Israel extend itself east or north; will the United States increase its direct military support to various regimes? The questions are multiple and there is no way to answer them at present. My point is simply that there can be no blueprint or scenario (no matter how sophisticated and accurate) sufficiently complex to account for every possible, extremely consequential *impulse* surrounding the question of Palestine.

In its defensiveness and its anxiety to protect its imperial interests, United States policy projects something resembling a blueprint for Palestine. Certainly "self-rule" and "autonomy," well short of self-determination and independence, are the main ingredients. The assumption is that because of its power and interests the United States has the right to decide for people like the Palestinians what is best. Every such effort at liberal interventionism in recent U.S. history has failed, and there is no reason to assume that the projected Palestinian tutelage will not fail also. But I am not such a mechanistic determinist as to believe that the failure will simply take place, or that Palestinian self-determination is guaranteed as a result. I prefer to rely on the Palestinian will to self-determination, which I have tried to describe in these pages, and on my confidence that in the United States an estimably large group of people will come to the realization that the policies that brought disaster in Vietnam must not be used against the Palestinian people.

That there will be a significant Palestinian counterresponse

to what is now taking place as a result of Camp David, I have no doubt. The PLO gathers support every minute now, and in the short run, it is also going to attract greater Israeli opposition and support. But because the present situation is essentially at an impasse, and because current ideas that leave out the PLO are proven bankrupt, it is far too tempting to say confidently that a Palestinian political initiative will emerge, and will carry the whole region forward. In many ways such an eventuality would be a positive result of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty. But we must not forget that Palestine is also saturated with blood and violence, and we must look forward realistically to much turbulence, much ugly human waste, in the short term. Unhappily, the question of Palestine will renew itself in all too well-known forms. But so too will the people of Palestine—Arabs and Jews—whose past and future ties them inexorably together. Their encounter has yet to occur on any important scale. But it will occur, I know, and it will be to their mutual benefit.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

There is an enormous, hopelessly proliferating mass of writing on the Middle East generally and on the Palestinians, Zionism, and their conflict in particular. I cannot pretend to note more than a small part of it here. However, I think it is useful to point out the material likely not to be familiar to the Anglo-American reader, who is far more likely to be exposed either to the standard political science expertise or to pro-Zionist writing.

A good place to begin—although it must be borne in mind that almost all of the items I shall mention here are not easily available except from large libraries—is with the very large and detailed bibliography in *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: An Annotated Bibliography*, eds. Walid Khalidi and Jill Khadduri (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1974). The institute in Beirut publishes a great deal of material in English, French, and Arabic, including *The Journal of Palestine Studies*, a quarterly now obtainable from P.O. Box 19449, Washington, D.C., 20036. The two indispensable compilations for any preliminary study of the Palestine question are Ibrahim Abu-Lughod's *Transformation of Palestine* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971) and Walid Khalidi's *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971). The classic work on Arab and Palestinian struggle is George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (1938; rprt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1948). This must be supplemented with Doreen Ingrams's collection of documents in *Palestine Papers, 1917–1922: Seeds of Conflict* (London: John Murray, 1972). See also A.L. Tibawi's *Anglo-Arab Relations* (London: Luzac, 1978), his *A Modern History of Syria, Including Lebanon and Palestine* (London: Macmillan, 1969), and his *British Interests in Palestine* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). Tibawi's historical research is the finest yet produced by a Palestinian, and ranks with excellent historical work anywhere for its findings and its honesty. Testimonial history is to be found in Sami Hadawi, *Bitter Harvest, Palestine 1914–67* (New York: New World Press, 1967), which should be complemented with the remarkable self-portrait of a Palestinian in exile by Fawaz Turki, *The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian Exile* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972).

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Two books by expert journalists that deal with the resurgence of Palestinian resistance in the sixties and thereafter are Gerard Chaliand, *La Resistance Palestinienne* (Paris: Seuil, 1970) and David Hirst, *The Gun and the Olive Branch: The Roots of Violence in the Middle East* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977). There is an interesting, although somewhat sketchy background provided for recent Palestinian resistance in Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine During the British Mandate* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973). One ought also to read the major RAND study on the Palestine guerrilla movement, William Quandt, Fuad Jabber, Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973). Quandt is now a member of the National Security Council and is considered to be Brzezinski's man on the Middle East, and therefore see also his *Decade of Decisions: American Policy Toward the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). For additional journalistic (and conservative) material on the period Quandt covers, there is Edward R. F. Sheehan, *The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger: A Secret History of American Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1976); word has it that most of Sheehan's privileged information was leaked to him by Kissinger, since he is the book's hero. Earlier information on U.S. foreign policy is studied critically in Richard Stevens, *American Zionism and U.S. Foreign Policy 1942–1947* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1962), and for a detailed work on the influence of the Jewish vote during the 1948 election there is the sobering account in John Snetsinger, *Truman, The Jewish Vote and the Creation of Israel* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1974).

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statement of the same story. A more recent and sociologically more sophisticated work is Elia T. Zurayk's *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

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Without a doubt, however, the most impressive material coming out of Israel is produced by one man, Professor Israel Shahak, professor of chemistry at The Hebrew University, a formidable scholar and chairman of the Israeli League of Human Rights. He translates articles, does detailed studies of his own, and mounts campaigns on behalf of human rights in Israel and the occupied territories. His materials (The Shahak Papers) can now be obtained from the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, 1322 18th Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; one set alone (based on what takes place in about three weeks) is worth more than what any combination of Western newspapers can deliver to their readers in a decade. Shahak's regular reports need to be supplemented by the only conveniently available one-volume account of Israeli occupation practices, *Treatment of Palestinians in Israeli-Occupied West Bank and Gaza: Report of The National Lawyers Guild 1977 Middle East Delegation* (New York: National Lawyers Guild, 1978).

In addition to the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, which regularly holds meetings and distributes literature, several organizations here and abroad publish counterarchival material. The Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) publishes books, occasional papers, and the like; these can be obtained by writing AAUG, P.O. Box 7391, North End

Station, Detroit, Mich., 48202. The Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP) is the only serious radical research collective on the Middle East in this country, run almost entirely by Americans; MERIP publishes a monthly bulletin, and occasional papers. Write MERIP, P.O. Box 3122, Columbia Heights Station, Washington, D.C., 20010. Other useful periodical material can be obtained from the *Review of Middle Eastern Studies* (Ithaca Press), *Gazelle, Israleft, Khamsin, Monthly Review, In These Times, Seven Days*, and columns by Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway in the *Village Voice*. In England Zed Press, in France Maspero, publish important books. I have found it valuable to read military journals, *The Wall Street Journal*, congressional hearings, State Department records, and other such establishment periodicals for the viewpoint they put forward. The Middle East establishment in particular is represented by *The Middle East Journal*, a quarterly. As antidotes, especially on the 1967 and 1973 wars, see: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, ed., *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation of June 1967: An Arab Perspective* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970) and Naseer Aruri, ed., *Middle East Crucible: Studies on the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973* (Wilmette, Ill.: Medina Press, 1975). See also Aharon Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World* (New York: Funk and Wagnals, 1970).

Two qualifications need to be made: (1) Western readers still cannot easily get hold of material produced in Arabic, which is obviously crucial, such as the journals, studies, reports produced by the PLO Research Center in Beirut. (2) In comparison with pro-Zionist material, everything I have listed, with a few exceptions, is much harder to come by, a situation colluded in, as I said above, by major networks, publishers, newspaper news services, and distributors.

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CHAPTER NOTES

Introduction

1. For an analogous kind of censorship, see Noam Chomsky, "10 Years After Tet: The Big Story That Got Away," *More*, 8, 6 (June 1978), 16–23.

2. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), p. 290.

Chapter One

1. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), pp. 31–49.

2. There is a detailed account of press and publishing censorship imposed on the Palestinian problem (by consensus) in England in Christopher Mayhew and Michael Adams, *Publish It Not: The Middle East Cover-Up* (London: Longman Group, 1975). Note furthermore that any Israeli or pro-Israeli book is routinely reviewed in *The New York Times* by a well-known pro-Israeli (e.g., Irving Howe on Saul Bellow's *To Jerusalem and Back*, Saul Bellow on Teddy Kollek's book about his experience as mayor of Jerusalem, etc.). Yet any book by an Arab or someone critical of Israel is just as routinely reviewed by a pro-Zionist critic (e.g., Michael Walzer on Noam Chomsky's *Peace in the Middle East?* or Nadav Safran on Sadat's autobiography). *The New York Review of Books* has almost literally never printed anything by a Palestinian since the Palestinian question came to the fore after 1974. During 1978, *NYRB* did print articles more or less critical of Israel by I. F. Stone, Guido Goldman, and Stanley Hoffmann, all of them supporting some sort of Palestinian self-determination, and yet the iron barrier against Palestinians—of whom there is no shortage—representing themselves remains. More serious is the scandalous nonreporting of what goes on inside Israel or the Occupied Territories; there is an almost total blackout on reports of Israeli government practices (most of them routinely carried in the

Israeli press), all of which, were they to have taken place anywhere else in the world, would have been front-page news.

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4. Alphonse de Lamartine, *Voyage en Orient* (1835; reprinted Paris: Hachette, 1887), vol. 2, p. 533.

5. Quoted from Istakhari and Ibn Hankal, in Guy Le Strange, *Palestine Under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500 Translated from the Works of the Medieval Arab Geographers* (1890; reprinted Beirut: Khayat, 1965), p. 28.

6. Quoted in Richard Bevis, "Making the Desert Bloom: An Historical Picture of Pre-Zionist Palestine," *The Middle East Newsletter*, V, 2 (Feb.–Mar. 1971), 4.

7. *The Anglo-Palestine Yearbook 1947–8* (London: Anglo-Palestine Publications, 1948), p. 33.

8. See Adnan Abu-Ghazeleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973).

9. Theodor Herzl, *Complete Diaries*, ed. Raphael Patai, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Herzl Press and T. Yoseloff, 1960), vol. I, p. 88.

10. *Palestine Papers 1917–1922: Seeds of Conflict*, com. and annot. Doreen Ingrams (London: John Maney, 1972), pp. 19 ff.

11. *Documents From Israel, 1967–1973: Readings for a Critique of Zionism*, ed. Uri Davis and Norton Mezvinsky (London: Ithaca Press, 1975), p. 44.

12. Janet Abu-Lughod, "The Demographic Transformation of Palestine," in *The Transformation of Palestine*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), pp. 153–61.

13. Quoted in Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel, 1917–1948* (1965; reprinted Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 5.

14. J. Abu-Lughod, "The Demographic Transformation," pp. 141–42, 152–153.

15. *A Survey of Palestine 1946: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Jerusalem, 1946), p. 146.

16. Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (1971; reprinted New York: Bantam Books, 1972), pp. 194 ff.

17. See Ingrams, *Palestine Papers*, pp. 20, 28.

18. Ibid., p. 58.

19. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 462.

20. For a demystifying report on the kibbutzim, see *The Candid Kibbutz Book* (London: MERAG, 1978).

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22. Quoted in James McDonald, *My Mission to Israel* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1951), p. 176.

23. George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (1938; reprinted New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 15.

24. I discuss this point at length in *Orientalism*, pp. 284–328.

25. Ingrams, *Palestine Papers*, pp. 31–32.

26. This subject is discussed in Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959).

27. Edmund Wilson, *A Piece of My Mind: Reflections at Sixty* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1958), p. 85.

28. Edmund Wilson, *Black, Red, Blond and Olive* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 462–63.

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30. Saul Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976) and Stephen Spender, "Among the Israelis," in *The New York Review of Books* (March 6, 1975); but see Noam Chomsky, "What Every American Should Believe," *Gazelle Review*, 2 (London: Ithaca Press, 1977), 24–32, for a critique of Bellow.

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32. This posture is perfectly set forth in Moynihan's *A Dangerous Place* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1978).

33. Nicholas Von Hoffman, *Daily Pilot*, July 6, 1977.

34. Cited in *The Right of Return of the Palestinian People*, United Nations Publication, 1978, pp. 6–7.

Chapter Two

1. I. F. Stone, "Confessions of a Jewish Dissident," in *Underground to Palestine, and Reflections Thirty Years Later* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

2. George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (London: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 50.

3. Ibid., p. 592.

4. Ibid., pp. 594–95.

5. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), pp. 153–57, 214, 228.

6. Arthur Hertzberg, ed., *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1976), p. 133.

7. Ibid., p. 134.

8. See Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pass.; a powerful case is made also by *The Non-Jew in the Jewish State: A Collection of Documents*, ed. Israel Shahak (privately printed by Shahak, 2 Bartenura Street, Jerusalem), 1975.

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12. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), p. 129.

13. Harry Bracken, "Essence, Accident and Race," *Hermathena* 116 (Winter, 1973), 81–96.

14. See Curtin, *Imperialism*, pp. 93–105, which contains an important extract from Knox's book.

15. George Nathaniel Curzon, *Subjects of the Day: Being a Selection of Speeches and Writings* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1915), pp. 155–56.

16. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, in *Youth and Two Other Stories* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, 1925), p. 52.

17. Ibid., pp. 50–51.

18. Agnes Murphy, *The Ideology of French Imperialism, 1817–1881* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1948), pp. 110, 136, 189.

19. Amos Oz, a leading Israeli novelist (also considered a "dove") puts it nicely: "For as long as I live, I shall be thrilled by all those who came to the Promised Land to turn it either into a pastoral paradise or egalitarian Tolstoyan communes, or into a well-educated, middle-class Central European enclave, a replica of Austria and Bavaria. Or those who wanted to raise a Marxist paradise, who built kibbutzim on biblical sites and secretly yearned for Stalin to come one day to admit that 'Bloody Jews, you have done it better than we did.'" *Time*, May 15, 1978, p. 61.

20. I have taken all of these quotations from an excellent, and invaluable, M.A. thesis submitted by Miriam Rosen at Hunter College in 1976, "The Last Crusade: British Archeology in Palestine, 1865–1920," pp. 18–21.

21. See Neville J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), and Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement*, Vol. I *1918–1929* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1974).

22. See the forthright historical account in Amos Elon, *The Israelis: Founders and Sons* (1971; reprinted New York: Bantam Books, 1972), pp. 218–24.

23. Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* trans. David Thorstad (New York: Monad Press of the Anchor Foundation, 1973), p. 39.

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25. Quoted in David Waines, "The Failure of the Nationalist Resistance," in *The Transformation of Palestine*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 220.

26. Ibid., p. 213.

27. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 371.

28. Ibid., p. 125.

29. Ibid., pp. 128–29, 253.

30. Ibid., p. 128.

31. Yehoshafat Harkabi, *Arab Attitudes to Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 1972). Harkabi was chief of military intelligence until he was dismissed in 1959 by Ben Gurion. He later became a professor at the Hebrew University and an expert Arabist, indeed the principal propagandist in Israel against everything Arab and/or especially Palestinian. See, for example, his virulently anti-Palestinian book (distributed gratis in this country by the Israeli embassy) *Palestinians and Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 1974). Surprisingly, General Harkabi has recently become a "dove" and a supporter of the Peace Now movement.

32. Reproduced in *Haolam Hazeh*, May 15, 1974. *Haolam Hazeh*'s editor, Uri Avnery, has written an interesting, somewhat demagogic book, worth looking at for the light it sheds on Israeli politics: *Israel Without Zionism: A Plea for Peace in the Middle East* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1968). It contains vitriolic attacks on people like Moshe Dayan, whom Avnery describes essentially as "an Arab-fighter" (cf. Indian-fighters in the American West).

33. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 130.

34. Ibid., p. 188.

35. Ibid., pp. 215–16.

36. Ibid., p. 130.

37. C. L. Temple, *The Native Races and Their Rulers* (1918; reprinted London: Frank Cass and Company, 1968), p. 41.

38. *Trial and Error*, pp. 156–57.

39. On the army as a matrix for organizing society, see Michel Foucault, *"Questions à Michel Foucault sur la géographie," Hérodote*, 1, 1 (first trimester 1976), p. 85. See also Yves Lacoste, *La Géographie, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre* (Paris: Maspero, 1976).

40. Details taken from Walter Lehn, "The Jewish National Fund," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, III, 4 (Summer 1974), 74–96. It is worth noting here that during the academic year 1977–78, Lehn, a retired professor of linguistics,

was visiting professor at Bir Zeit University, the only Arab institution of higher learning on the occupied West Bank. During the year he continued his research on the JNF, and also signed an open letter, on January 6, protesting (as an eyewitness) the savage beating of two young Palestinian students by Israeli soldiers (one of the two was hospitalized after he collapsed from the beating). Along with six other professors, Lehn was denied a work permit by the West Bank military authorities in early May 1978. Not one U.S. newspaper carried this news. But see also Uri Davis and Walter Lehn, "And the Fund Still Lives," *Journal of Palestine Studies* VII, 4 (Summer 1978), 3–33.

41. As an example, consider the fate of Umm al-Fahm, a large Arab village given to Israel by King Abdallah of Jordan in 1949 according to the Rhodes agreement. Before 1948 the village owned 140,000 dunams, with a population of 5,000. In 1978 there were about 20,000 Arab inhabitants of Umm al-Fahm, but the village's land had been reduced to 15,000 dunams, almost all of it rocky and poor for cultivation. All the best land was confiscated by various "legal" decrees, including the 1953 Law of Land, Insurance and Compensation. The greatest irony perhaps is that two socialist kibbutzim—Megiddo and Givat Oz—were built on the confiscated Arab land. What was left was turned over to a moshav, or cooperative agricultural settlement.

42. Joseph Weitz, *My Diary and Letters to the Children* (Tel Aviv: Massada, 1965), vol. II, pp. 181–82.

43. Jon and David Kimche, *A Clash of Destinies: The Arab-Jewish War and the Founding of the State of Israel* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1960), p. 92. See also the two important articles by Walid Khalidi, "The Fall of Haifa," *Middle East Forum*, XXXV, 10 (December 1959), 22–32; and "Plan Dalet: The Zionist Blueprint for the Conquest of Palestine," *Middle East Forum*, XXXVII, 9 (November 1961), 22–28.

44. The most thorough study ever made of the Palestinian exodus, after a combing of every Arab newspaper and broadcast of the period, revealed absolutely no evidence of "orders to leave," or of anything except urgings to Palestinians to remain in their country. Unfortunately, the terror was too great for a mostly unarmed population. See Erskine Childers, "The Wordless Wish: From Citizens to Refugees," in *The Transformation of Palestine*, ed. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), pp. 165–202. Childers, an Irishman, was a free-lance journalist when he conducted his research; his findings are devastating to the Zionist case.

45. See Avnery, *Israel Without Zionism*.

46. Weitz, *My Diary*, vol. III, p. 293.

47. Ibid., p. 302.

48. Tawfiq Zayyad, "Fate of the Arabs in Israel," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, VI, 1, (Autumn 1976), 98–99.

49. Yet in its editorial of May 19, 1976, *The New York Times* called the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza "a model of future cooperation" between the two peoples. Israeli destruction of Arab houses,

torture, deportation, murder, administrative detention, all have been denounced by Amnesty International, the Red Cross, even the 1978 State Department Report on human rights abuses. And still the repression continues, both in the gross and coarsely brutal ways I have mentioned and in other ways, too. Collective punishment is common: In 1969 the military governor forbade the sale of mutton as a punishment for the whole town of Ramallah; during the middle of the grape season in 1970 the sale of grapes, harvesting, and the like were all prohibited unless notables denounced PLO publicity. In April 1978 a seven-day curfew was imposed on Nablus because "the inhabitants did not collaborate with the police."

50. Quoted in Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, p. 70.

51. See Saul Bellow, *To Jerusalem and Back* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), pp. 152–61 and pass.

52. John Cooley, "Settlement Drive Lies Behind Latest Israeli 'No,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, July 25, 1978, makes it clear that Israel plans officially to populate the West Bank with a Jewish majority (1.25 million) by the year 2000, and that Yamit (in the Rafah salient—occupied Sinai) is being planned as a major Israeli city, under construction now. According to Arye Duzin, Chairman of the Jewish Agency, Yamit "must always remain under Jewish sovereignty" as forecast by the Zionist Executive in 1903. Many of the settlements are to be filled with South African Jews (hence Israel's close military—indeed nuclear—cooperation with South Africa, and its particularly cordial relations with Prime Minister John Vorster, a convicted Nazi), Americans, and of course Russians.

53. Jiryis, *Arabs in Israel*, p. 70.

54. The full text of the Koenig Report was printed in an English translation in *SWASIA*, III, 41 (October 15, 1976).

55. Take as an example the raid on Maalot by Palestinians in May 1974. This event has now become synonymous with Palestinian terrorism, yet no U.S. newspaper took note of the fact that for two consecutive weeks before the incident, Israeli artillery and air power were used to bombard southern Lebanon mercilessly. Well over 200 civilians were killed by napalm and at least 10,000 were made homeless. Still, only Maalot is recalled.

Chapter Three

1. Quoted in Nafez Nazzal, "The Zionist Occupation of Western Galilee, 1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, III, 3 (Spring 1974), 70.

2. For a somewhat disaffected European view of this subject, see Gérard Chaliand, *Restoration in the Third World: Myths and Prospects* (New York: The Viking Press, 1977).

3. Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), pp. 210–12.

4. *Enemy of the Sun: Poetry of Palestinian Resistance*, ed. Naseer Arari and Edmund Ghareeb (Washington: Drum and Spear Press, 1970), p. 66.

5. See Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Press, 1979).

6. On the state of Arabs under Israeli rule, there are excellent reports to be found in documents produced by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign (1322 18th Street, NW, Washington, D.C.), by Dr. Israel Shahak in Israel (his reports and translations on behalf of the Israeli League of Human Rights are often distributed by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign), by liberal groups like the American Friends Service Committee, the Mennonite Central Committee, the World Council of Churches, etc. Also by Amnesty International, the Red Cross, even the U.S. Department of State survey of human rights, which in 1977 and 1978 cited Israel's treatment of its non-Jewish subjects.

7. Abu-Lughod, review of Jiryis's *The Arabs in Israel*, in *MERIP Reports*, 58 (June 1977), p. 24.

8. Albert Hourani, *Minorities in the Arab World* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 22.

9. Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1960).

10. Yehoshafat Harkabi, *The Position of Israel in the Israeli-Arab Conflict* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1967), p. 84.

11. Ghassan Kanafani, *Rijal fil Shams* (Beirut: Dar-al-Taliah, 1963), pp. 7–8.

12. This is especially true of press reports, but in the standard, quasi-official American work on the Palestinians, there is little acknowledgement of the human factors that garnered support for the PLO. See William Quandt, Fuad Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). This study was done for the RAND Corporation.

13. The U.S. press failure on Iran, the neglect of what has been taking place in East Timor and elsewhere, all stem from the same lack of independent investigation, the same willingness to ignore a disturbing history, the same acceptance of state propaganda. See William A. Dorman and Elsan Omeed, "Reporting Iran the Shah's Way," *Columbia Journalism Review*, XVII, 5 (Jan.–Feb. 1979), 27–33; also, on the question of East Timor and press neglect, see Noam Chomsky, Statement Delivered to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, November 1978; on misreporting "Islam," see Edward W. Said, "Whose Islam?" *The New York Times*, January 29, 1979.

14. See Sarah Graham-Brown, "The Structural Impact of Israeli Colonization," *MERIP Reports* No. 74, IX, 1 (January 1979), 9–20. This is the most complete analysis of the subject now available.

15. The Peace Now movement, much compromised and far from united in its aims, is one collection; another is found in Sheli, the grouping represented in the Knesset by Arie Eliav; still another is located in the Israeli-Palestinian Council for Peace. None of these groups has ever gone as far as Rakah, as The Israeli League of Human Rights, as the various offshoots of Matzpen, all of which are at best a minority within a minority.

Chapter Four

1. One recent essay arguing this point of view—far too indiscriminately, in my opinion—is Fouad Ajami's "The End of Pan-Arabism," *Foreign Affairs*, 57, 2 (Winter 1978–79), 353–73.

2. John Steinberg, "The New World (Dis)order," *Seven Days*, III, 3 (March 30, 1979), 14–16.

3. Gerard Chaliand, *Revolution in the Third World: Myths and Prospects* (New York: The Viking Press, 1977).

4. Hisham Sharaby, *Muqadimat li dirasit al mujtama' al 'araby* (Beirut: Dar al Mutahida, 1975); Murray Bookshin, *The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years, 1868–1936* (1977; rprt. New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

5. One possible exception (there are several) is the work of Munif al Razzaz, very little of which is available in English, however. For a good selection of recent Arabic political and cultural thought, see the two selections edited by Anwar Abdel Malek: *Anthologie de la littérature arabe: Les essais* (Paris: Seuil, 1965) and *La Pensée politique arabe contemporaine* (Paris: Seuil, 1970).

6. Harold Saunders in *MERIP Reports*, No. 70, 8, 7 (September 1978), 13–15.

7. For a demystification of this official view, see Noam Chomsky, *"Human Rights" and American Foreign Policy* (Washington: Spokesman Books, 1978).

8. See I. F. Stone, "The Case for Camp David," *New York Review of Books*, October 28, 1978.

9. See the following letters: Sadat to Carter, Carter to Sadat, Begin to Carter, Carter to Begin. All signed as adjuncts to the Camp David Agreements, September 18, 1978.

10. For an account of this, see Amnon Kapeliouk, "De l'affrontement à la convergence," *Le Monde diplomatique* (December 1977), 18.

11. Walid Khalidi, "Thinking the Unthinkable: A Sovereign Palestinian State," *Foreign Affairs*, 56, 4 (July 1978), 695–713.

12. See *The New York Times*, March 29, 1979.

13. See Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War 1958–1967: A Study of Ideology in Politics* (2d ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

14. Testimony of Yehuda Zvi Blum in *The Colonization of the West Bank*

Territories by Israel, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Immigration and Nationalization of the Committee of the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, October 17 and 18, 1977, pp. 24–46.

15. See the arguments exonerating Israel's aggressions by Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977). See the criticism of Walzer's leniency toward Israel in Noam Chomsky, "An Exception to the Rules," *Inquiry*, April 17, 1978, 23–27, and Richard Falk, "The Moral Argument as Apologia," *The Nation*, March 25, 1978, 341–43.

16. Michael Bar-Zohar, *Ben-Gurion: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p. 161.

17. See the details of General Arik Sharon's career (in the notorious Unit 101 especially) given in *The Voice of Zionism*, published by *Middle East International*, Room 105, Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square, WC2N 5EP, London, pp. 46–57 (n.d.).

18. Clinton Bailey in *The Jerusalem Post*, February 22, 1979.

19. A recent report on land seizure and settlements on the Occupied Territories is Paul Quiring, "Israeli Settlements and Palestinian Rights," *Middle East International*, 87 (September 1978), 10–12, and 88 (October 1978), 12–15.

20. See Amnon Kapeliouk, "L'Autonomie selon Israel," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, January 1979.

21. Fayez Sayegh, "The Camp David Agreement and the Palestine Problem," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, VIII, 2 (Winter 1979), 40.

22. See Michael C. Hudson, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

23. Some of this work is already being done. See the important article by Barbara Kalkas, "Diverted Institutions: A Reinterpretation of the Process of Industrialization in Nineteenth Century Egypt," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 1, 1 (Winter 1979), 28–48.

24. The best book on the subject is Anwar Abdel Malek, *Egypt, Military Society*, trans. Charles Markham (New York: Random House, 1968).

25. On Palestinian nationalism between 1949 and 1967, see Saul Mishal, *East Bank West Bank: The Palestinians in Jordan, 1949–1967* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978).

26. The most "expert" proponent of this view is General Yehoshafat Harkabi, whose books are standard reading for the Israeli army, and are routinely distributed by Israeli embassies and consulates in the West. See his *Palestinians and Israel* (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 1974).

27. See, for example, *The Market of Arab Children in Israel: A Collection by the Israel League for Human and Civil Rights* (Tel Aviv, P.O. Box 14192), 1978.

28. See Roger Morris, *Uncertain Greatness: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 261.

29. The most cogent single analysis of U.S. policy during this period is to be found in Eqbal Ahmad, "What Washington Wants," in *Middle East Crucible: Studies on the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973*, ed. Naseer H. Aruri (Wilmette, Ill.: Medina Press, 1975), pp. 227–64. See also my study for the preceding period, "The United States and the Conflict of Powers in the Middle East," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, II, 3 (Spring 1973), 30–50.

30. "Towards Peace in the Middle East," Report of a Study Group, The Brookings Institution, 1975.

31. The best account of the problem is by Amnon Kapeliouk, "Le Pari," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1979.

32. On this subject, and the problem of muzzling talk by the Palestinians in this country, see the lead editorial, *Washington Post*, April 12, 1979.

33. Much the same argument is advanced by Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) in *Palestinien sans patrie: Entretiens avec Eric Rouleau* (Paris: Fayolle, 1978).

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About the Author

Edward W. Said is the author of *Orientalism; Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*; and *Beginnings: Intention and Method*. He lives in New York City.

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