

## A PEACE POLICY FOR ISRAEL

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**W**E have sympathy for the Jews who came to Palestine before the war, for they were deceived by the Zionists. We have sympathy for those who came after the war—for they were victims of Hitler. But the Jews who come to our country now—as conquerors—we just cannot understand them.’

I heard these words recently at an international conference. They were spoken by a delegate of the Palestine liberation movement, in answer to an Israeli delegate who was complaining that to discuss immigration into Israel was an infringement of Israeli sovereignty.

Some day there is going to be a general awakening in Israel to the fact that these words contain a key to the Middle East problem, and that ensuring a solution to the problem of the future welfare of the people of Israel need not be so difficult, if only they shake themselves free of the Zionist confidence trick that ties their security to a policy of unlimited expansion, if only they realise that their future must be as one loyal people among others in the region and not as a front for outside imperialist interests. The problem to be resolved is not, and never has been, Arab against Jew, as Israel’s rulers and its wire-pullers abroad pretend, but the problem of far-off imperialist would-be rulers making use of Jewish fears to embroil Jew with Arab and thus hold back the struggle of all the Arab peoples of the region for national independence and advance.

This is why, precisely, every voice from Israel dissenting from the Zionist myth, as does this book\*, is of first importance. The book does not deal in an up-to-date manner with the first necessary step toward eventual peace in the Middle East—the implementation of the UN resolution, but it does act as a healthy corrective for those many who, deeply distressed as all must be by the sufferings and insecurity of Jewish people throughout history, are deceived into imagining that effective sympathy requires uncritical acceptance of the theories and pretensions of Israel’s rulers.

Jewish people are the last of all who can rationally be racists. Ethnologically considered, Jewish racism is even more illogical than the Nazis’ Aryan twaddle. There are black Jews in Ethiopia, yellow Jews in China and as for European and American Jews—a goodly proportion are not semites at all but have the broad faces and wide

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\* *Israel Without Zionists*, Uri Avnery, Macmillan, 216 pp., 35s.

noses of mongoloids, for their ancestors never knew Palestine: these derive from the mass conversion of the Khazar kingdom in South Russia a few centuries ago.

Yet the Zionists, taking advantage of the sufferings of the Jews at Hitler's hands, and the sore on the conscience of humanity that failed to prevent it, have played a neat confidence trick in equating the Jew of today with the Jew of the Bible. Further, by blurring the distinction between Jew and Israeli, they have succeeded in turning the fraction of the Jewish people in Palestine into a racist, theocratic state at the expense of its previous inhabitants and in picturing the consequent conflict as one between Jew (the ancient victim) and Arab (the dog-in-the-manager owner of plenty of states and room for everyone who grudges—in the picture established by their fiction—a tiny place for his displaced brothers within his manifold broad acres).

Sedulously propagandising another myth, that of the heroic dwarf state (Israel equals David in this legend) repeatedly withstanding the incompetent overbig enemy (the totality of Arab lands being Goliath), they have successfully concealed the fact that none of these victories could have been won except by climbing upon the shoulders of, and parasitising, imperialism. There would never have been a 'Jewish home in Palestine', if it had not been for cynical exploitation of the struggle of the imperialists in the first world war, blackmailing first one side then the other until the cunning Balfour thought he saw a chance to jettison both promises to the Arabs and engagements to the French, by using Zionism as a screen for British imperial expansion. And the Israeli state itself, with its Zionist myths of Jewish Herrenvolk status and right to successive expansions, could not last more than a (metaphorical) day, whether economically or militarily, if it did not serve the ends of US imperialism and its satellites by continually menacing all that is progressive and unifying among the indigenous peoples of the region.

The arrogance, chauvinism and aggression involved in the claim that all Jews, even that true Israeli patriotism, must bow down to and serve the Zionist myth, has no precedent but Hitler's claim that all Germans owed allegiance to the Nazi thesis. On the contrary, just as those who fought Hitler were not anti-German, but true friends of Germany or, if themselves German, the real German patriots, while Nazism, instead of securing a 1,000 years Reich for Germany, doomed it to disaster, so all who wish well to Israel and its people, who wish to help them to a permanent national acceptance, peace and happiness in the region, must support those who are striving for an alternative to the Zionist policies and rulers. All the vaunted temporary military

superiority enjoyed today by Israel can give its people nothing more than the illusory security of the myopic. A theocratic racialism, defiant of the whole current of human morality, can never be a lasting foundation. An Israel that embodies it is as surely doomed ultimately as is 'white' supremacy in Southern Africa. It is an offence that not French planes, British tanks or US finance and the US fleet in the Mediterranean can ever lastingly protect. Not just I, but others before me also, have made this point ('All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword'—*Matthew*; and 'Put not thy trust in princes' (even Nixon and Wilson)—*Psalms*).

The stronger Israel grows, as a racist, theocratic state, tool of imperialism, the more antagonisms and hatred she is bound to arouse. The more, as night follows day, her situation leads her to attack her neighbours, expand and swallow their lands, absorb, as deprived persons and second-class citizens, peoples who can only desire her overthrow. The process is inevitable and can have but one end, not security, but that of the frog in Aesop's fable. Not the sword against wronged neighbours, but only reconciliation and *identification with* these neighbours, on the basis of righting the wrongs inflicted by her formation, can secure the survival—in the long run—of Israel in Palestine.

The proof is that not one but *two* intense nationalities have come into being in the area since the Zionist nightmare began to take shape and become concrete: these are the Israel *and* the Palestine identity and as the one grows stronger the other becomes ever more and more conscious and real. They must and can marry.

There is no ultimate incompatibility between the dream of Israeli security, restored to the path of the noble and characteristic contribution to humanity of Jewish thought of the past (utterly submerged and assassinated by the Zionist rulers and present Zionist policy of Israel)—namely, justice between man and man—and the noble aspiration proclaimed by the Palestine liberation movement: a secular Palestine in which all—Arab, Jew, Christian, Moslem—all, including all Jews now in Israel and all former Palestinians and immediate descendants who wish to return—shall dwell with equal rights in a fully democratic state.

That the new generation on the Palestine side should so fiercely and consistently proclaim this policy is already the most powerful feature of the situation, more powerful than the brutal swords of the Zionists who can see only a perspective of endless force and discrimination that endangers Israel and, repellent to the whole current of mankind's advance, must therefore spell its ultimate destruction.

Uri Avnery, the author of *Israel Without Zionists*, is by no means a solitary voice of dissent in Israel. Readers of *Labour Monthly* are familiar with the principled and even heroic stance of the Communist Party of Israel, led by Vilner and Toubi, in which side by side already Jew and Arab pursue a firm anti-imperialist, secular, anti-discriminatory and democratic line within Israel itself. There are already many, and will be more, dissenters. The hopeless impasse to which the Zionist policy—of subservience to imperialism, of discrimination and unlimited immigration at home, and of military retaliation and aggression as the vainly attempted solutions to all difficulties abroad—has brought Israel is becoming apparent to more and more independently minded Israelis. This important development in turn will have its impact on those sympathisers abroad—Jew and non-Jew alike—who, wishing well to Israel and to its neighbours—have been so deceived hitherto by the Zionist myth and its arrogant demand for unqualified support.

Avnery is a former Irgun nationalist and Israeli soldier, now an independent Knesset member (MP) and editor of an influential independent weekly. He did not hesitate to support the Israeli Government at the outbreak of the Six Days War. All this makes his doubts not less, but more interesting. His book is extremely readable, full of subtle analysis and intelligent, if cynical, judgement of the characters and political policies of leading personalities and parties in Israel today. Firmly attacking Zionist policy of unlimited expansion and reliance on imperialist aid, he subtitles his book 'A Plea for Peace in the Middle East' and calls not only for a federation of Israel and a new Arab Republic of Palestine but the creation of a 'Semitic Union' (unfortunate name) allying all the states of the region.

It is an extremely interesting detail (friends of Israel please note) that, holding such views and with no party backing, Avnery received seven per cent of the popular vote standing as candidate for President, the same figure, curiously enough, as that cast for the sinister Dayan.

Of course there is a gulf between the views of such as Avnery, to whom a *total* autonomy of structure is a *sine qua non* for Israel in any Palestine Federation, and that of the Palestine liberation front, which holds that the new secular Palestine must not differentiate between its citizens, and to whom a division which deprives Palestinians of, or continues to treat them as inferiors in, any part of their homeland is anathema, but this is neither theoretically nor practically unbridgeable.

On the other hand it is unnecessary to take any starry-eyed view of the possibilities of *immediate* agreement on a single state (remote

still in view of the fears, angers, hatred and injustice that prevail on all sides), in order to perceive that many state forms (e.g. cantonisation and confederation, as in Switzerland), of which it remains for the peoples concerned to find and work out at the right time that most appropriate, could eventually fit the bill and meet the needs of all.

The main point is that Zionist policy and ambitions can only mean the perpetuation of injustice to the original inhabitants of Palestine and peril to the adjoining states. Hence Zionism precludes negotiation and dooms Israel, sooner if forsaken by the imperialists, but, soon or late, inevitably. Avnery's book shows that, once this is rejected, there could at last be room for dialogue.