Peace or Armistice in the Near East?

By Hannah Arendt

Peace * in the Near East is essential to the State of Israel, to the Arab people and to the Western world. Peace, as distinguished from an armistice, cannot be imposed from the outside, it can only be the result of negotiations, of mutual compromise and eventual agreement between Jews and Arabs.

The Jewish settlement in Palestine may become a very important factor in the development of the Near East, but it will always remain a comparatively small island in an Arab sea. Even in the event of maximum immigration over a long period of years the reservoir of prospective citizens of Israel is limited to roughly two million, a figure that could be substantially increased only by catastrophic events in the United States or the Soviet Union. Since, however, (apart from the improbability of such a turn of events) the State of Israel owes its very existence to these two world powers, and since failure to achieve a genuine Jewish-Arab understanding will necessarily make its survival even more dependent upon continued sympathy and support of one or the other, a Jewish catastrophe in the two great surviving centers of world Jewry would lead almost immediately to a catastrophe in Israel.

The Arabs have been hostile to the building of a Jewish homeland almost from the beginning. The uprising of 1921, the pogrom of 1929, the disturbances from 1936 to 1939 have been the outstanding landmarks in the history of Arab-Jewish relations under British rule. It was only logical that the evacuation of British troops coincided with the outbreak of a Jewish-Arab war; and it is remarkable how little the accomplished fact of a State of Israel and Jewish victories over Arab armies have influenced Arab politics. All hopes to the contrary notwithstanding, it seems as though the one argument the Arabs are incapable of understanding is force.

As far as Arab-Jewish relations are concerned, the war and the Israeli victories have not changed or solved anything. Any settlement

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* This paper was written in 1948 upon the suggestion of Judah L. Magnes, the late President of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who from the close of World War I to the day of his death in October, 1948, had been the outstanding Jewish spokesman for Arab-Jewish understanding in Palestine. It is dedicated to his memory.
short of genuine peace will give the Arabs time to grow stronger, to mend the rivalries between the Arab states, possibly to promote revolutionary changes, social, economic and political. Probably such changes in the Arab world will come about in any event, but the question is whether they will be inspired by the thought of revanche and crystallize around a common hostility against Israel, or whether they will be prompted by an understanding of common interests and crystallize around close economic and political cooperation with the Jews, the most advanced and Westernized people of the region. Arab reluctance, on the one hand, to begin direct peace talks and the (implied) admission that they may prefer a peace imposed by an outside power, and Israeli handling of the Arab refugee problem on the other, argue in favor of the first possibility. But all considerations of the self-interest of both peoples speak for the second. To be sure, these reasons are weak in a century when political issues are no longer determined by common sense and when the representatives of great powers frequently behave more like gamblers than statesmen.

To such general considerations must be added the education in irresponsibility which was the concomitant of the mandate system. For twenty-five years, the peoples of Palestine could rely upon the British government to uphold adequate stability for general constructive purposes and feel free to indulge in all kinds of emotional, nationalistic, illusionary behavior. Occasional outbreaks, even if they enlisted almost unanimous popular support (as, for instance, the disturbances of 1936 to 1939 which were preceded by a successful Arab general strike, or the Jewish fight against Arab labor 1934-1935-1936 which was supported by practically the whole Jewish population), led to nothing more serious than another Inquiry Commission or another turn in the complicated game of British imperialist policy.

It is only natural that in an atmosphere where nothing was quite serious both parties grew more and more reckless, were more and more inclined to consider only their own interests and to overlook the vital realities of the country as a whole. Thus the Arabs neglected to take into account the rapid growth of Jewish strength and the far-reaching consequences of economic development, while the Jews ignored the awakening of colonial peoples and the new nationalist solidarity in the Arab world from Iraq to French Morocco. In hope or in hate both peoples had focused their attention so exclusively upon the British that they practically ignored each other: the Jews forgot that the Arabs, not the English, were the permanent reality in Near Eastern policies and
the Arabs that Jewish settlers, and not British troops, intended to stay permanently in Palestine.

The British, on the other hand, were quite content with this state of affairs, because it prevented both a working agreement between Jews and Arabs, which might have resulted in a rebellion against British rule, and an open conflict between them, which might have endangered the peace of the country. No doubt, "if the British Government had really applied itself with energy and good will to the establishment of good relations between the Jews and the Arabs, such could have been accomplished" (Chaim Weizmann). Yet, British interest in Arab-Jewish understanding awoke only when the British had decided to evacuate the country—a decision by the way which was caused neither by Jewish terrorism nor by the Arab League, but came as a consequence of the Labor Government's liquidation of the British rule in India. Since then the British have been genuinely interested in an Arab-Jewish settlement and in the prevention of the Balkanization of the region which may again attract a third power. But although the interests of the peoples of the Near East certainly coincide with British interests at this moment, the past record of British imperialism has made it impossible for her to negotiate a reasonable settlement.

But the choice between genuine peace and armistice is by no means only, or even primarily, an issue of foreign policy. The internal structure of the Arab as well of the Jewish states will depend upon it. A mere armistice would force the new Israeli state to organize the whole people for permanent potential mobilization; the permanent threat of armed intervention would necessarily influence the direction of all economic and social developments and possibly end in a military dictatorship. The cultural and political sterility of small thoroughly militarized nations has been sufficiently demonstrated in history. The examples of Sparta and similar experiments are not likely to frighten a generation of European Jews who are trying to wipe out the humiliation of Hitler's slaughterhouses with the newly-won dignity of battle and the triumph of victory. Nevertheless, even this generation should be able to realize that an independent Spartan existence will be possible only after the country has been built up and after the Jewish homeland has been definitely established, by no means the case now. Excessive expenditures on armaments and mobilization would mean not only the stifling of the young Jewish economy and the end of the country's social experiments, but lead to an increasing dependence of the whole population upon financial and other support from American Jewry.
A condition of no-peace and no-war will be far easier for the Arabs to bear precisely because of the stagnation of their economic life and the backwardness of their social life. In the long run, however, the poverty-stricken, undeveloped and unorganized Near East needs peace as badly as the Jews; it needs Jewish cooperation in order quickly to achieve the strength to prevent its remaining a power vacuum and to assure its independence. If the Arab states are not just pretending but really are afraid of Russian aggression, their only salvation lies in sincere collaboration with the State of Israel. The Arab’s argument that they can do without Jewish help and prefer to grow slowly and organically rather than be influenced by “foreign” Western methods and ideas may sound very attractive to a few romantics inside and outside the Arab world. The simple truth of the matter is that the world’s political pace will not allow them enough time for “organic” development; the Arabs, though potentially stronger than the Jews, are not a great power either and hardly on the way to becoming one. The victories of the Israeli army are dangerous to them not so much because of possible Jewish domination as because of the demonstrated power vacuum. If they continue to be anti-Western, to spend their energies fighting the tiny Jewish state and indulging their sterile pride in keeping the national character intact, they are threatened with something far worse, and much more real, than the bogey of Jewish domination.

In terms of international politics, the danger of this little war between two small peoples is that it inevitably tempts and attracts the great powers to interfere, with the result that existing conflicts explode because they can be fought out by proxy. Until now, neither the Jewish charge of an Anglo-Arab invasion nor the Arab countercharge of a Russian-Jewish aggression has contained any truth at all. The reason, however, why both legends sound so plausible and are so frequently accepted is that such a situation can indeed develop.

Moreover, the last war showed all too clearly that no better pretext or greater help exists for would-be aggressors than petty national conflicts fought out in chauvinist violence. The peoples of the Near East who show such a disturbing resemblance in psychology and political mentality to the small nations of Central and Eastern Europe, would do well to consider how easily these latter were conquered by Stalin as well as by Hitler, and to compare them with the more fortunate small nations, like the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland, who were not devoured by hate and not torn by chauvinistic passion.
The great good fortune of Jews as well as Arabs at this moment is that America and Great Britain not only have no interest in further hostilities, but, on the contrary, are genuinely eager to bring about an authentic pacification of the whole region. Mutual denunciations by Jews and Arabs to the effect that they are either British or Russian agents serve only to cloud the real issues: Jewish determination to keep and possibly extend national sovereignty without consideration for Arab interests, and Arab determination to expel the Jewish "invaders" from Palestine without consideration for Jewish achievements there. If this "independent and sovereign" behavior (Arab unwillingness during the war to take British advice, and the Jewish inclination to interpret as pressure any device which America may offer, for instance, in the question of Arab refugees) goes on unabated, then all independence and sovereignty will be lost. Since a trusteeship under the United Nations has become impossible, continuance of this stubbornness leaves only three kinds of peace which the world may finally be willing to offer the Near East: a Pax Britannica which is very unlikely at the moment, a Pax Americana which is even more unlikely, or a Pax Moscovita which, alas, is the only actual danger.

*The Incompatibility of Claims.*

A good peace is usually the result of negotiation and compromise, not necessarily of a program. Good relationships between Jews and Arabs will depend upon a changed attitude toward each other, upon a change in the atmosphere in Palestine and the Near East, not necessarily upon a formula. Hardly any conflict in the history of the world has given rise to so many programs and formulae from the outside; yet none of them has ever been acceptable to either side. Each has been denounced as soon as it was published as pro-Jewish by the Arabs and pro-Arab by the Jews.

The reception of the two Bernadotte Peace Proposals is typical. The first report to the United Nations concluded with a series of recommendations, made in the spirit of the United Nations' decision of partition; they provided for political implementation of economic cooperation through a "coordinated foreign policy" and "measures of common defense," for negotiated boundaries and for a limited guarantee of Jewish immigration. The second report, on the contrary, recommended two completely sovereign and independent political entities, separated by neutralized zones, and temporarily supervised by a UN
commission. Both reports were denounced equally by both sides. The differences between the two Peace Proposals were hardly recognized because they had one thing in common: the recognition of the existence of a State of Israel on one side, and the existence of an Arab population in Palestine and the Near East on the other.

Since no formula, however good and sensible, seems to be acceptable to either side while the present mood of the two peoples persists, it may well be that any plan, however rudimentary, will be a sufficient basis of negotiations as soon as this mood is changed.

The past two years will stand out in Jewish history for many decades, and perhaps for many centuries to come. Even if the establishment of a Jewish State and the outbreak of an Arab-Jewish war may turn out ultimately to be one of many ephemeral episodes in an unhappy history of a country that has known many changes of rulers and fortune, their place as a turning point in Jewish history has already been decided. The majority of the Jewish people feel that the happenings of the last years have a closer relation to the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. and the Messianic yearnings of two thousand years of dispersion, than to the United Nations’ decision of 1947, the Balfour Declaration of 1917, or even to fifty years of pioneering in Palestine. Jewish victories are not judged in the light of present realities in the Near East but in the light of a very distant past; the present war fills every Jew with “such satisfaction as we have not had for centuries, perhaps not since the days of the Maccabees” (Ben Gurion).

This feeling of historical momentum, this determination to regard these recent events as a final verdict of history, is doubtless strengthened by success, but success is not its source. The Jews went into battle against the British occupation troops and the Arab armies with the “spirit of Masadah,” inspired by the slogan “or else we shall go down,” determined to refuse all compromise even at the price of national suicide. Today the Israeli government speaks of accomplished facts, of Might is Right, of military necessities, of the law of conquest, whereas two years ago, the same people in the Jewish Agency spoke of justice and the desperate needs of the Jewish people. Palestinian Jewry bet on one card—and won.

Against Jewish determination to regard the outcome as final stands the determination of the Arabs to view it as an interlude. Here, too, we are confronted with a decision which is neither deducible from events nor changed in the least by them. Defeats seem to confirm the Arabs’ attitude as much as victories do that of the Jews. Arab policy in this
respect is very simple and consists mainly in a diplomacy which dis-
counts defeats and states and restates with undisturbed stubbornness
the old claim to ownership of the country and refusal to recognize the
State of Israel.

This mutual refusal to take each other seriously is perhaps the
clearest sign of the seriousness of the situation. During the war, it
expressed itself in the dangerous inclination to interpret the whole
conflict as the result of a sinister behind-the-scenes conspiracy in which
the Arabs were not confronted with 700,000 or 800,000 Palestinian
Jews but with the overwhelming strength of American or Russian im-
perialism or both, while the Jews insisted that they fought not so much
the members of the Arab League as the entire might of the British
Empire. That the Arabs should attempt to find a plausible explana-
tion for the fact that six Arab states could not win a single victory
against the tiny forces of Palestinian Jewry, and that the Jews should
shrink from the idea of being permanently surrounded by hostile
neighbors who so hopelessly outnumbered them, is understandable
enough. The net result, however, of a propaganda (by itself hardly
worthy of consideration) which treats the real opponent as a kind of
ghost or tool is an atmosphere where negotiations are impossible: for
what is the point of taking statements and claims seriously if you
believe that they serve a conspiracy?

This utterly unreal situation is not new. For more than twenty-
five years, Jews and Arabs have made perfectly incompatible claims on
each other. The Arabs never gave up the idea of a unitary Arab
state in Palestine, though they sometimes reluctantly conceded limited
minority rights to Jewish inhabitants. The Jews, with the exception
of the Revisionists, for many years refused to talk about their ultimate
goals, partly because they knew only too well the uncompromising
attitude of the Arabs and partly because they had unlimited con-
fidence in British protection. The Biltmore program of 1942 for the
first time formulated Jewish political aims officially—a unitary Jewish
state in Palestine with the provision of certain minority rights for
Palestinian Arabs who then still formed the majority of the Palestinian
population. At the same time, the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to
neighboring countries was contemplated and openly discussed in the
Zionist movement.

Nor is this incompatibility only a matter of politics. The Jews
are convinced, and have announced many times, that the world—or
history or higher morality—owes them a righting of the wrongs of two
thousand years and, more specifically, a compensation for the catastrophe of European Jewry which, in their opinion, was not simply a crime of Nazi Germany but of the whole civilized world. The Arabs, on the other hand, reply that two wrongs do not make a right and that "no code of morals can justify the persecution of one people in an attempt to relieve the persecution of the other." The point of this kind of argumentation is that it is unanswerable. Both claims are nationalistic because they make sense only in the closed framework of one's own people and history, and legalistic because they discount the concrete factors of the situation.

Social and Economic Separation.

The complete incompatibility of claims which until now has frustrated every attempt to compromise and every effort to find a common denominator between two peoples whose common interests are patent to all except themselves is only the outward sign of a deeper, more real incompatibility. It is incredible and sad, but it is true, that more than three decades of intimate proximity have changed very little the initial feeling of complete strangeness between Arabs and Jews. The way the Arabs conducted this war has proved better than anything else how little they knew of Jewish strength and will to fight. To the Jews, similarly, the Arabs they met for so many years in every city, village and rural district, with whom they had constant dealing and conflicts, have remained phantoms, beings whom they have considered only on the irrelevant levels of folklore, nationalist generalizations, or idle idealistic dreams.

The Jewish and Arab failure to visualize a close neighbor as a concrete human being has many explanations. Outstanding among them is the economic structure of the country in which the Arab and Jewish sectors were separated by, so to speak, watertight walls. The few exceptions, such as common export organizations of Jewish and Arab orange growers or a few factories that employed both Jewish and Arab labor, only confirmed the rule. The building of the Jewish homeland, the most important economic factor in the recent history of the entire Near East, never depended on Jewish-Arab cooperation, but exclusively on the enterprise and pioneering spirit of Jewish labor and the financial support of world Jewry. Jewish economy may eventually have to depend heavily if not exclusively on the Arab markets of the Near East. But this stage of mutual dependence is still far off and will be reached only after Palestine has been fully industrialized and
the Arab countries have reached a level of civilization that could offer a market for high-quality merchandise, which only Jewish economy will probably be able to produce profitably.

The struggle for political sovereignty, necessarily accompanied by heavy expenditure for armaments and even more decisive losses in work hours, has retarded considerably the development toward economic independence. As long as outside financial support on a large scale is assured, Jewish-Arab cooperation can hardly become an economic necessity for the new Israeli state. The same has been true in the past. The financial support of world Jewry, without which the whole experiment would have failed, signified economically that the Jewish settlement could assert itself without much thought of what was going on in the surrounding world, that it had no vital interest, except on humanitarian grounds, in raising the Arab standard of living and that economic issues could be fought out as though the Jewish National Home were completely isolated from its neighbors.

Naturally economic and social isolation had its good and its bad aspects. Its advantage was that it made possible such experiments as the collective and cooperative settlements, that an advanced and in many respects very promising economic structure could impose itself upon an environment of hopeless misery and sterility. Its economic disadvantage was that the experiment dangerously resembled a hot-house plant and that social and political problems which arose from the presence of a native population could be handled without consideration of objective factors.

Organized Jewish labor fought and won a relentless battle against cheap Arab labor; the old-time Arab fellahin, even though they were not deprived of their soil by Jewish settlement, quickly became a kind of relic, unfit for and superfluous to the new modernized structure of the country. Under the leadership of Jewish labor, Palestine underwent the same industrial revolution, the same change from a more or less feudal to a more or less capitalist order, as European countries did 150 years ago. The decisive difference was only that the industrial revolution had created and employed its own fourth estate, a native proletariat, whereas in Palestine the same development involved the importation of workers and left the native population a potential proletariat with no prospect of employment as free laborers.

This unhappy potential Arab proletariat cannot be argued away by statistics about land sales nor can it be counted in terms of the destitute. Figures do not show the psychological changes of the
native population, their deep resentment against a state of affairs which seemingly left them untouched, and in reality demonstrated to them the possibility of a higher standard of living without ever fulfilling the implied promises. The Jews introduced something new into the country which, through sheer productivity, soon became the decisive factor. Compared to this new life, the primitive Arab economy assumed a ghostlike appearance, and its backwardness and inefficiency seemed to await a catastrophe to sweep it away.

It was, however, no accident that Zionist officials allowed this economic trend to take its course and that none of them ever made, in Judah L. Magnes' words, Jewish-Arab cooperation "the chief objective of major policy." Zionist ideology, which after all is at least thirty years older than the Balfour Declaration, started not from a consideration of the realities in Palestine but from the problem of Jewish homelessness. The thought that "the people without a country needed a country without a people" so occupied the minds of the Zionist leaders that they simply overlooked the native population. The Arab problem was always "the veiled issue of Zionist politics" (as Isaac Epstein called it as long ago as 1907), long before economic problems in Palestine forced Zionist leadership into an even more effective neglect.

The temptation to neglect the Arab problem was great indeed. It was no small matter, after all, to settle an urban population in a poor, desert-like country, to educate thousands of young potential tradesmen and intellectuals to the arduous life and ideas of pioneerdom. Arab labor was dangerous because it was cheap; there was the constant temptation for Jewish capital to employ Arabs instead of the more expensive and more rights-conscious Jewish workers. How easily could the whole Zionist venture have degenerated in those crucial years into a white man's colonial enterprise at the expense of, and based upon, the work of natives. Jewish class struggle in Palestine was for the most part a fight against Arab workers. To be anti-capitalist in Palestine almost always meant to be practically anti-Arab.

The social aspect of Jewish-Arab relationships is decisive because it convinced the only section of the population that had not come to Palestine for nationalistic reasons that it was impossible to come to terms with the Arabs without committing national and social suicide. The crude nationalist demand of "a country without a people," seemed so indisputably right in the light of practical experience that even the most idealistic elements in the Jewish labor movement let
themselves be tempted first into forgetfulness and neglect, and then into narrow and inconsiderate nationalistic attitudes.

British administration which, according to the terms of the mandate, was supposed to prepare "the development of self-governing institutions," did nothing to bring the two peoples together and very little to raise the Arab standard of living. In the twenties, this may have been a half-conscious policy of *divide et impera*; in the late thirties, it was open sabotage of the Jewish National Home which the colonial services had always held to be dangerous to imperialist interests and whose ultimate survival, as the British knew perhaps better than Zionist leadership, depended upon cooperation with the Arabs. Much worse, however, though much less tangible, was the romantic attitude of the colonial services; they adored all the charming qualities of Arab life which definitely impeded social and economic progress. The urban Jewish middle class and especially the free professions in Jerusalem, were for a certain time inclined to imitate the British society they met among the administrative personnel. Here they learned, at best, that it was fashionable to be interested in Arab folk life, to admire the noble gestures and customs of the Bedouins, to be charmed by the hospitality of an ancient civilization. What they overlooked was that Arabs were human beings like themselves and that it might be dangerous not to expect them to act and react in much the same way as Jews; in other words, that because of the presence of the Jews in the country, the Bedouins were likely to want even more urgently land to settle down (a revival of the "inherent tendency in nomad society to desert the weariness and hopelessness of pastoral occupations for the superior comforts of agriculture"—H. St. J. B. Philby), the fellahin to feel for the first time the need for machines with which one obtained better products with less toil, and the urban population to strive for a standard of living which they had hardly known before the arrival of the Jews.

The Arab masses awoke only gradually to a spirit of envy and frustrated competition. In their old disease-stricken poverty, they looked upon Jewish achievements and customs as though they were images from a fairy-tale which would soon vanish as miraculously as they had appeared to interrupt their old way of life. This had nothing to do with neighborliness between Jewish and Arab villages which was the rule rather than the exception for a long time, which survived the disturbances of 1936-1939 and came to an end only under the impact of Jewish terrorism in 1947 and 1948. These relations, however, could
be so easily destroyed without harming Jewish municipal and economic interests because they had always been without consequence, a simple, frequently touching expression of human neighborliness. With the exception of the Haifa municipality, not a single common institution, not a single common political body had been built up on this basis in all those years. It was as though, by tacit agreement, the neighbors had decided that their ways of life were different to the point of mutual indifference, that no common interests were possible except their human curiosity. No neighborliness could alter the fact that the Jews regarded the Arabs as an interesting example of folk life at best, and as a backward people who did not matter at worst, and that the Arabs considered the whole Jewish venture a strange interlude out of a fairy tale at best, and, at worst, an illegal enterprise which one day would be fair game for looting and robbery.

The Uniqueness of the Country.

While the mood of the country was only too typical, quite like other small nations' fierce chauvinism and fanatic provincialism, the realities of Jewish achievement in Palestine were unique in many respects. What happened in Palestine was not easy to judge and evaluate: it was extraordinarily different from anything that had happened in the past.

The building of a Jewish National Home was not a colonial enterprise in which Europeans came to exploit foreign riches with the help and at the expense of native labor. Palestine was and is a poor country and whatever riches it possesses are exclusively the product of Jewish labor which are not likely to survive if ever the Jews are expelled from the country. Exploitation or robbery, so characteristic of the "original accumulation" in all imperialist enterprises, were either completely absent or played an insignificant role. American and European capital that flooded the country, came not as dividend-paying capital held by absentee shareholders but as "charity" money which the recipients were free to expend at will. It was used for the acquisition and nationalization of the soil, the establishment of collective settlements, long-term loans to farmers' and to workers' cooperatives, social and health services, free and equal education, and generally for the building of an economy with a pronounced socialist physiognomy. Through these efforts, in thirty years the land was changed as completely as if it had been transplanted to another con-
tinent, and this without conquest and with no attempt at extermination of natives.

The Palestinian experiment has frequently been called artificial, and it is true that everything connected with the building of a Jewish national home—the Zionist movement as well as the realities in Palestine—has not been, as it were, in the nature of things not according to the ways of the world. No economic necessities prompted the Jews to go to Palestine in the decisive years when immigration to America was the natural escape from misery and persecution; the land was no temptation for capital export, did not in itself offer opportunities for the solution of population problems. The collective rural settlements, the backbone of Palestinian society and the expression of pioneerdom, can certainly not be explained by utilitarian reasons. The development of the soil, the erection of a Hebrew University, the establishment of great health centers, were all "artificial" developments, supported from abroad and initiated by a spirit of enterprise which paid no heed to calculations of profit and loss.

A generation brought up in the blind faith in necessity—of history or economy or society or nature—found it difficult to understand that precisely this artificiality gave the Jewish achievements in Palestine their human significance. The trouble was that Zionists as well as anti-Zionists thought that the artificial character of the enterprise was to be reproached rather than praised. Zionists, therefore, tried to explain the building of a Jewish National Home as the only possible answer to a supposedly eternal anti-semitism, the establishment of collective settlements as the only solution to the difficulties of Jewish agricultural labor, the foundation of health centers and the Hebrew University in terms of national interests. Each of these explanations contains part of the truth and each is somehow beside the point. The challenges were all there, but none of the responses was "natural." The point was that the responses were of much more permanent human and political value than the challenges, and that only ideological distortions made it appear that the challenges by themselves—antisemitism, poverty, national homelessness—had produced something.

Politically, Palestine was under a British mandate, that is a form of government supposedly devised only for backward areas where primitive peoples have not yet learned the elementary rules of self-government. But under the not too sympathetic eye of the British trustee the Jews erected a kind of state within a non-existent state,
which in some respects was more modern than the most advanced governments of the Western world. This non-official Jewish government was represented only on the surface by the Jewish Agency, the recognized political body of world Zionism, or by the Vaad Leumi, the official representative of Palestinian Jewry. What actually ruled the Jewish sector of the country much more efficiently than either and became more decisive in everyday life than British administration was the Histadruth, the Palestinian trade unions in which the overwhelming majority of Jewish labor, that is, the majority of the population, were organized. The trade unions stepped into all those areas which are usually regulated by municipal or national government as well as into a great number of activities which in other countries are the domain of free enterprise. All sorts of functions, such as administration, immigration, defense, education, health, social services, public works, communications, etc., were developed upon the initiative and under the leadership of the Histadruth which, at the same time, grew into the largest single employer in the country. This explains the miraculous fact that a mere proclamation of Jewish self-government eventually sufficed to bring a state machine into being. The present government of Israel, though a coalition government in appearance, is actually the government of the Histadruth.

Although the Jewish workers and farmers had an emotional awareness of the uniqueness of their achievements, expressed in a new kind of dignity and pride, neither they nor their leaders realized articulately the chief features of the new experiment. Thus Zionist leadership could go on for decades talking about the natural coincidence between Jewish interests and British imperialism, showing how little they understood themselves. For while they were talking this way, they built up a country that was economically so independent of Great Britain that it fitted into neither the Empire nor the Commonwealth; and they educated the people in such a way that it could not possibly fit into the political scheme of imperialism because it was neither a master nor a subject nation.

This would have been greatly to the credit of the Israeli State and even to its advantage today, if it had only been realized in time. But even now this is not the case. To defend their nationalist aggressiveness Israeli leadership today still insists on old truisms like "no people ever gets anything, least of all freedom, as a gift but has to fight for it," thus proving that they do not understand that the whole Jewish venture in Palestine is an excellent indication that some changes
have occurred in the world and one may conquer a country by transforming its deserts into flourishing land.

Ideological explanations are those which do not fit realities but serve some other ulterior interests or motives. This does not mean that ideologies are ineffective in politics; on the contrary, their very momentum and the fanaticism they inspire frequently overwhelm more realistic considerations. In this sense, almost from the beginning, the misfortune of the building of a Jewish National Home has been that it was accompanied by a Central European ideology of nationalism and tribal thinking among the Jews, and by an Oxford-inspired colonial romanticism among the Arabs. For ideological reasons, the Jews overlooked the Arabs, who lived in what would have been an empty country, to fit their preconceived ideas of national emancipation. Because of romanticism or a complete inability to understand what was actually going on, the Arabs considered the Jews to be either old-fashioned invaders or newfangled tools of imperialism.

The British-inspired romanticization of poverty, of "the gospel of bareness" (T. E. Lawrence) blended only too well with the new Arab national consciousness and their old pride, according to which it is better to accept bribes than help. The new nationalist insistence on sovereignty, supported by an older desire to be left alone, served only to bolster exploitation by a few ruling families and prevent the development of the region. In their blind ideological hostility against Western civilization, a hostility which, ironically enough, was largely inspired by Westerners, they could not see that this region would be modernized in any case and that it would be far wiser to form an alliance with the Jews, who naturally shared the general interests of the Near East, than with some big faraway power whose interests were alien and who would necessarily consider them a subject people.

The Non-Nationalist Tradition.

Against this background of ideological thinking the few protagonists of Jewish-Arab cooperation find their true stature. So few in number that they can hardly be called a real opposition force, so isolated from the masses and mass propaganda media that they were frequently ignored or suffocated by that peculiar praise which descredits a man as impractical by calling him an "idealist" or a "prophet," they nevertheless created, on the Jewish as well as the Arab side, an articulate tradition. At least their approach to the Palestinian problem begins in the objective realities of the situation.
Since it is usually asserted that good will toward the Jewish National Home in Palestine was always completely lacking on the Arab side and that Jewish spokesmen for Arab-Jewish understanding never could produce a single Arab of any standing who was willing to cooperate with them, a few instances of Arab initiative in trying to bring about some kind of Jewish-Arab agreement, may be mentioned. There was the meeting of Zionist and Arab leaders in Damascus in 1913 charged with preparing an Arab-Jewish conference in the Lebanon. At that time the whole Near East was still under Turkish rule and the Arabs felt that as an oppressed people they had much in common with the Eastern European sections of the Jewish people. There was the famous friendship treaty of 1919 between King Feisal of Syria and Chaim Weizmann which both sides allowed to slip into oblivion. There was the Jewish-Arab conference of 1922 in Cairo when the Arabs showed themselves willing to agree to Jewish immigration within the limitations of the economic capacity of Palestine.

There were negotiations carried on between Judah L. Magnes (with the subsequent knowledge of the Jewish Agency) and the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee at the end of 1936, immediately after the outbreak of the Arab disturbance. A few years later, tentative consultations were carried out between leading Egyptians and the Jews. "The Egyptians," reports Weizmann in his autobiography, "were acquainted and impressed by our progress and suggested that perhaps in the future they might serve to bridge the gulf between us and the Arabs of Palestine. They assumed that the White Paper . . . would be adopted by England, but its effects might be mitigated, perhaps even nullified, if the Jews of Palestine showed themselves ready to cooperate with Egypt."

And last but not least, as late as 1945, Azzam Bey, then Secretary of the Arab League, stated that "the Arabs (were) prepared to make far-reaching concessions toward the gratification of the Jewish desire to see Palestine established as a spiritual and even a material home." To be sure, such Arabs had as little Arab mass support as their Jewish counterparts. But who knows what might have happened if their hesitating and tentative efforts had gotten a more sympathetic reception on the other side of the table? As it was, these Arabs were discredited among their own people when they discovered that the Jews either ignored them (as happened to Azzam Bey's statement), or broke off negotiations as soon as they hoped to find support from an outside ruling power (the Turkish government in 1913 and the British
in 1922), and generally made the solution of the problem dependent upon the British who naturally "found its difficulties insuperable" (Ch. Weizmann). In the same way Jewish spokesmen for Arab-Jewish understanding were discredited when their very fair and moderate demands were distorted and taken advantage of, as happened with the efforts of the Magnes group in 1936.

The necessity of Jewish-Arab understanding can be proved by objective factors; its possibility is almost entirely a matter of subjective political wisdom and personalities. Necessity, based on economic, military and geographic considerations, will make itself felt in the long run only, or possibly, at a time when it is too late. Possibility is a matter of the immediate present, a question of whether there is enough statesmanship on both sides to anticipate the direction of long-range necessary trends and channel them into constructive political institutions.

It is one of the most hopeful signs for the actual possibility of a common Arab-Jewish policy that its essentials have only recently been formulated in very cogent terms by at least one outstanding Arab, Charles Malik, the representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, and one outstanding Palestinian Jew, Judah L. Magnes, the late President of the Hebrew University and Chairman of the Palestinian group of Ihud (Unity).

The speech Dr. Malik made on May 28, 1948, before the Security Council of the United Nations on the priority of Jewish-Arab agreement over all other solutions of the Palestinian problem is noteworthy for its calm and open insistence on peace and the realities of the Near East, and also because it found a "responsive echo" in the Jewish Agency's delegate, Major Aubrey Eban.

Dr. Malik, addressing the Security Council, warned the great powers against a policy of *fait accompli*. "The real task of world statesmanship," he said, was "to help the Jews and the Arabs not to be permanently alienated from one another." It would be a grave disservice to Jews to give a Jewish state a false sense of security as the result of successful manipulation of international machinery, for this would distract them from the fundamental task of establishing a "reasonable, workable, just, abiding understanding with the Arabs."

Dr. Malik's words sound like a late echo to Martin Buber's (the philosopher of the Hebrew University) earlier denunciation of the Zionist Biltmore program as "admitting the aim of the minority to
'conquer' the country by means of international maneuvers.” But Dr. Magnes' statement of the case and the conditions for Jewish-Arab cooperation before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946, when the White Paper's ban on Jewish immigration was still in force, read like an anticipated response from the Jewish side to the Arab challenge: "Our view is based on two assumptions, first that Jewish-Arab cooperation is not only essential, it is also possible. The alternative is war. . . ."

Dr. Magnes recognized that Palestine is a Holy Land for three monotheistic religions. To it the Arabs have a natural right and the Jews historical rights, both of equal validity. Thus, Palestine was already a bi-national state. This means political equality for the Arabs and justifies numerical equality for the Jews, that is, the right of immigration to Palestine. Dr. Magnes did not believe that all Jews would be satisfied with his proposal but he thought that many would accept it since they wanted the Jewish State mainly because they wanted a place to which to migrate. He urged the necessity of revising the whole concept of the state. To the Arabs he argued that sovereign independence in tiny Palestine was impossible. Indeed, he called for Palestinian participation in a middle-east regional federation as both a practical necessity and as a further assurance to the Arabs. "What a boon to mankind it would be if the Jews and Arabs of Palestine were to strive together in friendship and partnership to make this Holy Land into a thriving peaceful Switzerland in the heart of this ancient highway between East and West. This would have incalculable political and spiritual influence in all the Middle East and far beyond. A bi-national Palestine could become a beacon of peace in the world."

*The Hebrew University and the Collective Settlements.*

If nationalism were nothing worse than a people's pride in outstanding or unique achievement, Jewish nationalism would have been nourished by two institutions in the Jewish National Home: the Hebrew University and the collective settlements. Both are rooted in permanent non-nationalist trends in Jewish tradition—the universality and predominance of learning and the passion for justice. Here was a beginning of something true liberals of all countries and nationalities had hoped for when the Jewish people, with its peculiar tradition and historical experience, were given freedom and cultural autonomy, a hope no one expressed better than Woodrow Wilson who called for
“not merely the rebirth of the Jewish people, but the birth also of new ideals, of new ethical values, of new conceptions of social justice which shall spring as a blessing for all mankind from that land and that people whose lawgivers and prophets . . . spoke those truths which have come thundering down the ages.” (Quoted from Selig Adler, “The Palestine Question in the Wilson Era” in Jewish Social Studies, October 1948).

These two institutions, the Kibbutzim (collective settlements) on one hand, the Hebrew University on the other, supported and inspired the non-nationalist, anti-chauvinist trend and opposition in Zionism. The University was supposed to represent the universalism of Judaism in the particular Jewish land. It was not conceived just as the University of Palestine, but as the University of the Jewish people.

It is highly significant that the most consistent and articulate spokesmen for Jewish-Arab understanding came from the Hebrew University. The two groups that made cooperation with the Arabs the cornerstone of their political philosophy, the Brith Shalom (Covenant of Peace) in the twenties and the Ihud (Unity) Association in the forties—both founded and inspired by Judah L. Magnes, the co-founder and President of the Hebrew University since 1925—are not simply the expression of Western-educated intellectuals who find it difficult to swallow the crude slogans of a Balkanized nationalism. From the beginning Zionism contained two separate tendencies that met only in their agreement about the necessity of a Jewish homeland.

The victorious trend, the Herzlian tradition, took its chief impulse from the view of antisemitism as an “eternal” phenomenon in all countries of Jewish dispersion. It was strongly influenced by other nineteenth century small national liberation movements and denied the possibility of Jewish survival in any country except Palestine, under any conditions except those of a full-fledged sovereign Jewish state. The other trend, dating back to Ahad Haam, saw in Palestine the Jewish cultural center which would inspire the spiritual development of all Jews in other countries, but would not need ethnic homogeneity and national sovereignty. As far back as the nineties of the last century, Ahad Haam insisted on the presence in Palestine of an Arab native population and the necessity for peace. Those who followed him never aimed to make “Palestine as Jewish as England is English (in the words of Weizmann), but thought that the establishment of a center of higher learning was more important for the new revival movement than the foundation of a State. The main achievement of
the Herzlian tradition is the Jewish State; it came about (as Ias Ahad Haam feared at the turn of the century and as Judah L. Magnes warned for more than twenty-five years) at the price of an Arab-Jewish war. The main achievement of the Ahad Haam tradition is the Hebrew University.

Another part of the movement, influenced by though not connected with Ahad-Haam Zionism, grew out of Eastern-European socialism, and ultimately led to the foundation of collective settlements. As a new form of agricultural economy, social living and workers' cooperatives, it became the mainstay of the economic life of the Jewish homeland. The desire to build a new type of society in which there would be no exploitation of man by man did more to attract the best elements of Eastern European Jewry—that is, the powerful revolutionary ferment in Zionism without which not a single piece of land would have been tilled or a single road built—than the Herzlian analyses of Jewish assimilation, or Jabotinsky's propaganda for a Jewish State, or the cultural Zionists' appeal for a revival of the religious values of Judaism.

In the rural collective settlements, an age-old Jewish dream of a society based on justice, formed in complete equality, indifferent to all profit motives, was realized, even if on a small scale. Their greatest achievement was the creation of a new type of man and a new social elite, the birth of a new aristocracy which differed greatly from the Jewish masses in and outside of Palestine in habits, manners, values and way of life, and whose claim to leadership in moral and social questions was clearly recognized by the population. Completely free and unhampered by any government, a new form of ownership, a new type of farmer, a new way of family life and child education, and new approaches to the troublesome conflicts between city and country, between rural and industrial labor were created. Just as the very universalism of teaching and learning at the Hebrew University could be trusted to secure firm links between the Jewish National Home, world Jewry and the international world of scholarship, so could the collective settlements be trusted to keep Zionism within the highest tradition of Judaism whose "principles call for the creation of a visible tangible society founded upon justice and mercy" (M. Buber). At the same time these experiments hold out hope for solutions that may one day become acceptable and applicable for the large mass of men everywhere whose dignity and humanity are today so seriously threatened by the standard of a competitive and acquisitive society.

The only larger groups who ever actively promoted and preached
Jewish-Arab friendship came from this collective settlement movement. It was one of the greatest tragedies for the new State of Israel that these labor elements, notably the Hashomer Hatsair, sacrificed their bi-national program to the *fait accompli* of the United Nations' partition decision.

*The Results of the War.*

Uninfluenced by the voices raised in a spirit of understanding, compromise and reason, events have been allowed to take their course. For more than twenty-five years, Dr. Magnes and the small group of his followers in Palestine and in Zionism had predicted that there would be either Jewish-Arab cooperation or war, and there has been war; that there could be either a bi-national Palestine or domination of one people by the other, and there has been the flight of more than 500,000 Arabs from Israeli-dominated territory; that the British White-Paper policy and its ban on immigration in the years of the Jewish European catastrophe had to be immediately annulled or the Jews would risk everything to obtain a State if only for the sake of immigration, and, with no one on the British side willing to make any concessions, there is the fact that the Jews obtained a sovereign state.

Similarly, and despite the great impression which Dr. Malik's speech made on his colleagues in the Security Council of the United Nations, the whole policy not only of Israel but of the United Nations and the United States itself is a policy of *fait accompli.* True, on the surface it looks as though the armed forces of Israel had created the *fait accompli* of which Dr. Malik warned so eloquently. Yet, who would doubt that no number of victories in themselves would have been sufficient to secure Israel's existence without the support of the United States and American Jewry?

The most realistic way to measure the cost to the peoples of the Near East of the events of the past year is not by casualties, economic losses, war destruction or military victories, but by the political changes, the most outstanding of which has been the creation of a new category of homeless people, the Arab refugees. These not only form a dangerous potential irredenta dispersed in all Arab countries where they could easily become the visible uniting link; much worse, no matter how their exodus came about (as a consequence of Arab atrocity propaganda or real atrocities or a mixture of both), their flight from Palestine, prepared by Zionist plans of large-scale population transfers during the war and followed by the Israeli refusal to readmit the refugees to their
old home, made the old Arab claim against Zionism finally come true: the Jews simply aimed at expelling the Arabs from their homes. What had been the pride of the Jewish homeland, that it had not been based upon exploitation, turned into a curse when the final test came: the flight of the Arabs would not have been possible and not have been welcomed by the Jews if they had lived in a common economy. The reactionary Arabs of the Near East and their British protectors were finally proved right: they had always considered "the Jews dangerous not because they exploit the fellaheen, but because they do not exploit them" (Ch. Weizmann).

Liberals in all countries were horrified at the callousness, the haughty dismissal of humanitarian considerations by a government whose representatives, only one year ago, had pleaded their own cause on purely humanitarian grounds, and were educated by a movement that, for more than fifty years, had based its claims exclusively on justice. Only one voice eventually was raised in protest to Israel's handling of the Arab refugee question, the voice of Judah L. Magnes, who wrote in a letter to the Editor of Commentary (October 1948):

It seems to me that any attempt to meet so vast a human situation except from the humane, the moral point of view will lead us into a morass. . . . If the Palestine Arabs left their homesteads 'voluntarily' under the impact of Arab propaganda and in a veritable panic, one may not forget that the most potent argument in this propaganda was the fear of a repetition of the Irgun-Stern atrocities at Deir Yassin, where the Jewish authorities were unable or unwilling to prevent the act or punish the guilty. It is unfortunate that the very men who could point to the tragedy of Jewish DP's as the chief argument for mass immigration into Palestine should now be ready, as far as the world knows, to help create an additional category of DP's in the Holy Land.

Dr. Magnes, feeling the full significance of actions which forfeited the old proud claim of Zionist pioneerdom that theirs was the only colonizing venture in history not carried out with bloody hands, based his protest on purely humanitarian grounds—and laid himself wide open to the old accusations of quixotic morality in politics where supposedly only advantage and success count. The old Jewish legend about the thirty-six unknown righteous men who always exist and without whom the world would go to pieces says the last word about the
necessity of such “quixotic” behavior in the ordinary course of events. In a world like ours, however, in which politics in some countries has long since outgrown sporadic sinfulness and entered a new stage of criminality, uncompromising morality has suddenly changed its old function of merely keeping the world together and has become the only medium through which true reality, as opposed to the distorted and essentially ephemeral factual situations created by crimes, can be perceived and planned. Only those who are still able to disregard the mountains of dust which emerge out of and disappear into the nothingness of sterile violence can be trusted with anything so serious as the permanent interests and political survival of a nation.

**Federation or Balkanization?**

The true objectives of a non-nationalist policy in the Near East and particularly in Palestine are few in number and simple in nature. Nationalist insistence on absolute sovereignty in such small countries as Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan, Saudi-Arabia and Egypt can lead only to the Balkanization of the whole region and its transformation into a battlefield for the conflicting interests of the great powers to the detriment of all authentic national interests.

In the long run, the only alternative to Balkanization is a regional Federation, which Magnes (in an article in *Foreign Affairs*) proposed as long ago as 1943, and which more recently was proclaimed as a distant but desired goal by Major Aubrey Eban, Israeli representative at the United Nations. While Dr. Magnes’ original proposal comprised only those countries which the Peace Treaties of 1919 had dismembered but which had formed an integrated whole under Turkish government, that is, Palestine, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria, the concept of Aubrey Eban (as published in an article in *Commentary* in 1948) aimed at a “Near Eastern League, comprising all the diverse nationalities of the area, each free within its own area of independence and cooperating with others for the welfare of the region as a whole.” A federation which according to Eban might possibly include “Turkey, Christian Lebanon, Israel and Iran as partners of the Arab world in a league of non-aggression, mutual defense and economic cooperation” has the great advantage that it would comprise more than the two peoples, Jews and Arabs, and thus eliminate Jewish fears of being outnumbered by the Arabs.

The best hope for bringing this federation nearer would still be a Confederation of Palestine, as Dr. Magnes and Ihud proposed after
partition and a sovereign Jewish State had become an accomplished fact. The very term Confederation indicates the existence of two independent political entities as contrasted with a federal system which is usually regarded "as a multiple government in a single state," (Encyclopedia of Social Sciences) and could well serve also as a model for the difficult relationships between Moslem Syria and Christian Lebanon. Once such small federated structures are established, Major Eban's League of Near Eastern countries will have a much better chance of realization. Just as the Benelux agreement was the first hopeful sign for an eventual federation of Europe, so the establishment of lasting agreement between two of the Near Eastern peoples on questions of defense, foreign policy and economic development could serve as a model for the whole region.

One of the chief advantages of federal (or confederate) solutions of the Palestinian problem has been that the more moderate Arab statesmen (particularly from Lebanon) agreed to them. While the plan for a federal state was proposed only by a minority of the United Nations' Special Committee on Palestine in 1947, namely by the delegates of India, Iran and Yugoslavia, there is no doubt that it could very well have served as a basis for a compromise between Jewish and Arab claims. The Ihud group at that time practically endorsed the minority report; it was in basic accordance with the principles set down and best expressed in the following sentence: "The federal State is the most constructive and dynamic solution in that it eschews an attitude of resignation towards the question of the ability of Arabs and Jews to cooperate in their common interest, in favor of a realistic and dynamic attitude, namely, that under changed conditions the will to cooperate can be cultivated." Mr. Camille Chamoun, representative of Lebanon, speaking before the United Nations' General Assembly on November 29, 1947, in a desperate effort to reach a compromise formula on the very day partition was decided, called once more for an independent state of Palestine to be "constituted on a federal basis and . . . (comprise) a federal government and cantonal governments of Jewish and Arab cantons." Like Dr. Magnes in his explanation of the plan for a Confederation of Palestine, he invoked the Constitution of the United States of America to serve as a model for the future constitution of the new state.

The plan for a Confederate Palestine with Jerusalem as a common capital, was nothing more or less than the only possible implementation of the UN partition decision, which made economic union a
prerequisite. The purely economic approach of the United Nations would have met with difficulty under any circumstances because, as Major Eban rightly stressed, "the economic interdependence of all Palestine was much overrated by the General Assembly." It would, moreover, have run into the same difficulties as the European Recovery Program, which also pre-supposed the possibility of economic cooperation without political implementation. These inherent difficulties in an economic approach became plain impossibility with the outbreak of the war, which first of all can be concluded only by political measures. Moreover the war has destroyed all sectors of a combined Jewish-Arab economy and eliminated, with the expulsion of almost all Arabs from Israeli-held territories, the very small common economic basis upon which hopes for a future development of common economic interests had rested.

Indeed, an obvious shortcoming of our arguments for peace as against a precarious armistice and for confederation as against further Balkanization, is that they can hardly be based upon anything like economic necessity. In order to arrive at a correct estimate of the impact of war on the Israeli economy, one cannot simply add up the staggering losses in working hours and destruction of property which Israel has suffered. Against them stands a very substantial increase in income from "charity" which never would have been given without the establishment of a state and the present tremendous immigration, both of which were the direct causes of the Jewish-Arab war. Since Jewish economy in Palestine in any case depended largely upon investment through donation, it may even be possible that the gains obtained through emergency outweigh the losses suffered through war.

Pacification of the region might well attract more dividend paying investment capital from American Jewry and even international loans. Yet it would also automatically diminish the Israeli income in non-dividend paying money. At first glance, such a development may seem to lead to a sounder economy and greater political independence. Actually it may well mean greatly reduced resources and even increased interference from the outside for the simple reason that the investing public is likely to be more businesslike and less idealistic than mere donors.

But even if we assume that American Jewry, after the European catastrophe, would not have needed the emergency of war and the stimulation of victories to mobilize support to the extent of a hundred
and fifty million dollars a year, the economic advantages of the war probably outweigh its losses. There are first the clear gains resulting from the flight of the Arabs from Israeli-occupied territory. This evacuation of almost fifty per cent of the country’s population in no way disrupted Jewish economy because it had been built in almost complete isolation from its surroundings. But more important than these gains, with their heavy moral and political mortgage, is the factor of immigration itself. The new immigrants, who are partly settled in the deserted homesteads of Arab refugees, were urgently needed for reconstruction purposes and to offset the great loss in manpower brought about by mobilization; they are not only an economic burden to the country, they constitute also its surest asset. The influx of American money, chiefly raised and used for the resettlement of DP’s, combined with the influx of manpower, may stimulate Israeli economy in much the same way, only on a much larger scale, as, ten years ago, the influx of American money together with the immigration of youngsters (Youth Aliya) helped the enlargement and modernization of the collective settlements.

The same absence of economic necessity marks the argument for confederation. As things stand today, the Israeli State is not only a Jewish island in an Arab sea and not only a Westernized and industrialized outpost in the desert of a stagnant economy: it is also a producer of commodities for which no demand exists in its immediate neighborhood. Doubtless this situation will change some time in the future, but nobody knows how close or how distant this future may be. At the moment, at any rate, federation could hardly base itself on existing economic realities, on a functioning interdependence. It could become a working device only if—in the words of Dr. Magnes in 1947—"Jewish scientific ability, Jewish organizing power, perhaps finance, perhaps the experience of the West, which many of the countries of this part of the world have need of, (would) be placed at their disposal for the good of the whole region."

Such an enterprise would call for great vision and even sacrifices, though the sacrifices might be less difficult to bear if the channelling of Jewish pioneering skill and capital into Arab countries were connected with some agreement about the resettlement of Arab DP’s. Without such a modernization of the Near East, Israel will be left in economic isolation, without the prerequisites for a normal exchange of its products, even more dependent on outside help than now. It is not and never has been an argument against the great achievements
of the Jewish National Home that they were "artificial," that they did not follow economic laws and necessities but sprang from the political will of the Jewish people. But it would be a tragedy if, once this home or this state has been established, its people continued to depend upon "miracles" and were unable to accommodate themselves to objective necessities, even if these are of a long-range nature. Charity money can be mobilized in great quantities only in emergencies, such as in the recent catastrophe in Europe or in the Arab-Jewish war; if the Israeli government cannot win its economic independence from such money it will soon find itself in the unenviable position of being forced to create emergencies, that is, forced into a policy of aggressiveness and expansion. The extremists understand this situation very well when they propagate an artificial prolongation of the war which, according to them, never should have ended before the whole of Palestine and Transjordan are conquered.

In other words, the alternative between federation and Balkanization is a political one. The trouble is not that rampant nationalism has disrupted a common economic structure, but that justified national aspirations could develop into rampant nationalism because they were not checked by economic interests. The task of a Near East Federation would be to create a common economic structure, to bring about economic and political cooperation and to integrate Jewish economic and social achievements. Balkanization would isolate even further the new Jewish pioneer and worker who have found a way to combine manual labor with a high standard of culture and to introduce a new human element into modern life. They, together with the heirs of the universalist spirit in Judaism as they are represented in the work of the Hebrew University, would be the first victims of a long period of military insecurity and nationalistic aggressiveness.

But only the first victims. For without the cultural and social hinterland of Jerusalem and the collective settlements, Tel Aviv could become a Levantine city overnight. Chauvinism of the Balkan type could use the religious concept of the chosen people and allow its meaning to degenerate into hopeless vulgarity. The birth of a nation in the midst of our century may be a great event; it certainly is a dangerous event. National sovereignty which so long had been the very symbol of free national development has become the greatest danger to national survival for small nations. In view of the international situation and the geographical location of Palestine, it is not likely that the Jewish and Arab peoples will be exempt from this rule.