Zionist Notes

III An answer to the CIIR and Uri Davis

Louis Allen

Dear Herbert,

It was typically generous of you not merely to invite the CIIR to answer my criticism of their Comment on the Middle East,[1] but to offer a platform as well to Uri Davis,[2] a distinguished and brave fighter for civil rights in Israel. By doing this you have, of course, complicated my task of replying in turn, because the tone and factual nature of the two answers are quite different, even though Mr Davis goes out of his way to commend the CIIR. Perhaps it would be best if I answered them separately, and I will take the CIIR first.

Mr. [Who?] spends a page telling me I have misconceived the role of the CIIR, which is a Catholic body, examines problems in the light of Catholic social teaching and values, and gives a Catholic view, but 'it is only *a* Catholic view'. All right. Then they should call themselves '*A* Catholic Institute, etc.'; because the use of the definite article, or the omission of it, in fact gives a generalising note to their title. The indefinite article does not. It's no good explaining this after the fact. The impact has already occurred. And even *if* one accepts the claim that they examine problems from the point of view of Catholic social teaching, it isn't clear to at least one reader how they are supposed to have done that in this particular case. That is why the question, 'Perhaps Mr Allen would care to specify where he feels the Comment is uncatholic or unchristian?' misses the point completely. It isn't that I feel it's uncatholic or unchristian here and there. It just doesn't appear to be Catholic or Christian in any way at all. In a complex issue, it's a sheer piece of propaganda for *one* side. And it deals, not in facts, but in selective presentation of some facts and omission of others, as my letter showed. So my criticism still stands. I am criticising them both for what they said and for what they did not say.

I cannot see how it helps their reply to go on about how they've avoided being trivial and superficial by choosing great issues. Triviality and superficiality lie in treatment as well as in choice of subject. And their proclamation that they've commented on Northern Ireland and Portugal, etc., instead of talking about Soviet Russia, as *The Tablet* wants them to, is utterly beside the point. The writer answers a case I never made. *Utitur in re non dubia testibus non necessariis.*

[1] *New Blackfriars*, February, 1975.
[2] *New Blackfriars*, March 1975.

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And what is any sensible person to make of the assertion that *Comments* are not anonymous because they are published under the aegis of the Catholic Institute for International Relations and are not the work of a single person? A draft is written by *someone,* and the comments are made by several people. All right. *If* the issue is controversial, let us know *who* they are. The CIIR's responsibility will still stand. Chatham House Surveys on equally sensitive topics bear the names of their authors, even though an institution, not a single individual, backs them. And the apparent involvement of (The/A) Catholic Institute, etc., is more important to me than that of Chatham House. If Mr [X] thinks his statement on the anonymity procedure establishes his credentials, we clearly have different views on the meaning of words.

But I know you don't want me to get bogged down in procedural points. What is admitted by the CIIR in its defence quite clearly betrays its purpose. The Comment it calls *The Middle East* is, we are told, 'an honest attempt to examine the situation of the Palestinians'. There are many ways of studying the Middle East. The selection of this single aspect, crucially important though it is, shows bias from the start. And it will not do, when they've been accused of weighting the evidence by being selective, merely to reply, 'Yes, we've been selective, haven't we?' I did not, incidentally, say the leaflet was 'subtle propaganda full of innuendo and deliberate oversights'. It *is* full of innuendo and oversights, but its propaganda line is as subtle as a kick from a mule.

May we now look at the answers to the points I raised? I will address the CIIR directly.

1. *Zionist/Arab roles in World War II*

Your purpose here—you say—was not 'to deviously suggest that the Arabs won the war' nor to 'cast aspersions on the military records of certain individuals'. I wasn't talking principally about 'certain individuals' but showing you, by example, that for a great part of the war the Zionist organisation was—naturally—on the side of the Allies, and that Arab participation, with a conspicuous exception in Transjordan, was confined to uneasy neutrality or a positive aiding and abetting of the Nazi cause. I stressed that I wasn't attempting a justification of one or an attack of the other: I merely wished the *facts* to be known. Not only did the Arabs refrain, as you put it, from 'wholeheartedly throwing in their lot with the allies', many of them wholeheartedly threw in their lot with the opposite side. I won't say 'the enemy' because it isn't clear to me that you would accept my verdict about who the enemy was.

You devote two-thirds of page five to World War II, and anyone who reads it without other information will undoubtedly assume that the Arabs, by remaining quiet, helped our war effort, and that the Zionists spent the time in acts of sabotage and arming themselves. You refer to '27,000 who received training in the British forces'. You don't say, and my answer to you did, what help some of these thousands

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gave to the Allied cause. There's selectivity for you, with a vengeance. So is your answer to my point on:

2. *Terrorism*

I am, apparently, mistaken in thinking your attitude to terrorism was 'ambiguous' [your word], because you deplore it from whichever side it comes. I'm very glad to hear this. Could you show me where in the Comment you deplore Arab terrorism? It's possible I've missed this, but I assure you I have just read through the Comment again and can see it nowhere. You do, as I mentioned, refer on the one hand to 'two extremist [Zionist] groups carrying out . . . sabotage and assassination attacks'; and on the other to '[Arab] liberation movements of which al-Fatah was the largest group'. You attempt to refute a supposed criticism of your ambiguous attitude to terrorism. The criticism was not of your ambiguity but of the positive *imbalance* of what you said. Ambiguity occurs when meaning is not clear. Your meaning's clear all right: the Zionists/Israelis commit acts of terrorism; their opponents create liberation movements. In all that canting nonsense, will you show me precisely *where* you've put a Catholic and a Christian interpretation?

'With Mr Allen we deplore the more recent atrocities at Lod Airport, Munich and Maalot'. Even with the two-edged 'more recent', this avowal is welcome. But I would have thought it more appropriate, in a Catholic and Christian comment, to have deplored them long before you got a nudge from me. Readers of your original Comment won't know you deplore them. They won't know you've even heard of them.

3. *Refugees*

It was not 'at best an ingenuous statement' when I said that it was unclear who was responsible for the initial expulsions of Arab refugees. I referred in passing to a now exploded view that they had been caused by Arab broadcasts. Given that this is not now accepted, it doesn't, as you seem to think, remove the case that the expulsions may have been partly caused by Arab propaganda, which, as we know, can be spread by word of mouth as well as over the radio. And it will not do to suggest that the mode of their going is irrelevant. There is an issue of responsibility here, and if the responsibility is divided, then there must be a division in the remedy too; it can't be all on one side, as your Comment and reply clearly assume.

I have apparently minimised 'the efforts of the host countries to accommodate large numbers of refugees out of all proportion to their economic abilities'. The economic abilities of the host countries I would really like to hear about; what they lack themselves their richer neighbours seem able to supply, if not for purposes of alleviating poverty then at any rate for making war. Isn't it a question of priorities, rather than of what is economically feasible? And you make my heart bleed when you refer to the fact that oil prices were only quadrupled *after* the 1973 war. The oil producing countries did not start to become

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rich after the 1973 war. They merely started to become four times as rich.

Figures: It may seem distasteful to debate figures when we are speaking of people losing their homes. But accuracy matters, in this as in any other question. A million and a half refugees have *not* been dispossessed. Over half a million left their homes, or were driven out of them, whichever version you accept. Their numbers have increased since, but it is misleading to suggest that the second set of figures can be *equated* with the first. Money will not, of course, exorcise 'the feelings of bitterness and injustice of the Palestinians'. I never said it would. But this is a *different* issue.

So is your reference to 'the recognition of basic human rights'. It may be a right to have the group to which one belongs recognised as a national entity; but I wouldn't have thought it a basic human right, but rather one that develops in the course of a particular period in history. Would the Palestinians have been recognised as a national entity under the Turkish régime, or even under the mandate? Isn't it rather something which has arisen since the end of World War II? But if it has happened, as a result of their sufferings and exile, it is a fact, and needs to be taken account of. Similarly, that the State of Israel exists precisely in order to give expression to the need embodied in the Law of Return is also a fact. It is the incompatibility of these facts that creates the problem we are concerned with.

4. *Jews in Arab countries*

There must, you declare, be a tragic correlation between the position of Jewish communities in Arab countries and Israel's external expansionist policies and internal discriminatory legislation. If this means anything, it must mean that before Israel was born and grew, the Jewish communities in Arab countries lived happy, contented, fulfilled lives, safe from violence and harm, etc., etc. I presume anyone who has had the temerity to draft a paper on the Middle East knows what drivel this is. The novelist Albert Memmi, a Tunisian Jew, in an open letter to Muammar Qaddafi, has some interesting facts about this:

> 'As late as 1912, any Jew daring to leave a Jewish quarter in Morocco had to take off his shoes, as if it were sacriligious for them to touch the sacred Moroccan soil. In the same Morocco in 1907 there was a great massacre of Jews in Casablanca, complete with rape . . . the burning down of houses and shops, and other atrocities. In 1912, there was another great massacre in Fez, and in 1948 in Oujda and other towns. In Algeria, there was the massacre of Constantine in 1934, with 24 killed and dozens . . . seriously wounded. In Egypt, the massacre of 1948—this time with the 'refinement' of hundreds of bombs. In Aden, in 1946, the local authorities declared that Jews were not entitled to live like human beings. A few months later, 82 were killed and 76 wounded, . . . in Iraq between 2nd and 3rd June 1941, 600 were killed, 1,000 seriously

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wounded, 600 shops looted, women raped, 1,000 houses burned'. These are facts, and could be multiplied throughout the Arab countries of the Near East. Memmi concludes emotionally, but in a manner relevant to your Comment:

> 'We always get what may have been the mistake of Deir Yassin thrown in our faces. We have suffered a hundred, a thousand Deir Yassins! And not only in Russia, in Germany or in Poland, but also in Arab lands, with the world never caring. But why do I need references and historical records? My own grandfather and father always remembered how they were afraid of being beaten over the head by any Arab who happened to come by. I myself, as a child, used to play in the lanes of an Arab village—like you, Mr President, I suppose. Do you remember what you thought of the little Jews and how you treated them? I remember only too well, unfortunately! . . .

And don't tell me, please, that all this is due to Zionism. That is another myth.

> '. . . The Jews were not only at the mercy of the populace, they had a status which justified such slavery . . . ever since the days of the Abbassids, it has been part of the Charter of Omar that . . . the Jew is at best protected like a dog that is part of the chattels. But let him but raise his head or behave like a human being, and he must be beaten within an inch of his life, to remind him of his proper place.
>
> The truth is that we have lived in the Arab countries in fear and humiliation. . . . The truth is that those young Jews from the Arab countries were Zionists before Auschwitz. The State of Israel is not the result of Auschwitz, but of the entire Jewish condition, including that in the Arab countries'.

Memmi's *interpretation* of what happened to Jews in the Near East may be open to debate. The facts, on the other hand, are clear, and they refute completely the innuendo in your answer.

I am not sure that your point about 'settler-colonisation' needs to be refuted. Even if the parallel were accurate between the early Zionist settlers, who obtained permission to settle and paid for the lands they worked, and the methods of colonisers who used their home country's military force to back them up—and I dispute the parallel—is there some moral issue here which I've missed? Settler-colonisation in the 19th century is a complex phenomenon, and has resulted in the creation of a large number of states. It doesn't seem at all clear to me that their present existence is based on immoral grounds, and I would like to see the development of Catholic/Christian doctrine that shows it is. One may choose, as a matter of *political* belief, to think it is. But that is, again, a different issue.

5. *Future solutions*

The hectoring way in which you give blunt advice to Israel in your final paragraph is of a piece with your general attitude towards her. I

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want to say a few words about this, though I would prefer to amplify this later in *New Blackfriars* with reference to the new debate between Mahmoud Hussein and Saul Friedländer. Your conclusion is that Israel *must* negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organisation 'as the legitimate spokesman for the Palestinians', 'in accordance with the UN decision'. Does the PLO then recognise the earlier UN decision which established the State of Israel? If so, a declaration of this would be most opportune, and would certainly prepare the way for negotiations.

Most people are aware of the fact that when enemies come to terms, you have to shake hands with the most appalling people. I should have thought that there was a case for discovering from the Palestinians now under Israeli occupation, as well as from those on her borders, a legitimate spokesman. But if the events of the past few years *have* given the PLO the authority to speak for the Palestinians, then clearly Israel will be bound sooner or later to talk to that organisation. But let us be clear that it is other Arab states, not the Palestinians, who have ensured the PLO's present status. If, as you suggest, 'Real security can never depend on foreign military and financial assistance', then this is a lesson the PLO has to learn, as well as Israel.

May I conclude by asking you what on earth you mean by declaring that peace can ultimately only be achieved when Israel sees itself 'as a truly Middle-Eastern state?' There is no such thing. The term Middle-East is a geographical expression invented by the British Army. The countries who live in the area we describe by it have links all over the world, and always have done. They will always, I hope, continue to have them. That Israel should turn itself into a country festering within its own borders—which has been the tragic lot of so many Arab countries—instead of being open to the world, would be a disaster. Do we really ask of the Vatican that it should be 'a truly Italian state'? It would seem an odd Comment from a Catholic and Christian body.

IV A letter to Uri Davis

Dear Mr Davis,

I find it much more difficult to answer the case *you* make, not because I think it a strong one, but because you yourself are not attempting merely to obfuscate the issue by concealing the truth or by misrepresentation, and because you are so genuinely and passionately involved in what you are convinced is the only solution to the problem. I know I must respect the sincerity which is evident in your passion. I also respect your own view that yours is a minority case appealing for justice; though I must say that if any of the Arab countries pro-

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duced such vocal minorities there might be more real hope for co-existence.

That is why I would like not merely to answer the points you raise, but to conclude by leaving behind the debating platform, once that's done, and attempt some positive product out of this whole polemic. If Herbert can give me the space, I'd like to do that in terms of recently published attempts at Arab-Israeli dialogue.

But first to the case you make, which is initially a commendation of CIIR's comment as 'accurate both in substance and implication' and also an attack on me for believing that 'state-worship constitutes part of the Catholic spirit or dogma'. In spite of the fact that you are Israeli born and bred, and have therefore first-hand knowledge of many *contemporary* facts, I find your championship of CIIR on these particular grounds less than convincing, and, as I hope I've shown, I think their pamphlet is accurate neither in substance nor in implication, particularly in terms of the *history* of the problem.

Needless to say, I never once said anything at all about state-worship, which I abhor as much as you do. I pointed out that it is unreal of the Arabs to expect the leaders of the state of Israel to connive at their own destruction, and few of the proposals made from the Arab side fail to involve that. It is a side issue whether this has been 'debated far too seldom'; I shouldn't have thought *any* element of the problem had failed to be debated endlessly. It is also doubtful, to say the least, that hesitation to debate is linked with 'effective Zionist exploitation of Christian "collective guilt" for the holocaust of the Second World War'. Take away the 'Zionist exploitation'. Take away 'collective guilt', Christian or otherwise. You are still left with the sheer fact of the holocaust. It won't go away, even if you accuse the Zionists of making use of it. Nor is it clear what else they should have done. You are prepared to coincide with the CIIR in their view of the cardinal nature of the Deir Yassin massacre, because it acted as a spur to evacuation, and hence to the creation of the refugee problem. This is precisely why I criticised the CIIR's devoting *one line* of reference to the holocaust as opposed to their amplification of the significance of Deir Yassin. Why is it not clear that the fact of the holocaust changed the way many diasporal Jews were bound to regard the possibility of Israel as a haven? The idea of a Jewish National Home existed before the holocaust. So did the idea of a Jewish State. But the irresistible impetus to create that state was derived (and I would differ from Albert Memmi here) from the deep trauma of the holocaust, which was not simply the linear successor of much of Europe's millenary attitude towards its Jewish populations, but also catastrophically different in degree. This was a cardinal event in Jewish history, and in world history. Many countries still find it convenient to minimise what occurred, or to muffle the memories. I am surprised you should want to support an organisation which has done this.

I'm not really concerned with your attitude towards the notions of collective or inherited guilt. Nor are they the same thing. Nor do I

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believe the Jews were held guilty by the Nazis for sins their ancestors committed. That is really to give an historical costume to a piece of quasi-biological frenzy that didn't seek for apologies in theories about 'guilt' of any kind. You might find yourself on trickier ground when you put this point to a Christian readership, which has been accustomed to the idea of collective guilt—and accepted it—since childhood. But let that pass.

You want me to distinguish between Zionist 'political immigration' into Palestine at the turn of the century and the traditional Jewish 'pilgrimage and immigration' to such places as Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias. I can't see how this helps. The nineteenth century is full of premonitions of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and of tentative efforts on their part to do so and to link up again with the Jewish communities that had survived there through many vicissitudes. Disraeli's *Tancred,* which has been called the 'first Zionist novel', goes back to 1847, Moses Hess's vision *Rome and Jerusalem* was published at Leipzig in 1862, Leo Pinsker's *Self-emancipation* came out in 1882, a year after the pogroms of 1881. I mention these simply to show that the immigration into Palestine during the nineteenth century can be traced to a mixture of ideas, religious or political, and the particular form they took after Herzl, of political Zionism, is not to be considered as a betrayal of the older forms but as a prolongation of them. Similarly the Arab nationalism of Nasser or Arafat might not be found *tout court* in the writings of nineteenth century Arabs; but there is doubtless a continuity there too.

That there should be derivatives of an earlier, totally religious immigration, in the Neturei Kartah does not surprise me, nor that there should be a radical socialist anti-Zionist organisation, Matzpen, which constitutes a political opposition to the present leadership. What is more surprising, in view of their irreducible hostility to the state, is that the Neturei Kartah are allowed to flourish as they do, with all their concomitant intolerance, which I, for one, find disquieting; and that the Matzpen, in spite of the government's attempts to gag it, has nevertheless succeeded in achieving considerable publicity inside and outside Israel; though I notice Maxim Ghilan (*How Israel Lost its Soul,* Penguin Books, 1974, pp. 160-161) speaks of its 'self-inflicted impotence inside Israel' and casts serious doubts on its effectiveness. I would draw very different conclusions from you, Mr Davis, on the existence of these groups. To me they are evidence that the Israeli state is far from being the aggressive monolith you would have us believe, and that there would be far brighter chances of peace in the Middle-East if any Arab country could show anything like the tolerance of similar dissident groups inside its own frontiers. All this was in reference to my contention that the CIIR pamphlet was inaccurate in tracing the conflict back to World War I. *Your* conclusion, 'Comment is correct in tracing *Zionist* Jewish immigration to the turn of the century' doesn't answer my objection at all.

You ask if my reference to the fact that the Mandate for the Jewish National Home originally included Transjordan was an indication

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that I thought this gives Israelis a legitimate right to establish an exclusively Jewish state in 'Trans-Jordan' as well. I never even suggest this. My point was to show the inadequacy of *Comment*'s historical sketch on pp. 3-4. As a result of continual chopping away of bits of the Mandated territories, the Jewish state in 1948 accepted frontiers enclosing far less territory than they were allotted when the Mandate was first proclaimed. The CIIR never even mentioned this. I think it should have done.

Like CIIR, you seem, frankly, to have the haziest notions of what went on in World War II. If you refer to King Farouk as pro-Allied, you fly in the face of a good deal of evidence. I can't for the life of me see what 'the Sherif Hussein' is doing in your list, either. My first reaction is simply *Qu'allait-il faire dans cette galère?* because for me he belongs to World War I. But perhaps there is some other Sherif Hussein whose activities I do not know. You will not, though, allow me to quote David Raziel as someone active on the Allies' behalf, and you refer to my mention of him somewhat disparagingly ('David Raziel, who should, it seems, be the proper subject of our admiration . . .'). You then go on to apply precisely the technique of collective guilt which you spend so much space denouncing earlier in your letter. David Raziel was the leader of the Irgun. The Irgun and the Stern Gang were jointly responsible for the Deir Yassin massacre. And so ...

Again, if your purpose is, like the ostensible purpose of CIIR's *Comment,* to provide background *facts,* and to correct misunderstanding, you must know perfectly well that what you're implying here is false. Any reader, uninformed of the historical truth, would naturally jump to the conclusion that Raziel had some connection with the Deir Yassin case. They would not suspect that, far from this being so, he died *seven years before it happened.* Raziel was killed, in fact, acting as a British commando in Iraq, helping to put down the pro-Nazi putsch of Rashid Ali. I am not proposing him 'as the proper subject of our admiration'. I am just putting the *facts.* What you're doing in *this* case, Mr Davis, is to attempt a smear, by using not merely the technique of collective guilt by association, which you profess to abhor, but using it retrospectively into the bargain.

You criticise me for ignoring the fact that the half-million Arab refugees of 1948 have increased their number by procreation so that one can speak of a million homeless, not simply half a million. Indeed I am aware of this, but if we are to speak of a flight of refugees, then we must keep to the numbers of *those who actually left.* The responsibility for this initial exodus, *pace* Erskine Childers, is still not clear. The responsibility for the fate of their subsequent families is even less so. You say that 'in the 27 years of Israeli state existence' their number has nearly doubled. You add that that of the Israeli Arabs has almost *tripled,* from 160,000 in 1948-9 to approximately 400,000. What deduction are we supposed to make from this? If you are not referring to an increase in population by annexation, then there is a deduction to be made of a startling nature.

You spend much space pointing out that the Jordanian massacre of

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Palestinians is unparalleled by any of the Israeli deeds and policies thus far. I am interested in this comparison, but nothing like it appears in CIIR's *Comment*. I can imagine why.

You seem to lay great stress on the fact that I said there seems to be no reason *now* for believing the Arab exodus of 1948 was caused by Arab leaders' broadcasts. Your indignation is aroused by my saying 'now', when Erskine Childers' paper (which I read in *The Spectator* in 1961 when it came out) settled this matter fourteen years ago. All right, if it makes you happier, I'll say that there seems no reason to believe this since Erskine Childers failed to find evidence of it from BBC monitoring archives, fourteen years ago. How much forrarder does that get us? No more than your assertion that 'peasants do not abandon their ancestral villages . . . for dubious political objectives'. But no one suggested they do. Far from being a dubious political objective, a request to leave their territory temporarily, in the assurance they would soon be back in the wake of a victorious Arab army, would seem a certain and immediately feasible possibility to many Arabs in the early months of 1948, when hostilities had not gone well for the Israelis. If one adds to that the counter-productive effect of Arab radio propaganda aiming, as Christopher Sykes points out, 'to inflame men with hatred of the Jews' this would be enough to explain what happened; particularly if, as Sykes claims, 'many Palestine Arabs had a bad conscience about atrocities towards Jews'. (*Cross-roads to Israel,* p. 418). Sykes's book was published four years *after* the Erskine Childers' article, and has this to say about the Arab exodus:

> In after years Arabs and Jews accused each other of having caused this new and terrible emigration by calculated measures. There is an element of truth in the charge either way, but the basic charge seems to be empty. There is good evidence that there were some and perhaps many ruthless-minded men among the Jews who hoped that the terrorists might succeed in panicking the Arabs into mass flight; there is also evidence that there were some Jews, including influential ones, who had hopes that a population-transfer policy, such as had been carried out between Greece and Turkey, might be forced on the Palestine Arabs. But there is no evidence of a long-standing and agreed Jewish policy to evict the settled population; on the contrary in the first half of 1948 there is considerable evidence that the Jews tried to prevent the flight (p. 419).

I will leave it to your readers to judge the issue in the light of that balanced statement.

This brings us closer to the present, and to the status of the Arabs in Israel. If you expect me to attempt a defence of the expropriation of innocent people, you are mistaken. But in the case of Majdal, I could suggest at any rate one reason why the Israelis should have felt less than cordial towards the inhabitants. You will know as well as I do that Majdal served as a brigade headquarters for the Egyptian Army in its assault on Ashdod, and that Egyptian troops stormed the neighbouring kibbutz of Nitzanim. Members of that kibbutz were told later by Arab

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informants that the next day local Arabs paraded through a nearby village carrying the heads of two women captives on sticks. If you are prepared to accept motivation derived from Deir Yassin, then on the other side there is motivation derived from similar causes. All the more so when one recalls that for much of the period in question Israel was at war with the neighbouring Arab states. During a period of war, or of preparation for war, what is likely to be the status of a community linked by every kind of relationship with the enemy? The CIIR comment was keen enough to place the responsibility for the condition of Jews in Arab countries upon 'acts of terrorism perpetrated by the Zionist underground movement'. Whatever the true *facts* about the particular case they refer to (Iraq), at any rate transfer the *motivation* to the Arab status inside Israel and assess the result.

When you speak of the 1967 war, I find you even less convincing. My particular point against *Comment* was its less than honest account of the period immediately *before* hostilities, i.e., the truth or untruth of the rumours conveyed to the Syrians that the Israelis were going to move against them. You say nothing to suggest that my correction was inaccurate; but you quote at great length Ezer Weizmann's article and Matityahu Peled's statement, the upshot of both being that the war of 1967 was not, as we were led to believe, a back-to-the-wall fight for survival by Israel. This was, says General Peled, a bluff 'which was born and developed only after the war'. The idea was not born *after* the war at all. When Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran and bade U Thant withdraw the UN peace-keeping force, the threat to Israel's existence was real. That the confident efficiency of the Israeli armed forces reduced the threat to almost nothing is another matter. Both Weizmann and Peled are speaking with the advantage of victorious hindsight.

But what you don't seem to see is that, in any case, your quotations are irrelevant to what I said. Not only that, the quotation from Weizmann (inadvertently on your part, I must assume) gives the game away. 'Not that we initiated the Six Day War' he writes, 'certainly we did not cause it . . . it was imposed on us . . .'. Of course they took advantage of the situation *once it had been created.* What were they supposed to do? Sacrifice precious lives and then politely return to square one, after a brief apology for having had the temerity to defend themselves? Much comment on Israel and the conquered territories seems to imply they should. 'Cet animal est bien méchant; lorsqu'on l'attaque, il se défend'.

But let us come to solutions, away from debating points; because, frankly, to start on the issue of whether colonial settler states are inevitably doomed to disappear, and to what extent Israel is to be classified amongst them, would open up a field of historical speculation which would fill *Blackfriars* for possibly the next ten years. Israel will have to treat with the Palestinians, of that most of us are convinced. She will find it hard to treat with the PLO, but she may have to. As the Egyptian student, and wife of an Egyptian politician, Sana Hassan

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said in *Le Nouvel Observateur* last year (8 July 1974) when discussing the future with an Israeli writer, Amos Elon, 'The British realised in the end that politics consists of shaking bloody hands'. But it should be realised by all who press and urge the Israelis to do this, that they are asking a great deal. The idea of a joint Jewish-Arab community in one state in the old Mandate frontiers was hardly a success under the Mandate. The return of occupied territories by Israel as a pre-condition for peace looks a bit silly when one considers that Israel withdrew from her 1956 conquests, and didn't find peace as a result.

One of the major causes of this is, quite simply, the persistent hatred of the Israelis which has been built up by decades of anti-semitic propaganda of the tried, old-fashioned kind, in most Arab countries. There isn't simply a legacy of hatred, there is a positive cultivation of it. When Fadwa Toukan, the poetess of Nablus, an Arab intellectual who had been educated in the University of London, met Jewish writers after the 1967 war, she accused the Israelis of being brought up on hatred too. Her reasons were astounding: 'We've all read the book written by a very fanatical Zionist of yours. I don't remember his name. I mean the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", a book that's full of hatred, that tells about the intention of the Jewish people to take over the entire world. When I read that book I was horrified'.

The episode reminded me strongly of a discussion I once had with an Indian, a doctor in the Indian Army. He hadn't realised, he said, what an appalling institution the Catholic Church was until he'd read *Maria Monk*. In neither case was a member of the illiterate masses involved, quite the contrary. It's not surprising, when one realises that the *Protocols* were re-published officially by the Egyptian Government, and were recommended to visiting Asian dignitaries as an insight into Jewish machinations by Nasser himself.

In the debate between Sana Hassan and Amos Elon which I referred to above, Mrs Hassan dismissed this and the Arab use of anti-semitic stereotypes as 'a war-time racialism', not different from the anti-Japanese propaganda diffused by the Americans during the Second World War. She did not, she said, deny that it was intense and full of hate; but it was not endemic and would die out spontaneously once the war was over.

It would be comforting to think she was right. But propaganda has a talent for survival, as the history of the *Protocols* shows. Which means that we are asking the Israelis to make concessions, upon which life and death will depend, to people whose only knowledge of them is based on intense and persistent hatred. No wonder they are chary of giving up their present frontiers. No wonder, either, that the hectoring of the CIIR: 'Israel must . . . recognise the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the legitimate spokesman for the Palestinians' seems so gross. I think Israel could only do this in a context in which the PLO itself had already made clear that it would regard the establishment of a Palestinian state side by side with the state of Israel, as a *terminus ad quem*. I think if the Israelis were convinced of this, there would be some chance of peace.

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