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Arab Versus Jew: The Evolution of Two National Strategies

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In the most dangerous continuing crisis in the world today, the Arabs and the Israelis are dedicated to the strategies that are a reaction to their respective national characters. Each is violently nationalistic in his own way, and the basic tenets of Arab nationalism and Zionism, though mortally opposed to each other, are nevertheless basically similar. Each people is beset by nagging insecurities and fears—they are afraid of each other and themselves—and each fights out of a desire to reclaim its lost glory and traditions of the past. With their strategies on an inevitable collision course and with the national character of each people ultimately at stake, they will continue to fight until each somehow feels secure from the threat which he imagines the other poses.

ARAB VERSUS JEW:
The Evolution of Two National Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

All too often national strategy is regarded simply as an extension of the policies which it serves, with the result that its study is limited to consideration of its political, economic, and military ingredients. This approach involves a direct cause and effect relationship between an external threat and the policies and strategy which are developed to counter it.

Perhaps because it is so obvious, the fact is frequently overlooked that both policy and strategy are, to a very great extent, predetermined long before a threat from outside has to be faced. A nation, like the individual human being, is the sum total of its experience, and in any given situation its reaction will be influenced by all those factors which have made it what it is. Policy and strategy, then, are as much an outgrowth of the national character as they are a response to an immediate problem.

The Arab-Israeli conflict provides a classic example. It is almost universally understood that the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 was the direct political cause of the most dangerous continuing crisis in the world. Why the conflict defies resolution, why the adversaries remain so bitterly divided, and why they cling so tenaciously to their respective strategies seem much less generally appreciated. The answers to these questions lie in the national identities of the Arabs and Jews. They have

taken a collision course because of what they are, how they regard themselves, and how they consider each other.

This paper is an examination of the two opposing strategies and of the principal influences which have gone into their making. It seeks to delineate those factors which have shaped the national character of each people, to examine the key similarities and differences, and to demonstrate how directly they have influenced the strategies of Israel and her immediate Arab neighbors. No solutions to the Middle East problem are proposed, but some thoughts are offered as to what the future may hold for both people.

I—THE STRATEGIES

> We face you in battle and are burning with desire to start in order to obtain revenge. This will make the world realize what the Arabs are and what the Jews are.

With these words, broadcast to Israel on the eve of the war of June 1967, Egyptian President Ab-del Nasser threw down the Arab gauntlet to Israel for the third time in 19 years.[1] Had he tried, Nasser would have been very hard put to reveal more about the Middle East than he did in these two sentences. He exposed the roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict, revealed something of the Arab character—and by implication that of the Israeli—and pinpointed the basic strategy of both sides.

There is a certain timeless quality to what he said. His words remain as applicable today, long after the incredible Egyptian debacle in the Sinai, as they would have been in 1948 or at any point thereafter. Fundamentally, neither people nor strategy has changed in the past 21 years, and neither is likely to in the foreseeable future.

Somewhat paradoxically, both sides want change and want it badly. Neither the Arabs nor the Jews can long tolerate the status quo. But each side wants to alter the situation completely on its own terms and in its own favor, because each regards the other as the central threat which it faces. The principal issue between them—the existence of the State of Israel—remains nonnegotiable, and the strategies of Arab and Jew must therefore inevitably collide.

There are probably no more clearly defined, simply stated, or all-embracing strategies anywhere in the world. In essence, they can be stated in three words: "Eliminate Israel" and "Survive."

What the military pursuit of these objectives has meant hardly requires detailed review. Suffice it to say that in the wars of 1948, 1956, and 1967, neither side accomplished the goals for which it fought. Despite three successive and humiliating defeats, the Arab States seem more than ever convinced that resort to force and total Arab victory is the only answer. Certainly they are motivated, as Nasser said, by a burning desire to avenge themselves, and this desire feeds the frustrated need to accomplish the basic strategic aim. The longer Israel, and particularly a victorious Israel, exists, the more its elimination becomes imperative.

Some measure of the depth with which this need is felt can be seen in the fact that it was held up as the priority mission shortly after the 1967 war. Even as he described his blueprint for turning a defeated Egypt into a modern state, Nasser made it clear that the changes he proposed "take second place to the 'sacred task' of liberating the country from Israeli aggression."[2] Although his statement was designed primarily for home consumption and was obviously propagandistic, ensuing events left little doubt that he had correctly assessed what the real priorities were and still are. The cease-fire had hardly become effective before the fedayeen—the Arab commandos—were back in

action, and the invariable peacetime pattern of Arab attack and Israeli response was thus reestablished. Four months after the fighting had stopped, in October, the Moslem leaders of no less than 34 countries raised the banner of jihad, the holy war, against Israel.[3]

The regular Arab armies were, of course, in no shape to resume the fight, and it thus fell to the lot of the fedayeen to conduct the jihad. They had performed the task with marked enthusiasm. According to one recent account, there have been well over 1,200 "incidents"—raids, bombings, sabotage, ambushes—along the Arab-Israeli border since the end of hostilities, and in October 1968 the principal commando organization, Al Fatah, issued a communique stating flatly that it would not lay down its arms "until the last Zionist has been killed."[4]

To Israel, the history of the past 21 years is ample proof that this is no empty boast. Three successively brilliant victories have each failed to prevent the resumption of fedayeen activities as soon as the major fighting ceased. Repeated air, artillery, and commando strikes against known or suspect fedayeen bases have similarly proved no deterrent. Almost constant Arab attack, from potshotting by snipers to major artillery barrages, is simply a fact of Israeli national life. True, the state has survived—but in a totally hostile environment—and it is no more secure now than it was at its inception.

To those responsible for the national security, this situation is a natural consequence of "Arab encirclement." This notion, originally propounded by David Ben-Gurion and still the basic doctrine of the Israeli Defense Forces, holds that the entire country is a frontier and that Israel is in constant danger of imminent destruction. The Arab policy of infiltration is considered as outright guerrilla warfare, and Israeli responses are intended both to punish and deter the infiltrators and to generate international pressure on the Arabs to make peace.[5]

The assessment is indeed difficult to fault, and its meaning for the people is obvious. Israel has no choice but to live in an atmosphere of near-permanent crisis. Soldier and civilian alike must always be in a high state of readiness to fend off the next attack or perhaps to participate in the major war which could at any time punctuate what passes for peace.

Despite three wars already won and despite their continuing ability to retaliate against Arab attack at the time and place and in the manner of their own choosing, the Israelis have evidently understood all along that they are unable to impose a military solution in the Middle East. This is implicit in their interpretation of Arab encirclement. The statement that responses to fedayeen attacks are designed to bring international pressure on the Arabs is, in reality, an admission that peace cannot be maintained without help from outside.

Such foreign assistance as has been forthcoming has accomplished little more than to supply the adversaries with the arms and equipment for the next round. International diplomacy has failed to break the deadly impasse even more dismally than has resort to force. For 21 years the best efforts of the United Nations, the Great Powers, individual nations, and even individual men have been to no avail. The myriad proposals they have put forth have all proved unacceptable to one side or the other or to both. Today, nearly 2 years after the end of the 1967 war, the Arabs and the Israelis have yet to sit down at the same table, much less to begin any kind of negotiations.

In the councils of state to which it has access, each side seeks to win sympathy for its cause and proclaims its readiness to talk, albeit not very seriously and only through a system of go-betweens. But the talking never

seems to get off the ground, largely because there is really nothing to talk about. Negotiation seeks to arrive at mutually acceptable solutions; in the Middle East the only acceptable solutions are mutually exclusive.

II—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LAND

If any single factor in the conflict can be considered vital, it is the struggle for land and for sovereignty over it, for in this struggle are rooted all the staggeringly complex elements of enmity between Arab and Jew. Neither side is seeking to establish and maintain control of a strategically situated piece of real estate. This has never been a consideration. The struggle springs, instead, from the deep psychological and emotional need to possess the land—and particularly Palestine—which is common to both adversaries and which transcends any other issue between them.

On both sides of the border, this need is the natural outgrowth of a pervasive and elemental belief that the land has always belonged to the people and that it has been too long denied them. Firmly held belief always matures slowly. This one, diamond hard, required the entire histories of the Arabs and Jews for its development. It had its beginning almost in prehistory and culminated only in the mid-20th century.

Both peoples calculate that their existence in the area stretches back well over 5,000 years, to the time the prophet Abraham led his nomadic followers out of ancient Babylonia and into the Land of Canaan. There, they agree, their common ancestor fathered two sons—Isaac and Ishmael—who respectively established the two tribes which survive as the Jews and the Arabs of today.

The historicity of the story is irrelevant. The children of Abraham believe it, or claim to, and, in any case, consider that it gives them title to the land by right of birth and in perpetuity. The strength with which this notion is imbedded in the psychology of Isaac's progeny is, of course, manifest in Hebrew Scripture. The Jews have always been convinced that God himself promised them the land "for an everlasting possession" (Genesis 17:8).

If they trace the ultimate source of their existence to the same time and place and ancestry, the two Semitic peoples must also see in the tale of Abraham the origins of their divergence. The paths of the prophet's sons have never crossed. Yet from the very beginning, their almost completely separate histories have paralleled each other so closely that it is possible to state that what has happened to one people has essentially happened to the other as well.

From their primal acquisition of Palestine each people received its national origin and its ethnic consciousness. When Isaac and Ishmael founded their houses, they not only gave birth to the Jewish and Arabic people, each also endowed his lineage with a deep sense of separate identity and of unique kinship to the land from which they sprang. A 20th century Arab apologist expressed the feeling in these words: "From this area probably came the beginnings of man himself. And if that is not quite an anthropological certainty, it is an historical certainty that the great spiritual consciousness of man did come from the very heart of the *Arab* world."[1] [Italics added]

As understandably biased as it may be, the statement obviously contains a great deal of truth. The land was the cradle of the Judaic and the Islamic faiths and thus of the vehicles through which their adherents express their sense of special relationship to God and to other men. Despite extremely wide differences, the two religions have a key element in common. In each the believer accepts that he has been set apart

as a bearer of the one true faith. The Jew has seen himself as a member of the chosen people of God since the time of Abraham. The Arab disagrees. In his view, God gave to Mohammed—the last of the prophets—the task of righting the wrongs both of Judaism and of Christianity. The former held that God's law was applicable only to the Jews, while the latter contented itself with worshipiug God's messenger. The teachings of Mohammed, embodied in the term "Islam," were thus to constitute the final and definitive religion for the world's people.[2]

Theocracy was inevitably the form in which these beliefs found their first political expression. The claim to each people to be the exclusive agent of the divine will was the ideological bedrock of the extensive empires established by the Jews and, much later, by the Arabs. In each, religion and the state were inseparable; political greatness—then as now—was, in essence, a matter of preordination.

The Jews reached the zenith of power in their Promised Land nearly 3,000 years ago under King David. From the political capital of Jerusalem, successive wars had pushed the boundaries of Canaan northward past Damascus to the banks of the Euphrates and south to the Gulf of Aqaba; from the Mediterranean the kingdom extended east into the Syrian desert. The Hebrews held dominion over almost all of what is now the modern Middle East, including Jordan, most of Syria, and parts of Iraq and Egypt.[3]

The Arabs date the beginning of their own greatest era from Mohammed's proclamation of Islam in A.D. 610. With the deliberate intent of spreading the true faith among the infidels and of bringing an entire new civilization to mankind, the prophet and generations of his followers succeeded in creating an empire which ultimately surpassed even that of Rome. At its height it extended from the Pyrenees across North Africa and through the Middle East to the borders of India.[4]

The fact that these two empires came into being at all is far more significant than the welter of events which went into their making. Their existence gave the Jews and the Arabs the only epochs of political, military, and religious glory in their histories, and that glory was based on hegemony in the ancient homeland. Until very recently, indeed, neither people ruled the land at any other time. Their empires did not endure. Why they failed is far less important than the fact of their passing, for as their existence left a common heritage of past greatness to both people, their loss left a common legacy of suffering and oppression.

For the Jews the beginning of the end came with the conquests of the Assyrian King Tiglath-pileser III some 250 years after the death of David. He conquered the northern portions of the Canaanite kingdom, compressing the Hebrews into the highlands of Samaria. This area fell to Sargon II in 721 B.C., and some 27,000 Jews were carried off into Assyrian captivity.

Although a portion of the kingdom survived in Judea for another 20 years, defeat in Samaria was the signal national disaster. It marked the beginning of the Diaspora, the period of exile from Palestine which was to endure for more than a thousand years. The Hebrew captives were scattered and became the 10 lost tribes of Israel—the wandering Jews.[5]

After the downfall there was, of course, a residual Jewish presence in the area. Much later, the survivors were even able to establish a miniscule kingdom which, under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus and his heirs, lasted for 90-odd years. With that single exception, however, they were a subject people destined to enjoy no political independence until 1948.

What happened to the Arabs differed greatly in nature and degree, but not in basic effect. The end of their empire

came with the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258; it was not followed by exile, but the aftertaste must have been just as bitter.

The Arabs had been the *Herrenvolk* of Islam since its inception. Both at home and in the dominions they had for six centuries constituted the political, religious, and military aristocracy and had come to regard the whole fabric of the Islamic Empire as something uniquely theirs. With the fall they lost their exalted status; their principles of aristocratic imperium were replaced by those of oriental despotism, and the Arabs were relegated to the second-class stature of subjugated people in their own land.[6]

The frustrations of these losses were compounded because Islam persisted. With the exception of Spain, the faith endured in those countries in North Africa and Asia Minor into which the Arabs had carried it. A truncated version of the old political empire emerged, following the conquests of the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century; there was a semblance of restoration, but the replica fell far short of the original in one vital respect. Muslim the Sublime Porte may have been, but Arab it was not.

Political independence and sovereignty in their native land continued to elude the Arabs until well into this century. They had expected to gain their freedom after the Ottoman collapse at the end of World War I, just as the European Jews had been led to believe that they would be given a national home in Palestine at the same time. But the powers which replaced the Turkish suzerains were in no hurry either to make good on their war-born promises or to relinquish the victors' mandates. The peoples of Abraham were denied their birthright a little longer.

They got it only after another world war had been fought and after the signs of prolonged strife between Arab and Jew loomed unmistakably clear. Except for Iraq, which was granted independence in 1930, the immediate parties to the conflict all attained statehood at approximately the same time. France relinquished her overlordship of Syria and Lebanon in 1945, and Britain cut Jordan free the following year. The spring of 1948 saw the creation of Israel, and Egypt finally gained her own independence in 1954.[7]

Within less than a decade, then, the circle of history suddenly closed, and Arabs and Jews at last regained full title to their ancestral home. Each people is fanatically determined that the land which has always been the focal point of its national destiny shall never again be lost. Through the processes of nation building in which they are so deeply engrossed, both Arabs and Israelis are consciously striving to recapture the greatness of their respective pasts and to rebuild their long-lost national identities. Preoccupation with what they once were is almost obsessional. It colors—and sometimes exquisitely distorts—their strident nationalism, their views of each other, and their military traditions and philosophy. It is even evident in their insecurity. Each people is beset by a gnawing fear that history could well repeat itself, and there is a strong sense among them that what they do must somehow redeem the weaknesses and failures which cost them their inheritance—the homeland on which all their messianic aspirations are centered.

III—THE FORCE OF NATIONALISM

Nationalism in any form is a potent and frequently troublesome force, and the two brands peculiar to the Middle East are unrivaled in mutual antagonism and in sheer volatility. They are poles apart in outlook; the national objectives which each pursues are in total opposition to those of the other, and in its own sphere each commands the full and complete support of the people.

In their essential features, however, Arab nationalism and Zionism are virtually identical. They were cut from the same piece of cloth. Neither is really nationalism in the narrow and commonly accepted sense of the word. Both are supranational: one is pan-Arabic, the other pan-Judaic. They are both political and social movements, and they are both messianic philosophies. Their development was influenced by the same basic features, and they seek the same ultimate goals for their respective peoples.

The modern Arab is, of course, subject to two separate nationalisms. One derives from his citizenship in a particular country. The second, far and away the stronger, comes from being an Arab. Whether he is Jordanian, Syrian, or Egyptian, he sees in Arab nationalism the embodiment of the entire legacy of Islam, the vehicle for maintaining his political independence, and the only hope for recovering the past glory of his people.[1]

By all odds, the heritage of Islam alone would seem sufficient basis for the evolution of an exceedingly strong force indeed. Mohammed's initial successes were certainly due to the proclamation of a new faith, but they would have been impossible except for the fact that the Arabs had a strong cultural affinity long before the Prophet launched his program. Both history and common language had already given them likemindedness, a sense of common identity, and a pagan pride in their ideal of manly virtue. They were ready for what Mohammed had to offer. The doctrine he promulgated sparked an instantaneous response because its combination of religion and politics held out the promise of conquest, racial superiority, and raw power. At the head of the new chosen people, Mohammed installed himself as Imam—spiritual leader, temporal leader, and commander of the armies.[2] Islam was to be spread by force of arms, and manhood was to be proved on the battlefields of holy war.

What the Prophet did, in fact, was to endow the Arabs with the belief that they were destined to rule by divine right. He also laid the foundations of their persistent pride in military achievement and capitalized on their predilection for one-man rule. In the universal theocracy which he envisioned, there was to be no nationhood other than that of the Arabs. The ultimate aim of Islam was to subordinate the entire world to a single system of religion and law which was to be enforced by the supreme authority of the Iman.[3]

The formula worked for 600 years, and during the heyday of empire the Arabs were welded into a single community, imbued with a common ideal, and transported to the pinnacle of worldly power. Commitment to the faith may have been the principal motive force behind their accomplishments, but it was buttressed by fervent pan-Arab nationalism and solid military prowess.

Both the strong sense of community and the faith survived the fall of the empire to become the most enduring qualities of contemporary Arab society.[4] Through long generations of foreign domination, however, nationalism itself had to lie dormant. It never died out, and it was never far beneath the surface of the Arab temperament. In the milieu of a subject people it could not be expressed, and there was simply no opportunity for the emergence of a native political leader around whom the Arabs could or would rally.

That Arab national consciousness was finally reawakened is largely attributable to the direct and sustained influence of the West which began with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. Over the years, constant exposure to European political, social, and economic concepts and methods served to remind the Arabs of their own lack of progress. At least among the more astute leaders

there began to dawn, very slowly, the realization that the aliens held the key to Arab renaissance. Throughout the 19th century their thinking was heavily influenced by European nationalism, and they began consciously to emulate the Western way of doing things, particularly in the realm of politics. At the same time, the emerging genre of Westernized Arabs was well aware that the strong elements of feudalism and tribalism in their society were as much a brake to Arab progress as was domination by foreign powers. Both had to go; their elimination would clear the way for the eventual establishment of a reunified, independent, and modern Arab state.

The current version of Arab nationalism thus resulted from the fusion of Western influences with long-established Arab traditions and aspirations. The great strength of the movement lies in its vigorous pursuit of modernization and in its appeal for an Arab unity solidly based on cultural and social homogeneity and on common political interests. Particularly since independence, the leaders have deliberately promoted secularism and are prone to judge their neighbor regimes by the degree to which each opposes clericalism, theocracy, and tribalism.[5]

As forward looking as its program may be, Arab nationalism nevertheless suffers from two fundamental weaknesses, and both are hangovers from the past. The first is the characteristic Arab proclivity for one-man rule. Since the time of Mohammed, the loyalty of the people has always been to their rulers rather than to institutions; they have never been able to develop a system in which enduring national unity derives from allegiance to the nation-state instead of to those who head it. The leaders themselves may be partly to blame. It seems fair to suggest that the two most notable Arab nationalists of our time—the Mufti of Jerusalem and Ah-del Nasser—have at least imagined themselves in the role of the new Imam. Secondly, there remains as a hangover of feudalism a deep gap between the leaders and the led. Westernized, educated Arabs who have risen to positions of power are well aware of the barriers to progress. But their nationalism evokes responses from a great mass of people whose frame of reference and pattern of values remain Islamic. Nasser's charismatic appeal stems primarily from his ability to articulate what every Arab feels in his heart.[6]

Across the frontier, the nationalism of the Israeli leadership strikes just as responsive a chord in two million people whose basic frame of reference is Judaic. The Israeli sees in Zionism precisely the same things that the Jordanian or Syrian sees in Arab nationalism—the heritage, independence, and destiny of all his people everywhere.

In the same way that their pre-Islamic history prepared the Arabs to receive Mohammed's message, 2,000 years of the Diaspora kept alive the instinctive yearning for the homeland and nourished the peculiar sense of Jewishness without which Zionism could never have emerged. Scattered though they were after the loss of Canaan, the Jews nevertheless remained bound together into a kind of community of suffering and separation. Some measure of the depth of their feeling is evident in the survival of such pre-Christian terms as the Wailing Wall and Lamentations. The dawn of more modern times in Europe brought anti-Semitism; stigmatized as Christ-killers, the Jews had to endure discrimination in a multitude of forms ranging from lack of full social acceptance to outright degradation. Among their Christian peers they came generally to be regarded as a class of moneylenders, pawnbrokers, or peddlers who were essentially alien. The word Jew itself became pejorative.

Oppression was always worst in Eastern Europe, especially in Russia and

Poland. In the latter half of the 19th century it became intolerable. Hundreds of years of enforced segregation into ghettos and pales were capped off when the Jews were denied training for and entry into all but menial professions and were deprived of the elementary rights of citizenship. Then the pogroms began in earnest, and the long-suffering Jew was ready for Zionism.

Having neither the means nor the numerical strength to revolt, the Jews were left with no alternative but to flee. Zionism grew up among those who were convinced that no lasting sanctuary was possible short of a return to Palestine and eventual Jewish statehood. From its inception the movement was more secular than religious, and its aims were political and social.[7]

The idea of reestablishing a national home also held considerable appeal for West European Jewry. In contrast to their eastern brethren, however, they had fared quite well as a result of the growth of liberalism sparked by the French Revolution. Anti-Semitism was still strong, but it was of a much less virulent strain than that of the East. The political and legal restrictions of earlier years had been lifted, and the social barriers had weakened to the extent that the Jew could win acceptance on an individual basis. Furthermore, such an environment made them more susceptible to the nationalism of their individual countries. Assimilation in some places was the rule rather than the exception.

As a consequence, an active Zionist program was difficult to launch: some Jews were totally sympathetic while others favored a national home but not necessarily in Palestine. A great many were willing to raise funds for resettlement, to publicize the plight of the Russian and Polish Jews, or simply to participate in endless meetings and discussions. In Germany there was a strong element which would have nothing to do with Zionism whatever on the grounds that they were Germans first and Jews only incidentally.

How all the attitudes, opinions, and efforts of Europe's Jews finally converged and coalesced into modern Zionism is a history in itself. The contributions of three men, however, were vital. Theodor Herzl, the urbane, converted Viennese journalist whose reversion to Judaism won him recognition as the Father of Zionism, gave the concept its clearest political exposition in his book *Der Judenstaat.* Taking up the cudgels for his oppressed coreligionists, he then hammered unrelentingly at his contemporaries until the basic program of achieving statehood through mass colonization of Palestine was finally accepted at the first World Zionist Congress at Basle in 1897.[8] The work was continued by Chaim Weizmann, who succeeded Herzl as leader of the Zionist organization and kept the idea of a Palestinian home alive in sympathetic circles of the British Government. Perhaps more important, he promoted Zionism for what it really was—a fusion of politics with the ancient religious heritage of the Jews. At his first meeting with Lord Balfour in 1905, for example, he said that he "dwelt on the spiritual side of Zion, pointing out that nothing but a deep religious conviction expressed in modern political terms could keep the movement alive, and that this conviction was based on Palestine and on Palestine alone."[9] In the meantime, a relatively obscure rabbi named Samuel Mohilever had given the movement the single vital element without which it may well have remained forever a dream. In the 1880's he and his "Lovers of Zion" organization had begun to purchase land in Palestine and to settle returning Jews on it.[10]

By the turn of the century, Zionism had erupted full-blown; it had a worldwide central authority which raised funds, purchased land, and made policy, and it had won international recognition. The First Aliyah, or wave of

immigration, was already in full swing, and newly arrived Jews were working the soil of their ancient homeland. Short of attaining statehood itself, there was only one further prerequisite to be met, and it was of tremendous importance. In order to escape persecution, the immigrants were more than willing to trade their former nationalities for another and—as Herzl had originally proposed—to swear fealty to the Ottoman Sultan. But they could never build their own state if they became content with colonial status. The polyglot of Jews from every country in Europe had to be infused with a new kind of nationalism.

The odds were against it. The Promised Land to which they returned was inhospitable at best, and the simple process of wringing a marginal existence from it left little time for developing sophisticated political doctrines. Any attempts to do so would certainly have foundered. The national political backgrounds of the immigrants were so diverse as to have precluded easy agreement on the course they should take, and even if they had come up with a program, anything even remotely smacking of an incipient struggle for independence would have met swift and decisive retaliation from the Turks. Therefore, there were no stirring pronouncements.

Instead, the new nationalism grew out of a single idea, exquisite in its implicity, which transformed a babel of immigrants into a united people and made possible the emergence of the State of Israel. The Jew had to be willing to die for his new homeland, otherwise, national regeneration was impossible.

This idea was conceived and propounded by David Green, the stubborn and visionary Polish immigrant who symbolized his own break with the past and total commitment to the Jewish future by Hebraizing his name to Ben-Gurion. He evolved a program for translating his thought into action which was as simple in concept as the idea itself. From the time of their arrival in Palestine, the early Jewish settlers had always hired Arabs to guard their farms against pilferage and theft. In 1909, Ben-Gurion engineered the replacement of the Arabs by Jews, who were then formed into a self-defense unit called Hashomer (the Watchman) and given the mission of protecting Jewish settlements against Arab attack. Inevitably, some of the unemployed Arabs turned to pilfering and violence resulted. The Jews thus demonstrated to the Arabs—and, much more significantly, to themselves—that they were in Palestine to stay and would fight to do so.[11]

Hashomer and its successor organizations, Haganah and the Israeli Defense Forces, thus became vehicles through which the new brand of nationalism was inculcated in each successive wave of Zionist colonists. The defense units were the creations of the House of Labor (HOL), which later became Ben-Gurion's Mapai Party, and they were carrying out the HOL policy which, after independence, was embodied in national law. In the first Defense Service Bill, introduced in the Knesset in 1949, the army was specifically enjoined to act as a nation-builder, to "Israeli-ize" the immigrants and to infuse them with a nationalist ideology. As Ben-Gurion put it, "It is the duty of the army to educate a pioneer generation . . . which will weld together the exiles and disparate elements and prepare them to fulfill . . . the historic tasks of the State of Israel."[12]

At least prior to independence, then, Israeli nationalism was virtually forced into being. Ben-Gurion and his colleagues rammed their program through because they foresaw that realization of the Zionist ideal was going to be an uphill fight all the way. Though they were bound together by religion, culture, and a common dream, the

incoming Jews suffered from the Diaspora mentality. They were too well accustomed to oppression and defeat. Furthermore, they had no *lingua franca* except perhaps Yiddish[13]—itself a product of exile—and they had nothing remotely approaching the social homogeneity of their Arab neighbors. There was no hope of regaining the glory of the ancient past until the more recent past had been cast away. Hashomer and Haganah were tasked to play the dominant role in this process precisely because they were military, or at least paramilitary, organizations. They developed in themselves and then exemplified to the returnees the positive attitudes, discipline, and unity in a common cause that the new society had to achieve. Like all armies, they projected an aura of strength and courage which may have been all the greater because they were clandestine and illegal, and, like all armies, their ultimate job was to fight and to win—something the Jews had been unable to do on a national basis since the time of Judas Maccabaeus.

The vehement nationalism which resulted has succeeded in fulfilling the long Zionist dream of reclaiming the old homeland, and it has given the modern Israeli the same social unity and sense of ethnic resurgence that Arab nationalism has created in its people. It has also inspired him to accept the dual task of strengthening the nation while continuing to gather in the exiles. If it enjoys any signal advantage which is lacking in its Arab counterpart, it is the ability, born of the political experience of the European Jews, to foster loyalty to the state as an institution. By its very nature, however, Zionism tends to cut its people off from the wider stream of international ideas; it is, after all, a minority culture, and the basic religious tenet of being the chosen people necessarily perpetuates a proud kind of spiritual apartheid. Added to Israel's physical encirclement by hostile Arab States, this has resulted in a bent toward national introspection which borders on chauvinism.[14]

There is every reason to argue that Zionism was foredoomed to collide with Arab nationalism, if for no other reason than both ideologies preached national liberation and self-determination to two different peoples at the same time and on the same soil. From the initial immigration until 1919, however, the Arabs and Jews lived at peace with each other. It is true that these were the final adolescent years of both nationalisms and that both peoples were still subject to Ottoman rule, but neither was unaware of the aspirations of the other. Indeed, there were several instances in which their leaders mutually, if fruitlessly, discussed the prospects of a shared destiny.

When the Arabs and the Jews finally did clash, it was not entirely of their own volition. The actions of the Western Powers, and particularly of Britain, were the catalytic agents which broke the nascent conflict into the open. Impelled by the exigencies of the First World War, London fomented the Arab revolt against the Turks, promised independence first to the Arabs and then to the Jews, delivered it to neither, and with France accepted the League of Nations mandate to run the Middle East after the armistice. Regardless of any extenuating circumstances, these actions struck Zionists and Arab nationalists alike as the sheerest kind of duplicity. Both launched a struggle for national liberation which shortly became a two-sided fight against the mandatory powers and against each other.

The Arabs were particularly embittered. Not only had their fighting for the Allied cause been in vain, but the disclosure of the Sykes-Picot agreement convinced them that Britain, France, and Russia had secretly plotted to rule the area all along and that London had never had the remotest intention of granting Arab independence. Secondly,

aud worse, they saw in the Balfour Declaration a firm British commitment to turn the whole of Palestine over to the Jews and to support Jewish statehood.[15]

What happened was a kind of transference of hatred. Shocked by the brutalities of Great Power polities but unable to take direct revenge, the Arabs songht another avenue for venting their frnstrations. They found it in the Jews, and Zionism heeame the symbol of their thwarted nationalism. They saw it as an essentially Western product imposed upon them through a snowballing influx of Westernized Jews intent upon the ereation of a Western-style state in the Arab midst. They resolved, then, to eombat the West by fighting its agents.

The die was east in 1919 with an unsuecessful Arab attaek on the settlement of Tel Hai in northern Galilee. The fighting which broke out that day is now in its 50th year. Certainly it has not been snstained eombat in any military sense for there were, in the earlier years, some fairly long periods of relative ealm, notably from 1925 to 1929. The Jews even made further attempts to reaeh some aeeommodation with the Arabs, but it was already too late by the time of the Arab riots in Jaffa in May 1921. In the aftermath, Haj Amin el Husseini, the Mnfti of Jerusalem, laid down the policy that any Arab who negotiated with a Jew was a traitor, and the more extreme Zionists felt that exactly the opposite was true.[16] From the Arab point of view the sitnation has gone steadily downhill ever since. In the ensuing years Jewish immigration gathered momentum on an almost daily basis and beeame a floodtide after Hitler eame to power. (By 1946 the Palestinian population was 30 pereent Jewish, as opposed to a seant 11 pereent in 1920.) Furthermore, the Mufti's Arab revolt of 1936-1939 failed eompletely; it did not stop immigration or land sales to the Jews, and it could not hring about the formation of an Arah national government. When independence finally eame to the Arahs after the war, it was accompanied by realization of their worst fears, for Israel was granted statehood just as Muslim hopes were onee more heginning to take flight. The ehief effeet of half a eentury of such frustrations has been to spread Arah nationalism from the leadership to the very roots of Arab society. Israel, the eonstant target of their anger, remains the one issue npon which all Arabs are united in the "saered eause of liberating Arab lands not yet free of foreign rule."[17]

Therein lies the nub of the problem. Arah nationalism and Zionism have the same fundamental aim—to protect the long-sought and hard-won independence of their peoples and to ensure their eontinuing freedom from any kind of foreign domination or oppression whatsoever. The trouhle is that eaeh has eome to regard the other as the alien, and since Tel Hai eaeh snecessive elash has widened the gulf between them. Spiritually and ideologically, the two movements remain worlds apart and mutually repellent, "living in two separate 'universes of discourse' which are incapahle of communion or meaningful dialogue."[18]

IV—THE EFFECTS OF INSECURITY

If the Arahs and the Israelis are ever to engage in any relationship other than polemics interspersed with combat, the grip of uationalism must first relax to the point that each is willing to accept the other as an ahsolute equal. The prospects are exceedingly dim, for they both remain steadfastly convinced that they are the truly chosen people and must therefore he superior to each other; by definition, neither can tolerate the suggestion that he is not of greater stature than his enemy. While this attitude is at root a product of long-ingrained religious belief, it also serves to mask those characteristics which the Arah and the Jew want to keep hidden

from each other—and sometimes from themselves as well.

Beneath the facade of confidence, national strength, and spiritual regeneration which they project, each people is beset by a deep sense of insecurity and fear which, on either side of the frontier, amounts to a national inferiority complex.

The genesis of the Arabs' doubting what they inherently believe about themselves probably dates from their initial exposures to the West. Whatever it profited them in terms of awakening their latent national consciousness and inspiring them to seek modernization and independence, the whole history of association with the foreigners was painfully unhappy on two principal counts. It drove home the hard realities of Arab backwardness and Western antipathy toward Islam, and in its people it created an acute and enduring feeling of rejections.[1] The proud inheritors of Mohammed's legacy were regarded and treated as strictly inferior, a ragtag lot of "bloody wogs."

Arab relations with the Jews have added to this sense of inferiority the infinitely more troublesome elements of guilt and fear. Today's Arab may never admit it, but he knows very well that his people bear a direct responsibility for making their own nightmare come true. From the beginning of the immigration, they sold the land on which the Jews settled. Despite the fact that Zionist plans to establish a national home in Palestine had been a matter of public record since at least 1894 and despite the Mufti's efforts to stop it during the 1920's and 1930's, the landowners continued to sell right up to the eve of World War II.[2] To make matters worse, when Haganah secretly began to arm the Jews after the revolt of 1936, it found that a surprising number of Arabs were engaged in the weapons trade. Some were out-and-out arms merchants, others were smugglers, and even the Arab Legion was an occasional source of supply. Many of its soldiers were "perfectly willing to do business with the Jews, who paid well and asked no questions." Such transactions were necessarily limited, but direct deals with the Arab civilians continued up to within a day or so of the invasion of Israel in 1948.[3]

It was also during the mid-1930's that the Arabs began slowly to perceive that there had been some fundamental changes in their customers. They had, for centuries, known the Jews in their midst as narrow and uneducated Orthodox mystics, mostly of Spanish or oriental origin, who were content with their minority status and generally anti-Zionist in outlook. But the years of European colonization and Zionist indoctrination had produced a tough new breed of sabra. Furthermore, the prewar refugees from nazism soon proved that they were just as determined and energetic as the natives. The Arabs thus found themselves facing a Jew who was courageous and resourceful and who was uniformly more effective than the Arab in both terrorism and politics. The result was fear, coupled with a persistent tendency to regard the new kind of Jew as almost superhumanly clever[4] and therefore not one with whom to negotiate or trade.

The psychological effects of Israel's emergence as a nation and of the interactions of Arab and Jew since 1948 have, of course, been even more severe. When the combined Arab forces invaded the new state on 15 May 1948, Arab League Secretary General Azzam Pasha publicly declared that "This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades."[5] The statement is typical of those which have preceded each new round of fighting and which have become a basic ingredient of Arab nationalist propaganda. Such utterances may be designed to keep popular hatred of the Jews on a front burner, but they

have always come back to haunt the Arabs. Despite their overwhelming superiority of numbers, they have never been able to deliver on their wildly extravagant threats to annihilate Israel.

Each successive defeat on the battlefield, ignominious enough by itself, has thus been doubly humiliating. The events of 1948, 1956, and 1967 all shattered the inner confidence and flimsy unity of the Arabs and left them exposed before the world, still deprived of the warrior image they are seeking to reestablish. They have never yet recovered. Rejected by the West and frightened by the state which they feel the West created and supports, they manifest their accumulated frustrations through strident xenophobia, open and often irrational hatred of their enemies, and the thirst for revenge which Nasser touted on the eve of the 1967 war.[6]

For their part, the Israelis undoubtedly wish that they were endowed with the superhuman qualities which the Arabs, in their more fearful moments, sometimes ascribe to them. At least on the surface, they are dangerously confident of their strength and of their ability to defeat the Arab countries, singly or in combination. Nevertheless, their own sense of fear and insecurity is even greater than that of their enemies for the simple reason that they are totally surrounded.

Far from being a new phenomenon, this situation has been an integral part of Jewish life for centuries. As they were in the pales, the ghettos, and the concentration camps, the Jews in Israel are compressed and segregated, an isolated and well-defined target for the hostility around them. Furthermore, the incursions of the Arabs have the same ultimate purpose as did those of Cossacks and Sonderkommando—to annihilate the Jews. In this sense alone the Zionist dream has failed, for the Jews have escaped from the pales of Europe only to find another in the Promised Land.

The analogy may be somewhat overdrawn, but the fear of racial extermination is not. It is the one facet of the Israeli character that Ben-Gurion's drill-sergeant style of national regeneration has not yet been able to overcome. That it persists is due to a multitude of factors, and chief among them are the memories of the Nazi era and the avowed intent of the Arabs to impose their own solution to the Jewish problem. To the Israeli it makes little difference that in one case he was subject to slaughter for what he is and in the other for where he is. The end result is the same.

There is every likelihood that the Jews tend to equate the Arabs with the Nazis on political as well as on emotional grounds. After his exile from Palestine following the Arab revolt, the Mufti and his coterie finally found refuge in Berlin, and during the war years they recruited a goodly number of their countrymen to fight for Hitler.[7] In Palestine itself there were many more who were sympathetic to the Axis cause, albeit for reasons only indirectly related to Zionism. The Israeli view, then, is that there must be in the Arab leadership a sizable element which is still tainted by its exposure to National Socialism—a consideration which makes Arab encirclement a very ominous matter indeed. Jewish unease is further heightened by the fact that the Arab governments are, by and large, totalitarian and often military dictatorships.[8] Against this background, the ceaseless drumfire of threats to exterminate the Israelis takes on a terrifyingly familiar ring.

Like those of the Arabs, the innate fears of the Jews are also complicated by a sense of collective guilt. Throughout their European experience they were basically unable to resist persecution, and there grew up an almost universal image of the Jew as the passive victim of others' violence. Certainly by the mid-1930's this notion was being

discarded in Palestine if nowhere else. To the Arabs and to the mandatory powers the new breed had by then clearly demonstrated that the Jews, far from being helpless, were a force to be reckoned with. They had rediscovered the will to fight. In Hitler's Europe, however, almost the opposite was true, and because they regarded themselves as being the same people, the Palestinians almost consciously assumed a sense of guilt and shame for the inaction of their brothers.

To their profound shock at the cold-blooded extermination of 12 million Jews was added the intolerable knowledge that the victims did nothing about it. Through 10 years of Nazi terror there was never an organized Jewish resistance movement; with the sole exceptions of the revolts at Treblinka and in the Warsaw ghetto, they never fought back. They were herded, meek and unresisting, into the camps and to what they knew was certain extinction.

As a result there is among the Israelis, and especially among those who survived the concentration camps, a compelling need to expunge the record of the past. It is so strong that it amounts to a need for national redemption in the theological sense as well as the political. In early 1969 Shmuel Shnitzer, one of Israel's leading columnists, summed it up as follows: "Israel was created so as to redeem us from the curse of helplessness . . . Israel arose out of the ashes of Auschwitz so as to put an end, forever, to Auschwitz."[9]

If they are seeking to eradicate the guilt of their failure to fight, it follows that the principal way to redemption is to demonstrate that they will never again refuse to accept battle, no matter what the odds. This they have constantly done, but against an enemy who is just as intent on redeeming his own failures. Inevitably, neither side has any recourse except the battlefield.

V—MILITARY TRADITIONS, OLD AND NEW

As does every facet of their respective national characters, the fighting between the Arabs and the Israelis bears the indelible imprint of the ancient past. The weapons, the tactics, and the battle doctrines are modern and largely foreign, but their employment is based on traditions which are measured in thousands of years and which are inextricably bound up in the strivings of each people to reclaim its lost glory.

The Arabs consider that the only way to fight Israel is to wage jihad, the classic Muslim war against the infidels which Mohammed proclaimed 13 centuries ago shortly after his arrival at Medina in 622. It was there that the Prophet announced that spreading Islam through fighting the nonbelievers was a matter of divine command. Putting what he saw as God's will into action, he began a campaign of small raids and in 630 captured Mecca at the head of 10,000 men. Since that time holy war has been a fundamental article of the Islamic faith.[1] It is for this reason that the Arab leaders choose to invoke jihad rather than to issue a flat declaration of war. The response from the rank and file is a heady kind of religious and emotional intoxication that unites all the Arab people in a common cause. It also tends to blind them to problems at home.

The actual conduct of jihad is by no means a simple matter of going forth to do battle. An entire philosophy of war is involved, and in a sense the dictates of the Koran constitute the immutable rules of engagement. Since they are matters of faith, they must inevitably exercise a strong and continuing influence on Arab military thought and operations.

The nature of jihad is itself predetermined by the religious precepts which it serves. In any language the term "holy

war" is somehow suggestive of righteous outthrust, of carrying the flight to the enemy, and this is particularly true where the basic belief calls for its own universalization. Given the expansionist nature of Islam, it follows that warfare waged in its name must by definition be offensive. Jihad is precisely that, and when the banner is raised the Arabs take the initiative in what becomes a more or less permanently declared state of war.[2] In effect they are freed from the many constraints against starting a war which might otherwise prevail, and though they may be defeated, they nevertheless remain obliged to continue fighting until the jihad ends in victory or is suspended.

Certainly the half century of Arab struggle against the Jews has more than satisfied these requirements. Whether by accident or design, it has also conformed to virtually every other rule of holy war which Muslim doctrine prescribes. Since the initial attack at Tel Hai, for example, there has never been a period of peace exceeding the 10-year limit between jihad and jihad imposed by the Koran. Even the quietest years, from 1925 to 1929, were punctuated by occasional outbursts of violence. The fighting has been and continues to be "jihad by the sword"—an unrelenting battle against enemies of the faith in which no quarter is asked and none is given. Even the sole basis upon which the Arabs are willing to terminate the struggle has aspects which are rooted in their Scripture. Putting an end to Israel's statehood may be a political imperative, but if the state ceased to exist, those Jews who remained would be given a single alternative to extermination. As believers in God but not in the Prophet, they would have the option of accepting Arab overlordship and of resuming the second-class status accorded the Jews until the onset of immigration a century ago.

In two key aspects, the unvarying Arab battle strategy of major campaigns interspersed with ceaseless small-scale actions also constitutes a textbook exercise in jihad. The guerrilla warfare against the Jews is nothing more than a modern application of *karr* and *farr*, a tactic which dates from the period of Muslim expansion and which may have been developed by Mohammed himself. It consists of lightning attacks and quick retreats which hurt and confuse the enemy while leaving the main Arab forces intact to gather strength for a major onslaught. Secondly, when the combined Arab armies have marched, they have always enjoyed considerable numerical superiority over the Israelis—as if the leaders were consciously mindful of the Koran's strictures against launching holy war when the enemy is too powerful to defeat.[3] Even when they are beaten, there is at least some comfort for the families of those who have fallen. Whether regular or guerrilla, those who are killed in action are accorded a reverence usually reserved for the prophets, for jihad is still regarded as Allah's direct road to Paradise.[4]

At least from the military point of view, then, it seems obvious that the ancient traditions of jihad should play a strong positive role in shaping the fighting qualities of the Arab forces. They are, however, rather seriously offset by the circumstances of more recent history.

Throughout the years of fighting the Jews, Arab combat operations have, of course, been heavily influenced by the doctrines of those powers which have held sway in the Middle East. At various times Arab soldiers have ingested large doses of Turkish, British, French, and Soviet military thought. Some they have adapted to their peculiar environment and situation, while others have been applied with a singular lack of imagination—witness the static and typically Russian defense-in-depth the Egyptians employed against Israeli armor in the Sinai campaign of 1967.[5] Such cases as

this point up what may well be the single fundamental weakness of Arab arms.

Clearly there is nothing wrong with the fighting spirit of the Arab soldier. Equally as clearly, there is nothing wrong with the foreign doctrines he has absorbed, if they are properly applied. The problem is simply that neither has been backed up by solid military experience. The Arab countries are still relatively new in terms of independence, and they are still beset by recurrent periods of political instability. They have not yet had sufficient time for the long years of patient training and consistent hard soldiering without which no collection of armed men—however highly motivated they may be—can be welded into a disciplined and effective military force.

The sole exception is the Arab Legion. Formed soon after the establishment of Transjordan following World War I and British trained and officered until very recently, it had had 30 years of experience when the State of Israel was created. In all three major wars, it has been the only Arab force to acquit itself well in combat.[6]

For a situation such as this, much time and much training in a stable political environment are the only remedies. The Arab leaders, civil and military alike, are painfully conscious of the problem, yet they all persist in trying to find a shortcut to its solution by arming to the teeth for the next round. This is especially true of the Egyptians, who continue to import Soviet advisers and technicians, along with vast quantities of arms, in the hope that outside expertise will somehow make up for the basic lack of professionalism of the Egyptian forces.

In the meanwhile, the guerrillas provide the screen behind which the build-ups take place. By and large, they have been recruited from among the 700,000 refugees—and their children—who fled Israel during the 1948 war. Twenty years of camp life have kept these people uprooted, destitute, and embittered. Like all refugees everywhere they have an axe to grind; they want revenge, and they want it against Israel. Guerrilla activities provide them an outlet for the frustrations and hopelessness of their lot, and they answer the call of such organizations as Al Fatah with such complete commitment that even 13- and 14-year-olds are given daily paramilitary training.

Obviously the guerrillas serve the Arab cause well. In addition to inflicting casualties and damage on the Israeli forces and buying time for the Arab armies, their constant raids remind the Arab people that the fight is by no means over. They tend, at least partially, to quench the constant thirst for revenge, especially during those periods when the main forces are recovering from defeat, and they provide a growing reservoir of combat-trained manpower. Politically, each successive guerrilla attack strengthens Nasser's image as the chief prosecutor of the struggle just as it weakens the fragile *modus vivendi* between the Israelis and those Arabs living in the occupied territories.[7] Perhaps more important, the attacks often seem designed to provoke Israeli overreaction and thus to weaken international support of Israel by turning public opinion increasingly against the policy of massive reprisal.

That the refugees have constituted the principal source of guerrilla recruits is one of the great ironies of the Middle Eastern situation, for they have been used as pawns by their own people. After the fighting in the first war stopped in January 1949, Israel offered to repatriate some of the refugees and to pay for the settlement of others, but Nasser refused to let them leave their camps in the Gaza Strip. Lebanon refused them admittance out of fear of upsetting the delicate balance between its Muslim and Christian populations, and Iraq and Syria made no attempts

whatever to absorb them. Only Jordan, whose King Abdullah annexed all of Palestine not occupied by Israel, gave them full rights of citizenship.

The guerrilla raids into Israel began immediately after the conclusion of the armistice, and it soon became manifestly obvious that the terrorists were coming from the refugee camps. By 1955 there was little remaining doubt that the Arab governments were deliberately exploiting the refugees for purposes of guerrilla recruitment, and indeed there was a good deal of suspicion that their original refusal to aid their coreligionists had been a matter of malice aforethought. It was at that time that Nasser began openly to arm and train the fedayeen and to use their Gaza Strip camps as bases for increasingly frequent forays into Israel. This policy shortly backfired. It convinced the Israeli leaders that reprisal raids were insufficient to halt terrorism, and the Israeli Army consequently invaded Egypt a year later.[8]

Over the long run, there is a very real danger that the whole fabric of the Arab "guerrilla policy" could come apart at the seams. Far and away, the majority of the guerrillas are Palestinian refugees who swear allegiance to none of the present Arab governments, although they pay lipservice to the larger cause of Arab nationalism. Their goal is to regain what they regard as their lost lands inside Israel, where, of course, they envision for themselves a major role in the future—either as the nucleus of a Palestinian army or government, or both. They know that they can never defeat the Jews by themselves. But the longer the regular armies fail to realize their basic strategic aim of exterminating Israel, the greater the disillusionment of the guerrillas must become. As it grows, their anger will shift from the problem to those who cannot solve it. Unless they are brought under the control of one or more of the current Arab governments—and of this there is virtually no prospect—they could well develop into a political force capable, through capitalizing on the failures of established authority to reconquer Palestine, of winning the adhesion of the entire Arab people.

For the immediate future, however, the guerrillas will fight on in the hope that the next round will go to the Arabs. Whatever eventuates, they will remain convinced that "there is but one road to peace, the restoration of Palestine to its people."[9]

Despite ceaseless guerrilla attacks and the ever-present danger of still another major war, the Israelis are now well convinced that they have succeeded in regaining at least the ancient warrior image of the Hebrew people. They have done so through 50 years of fighting what has been just as much a holy war for them as for the Arabs, through winning the three major conflagrations, and through the slow but steady increase in their military confidence. There was, however, one signal event which had to transpire before the Jews could gain a unity with their soldier forebears. That event was the capture of Jerusalem in 1967. It was that victory which perhaps more than any other drove home what it was to be an Israeli. To the men of the IDF at the front, it meant that:

> The 'something' had happened. It was not a conquest but liberation, it was not our long route to Nahel, it was the long route to our people, from Moses to the paratrooper who first touched the sacred wall. We were suddenly not defending a frontier, a settlement, a decade, we were part of something that was larger. The existence and dreams and hopes and future of a people . . .[10]

Through its use of the words "liberation" and "defending," this passage also serves to highlight the key difference

between the old military traditions of the Jews and the Arabs. Judaism has never been a missionary religion because its adherents have regarded themselves as the chosen people from the moment of their origin. Unlike jihad, then, the holy wars of Hebrew antiquity were fought for the *defense* of the faith rather than for its spread. Obviously the basic psychology remains unchanged; like their ancestors, the Israelis fight to preserve something which they consider has always belonged to them.

The traditions which they have reclaimed are for the most part well known. Even the casual Sunday School scholar is familiar with the superb generalship of Abraham and of Joshua at Jericho and with the story of David and Goliath. The latter must, incidentally, be a source of grim satisfaction to the Israelis, who have themselves come to enjoy no mean reputation as giant killers. But there are other heroes, men of the Diaspora years less well known to non-Jews, who provided an ingredient of the image equally as important as those of heroism and glory. Of these men, two seem deserving of special note.

Both fought in Palestine against alien rule. The first, Judas Maccabaeus, revolted against Antioch IV of Syria in 167 B.C. He led those Jews who refused to give up their faith in a campaign of sudden guerrilla strikes which succeeded, in 164, in capturing all of Jerusalem except the citadel. As a result, traditional Hebrew worship was restored to the Temple. Almost exactly a century later, the Jews rose against the Roman Hadrian, again because their religious practices had been forbidden. Under the leadership of Simon Bar Kokba, half a million Jews fought a valiant, if totally hopeless, war for their beliefs. They were decimated and scattered, and the name Judea was replaced on Roman maps by Syria Palestinia—after the Jews' deadly enemies.[11]

The real significance of Maccabaeus and Bar Kokba lies less in their defense of the faith than in the fact that they revolted at all. They resisted. And it was their long dormant tradition of Jews fighting back that had to be revived if the dreams of the Zionists were ever to come true and the State of Israel to survive.

Unlike the Arabs, however, the Jews have had no ancient and binding rules to guide the military phase of their redemptive quest. Their Scripture is essentially a theological history of the Hebrew people. As such, it contains nothing approaching the philosophy of jihad and the rules of warfare laid down in the Koran. In this respect the Jews have had to shift for themselves, to make it up as they have gone along. This fact, combined with the events of their colonization of Palestine, has given them advantages of which the Arabs have been deprived.

From the beginning of the immigration until the end of the First World War, the nascent Jewish self-defense forces were little more than illegal policemen. Such training as the men of Hashomer received was anything but uniform; it was based at most upon the drill of that European army in which a particular unit leader happened to have served. Nevertheless, the rudimentary discipline and instruction in the use of firearms paid off well. They were, after all, imparted to people who were already united in purpose and whose determination to fight was increasing daily.

By the end of the war and the reorganization of Hashomer into Haganah, the nucleus of a small army had been created. At that point the nucleus began to absorb the foreign military thought upon which the training and battle doctrines of the IDF are still based. That thought is, of course, British.

This is not to suggest that Haganah was able openly to solicit training, arms

or anything else of a military nature from the mandate authorities. It was an outlawed, underground army dedicated to struggle against the British occupation as well as to fend off the attacks of the Arabs. But it deliberately watched, copied, and learned from the British and adapted the lessons to the circumstances of Middle Eastern life.

They were not always without British assistance, however. During the Arab revolt, internal security in Palestine broke down to such an extent that Haganah was forced to abandon its strategy of "defense from the stockades" and to carry the offensive to the Arabs. The mandate authorities assigned Orde Wingate—whose raiders were later to win fame in Burma—to train Jewish guerrillas for this purpose. His "Special Night Squads" were to become the shock troops of Haganah.[12]

It was, however, during World War II that the Jews received their greatest direct exposure to British military ways. With the outbreak of hostilities, the Jewish Agency issued a worldwide appeal to all Jews to cooperate with the United Kingdom in the struggle against Hitler. Through the war years, a total of 30,000 Palestinian Jews—a force one-third as large as the present IDF and including such leaders as Moshe Dayan—served with the British forces. Some, of course, remained with the auxiliary units in Palestine, others saw service in the desert campaigns, and a Jewish brigade group fought in Italy.[13]

By the time of independence, then, the cadre of the emergent Israeli Army consisted of veterans both of the guerrilla campaigns against the Arabs and of large-scale modern warfare involving masses of men and equipment. Unlike the Arabs, who have been influenced by the concepts of jihad and the doctrines of sundry foreign powers, they have drawn their basic military philosophy from a single source. They have applied it and its accompanying traditions across the board in the IDF.

Because the Israelis are not subject to those problems which constitute such a headache for the Arabs, the task has been relatively easy to accomplish. First and foremost, the people universally recognize the need for a strong defense establishment to protect them from national extermination. In the face of such a threat, with all its special meaning for the Jews, survival at any price is cheap. Further, the isolation of the state and the unity of its citizens have combined to provide the internal political stability necessary for the development of an effective armed force. The people themselves are basically of European stock, and they have retained a characteristically pragmatic approach to their problems. For these reasons they are willing to maintain—indeed to insist upon—a standing army of 80,000 men and to keep half the population of the country in the active reserve, to accept peacetime conscription of men and women alike, and to buy arms wherever there is a seller.[14]

On balance, the Israelis have enjoyed almost every politico-military advantage which the circumstances of history have denied to the Arabs, including winning three wars. The Jews, as a result, may remain defense minded, but they have become aggressive and victory oriented. Certainly the fighting spirit and military abilities of their forces are at least equal to those of the Arabs, whom they face in daily confrontation.

The only remaining question, then, is what happens next?

VI—THE FUTURE

If it has ever been true that the past is prolog, it is preeminently so in the Middle East. The histories of the Arabs and the Jews, both ancient and modern, leave little doubt as to the course of future events; the handwriting on the wall is clear, and its message for both people is disquieting in the extreme.

For the short term, there is no alternative to further bloodshed, and

there can be none so long as the basic strategy of each side remains unchanged. Indeed, the prospects of a major war are now greater than they have been at any time since the creation of the state of Israel. The last round cost the Arabs not only their third consecutive defeat, but for the first time they also lost Arab lands which no amount of international pressure has induced the Israelis to relinquish. The Sinai Peninsula, the west bank of the Jordan, and the Gollan heights remain in enemy hands. Worst still, the Israelis control all of Jerusalem—the third holiest city of the Islamic faith.

The struggle has thus taken on an entirely new dimension. Arab frontiers have been rolled back, and as a consequence the thwarted aspirations of Arab nationalism are further than ever from realization. Certainly the goal of exterminating Israel can never be achieved until the Jews are first ejected, by whatever means, from territory they hold by sheer right of conquest. Furthermore, the possibility that the occupied territories will be incorporated into the State of Israel constitutes a nightmare which no Arab can endure. The Jews have got to go.

They obviously intend to stay, for reasons just as valid to them as the reasons for evacuation are to the Arabs. There is no question that the status of Jerusalem is beyond negotiation; its psychological importance to the Jewish people overrides all political considerations, and the Israeli leadership has repeatedly made it clear that they can never again give it up. Short of absolute and enduring guarantees against all forms of Arab attack—and 2 years of frantic diplomacy have produced none—Tel Aviv will refuse to withdraw from the other occupied territories as well. In the words of Gen. Ariel Sharon, who led the fight against the fedayeen, an Israeli pullback would mean that guerrilla warfare would be waged "from the suburbs of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem" and that demilitarization of the west bank would only create a "military vacuum in which terrorism and sabotage would thrive."[1]

There being no remedy for the situation, one side or the other must inevitably resort to the verdict of arms. The only question is one of timing. At least in the past, the Arabs have had a habit of telegraphing their punch, and they may do so again. Two things will bear watching. A sudden increase in the tempo of guerrilla activity and its maintenance at a high level could well signal the Arab intent to march; the surest harbinger of war, however, will be a steady drumfire of propaganda threats to annihilate the Israelis. When either of these occurs, the situation will rapidly become critical, for the Israelis well know the signs and may elect to preempt. If they do, they will strike suddenly and with almost no forewarning.

There would seem to be little doubt as to the outcome of the next round. Given their political, military, and psychological advantages over the Arabs—not to mention their dread fear of losing—the Israelis will probably emerge victorious once more. Less likely, though still within the realm of possibility, is a stalemate in which neither side can inflict a decisive defeat upon the other and the fighting ends in

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a truce imposed and supervised by the Great Powers.

In either case, the situation will have been exacerbated but fundamentally unchanged. Israel will again have survived but will still remain surrounded by hostile Arab powers more than ever bent on her destruction. The strategies will remain fixed on a collision course.

Over the long run, the future may hold more pitfalls for the Jews than for the Arabs. While they are by no means secure, and cannot be so long as the Arab threat exists, they have reestablished and maintained a nation-state in the ancient Jewish homeland and are confident in their ability to defend it. They have even extended its boundaries, through the campaign of 1967, to something which at least vaguely approximates Canaan of old. In short, their quest for national redemption and the grandeur of the past is well under way.

Herein lies the danger. In a very real sense, both time and success may already be working against the Israelis. Together they contribute to a kind of withering away of the revolutionary elan and sense of Jewishness which have been the vital strengths of the whole Zionist movement. The process is almost imperceptible on a daily basis, but the cumulative effect can reach national proportions. In 1948, for example, it was extremely doubtful that Israel could survive the Arab onslaught. Twenty-one years and three wars later the odds—even in the eyes of the Israelis—are better than even and are shifting further into the plus column with each day. But as confidence in the nation's ability to handle the Arab threat increases, so does a popular tendency toward complacency, accompanied by a corresponding increase in individual self-interest.

What might come to pass was foreseen as early as 1962 by Israel's trade union boss Pinhas Lavon; there could emerge:

> . . . a new society which may be very good for the people living in it—they will work less, will eat well and will enjoy themselves—but it will be a society without a God and even without idols of serious dimensions. We shall become a completely 'normal' society without any special charm and without any special attraction. We shall then be, in the last analysis, a Levantine country.[2]

If and when the society becomes normal, the driving forces of national redemption and striving for fulfillment of prophetic destiny will have lost all meaning. Zionism will be a dead issue.

There is no such danger on the Arab side of the ledger, but neither are their long-term prospects bright. All the disadvantages which have contributed to their defeats will continue to plague them far into the future. They are most unlikely, for example, to enjoy a prolonged period of internal political stability in which to weld their warriors into disciplined, trained and combat-effective forces. The old proclivity for one-man rule will further keep them divided among themselves, thus thwarting their dreams of a pan-Arab union, and at the same time Arab nationalism will become increasingly strident in character.

The greatest danger lies in the fact that their very nature will impel the Arabs to fight on against Israel at least until they have won a single recognizable victory. Only then will they feel that the accumulated wounds of past defeats have begun to heal and that they have once more shown "the world what the Arabs are." Otherwise they must inevitably come to doubt what they have always deeply believed about themselves and their heritage. And this is a prospect they will refuse to accept.

In sum, there can be no peace in the Middle East until both the Arabs and the Jews feel secure, and to each side

this means freedom from the threat of the other. They will continue to fight until this goal has somehow been achieved.

FOOTNOTES

I—THE STRATEGIES

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2. W.J. Barnes, "Some Pan-Arabian Problems," *Contemporary Review*, June 1968, p. 287.
3. "El Fatah," *Time*, 13 December 1968, p. 23-28.
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5. Amos Perlmutter, "The Israeli Army in Politics," *World Review*, July 1968, p. 626.

II—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LAND

1. Rafik Asha, "Arab Nationalism," Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, 14th, *The Arab Nation: Paths and Obstacles to Fulfillment* (Washington: Middle East Institute, 1961), p. 25.
2. Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), p. 8; Wilfred C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 12-15.
3. Harry B. Ellis, *Israel and the Middle East* (New York: Ronald Press, 1957), p. 16.
4. Smith, p. 28-29.
5. Ellis, p. 18-25.
6. Hazem Z. Nuseibeh, *The Ideas of Arab Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 26-36.
7. Ellis, p. 200-201.

III—THE FORCE OF NATIONALISM

1. Asha, p. 29.
2. Ellis, p. 31.
3. Khadduri, p. 45.
4. Smith, p. 18-19; Nuseibeh, p. 20-21.
5. Fayez A. Sayegh, "The Encounter of Two Ideologies—Zionism and Arabism," Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, 14th, p. 73-91.
6. Charles D. Cremeans, *The Arabs and the World: Nasser's Arab Nationalist Policy* (New York: Praeger, 1963), p. 25, 59.
7. Ellis, p. 56 ff.
8. Barnet Litvinoff, *Road to Jerusalem* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1965), p. 73-92.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
10. Associated Press, p. 32.
11. Litvinoff, p. 126-127; Perlmutter, p. 610.
12. Perlmutter, p. 619-623.
13. For a description of the struggle to make Hebrew into the national language of Israel, see Litvinoff, p. 37-56.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
15. Ellis, p. 92.
16. Litvinoff, p. 193-194.
17. Ellis, p. 95-125; Cremeans, p. 12-13.
18. Sayegh, p. 90.

IV—THE EFFECTS OF INSECURITY

1. Smith, p. 71.
2. Cremeans, p. 129-130.
3. Munya M. Mardor, *Haganah* (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 125.
4. Litvinoff, p. 49; Cremeans, p. 182-183.

5. Quoted in Robert St. John, *Israel* (New York: Time, Inc., 1962), p. 43.
6. Ellis, p. 202; Asha, p. 30.
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8. Shalomo D. Goitein, "Arab Nationalism—as Viewed from Israel," Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs, 14th, p. 67.
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V—MILITARY TRADITIONS, OLD AND NEW

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VI—THE FUTURE

1. Rubinstein, p. 93.
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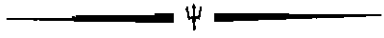

In the nature of man we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence, thirdly, glory. The first maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; the third, for reputation.

Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan, 1651

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