

been destroyed by their yielding to the temptations of conformism, when the need for expressing their unity in accepted formulas subdued the zest for truth. Over a year ago, the New Left in America seemed to be young, fresh, undogmatic, pluralistic, and apparently in direct contact with human need and human pain. That it was anti-intellectual seemed to have at least the advantage of saving it from being *pseudo*-intellectual. That it was ahistorical seemed to make its perceptions of the immediate more keen and relevant.

What has happened? For one thing, the Left has its writers and they have to write. When the crisis developed in May-June 1967, they were unprepared. The issues of the Middle East cannot be perceived with the naked eye as can the living conditions of the migrant workers of New Jersey; they involve a knowledge of history, and it is no dishonor to these writers to say that most of them were largely ignorant of Middle Eastern history. Understandably, they took their clues from what they considered to be trustworthy international sources, and all this took place at a time when the American Left was beginning to take satisfaction in its new connections with new friends abroad.

This article can hardly pretend to offer a short-cut to the kind of knowledge of Middle East history that is required for intelligent and humane discussion of recent events. It may, however, convey some intimation of the chasm that has existed between recent literature and reality. But new beginnings are always possible in life, in literature, and in politics. This, we may assume, is the reason for the existence of the journal called *New Politics*.

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A Reply to Hal Draper—2:

Exorcism As a Substitute for Logic

Abraham Friend

WHATEVER THEIR MERITS, the criticisms of Israel contained in Hal Draper's article, "Origins of the Middle East Crisis" (Volume VI, No. 1), have no direct bearing on, or relevance to, what attitude one should take on the six day war. At best the article is a non-sequitur. In the critical situation of last June, when the very existence of a people was at stake, an irrelevant and distorted attack is more than a logical fault; it shows an insensitivity; it is an act of callous immorality.

Instead of addressing himself to the rights and wrongs of the six day war, Draper repeats a pattern common among both assimilationists and old-style anti-Semites. It is reminiscent of *Dr. Zhivago* in which Pasternak, a Jew, describes a minor pogrom and instead of expressing indignation against the

perpetrators, he philosophically wonders why the Jew persists in his suffering by remaining a Jew. After all, Pasternak reasons, there is only a small difference between Jews and Christians...if only the Jew would fade away...no more pogroms . . . obviously.

Draper tries to set up rules in advance that he thinks will absolve him from the need to present a balanced consideration of the issues. He says he is going to devote himself "mainly to the myths and illusions about the Israeli side of the story." He is motivated by a compulsion to lay the ghost of Zionism and, above all, to escape the need to deal with the problems seriously. It is only an excuse, or an attempt at an excuse, to distort matters. The major technique of the propaganda of the Big Lie is not the invention of falsehoods but a completely one-sided and distorted representation of the picture. For Draper, Zionism is not a nationalistic answer of a significant number of Jews to their sorry conditions in the world but it is some kind of devil. Zionism is so bad that even those Zionists who agree with Draper about a bi-national state are transformed into non-Zionists. They become only "people who considered themselves to be Zionists." This is not logic or argumentation. This is exorcism. Despite the fact that Zionism embraces many political parties, tendencies and philosophies, from extreme right to extreme left, from advocates of a "cultural center" to advocates of control of both sides of the Jordan, for Draper it is all cut from the same cloth, woven by Satan, himself.

Zionism is labeled not only a "tribal mystique" but a "tribal blood-mystique." To prove this, Draper, a master at quotations (a talent of his I have always envied), comes up with the following:

The converted Jew remains a Jew . . . Jew and Jewess endeavor in vain to obliterate their descent through conversion or intermarriage . . . The Jewish type is indestructible . . . Jewish noses cannot be reformed . . . black wavy hair . . . will not change by conversion into blond . . .

If this is the worst or even only the most typical proof of "tribal blood" concepts, it is a sad day for Draper's thesis. Doesn't he know that the above is the tragic historic experience of many? Has not Nazism in our day proved that this is not a mystique but rather an erroneous generalization based on historical experience? Zionists and anti-Semites are not alone in maintaining this point of view. I have seen New York City high school textbooks in which only two historical figures are identified as Jews—Disraeli and Marx—both of whom were descendants of converted parents, neither of whom considered himself a Jew.

Let us be charitable and grant Draper that *some* Zionists (and Israelis) do accept a "tribal mystique." Why ignore the overwhelming majority of thinkers who explain Jewish alienation on various other grounds ranging from the simple irritations normal to all minorities, to the class and economic analysis of the Marxist, Borochoy? In evaluating no other nationalism or social movement does Draper make this same methodological error. Draper surely knows of Stokely Carmichael's statement that "No, not one" white person can be trusted, or the Black Muslim myth that all people were once black and that the white people were bred by Mr. Yacub as a savage race of "white devils." Draper is able to give critical support to some advocates of Black

Power despite these "racist" elements. He is able to differentiate in the case of all other nationalisms between the social reality that impels them and some of their extremist groups and pronouncements. Only in relation to Zionism and Jewish nationalism does he become simplistic.

In 1948, Draper was dragged by events into accepting the fact of Israel and of Jews acting "as if" they were a nation. Instead of regressing, it is time for him to rethink and reconsider his attitude to both Jewish nationalism and its most powerful manifestation, Zionism. No special consideration is necessary, just the same consideration he gives to other nationalisms.

LET US START PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE. First, Deir Yassin. It really was an atrocious act that no one can condone. But it was an isolated event. For the one Deir Yassin cited by the Arabs, the Jews can point to dozens perpetrated by the Arabs. To be sure, it was a terrorist act. But terror for what purpose? For the sake of terror? Draper knows but is absolutely silent. Partition had been voted but the British were still in full control of the country. The Arabs used this period for a series of terrorist attacks on Jewish settlements as a means of influencing opinion. Deir Yassin was a *retaliatory* action—a brutal and savage act that violated the policy of the official Jewish agencies which denounced it. The fact that the Haganah made a pact with the Irgun is no proof that it sanctioned the brutal act but rather that it considered other matters more important than Deir Yassin. One can argue the moral validity of Haganah's cooperation with the Irgun but one cannot rewrite history by branding all Israeli groups with complicity in the act.

Incidentally, the pro-Arab, Christopher Sykes, in *Crossroads to Israel*, makes the point that it was one of the great mistakes of the Arab leadership to focus on Deir Yassin. The results of this propaganda overemphasis led to unnecessary flight by Arabs who were only one step removed from nomadism and who did what comes naturally to nomads—they picked up and left. The exodus was not an Israeli or Zionist plot, (it was not even a plot of the Arab Higher Committee), but as Draper himself says, Arabs fled whenever any troops showed up.

It is important to know that the flight began not after May 15, 1948 when the real fighting broke out, nor did it begin after Deir Yassin. As a matter of fact, according to both Don Peretz and Sykes, it began immediately with the U.N. partition resolution in November 1947. The first to leave were the upper classes and the "natural" leaders. Without social cohesion, the rest were in no position to act rationally. In Nazareth, where the leadership remained, the population did not flee and there was no displacement.

The Arab leadership is given complete absolution for its role in the creation of a refugee problem and the blame is placed entirely on Israeli acts and the normal fear of Arab peasants. But in Haifa, where there was close cooperation between Arab and Jewish labor groups, the Israelis made every attempt to convince the Arabs to remain. They negotiated; they sent loudspeakers to tour the Arab sections. Yet, the Arabs—thousands of them—left in an organized fashion. Who organized this flight?

Despite his pro-Arab position Sykes is able to state "*Palestine* Arabs had a bad conscience about atrocity toward Jews." For Draper, only foreign Arabs

share any blame. What happened to the Mufti and the Arab Higher Committee? Did they vanish completely? It is simply not true "that Israel's rulers created the massive Arab refugee problem." In 1936, when the Mufti organized attacks on the Jews and the "Zionists" adopted the policy of "Havlagah," i.e. no retaliation, about 40,000 Arabs fled the country. They returned later when peace was restored. This time unfortunately they were not allowed to return but were used as pawns in a vain attempt to force a favorable peace.

An accurate picture of the responsibility for the creation of the human tragedy of the Arab refugees is much more complex than the one Draper presents in his article. Some Arabs left because they were enemies of the state. A few, very few, were expelled by the Jews. Most fled for the same reason that refugees generally do—to get as far as possible away from the battle area. Certainly the refugees should have been treated as unfortunate human beings caught in a web of circumstance. Israel could have and should have won their loyalty. Jews, who have so often been refugees and suffered so much in such circumstances, were expected to be doubly considerate and not treat other unfortunates as enemies or pawns in a power struggle. But what direct bearing does that have on the May-June days when Nasser, El Attasi and Hussein decided the time was ripe to drive the Jews into the sea?

Draper uses the "pogrom" at Kfar Kassim as proof that Israel is just another Moloch. But he should read what he wrote in the very same paragraph: "*All of Israel was appalled.*" (my emphasis). Zionists, too? And the soldiers involved were punished. Not good enough? Possibly. But hardly the picture of a tribal blood, expansionist, militarist, reactionary, chauvinist, racist, Moloch of a society.

ON THE QUESTION OF "INFILTRATORS," an issue more directly connected to causing the fighting both in 1956 and 1967, Draper again paints a distorted, monochromatic picture. For him, the "infiltrators" are simply displaced Arab peasants who, looking across the border, see their own fields tilled by others. As simple landed people, they merely want to get back what is theirs. This is presented to us as literal truth, not as a symbolic description of events. There is not a word or a syllable evaluating the role of the Fedayeen, the PLO, the El Fatah or other organized groups officered by Egyptians and Syrians. The only people Draper sees are peasants and Israeli militarists. There is a mere hint of others when Draper says: "the Egyptians only used them [refugees] for their own purposes..." A little more detail on just how they used them would have destroyed his point on infiltrators.

This tendency to gross exaggeration and one-sidedness is evident elsewhere in the article. We read: "The great land robbery of the *Israeli Arabs* was the despoiling of a *whole* people." (My emphasis.) Not a part, not even a major part but a *whole* people. The unwary reader is left with the impression that all Israeli Arabs were robbed of their land. Again, let us put things in perspective. How many of the Arabs who remained in Israel lost their land? The official Israel estimate is that only a few hundred were involved. Mapam, (described by Draper as land-grabbing bleeding hearts), which fought against the government policy of appropriating the lands of Arabs still in Israel by a declaration that the owners were absentees, claims that up to

30,000 people were affected. 30,000 out of a quarter of a million. Bad enough! Parenthetically, in some cases, Mapam kibbutzim did refuse to accept land belonging to such "absentees." But Draper is carried away by his compulsion to tar *every* Zionist with the same brush.

DRAPER'S CHARGE THAT ISRAEL IS "EXPANSIONIST" is the only point that has any direct and immediate relevance to the war. What does he mean by the term "expansionist?" Usually, it means the use of every method, fair and foul, which a country uses to extend its territory. The United States used fair means in purchasing Louisiana and foul means in provoking war with Mexico and violating treaties with the Indians. It was in this way that America fulfilled its "Manifest Destiny" and that the empires of the world were built.

Does Draper seriously believe that had there been a peace treaty with agreed-on borders, there would have been an Israeli drive for expansion? Anyone with just rudimentary knowledge of the realities of Israeli political life and division of opinion knows that the expansionists and "hawks" would not have reached first base were Israel living peacefully within agreed-on borders.

The 1956 war does not prove that Israel is expansionist. In fact, it proves the very opposite. If Israel had then been interested in territorial acquisition, it would have looked to the West Bank of the Jordan. (Gaza has no attraction for anyone except as a base for attack.) Instead, Israel did everything possible to keep Jordan out of the war. In 1956, its attempts were successful; in 1967 they were not. The fact is that in 1956, the Israelis were convinced, rightly or wrongly, that Nasser, who had just managed to make himself the hero of Arab nationalism and was riding a wave of emotion by taking over the Suez Canal, laden, in fact overladen, with Czech and Russian arms, was about to lead a Jihad against Israel. Such were the circumstances under which the Israelis acted. Unfortunately (and with hindsight we now know, unnecessarily), they collaborated with the British and French imperialists and thereby gave all their enemies a real tool with which to brand them "tools of imperialism."

Let us take a closer look at the final outcome of the 1956 events. If it is true, as Freud said, that results are a good clue to basic intentions, that is applicable to the 1956 war. The fact is that Israel settled for U.S. and U.N. guarantees of free passage through the Straits of Tiran and protection of its borders from attack. This shows its *fundamental* policy is one of defense rather than expansionism. When these guarantees broke down in 1967 and Israel was really in danger of attack, it had no one to rely on. It was deserted by the U.N., the U.S. and its former British and French imperialist allies. The essential point is that Israel's policy is basically defensive and not expansionist.

It is true that in the long run Israel's security will be better served by a political approach and not by the military approach of the present Israeli leaders, but that does not negate the fact that in 1967 Israel was in immediate danger, that its defense was imperative for socialists and believers in national self-determination. Israel did not seek a pretext to go to war, as Draper implies, in order to foster its expansionism. Nasser did not only "talk loudly,"

he acted. He blockaded the ports—an act of war—he forced Hussein into a treaty that encircled Israel, and as the captured documents prove, he had “operative” orders for the invasion of Israel. It is by no means certain even today that Israel fired the first shot, although Israel was first to use its air force in decisive action. U Thant, no particular friend of Israel, says he cannot determine who fired first. Draper however does not shrink from accusing Israel of “precipitating the shooting war.” Apparently, coordinated firing from three sides and the blockades are only the actions of a “blowhard.” For a responsible leadership to interpret it in that way would have been criminal neglect.

Draper treats us to a cheap movie script about a Zionist conspiracy that exploited the Jewish refugees from Hitlerism to “carry out the goal they had set half a century before: to dispossess the Arab nation of Palestine...” The gloom deepens in 1942. The Zionists end their doubletalk and in the “Biltmore Program” announce (from behind a black cape?): “We are going to take the whole country.” This is no mere questioning of the methods the Israelis use in a particular situation but a questioning of their right to be in Israel. This is further reinforced by Draper’s comment that “Hitler’s extermination program was a great crime, but why does it mean that we have to give up our land to the Jews?” This argument seems so unshakeable to him that he throws out the challenge: “I should like to see someone refute this.”

The truth of the matter is that there was no plot to dispossess anyone, let alone an entire nation. There was no need for anyone to lose his land. *The historical fact is that the Israelis are probably the only people who acquired a territory peacefully, without force and without conquering anyone.* That was true for the entire period from the 1880s to 1948, when the state came into existence. It was the fight against partition and not the settlement of the refugees in 1948 that led to any displacement. The peaceful process could have continued and would have allowed for the settlement of the Jewish refugees from Europe had there existed any Arab sentiment for cooperation half as strong as Jewish sentiment for Arab-Jewish cooperation. Instead, there was total rejection of any Jewish peace feelers. The “Biltmore Program” was, as the debate in the press shows, not a decision to grab the whole country but the very opposite—a preparation for acceptance of partition (which had previously been rejected by most Zionists) of the country where the Jews would have a state in which they would constitute a majority.

The Arabs of Palestine would have lost nothing as citizens under Jewish settlement if they had shown the least desire for accommodation with the Jews or a peaceful acceptance of partition. Absolute political sovereignty was the only right the Arabs would have lost. This is an important right, of course, but one they could never have obtained without the cooperation of the Jews in helping them oust the British from Palestine. This path was not followed. Even the concept of bi-nationalism did not promise to grant Arabs exclusive sovereignty. Bi-nationalism meant that national groups shared responsibility for governing the country as a whole.

IS THE CONCEPT OF A BI-NATIONAL STATE applicable today? I wish it were. But making it meaningful would entail keeping the West Bank, etc., and Israel

in one state. I doubt that any Arab nationalist would ever agree to such an arrangement. The more probable way to peace in the Middle East is through a peace treaty recognizing Israel's right to existence and its status as an equal. In exchange, Israel would return—henceforward demilitarized—the territories it had seized in the June war.

Draper could have done the cause of peace and socialism a service had he given the subject his usual balanced treatment. He might have appealed to those who want and are working to make Israel something more than a "state like any other state." Instead, he has only repelled them.

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A Reply to Hal Draper—3:

Making a Caricature of a Discussion

Bernard K. Rosen

DRAPER'S RABID RESPONSE to my views of the Middle East (*New Politics*, Vol. VI, No. 2) bears out Lenin's apt observation that rarely does one run into a conscientious opponent in politics.

An honest critic of my views would have conceded that I was, and am, against Zionism. But not Draper. Because my views coincide with those of the Zionists in some respects, I am, *ipso facto*, a Zionist! It makes as much sense as if I were to accuse Draper of being a Maoist because his views on Israel are similar in some ways to those of the Chinese leader. Thus is the discredited method of the amalgam brought to life again, made so notorious by Stalinism and always practiced so assiduously by the seasoned enemies of socialism, Zionists included (yes, Zionists!). The use of the amalgam is unworthy of a socialist and can only hurt the socialist movement and its morality. Draper should know better unless he has forgotten what he has learned in the past.

When I proposed a new, socialist "line" for the Middle East, I had no pretensions at originality. I am well aware of the fact that much has been written on the matter and that socialists have discussed and grappled with the problem. All I had in mind was that it was time for socialists, particularly independent socialists who are not wedded to rigid dogmas and ossified movements, to shake themselves free of their political lethargy and quickly strike out in new directions with a program best calculated to further the interests of the masses and socialism.

War is a continuation of politics by other means, Draper observes, quickly adds that reactionary Israeli state policies led to 1956 and 1967 and believes, thereby, that he traps me in my ignorance and chauvinism. True, Israeli state capitalist policies, as well as Egyptian capitalist state and foreign imperialist policies, determined 1956 and 1967, with more than one factor causing the