

Israel, Zionism, and the Arab Question

To the Editor:

I have just read in LABOR ACTION for Oct. 25 the translation of my letter on Zionism and the Arab question, and the reply by Hal Draper. This reply obliges me to write once more (I hope it will be the last) in order to state my point of view precisely.

First of all, I spoke in my letter of Lebanon [in French *Liban*—Trans.] and not of Libya [in French *Libye*—Trans.]. This error of the translator led Hal Draper to believe that I was referring to Libya, evidently a mistake. [The translator apologizes profusely, though we add, to cover up his confusion, that it was a question of deciphering handwriting as well as of translating.—Ed.]

For Hal Draper, the central question is the following: Is it necessary to destroy the state of Israel by armed force? And he sees no solution other than that if one is opposed to the very existence of the state of Israel. I regret to say that the alternatives seem to me to be false ones. By no means do I propose a recommencement of the armed struggle between the Arabs and Israel; I very strongly wish that it should not happen. But I am for the fusion of the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine into a single people, and Draper seems to be in agreement on that. How is this fusion to be achieved? For that we have to rely on the socialist and internationalist propaganda on which we agree, it seems to me. But Draper does not seem to see that such a fusion will necessarily end in the destruction of the state of Israel—which is that of a religious group—and its replacement by a state of Palestine. How can one suppose that the Arabs could accept as their own a state based on Jewish racism? A unified state—even if it is federated as Draper proposes, which seems to me an inadequate solution—could not be Israeli but Palestinian. That seems to me evident, and I do not understand how Draper can suppose that the state of Israel could survive a fusion with Arab Palestine.

REPLY: ISRAEL AND JEWISH IMMIGRATION

Comrade Gallienne's second letter, above, is welcome; it is clear that his views are not quite as different from the ISL's as seemed to be indicated in his original letter. One reason seems to me to be that he was not familiar with the ISL resolution and policy (on Palestine federation, for instance), as was Maksoud, and as I assumed he was too. Another reason is that in his first letter he seemed to be solidifying himself entirely with the line of the Arab socialists as expounded by Comrade Maksoud in the LA discussion. We had challenged Maksoud on the war-against-Israel line. Gallienne had not differentiated himself.

(1) In his present letter he discloses that in demanding the "destruction of the state of Israel" he means absolutely nothing more than the fusion of Israel and Arab Palestine into a "state of Palestine"—that he agrees with this demand of ours which we counterpose to the Arabs' perspective. We assume also that he means a voluntary fusion.

Very good. To be sure, to use "destruction of the state of Israel" as the term to designate the peaceful fusion of two peoples is a very ferocious way of talking politically. To be sure, it is also a very strange and misleading sort of ferocious talk when there are so many people around in Comrade Gallienne's part of the world who by no means have his peaceful interpretation of the words.

But notwithstanding, there is certainly no doubt that our proposal—and Gallienne's—for a fusion of Jews and Arabs in a united Palestine would mean the end of Israel as the present sovereign "Jewish state." That is why we raised it. The center of our attack on Zionism is on the concept and practise of the "Jewish state." We are for transforming Israel into a "bi-national" state precisely in order to make possible Jewish-Arab fusion.

As for the federated form: Gallienne is beside the point when he comments that a federation would be "inadequate." It is our proposal not because it is an end in itself but because we are convinced that it is the only practicable initial form for such a fusion. Gallienne should remember that we are talking about two people who right now are closer to going to war again than they are fusing voluntarily. In a Palestine which is reunited federally, one section would of course still be called "Israel," quite probably. We trust that this nomenclature will not

I know that LABOR ACTION condemns the anti-Arab racism in Israel; that has never been in question. But I said that Draper had not spoken in his reply to Maksoud about the expulsion of the Arabs of Palestine; and that is for me the center of the problem.

And Draper still does not answer the question: Does a population removed from all parts of the globe have the right to colonize a country? If one recognizes the Jews' right to establish themselves in Palestine, it is inevitable that they should take the Arabs' lands and that they should drive them out besides.

There is a curious contradiction in the position of Draper and LABOR ACTION. Draper declares that he agrees with me on the return and the indemnification of the expelled Arabs, the reunification of Palestine, the right of Jews to leave Israel if they so wish, complete equality for all the peoples. Very well. But he does not say a word about limitation on Jewish immigration into Israel. Is he in favor of letting this immigration go on? If he is, there is a contradiction in his ideas, for immigration necessarily pushes the Jews to occupy the Arabs' lands and to increase their territory at the latter's expense. The role of internationalists is, then, to alert the Jews who want to emigrate to Israel, and to make them understand that by acting in this way they are working against socialism.

Between Draper's position and mine, then, there are very important divergences:

- (1) The state of Israel, in my opinion, must be replaced by a state of Palestine.
- (2) Jewish immigration into Palestine must in my opinion still be stopped before it is too late, that is, before it ends in an armed conflict which I do not wish any more than does Draper.

Very fraternally,
J. GALLIENNE

Damascus, Syria, Nov. 23

repel Gallienne too violently. In any case, it is another reason against talking in terms that sound like "destroying Israel," and letting it go at that.

Our own thinking has been, most often, in the framework of asking this question: What would be a revolutionary socialist program for an anti-Zionist movement within Israel? Perhaps Gallienne has devoted more attention to another important question: A revolutionary socialist program for the Arab world. The two cannot be identical, of course, but they must not be contradictory. They must be compatible at the worst; complementary, at the best.

(2) Now in the course of this thinking, we have paid a great deal of attention to attacks on, and demands about, the Israeli crimes against the Arab refugees and expellees. For the second time Comrade Gallienne complains that I did not mention this in my reply to Maksoud, and for the second time I am forced to reply that it had nothing to do with our differences with Maksoud. Comrade Gallienne makes no connection with anything; he just notes. It isn't very helpful.

(3) "And Draper still does not answer the question: Does a population removed from all parts of the globe have the right to colonize a country?"—Such obviously loaded questions are also the reverse of helpful.

No one has "the right to colonize a country."

What Gallienne intends is a question about the right of immigration, which I discussed at length in the polemic with Maksoud. It is Comrade Gallienne's way of making an argument: in this case, he is asserting in effect, immigration is identical with colonization. All immigration of Jews, or only Zionist-type mass immigration? He does not say.

Is it possible to develop a socialist policy which will reconcile the right of Jews to immigrate to countries of their choice (including Palestine), with the fight against the Zionist aim of carving a Jewish state out of the Arab world? Well, this is exactly what we tried to do; exactly what I tried to explain in the discussion against Maksoud; exactly what is set forth even more cogently in our resolution.

But all Gallienne does is simplistically to identify any immigration with colonization, and this adds nothing that I need discuss again.

But if at war's-end there was a special problem of an uprooted people in Europe who were being strangled to death before the eyes of the world (a problem which, I am afraid, plays no role in Gallienne's considerations) and the need for a socialist policy which could take account of their plight as well as of the real crimes of the Zionists against the Arab people, then what about today? Obviously this special problem has diminished substantially and no longer calls for action in the same way.

Then what about the problem which, Gallienne says, I omitted?—namely, "limitation on Jewish immigration into Israel." That is easy, but further on, Gallienne refers to "stopping" Jewish immigration; and in his first letter he demanded "the end of the Jewish immigration into Palestine."

The question arises: Is Gallienne really talking only about a "limitation" on Jewish immigration; or is he demanding a ban on Jewish immigration (the latter being a not unpopular slogan in his part of the world)?

The fact is that the Israeli Zionist government has itself, these days, adopted a policy of limited immigration, against extreme-Zionist demands for unlimited mass immigration. But that is tactical for them. Zionist immigration policy is ultimately directed to expansionist and anti-Arab ends in its very bases. Gallienne would have been perfectly correct if he had limited himself to this point.

It follows, in my view, that a socialist anti-Zionist policy in Israel would certainly concern itself with the limitation (not stoppage) of Jewish immigration. What would be the socialist criteria as against the fundamentally expansionist aims of Zionism? I suggest these:

- (1) Priority for resettling the Arab refugees and expellees over against any and all Jewish immigration.
- (2) The fixing of a quota for immigration on the basis of the economic and social absorptive power and needs of the country, not on the basis of the Zionist aim.

(3) Whether a given higher or lower immigration rate would help the productivity of the country, or depress its living standards and burden its resources, is to be determined by competent economic technicians.

(4) If a federated Palestine is to be possible, it will undoubtedly have to be based on prior agreement on immigration quotas, through peaceful negotiations and a will to come to agreement. Such agreement with the Arabs would be impossible or unstable as long as Zionist policy and ideology rules Israel.

These are some thoughts on criteria for limitation of immigration. I should like to think that here too Comrade Gallienne means the same thing we do when he himself uses the word "limitation."

By the way, I note that the "curious contradiction" in our position turns out to exist in an answer I do not give to the above-mentioned unclear question.

Hal DRAPER

BOOKS RECEIVED

Received from New American Library, publishers of Mentor and Signet books, publication date Dec. 22:

W. W. Rostow & others: *The Dynamics of Soviet Society*, Mentor, 50¢. David St. Leger: *A Treasury of Wisdom and Inspiration*, Signet Key, 35¢. Georges Simenon: *The Brothers Rico*, Signet, 25¢. W. C. MacDonald: *Law and Order Unlimited*, Signet, 25¢. Charlie Wells: *Let the Night Cry*, Signet, 25¢. Charles Furlow: *Search for the Sun*, Signet Giant, 35¢. M. F. Caulfield: *The Black City*, Signet, 25¢. Adam Knight: *Kiss and Kill*, Signet, 25¢.

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