

agreement which would recognize Abdullah's right to retain the Old City and the other fruits of his brutal aggression against Israel. This meant agreeing to British seizure of a slice of Palestine. Neither before nor during the U.N. session did Israel's government raise the demand that Abdullah's British guns, which were menacing Israel, be removed from the Old City and from the rest of Arab Palestine. Under the circumstances both the Washington-dictated Conciliation Commission plan and the government of Israel plan (in its actual form) would have resulted in strengthening imperialist positions to the detriment of Jews and Arabs.

The Israeli government's proposal proved to have little support in the United Nations. The debate centered around the kind of internationalization to be adopted. An alternative proposal by Australia provided for a more complete internationalization that conformed to the Vatican's ideas, while leaving Jerusalem's fate in the hands of the American-controlled Conciliation Commission. Some type of reactionary "internationalization" seemed certain of adoption when the Soviet Union stepped in and by drastic amendments to the Australian plan changed its character. The amendments eliminated the Conciliation Commission from the proposal (though the U.S.S.R. did not succeed in abolishing the commission entirely), placed the international regime under the supervision of the U.N. Trusteeship Council, in which the Soviet Union has an important voice, provided for greater democratization of the Jerusalem setup, and in general brought the plan into harmony with what had been projected for the Holy City in the original partition resolution. The Australian-Soviet proposal passed by 38 to 14, with 7 abstentions, the United States and Britain, as well as Israel, voting against it. Once more, thanks to the U.S.S.R. and its allies, imperialism had suffered a rebuff in Palestine.

For Israel all this should underline the experience of two turbulent, glorious and inglorious years: there is no sanctuary in imperialism; there is no refuge among those whose business is tyranny and war.

### III. Cockpit of Empire

In Israel you are conscious more of Europe than of Asia. It is a Europe torn out of Poland, Rumania, Hungary, Germany, twisted and seared by the Hitler horror. Yet somehow all this that is so terribly alive already belongs to the past. Europe recedes. And America for these people exists only as a gargantuan political and financial enigma that smiles or frowns on Israel. Chiefly and almost exclusively you are conscious of Israel. This national self-preoccupation shuts out for most Israelis not only the thunder of approaching global storms, but even the lightning of the immediate neighborhood. Who would guess, from reading Zionist literature, that Israel is situated not on an elysian island, but in the vortex of the Middle East? Who would know, from the lyrical books and pamphlets, that Zionism chose to solve—after its fashion—the Jewish problem in the very spot where giant powers and trusts had chosen to solve—after their fashion—problems of their own?

The flight from Europe has intensified the mood of immersion in Israel. Yet the Yishuv's own experiences in the last few years have certainly dented and cracked the isolationist shell and thrust the rude realities of world politics and economics into the consciousness of large numbers of its citizens. But it would be an exaggeration to say that the majority have already shed illusions and the tendency to discount the explosive milieu that surrounds them.

One does not have to go far to encounter a striking physical expression of the Middle East reality. Squatting against the Haifa skyline are the yellow, funnel-shaped turrets of the British-owned oil refineries: a reminder that Israel's problems would be relatively simple, that it would not have had to fight a war in the very act

of birth were it not an inseparable part of that tinderbox of economic, political, and strategic tensions that is the Middle East.

The Middle East was the birthplace of the three great world religions. In our own time it has become, if not the birthplace, one of the principal fountainheads and shrines of a fourth: oil. The Middle East is in fact the world's greatest oil gusher. It contains about 41 per cent of the proved reserves (those actually discovered) of petroleum, or about 8 per cent more than in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The potential reserves are believed to be several times larger. The right to extract and profit from this enormously valuable natural resource does not belong to the half-starved millions of the Middle East. It belongs entirely to nine foreign companies, eight of them giants of the international cartels. These eight, operating in the major oil area around the Persian Gulf, are the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, 55.9 per cent of whose stock is owned by the British government; Royal Dutch-Shell, a British-Dutch world trust second only to the Rockefeller Standard Oil combine; a French firm, Compagnie Francaise des Petrolles, partly owned by the French government; and the following American corporations: Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, Socony-Vacuum Oil Company, Standard Oil Company of California, Texas Company, and Gulf Oil Corporation.\*

The two Standard Oil firms and Socony-Vacuum are part of the Rockefeller empire; Morgan and Rockefeller interests and the Continental Illinois Bank and Trust Company dominate the Texas Company; Gulf Oil is Mellon-controlled.

Oil production in southwest Iran is a monopoly of Anglo-Iranian. The Iraq Petroleum Company, which has a seventy-five-year concession for the rich Mosul oilfields in Iraq, is jointly owned by Anglo-Iranian, Royal Dutch-Shell, Compagnie Francaise, New Jersey Standard, and Socony-Vacuum. Their combined assets are more than \$5 billion. In addition, Iraq Petroleum has concessions in Syria, Lebanon, Qatar, Cyprus, Transjordan, in southern Arabia, and Palestine, including what is now the state of Israel.

At the time of the establishment of the Jewish state the only

\*In Egypt operations have been carried on by Anglo-Egyptian Oilfields, Ltd., a Dutch-Shell subsidiary, by Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony-Vacuum.

place in Palestine where oil had actually been discovered was Jebel Usdum, the Biblical Sodom. This is at the southwestern end of the Dead Sea in the Negev, the semi-desert southern area of Palestine. Prospecting had also taken place at two other points in the Negev. All three are within the territory of Israel.

The Saudi-Arabian oilfields, potentially the most productive in the Middle East, and those on the island of Bahrein are wholly an American show. In Saudi Arabia the fabulous Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco), jointly owned by California Standard, Texas Company, New Jersey Standard, and Socony-Vacuum, has a sixty-six-year concession for an area covering 440,000 square miles. This is the largest exclusive concession in the world—about one-sixth the area of the United States. The same companies are also the joint owners of Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company (TAPline), which in 1949 was building a 1,030-mile pipeline to the Mediterranean coast.

The ninth member of the Middle East plunderbund is a newcomer, a so-called independent. The American Independent Oil Company, which was given the concession for the neutral zone between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, was organized in 1948 by eleven firms, none of which can be described as "little business."

Thus we have a network of control, in which British and American interests both interlock and compete. Britain in 1947 controlled 52 per cent, the United States 42 per cent, and other foreign interests 6 per cent of about 30 billion barrels of proved reserves in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> Oil has for some years accounted for the largest share of American industrial investments abroad. In 1947 it represented two-thirds of the total, with the biggest chunk going into the Middle East. By the end of 1948 the investments of Aramco alone in Saudi Arabia were about \$310 million.<sup>3</sup> But even bigger plans were in the offing. In 1948 it was announced that during the next five years the various oil companies would spend nearly \$2 billion on fattening their Middle East bonanza, with more than a quarter to come from Aramco.\* "This huge program," commented *Business Week* with massive understatement, "is not designed, of course, for the benefit of the Middle East."<sup>4</sup>

\*This program later had to be curtailed when, after years of alarmist propaganda about the shortage of oil, industry spokesmen admitted early in 1949 that overproduction had developed.

However, there are beneficiaries in the Middle East too. The picturesque, if reactionary, potentates of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the minor feudal domains on the Persian Gulf derive their chief financial sustenance from the royalties paid them by the oil companies. Each of these companies, according to an authoritative study sympathetic to the oil trusts, "takes on some of the attributes of a foreign power in dealing with the local government within whose territory it operates a miniature economic empire... The concession agreements generally limit the sovereignty of the local government by stipulating that the government cannot exercise any control over the business operations of the company." And in addition to determining rate of production, prices, etc., "the companies are generally relieved of local taxation of all kinds."<sup>5</sup>

The United States had to muscle its way into the lush pickings of the Middle East since the British had staked out prior claims. In the 'twenties the State Department, loudly demanding the "open door" for the Rockefellers, forced the British to cut them a slice of the pie that became the Iraq Petroleum Company. But it was in Saudi Arabia that the invasion of the American trusts scored its greatest triumphs. The story of Saudi Arabian oil is an illuminating case history, first, because the operations of Aramco have been backed by Washington not only politically, but financially as well; second, because this combined big business-government offensive succeeded within a short time, despite British economic and political agreements with King Ibn Saud, in transforming a British sphere of influence into an American. Though Ibn Saud had for years been on the British payroll, he eventually succumbed to the brighter blandishments of the dollar. Commercial production began in 1938, but it was in the war and postwar periods that operations were rapidly expanded. It was hardly an accident that this coincided with the expansion of American political activity and influence in the Middle East. The Saudi Arabian bridgehead is in fact part of the larger Operation World Dominance launched by the United States after World War II. Here the cold war against Russia prepares for a considerable rise in temperature.

The sordid tale of Aramco's wartime relations with the American government has been given wide publicity as a result of the revelations of the Senate Special Committee Investigating the

National Defense Program.<sup>6</sup> The Aramco story demonstrates how the drive for profit and power on the part of one of the decisive groups of American big business influences and meshes with the government's foreign policy. Since the war, the oil interests have continued to exert great influence on foreign and military policy, especially in regard to Palestine and the Middle East. Arabian oil, in the words of a well-informed commentator with excellent White House contacts, "exerts a tidal pull on our foreign policy that has made the State Department at times the spearhead for the oil industry."<sup>7</sup>

### OIL AND STRATEGY

The tidal pull became particularly strong in 1947 during the United Nations Palestine discussion and in the months immediately after the partition decision. The Nation Associates presented a memorandum to President Truman in June, 1948, with documentary evidence that Aramco, "with the active collusion of the State Department," was "working with the British Foreign Office, the Arab League, controlled by the British government, and leaders of the Arab states" to undermine the partition decision.<sup>8</sup> The conspiracy against partition and Israel was also actively promoted by the military and by the late James Forrestal, then Secretary of Defense. Forrestal had formerly been president of the Wall Street banking firm of Dillon, Read and Company, which floated large bond issues for the owners of Aramco. At a hearing before a special subcommittee of the House Committee on Armed Services, he was asked apropos Saudi Arabia: "Has not the decision of the United Nations on the division of Palestine rendered more insecure our position there?" Forrestal replied: "The answer is 'Yes' to your implied question."<sup>9</sup>

Pressure of the American oil interests has undoubtedly been a large factor in the shifts, duplicities, and betrayals which have characterized American policy toward Palestine. But the prevalent tendency to paint the portrait of this policy almost exclusively in oil is an over-simplification. It ignores the role the Middle East has played in world affairs from the beginning of recorded history and especially during the past hundred and fifty years. It obscures the

connection between the Palestine policy and American foreign policy as a whole and the underlying forces shaping both.

Even if there were no oil in the Middle East, its strategic importance would undoubtedly attract to it the builders of the American empire, as it did in their time the empire builders of Greece, Rome, Turkey, and Britain. This area is the land bridge between Europe, Asia, and Africa. It is the Gibraltar of the eastern Mediterranean and the bastion of the Suez Canal. From it radiate communications by land, sea, and air that bind the world together. In World War II Rommel's campaign in northern Africa, the Hitler drive into the Balkans, and the Nazi thrust toward the Caucasus all converged toward this strategically vital region. Ernest Bevin once aptly termed the Middle East "the throat of the British Empire."<sup>10</sup>

In recent years American imperialism has laid none too gentle hands on that throat. The related strategic and economic attractions of the Middle East have made it one of the major cockpits of the Anglo-American conflict. In this desperate power struggle American influence has been ascending, British declining. The Wall Street-Washington offensive has converted Saudi Arabia into an American dependency, with an air base at Dhahran; has established American military, financial, and gendarmerie missions in what was formerly a completely British semi-colony, Iran; has won a decided edge over both Britain and France in Lebanon; is pressing the British in Iraq; is gaining ground in Egypt; and has replaced Britain as the dominant power in Israel. American policy vis-a-vis Britain in the Middle East, as elsewhere, is to combine and combat, to support and supplant her.

This relentless conflict, which bears no resemblance to the official amenities of Anglo-American relations, sometimes descends to the level of the old Chicago gang wars. A case in point was the three coups in Syria in 1949. The well-informed British journalist, Jon Kimche, has strongly intimated that the Foreign Office was responsible for the murder of Husni Zayim, the Syrian dictator, only a few months after he seized power in March, 1949. According to Kimche, Zayim was at first a French agent, used in a French attempt at a comeback in the Middle East. Soon, however, he acquired "more formidable backing. He had signed the agreement with the Arabian American Oil Company for passage of the Tap-

line through Syria and he had come to terms with the Americans. . . . The French phase had passed and the American phase was in full flood." As a result, "Zayim fell afoul of some power."<sup>11</sup> That power—Kimche leaves no doubt that he means Britain—did not hesitate to use force and violence to oust America's tools from this important sector of the Middle East. In December the army officer who had overthrown Husni Zayim was himself removed in a third coup, this time pro-American.

The electoral victory of pro-London Wafdists in Egypt and British efforts to mend fences in Israel and elsewhere are a reminder that Britain's strength in the Middle East should not be underestimated. Oil provides a massive foundation for British power. London's other investments throughout the Middle East also far exceed those of any other country. Moreover, long-established economic, political, and military positions in various countries, plus its vestpocket kingdom of Jordan, give Britain considerable leverage as both rival and partner of the United States.

A new phase in the American penetration of the Middle East opened with the Truman Doctrine. In this the interests of oil and strategy were joined as part of a global offensive. Turkey, which under the Truman *diktat* became, with Greece, a center of American financial and military penetration, can be considered either a part of the Middle East or closely bound to it, economically, politically, and by religion. The Doctrine, by enabling the United States to supplant Britain in Greece and Turkey, had the effect of strengthening the whole American position in the Middle East and accelerating the conversion of the oil empire into a gigantic war base. This region was also later integrated into the Marshall Plan; by 1951 over 80 per cent of the oil being provided under the European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan) is scheduled to come from the Middle East, to the vast enrichment of the American, British, Dutch, and French trusts, which will rake in \$1 billion in profits.<sup>12</sup>

The Truman Doctrine served to emphasize that while the Anglo-American antagonism is sharp and worldwide—and nowhere more acute than in the Middle East—it operates within a context of collaboration for common objectives, with Britain as junior partner. What today serves to focus all imperialist calculations in the Middle East is the emergence of the Soviet Union as an anti-

imperialist world power. Bear in mind that, except in Scandinavia via Norway, imperialism's only common frontier with the U.S.S.R. is in the Middle East, through Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan. More than once it has been pointed out that "the Middle East is the only point from which the great Russian oilfields at Baku can be bombed effectively."<sup>13</sup> That this is no academic matter is attested by the fact that an attack on Soviet Russia was actually launched from that area in 1919 when the British used Iran as a base for military operations against the young socialist state.

This points up the striking contrast between Soviet policy in the Middle East and that of the other powers, as well as of tsarist Russia. The Soviet-Persian treaty of 1921 was unprecedented in the relations between a great power and a weak, undeveloped country. Under its terms all debts to the tsarist government were cancelled and all Russian state property and concessions in Persia (now Iran) were turned over to the Persian government. Unlike Britain and the United States, the U.S.S.R. actually borders on the Middle East and is directly menaced by hostile developments there. Yet it has no bases in that region. There are no Soviet military or financial missions running this or that nominally independent state. And no Russian capitalists pipe the fabulous profits of Middle East oil to Moscow in return for bribes to semi-feudal princes. The Soviet Union wants nothing of the Middle East except freedom from war and the threat of war.

Where does Israel fit into this Middle East picture? The Palestine issue has provided one of the principal vehicles for the American advance into that area. As far back as 1913 the Standard Oil Company of New York bought seven concessions from Ottoman subjects for the exploitation of oil in the Negev and various minerals around the Dead Sea. When the British conquered Palestine, they took over these concessions, which became the subject of prolonged negotiations between the State Department and Whitehall after World War I. The matter was finally settled when the American oil companies were cut in on the Iraq Petroleum Company, which acquired the Palestine concessions.

On the political plane the King-Crane Commission appointed by President Wilson recommended in 1919 that a Syria which was

to include Lebanon and Palestine be placed under an American mandate. The American secret agent, William Yale, a former Standard Oil representative in the Middle East, who was a member of the commission's technical staff, dissented from the majority view and recommended that "Palestine should be separated from Syria and constituted as a National Home for the Jewish People under the Mandate of Great Britain..." However, gazing into the future, Yale anticipated these developments: "Furthermore, a Jewish State will inevitably fall under the control of American Jews who will work out along Jewish lines American ideals and American civilization. A Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine will develop into an outpost in the Orient."<sup>14</sup>

Actual American policy tended to follow the lines delineated by this perceptive secret agent and ex-Standard Oil man. In the interwar years the United States was content to leave direct political responsibility in the Middle East to the British and French, while counting on superior American economic power as a battering ram against their positions. In 1924 the United States signed a treaty with Britain assenting to the action of the League of Nations in granting her the mandate over Palestine—a treaty which formally established an American interest in the future of Palestine, while leaving to Britain the active role in shaping that future.

However, once the United States entered World War II, it moved into the Middle East with full power. After helping the British kick out the French, the Americans began to elbow out the former. With the creation in the postwar period of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry active American intervention in Palestine began. Walter Lippmann spelled out the implications of this intervention when he wrote:

"The Palestinian solution will be one thing if our role is limited to recommending what Great Britain, which is on top, is to carry out. It can be a quite different solution if the United States makes a momentous decision that the whole Middle East is a region of such vital interest to the peace and prosperity of the world that we must be present in the Middle East—*present somewhere, for example, at the port of Haifa*—exercising not only influence from the distance of Washington, but influence radiating from some local point of actual American power."<sup>15</sup> (Emphasis mine—A.B.M.)

And Lippmann compared this decision to that which was made at the turn of the century when the United States seized the Philippines and intervened in China.

Thus Lippmann's conception—and he reflected the views of the ruling oligarchy—was that Palestine must become the springboard for American economic and political expansion in the Middle East. As is known, the United States made the decision which Lippmann urged, though its presence in the port of Haifa came later and under the nominal aegis of the United Nations. Washington used its intervention in Palestine to supplant London as the dominant power in Israel, and exploited the military debacle of the Arab states to extend its influence over them.

The maneuvers of Washington and London in regard to Israel, the Arab states, and Iran must be viewed not only as reflecting the Anglo-American conflict, but primarily in terms of the Anglo-American partnership for war against the Soviet Union, against democratic Europe and Asia. This ultimately governs all decisions. Thus, the Middle East has become one of the principal incubators of World War III.

Within this larger context the Arab Middle East is one of the chief means by which imperialism blockades Israel, economically, politically, and militarily, undermining its independence and seeking to dragoon it into its war schemes. But the Arab Middle East can also become one of the chief means of completing Israel's liberation, of assuring its progress and enabling the Jewish state, together with the Arab peoples, to become a force for peace. This can come to pass if the people of Israel, rejecting their government's false course, overcome misunderstanding and make common cause with their Arab brothers against common enemies. "Anglo-American diplomacy," admitted Cyrus L. Sulzberger in the *New York Times*, "has worked to safeguard Anglo-American strategical interests with reactionary feudal elements in the Arab world who must inevitably be brushed aside by time."<sup>18</sup>

Not simply by time, but by the peoples, Arab and Jewish.

## IV. The Jews: Zionist Premise

On a July day in 1948 I stood with cheering thousands on the streets of Tel Aviv and watched the khaki-clad, bronzed defenders of the Jewish state march in celebration of Israel's first Army Day. It was the forty-fourth anniversary of the death of Theodor Herzl. Nearly fifty-one years earlier, after the congress which was to create the World Zionist Organization, Herzl wrote in his diary:

"If I were to sum up the Basle Congress in one word—which I shall not do openly—it would be this: at Basle I founded the Jewish state."<sup>1</sup>

Herzl of course did not found the Jewish state. It was the work of the Jewish people, whom this half-assimilated Austrian intellectual understood little, and of world forces to which he was blind. Yet Herzl's name is indissolubly linked with Israel, even though the struggle that forged the Jewish state represented the negation of so much of his doctrine.

That doctrine was political Zionism. It is not the purpose of this book to present a history or a complete evaluation of Zionism, but only to consider those aspects which help in understanding Israel and its problems. Let me emphasize at the outset that though Zionism initiated and nourished the project that eventually became Israel, Zionism and Israel are not the same.

Zionist doctrine holds that the Jews of various countries constitute a single nation which has existed continuously since Biblical times. According to this view, after the destruction of the Second Commonwealth in 70 A.D., the Jews were exiled from their homeland, Palestine. In that exile, called the Diaspora (in Hebrew "galut"), the Jews have everywhere been condemned to an abnormal