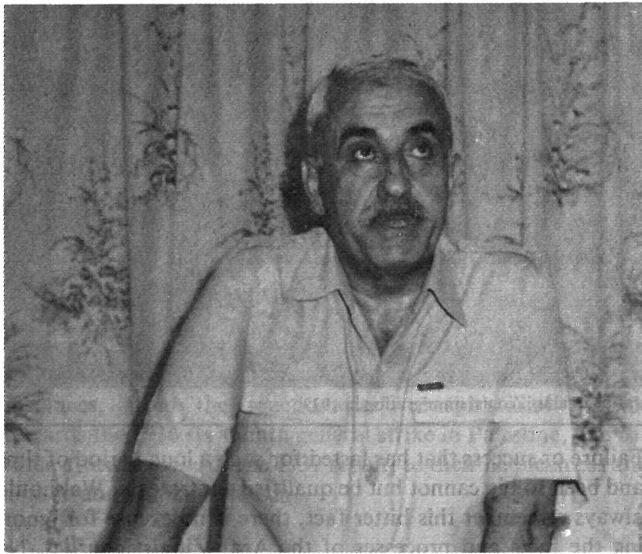


'Israel' — 40 Years

The following is the first half of an article by PFLP General Secretary George Habash, which first appeared in *Al Hadaq* Magazine in May this year - on the fortieth anniversary of the Zionist state. It addresses the need for a more realistic assessment of this state as a prerequisite for deriving the Palestinian and Arab strategy of confrontation.



Forty years have passed since the establishment of the Zionist entity on the land of Palestine. Forty years is the age of the Arab and Palestinian tragedy, of the Palestinian exodus, of the uprootedness, homelessness, negation, annihilation and massacres suffered by our people at the hands of the Zionist usurpers and their allies.

These were also forty years full of resistance and struggle on the part of both the Palestinian and Arab people for the preservation of their national identity and the restoration of their rights and occupied land.

In 1948, the Zionists' dreams materialized when the ideas Hertzl expressed in his book, *The Jewish State*, became a real state in Palestine. With extensive support from imperialism in general and Britain in particular, the armed Zionist usurpers established their state under the umbrella of international law represented by the Partition Plan (UN Resolution No. 181). They went further in their interpretation of this resolution, undermining the defined borders of the Palestinian state. Within a few years, the chapters of the conspiracy were completed through the convention of the Jericho conference (1950) which declared that the Hashemite regime was entitled to annex the West Bank to the Kingdom of Jordan. The very word *Palestine* has for years been absent from political lexicons and atlases in a cruel attempt to erase it from memory.

Although the 15th of May 1948 is the official date of the establishment of the aggressive Israeli state, its emergence dates back much farther, being the result of a build-up phase extending over thirty years, from the Balfour Declaration to the Partition Plan. In this phase, the Jewish Agency (of the World Zionist Organization) was acting as a state within the state (in this case, the British Mandate), and exercising its power to the utmost in the political, economic, military and social spheres. This phase, characterized by the official adop-

tion of the Zionist scheme by British imperialism, was itself the extension of twenty years of preparatory efforts by the Zionist movement which had taken an organized, comprehensive form at the Basel Congress in Switzerland in 1897. This congress was the culmination of the extensive discussion which had accompanied the emergence of the Zionist movement in the middle of the 19th century.

Here lies the very reason for the «Israeli surprise» in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. There were those who considered this war just a short round; they thought they were facing a few bandits; they had no idea of the development of Zionist power in the economic and military fields, and in terms of human resources. This power was markedly superior to that of the Arab forces which took part in the war, qualitatively and quantitatively, in terms of arms and human resources.

This was accompanied by the intensification of both impotence and treason on the part of Arab reaction, together with pervasive backwardness, discord, etc. The 1948 war was one between two widely divergent sides: the Israelis who were living their present and building up their future, and the Arabs who had just come out of the moribund Ottoman heritage, and whose development had been arrested since 1918, due to imperialist domination and the partition of the region among the principal imperialist powers of that time.

Because of all these factors, the 1948 defeat represented a typical interaction of Zionist ambitions, imperialist collusion and Arab reactionary failure and treason; hence, the interdependence of the struggles for the restoration of Palestine, ending the corrupt Arab reactionary regimes, and liberation from colonialism and imperialist domination.

The lopsided international balance of power prevailing at that time contributed to the success of the imperialist-Zionist effort to establish 'Israel'. The Soviet Union had just emerged from the war where it had suffered heavy damage and casualties, together with the newly born socialist community. It was not in a position to foil the imperialist-Zionist scheme. This is aside from all the wrong calculations and evaluations on which attitudes towards the Zionist entity were based. These included assumptions that the Jews had a right to self-determination, and that there was a chance for «democratic development in the young Hebrew state».

Much of world public opinion assumed that 'Israel' was a state of victimized Jews who had - relatively speaking - paid most dearly for the rise of the Nazi monster in Europe; thus it would be peaceful and an «oasis of democracy» in the region. Both western and Zionist mass media contributed to the promotion of this image, achieving outstanding successes. This image is not easy to erase, even after forty years of the Zionist entity's existence and aggression. Only gradually has the image of the cruel occupier shooting at children, women and old people, carrying out massacres, etc., begun to replace the image of the small, peaceful country threatened by Arab «barbarism» and Palestinian «terror».