



The Plot Thickens

The Zionist Connection II: What Price Peace? by Alfred M Lilienthal. North American, Inc., New Brunswick, USA, 1982, 904pp, \$9.95

M Iqbal Asaria examines a much neglected study which provides valuable insights into the nature of Zionism and the methods used to attain the support of major world powers and particularly of the United States.

THE Zionist invasion of Lebanon, or the bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis, or the razing to the ground of the Iraqi nuclear facilities always seem to bring Israel and USA more closer together when commonsense would dictate otherwise. Indeed, President Reagan's gloating over the Israeli raid on Tunis embarrassed even his own State Department officials let alone America's European allies. How has this single-minded and unreserved US support for Israel developed? What is the rationale of such an alliance? Are the people of Palestine entirely dispensable in this political juggling? This and many other questions are tackled in Alfred Lilienthal's massive study. The book was first published in 1978 and revised editions published in 1979 and 1982. As such it is more thorough in the treatment of pre-1978 events and very sketchy in dealing with later events.

"On every other issue of concern to Americans, both sides have invariably been publicly presented, no matter how controversial: the cigarette lobby vs. cancer research, the drug alarmists vs. the upholders of pot, traditionalists-oldsters vs. Beatles-hippies, civil rights gradualists vs. extremists, hawks and doves over Vietnam, pro-Watergate outcome vs. Nixon apologists - to mention but a few. It has only been on the subject of Jews, Zionism, and Israel that the U.S. and most of the Western world have had a near-total blackout", writes Lilienthal and goes on to say, "This new, updated paperback edition has been published as an answer to the widespread demand to learn more about the untold side of a subject, the understanding of which may be vital to man's very existence".

He proceeds to analyse the genesis of the Zionist state in the duplicity of the British establishment at the turn of

the century. He shows, for example, how when the Balfour Declaration was being promulgated in 1917, the British were giving contradictory signals to the Zionists and the Arabs. At a time when over 95% of the population of Palestine was Arab, the very wording of the Balfour Declaration indicates that the British had come to some secret arrangements with the Zionists. The Declaration read:

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country".

On their part Sheriff Hussein of Makka and Feisal also seem to have come to some arrangement with the British, since despite the Balfour Declaration they continued to put across the argument that they had unequivocal commitments from His Majesty's Government to safeguard the Arab position and interests.

Lilienthal shows how, with consummate skill, the Zionists proceeded to put flesh on the declaration of intent secured from Lord Balfour in 1917. They played on the changing fortunes in the war and the help that could be rendered to the Allied effort by the Zionist presence on all sides, to slowly whittle down any pangs of conscience the British may have had for the Palestinian people.

In the post-World War I period as global power gravitated towards the United States, the Zionist efforts also moved across the Atlantic. When Hitler started his 'final solution', the then US President, Franklin D

Roosevelt, had already had a plan put together to settle the bulk of the endangered Jews in Canada, USA, Britain and France. The Zionists were quick to realise that this would spell the end of their dreams for a Jewish State, and moved swiftly to sabotage the efforts. Morris Ernst, a New York attorney and a close friend of the President, who was assigned the task of organising the international asylum effort was lost for words when FDR said to him: "Nothing doing on the programme. We can't put it over because the dominant vocal Jewish leadership of America won't stand for it. They are right from *their* point of view. The Zionist movement knows that Palestine is, and will be for some time, a remittance society. They know that they can raise vast sums for Palestine by saying to donors, 'There is no other place this poor Jew can go'. But if there is world political asylum for all people irrespective of race, creed or colour, they cannot raise their money. Then the people who do not want to give the money will have an excuse to say 'What do you mean there is no place they can go but Palestine? They are the preferred wards of the world'. Alas, even Lilienthal's probings do not provide an answer as to what made the President change his mind so abruptly and in such a radically different direction.

In the concluding years of the Second World War the British 'understandings' on the Zionist state were transmitted to the USA. Churchill and Roosevelt both maintained the sham of trying to guard the Arab interests and issued conciliatory statements to Arab and Zionist leaders with impunity. Lilienthal shows how these panderings were designed to buy time for the Zionists and allow them to consolidate their physical hold on Palestine. In this phase Rabbis Wise

and Silver had the ear of the US President while illusory promises were dished out to Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia. The author reports the offering of a bribe to Ibn Saud to accept the Zionist position. John Kimche in his book, *The Unromantics - The Great Powers and the Balfour Declaration* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1968), mentions the earlier offer of over £40 million of development aid offered to Feisal during his meeting with Weizmann in 1917. Be that as it may, what emerges is that Zionism had made deep inroads into the British and American establishments well before the United Nations (or the League of Nations, as it was then) was called to play a role. The introduction of the UN into the debate, must be seen as well-conceived plan to keep up the double-faced diplomacy with which to assuage Arab popular fears.

With the pillars of the Zionist state so laid, the battle was joined to wipe out the notion of the Palestinian people from the minds of Americans and Europeans. It is with this aspect that the bulk of Lilienthal's work is concerned. With consummate skill he depicts the re-writing of history to 'insert' a massive Jewish presence in Palestine since time immemorial; the portrayal of the Jew as a bleaguered person amidst hostile and 'barbaric' Arab forces; the equation of the interests of Israel and the US; the justification of everything done by Israel as 'legitimate' if not necessarily strictly moral; and the extraction of one of the most sophisticated military arsenals from the US armed forces on grants and long-term loans.

Through the narrative we see the emergence of "the Jewish Lobby", that oft-mentioned creature without whose consent US Presidents seem even afraid to drink even a glass of water. The Jewish Lobby has even dominated US discussions with the Soviet Union. Many Congressional motions like the Jackson amendment, make good relations with the USSR conditional upon allowing Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel. This issue is also billed to figure prominently in the forthcoming talks between Reagan and Gorbachev.

Ironically, as global information exchange has become easier and fast, the ability of the Jewish Lobby to dominate public opinion has increased rather than diminished. Lilienthal, shows that this results from control and utilisation of the media by the Zionists. Through the Nixon and Carter eras this control was used to tarnish the image of the

Arabs to such an extent that Reagan's Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, was able to sanction the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, involving the killing of thousands of innocent civilians, without fear of any backlash from domestic public opinion. Lilienthal, also touches on the machinations of Henry Kissinger, and suggests that deep down his Jewish origins made him unsuited to take a non-Zionist view of the situation. For the likes of Kissinger he says, "However much the essence of Judaism may have remained as distinct as ever from Zionism, the nationalist shadow has so overtaken the religious substance that virtually all Jews have, in practice, become Israelists, if not Zionists. Many who mistrust the Zionist connotation can still have their cake and eat it, through Israelism".

While Lilienthal provides a useful chronicle of developments and adduces conclusive evidence of deliberate double-speak amongst the British and American establishments, his book raises many awkward questions which require a similarly well-documented analysis. What, for instance, were the forces used to convert people like Winston Churchill and F D Roosevelt to the cause of Zionism? How did large segments of the British and American establishments connive in the injustices perpetrated on the Palestinian people? The US has used Israel as its primary foreign policy tool in subjugating the Middle East. Was the Zionist state conceived as much a tool or has it emerged as one over

time? What are the implications for a 'democratic' form of government if a tiny minority can so paralyse and dominate major foreign policy issues? These queries, although within the purview of Lilienthal's work, are not adequately tackled.

There are questions, which the study raises, which are strictly outside the scope of the study, but which are prompted by the book's subject area. If, as Lilienthal shows, the Arab governments were aware of US and British duplicity from the turn of the century, why they continue to rely on the same powers for a rectification of the injustices resulting from the imposition of the Zionist State on Palestine? Are the 'understandings' reached with Sheriff Hussein of Makka and Prince Feisal still being honoured by the Saudi and Jordanian monarchs? What other explanation can be offered for this strange Arab behaviour?

Lilienthal's study stops after absorbing the lessons of the oil embargo of 1973. Had it not been for the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the impact of the embargo would have been token. Even with the shock created by the Islamic Revolution of Iran, the US has been able to strengthen its relationship with Saudi Arabia and Egypt, despite having moved much closer to Israel. US abstention in the UN Security Council motion condemning the Israeli bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis, has become a demonstration of pro-Arab sentiments for countries like Saudi Arabia and Tunisia! The Zionist connection is alive and well. ■

