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Preface

Many books have been written on Israel and Palestine. This volume deals with aspects of the subject hitherto almost totally neglected. It is the product not only of study, but of first-hand experience and observation. During six months spent in Israel in the unforgettable days when the Jewish state was born, I lived part of what I have written here.

The subject of Israel has unfortunately in some circles in the United States been enveloped in a fog of worshipful awe, and criticism is often regarded as little short of blasphemy. As a partisan of the struggles and aspirations of the people of Israel—such partisanship is inseparable from objective historic truth—I have necessarily criticized policies, programs, and ideologies which appear to me harmful to the interests of both the Israeli people and world democracy.

A few words about the transliteration of Hebrew and Yiddish terms in this book. There is no single accepted system, and the one I have employed may not please everyone. I have tried to make the spelling as phonetic as possible. Wherever "ch" is used in a Hebrew or Yiddish word, it is roughly equivalent to the guttural "ch" in the German word, "machen." I have dropped the Hebrew letter "hay," equivalent to the English "h," where it occurs at the end of a word, as in "Haganah," since it customarily is not sounded. The only exception is in words in which this final letter is preceded by the Hebrew equivalent of our short "e." For example, in "sadeh," which means "field," the final letter is retained to indicate that the word is to be

pronounced as two syllables. The accent in Hebrew words tends to be on the last syllable, though there are many exceptions. For the convenience of readers a glossary of Hebrew and Arabic terms used in the book appears at the end of the volume.

I cannot begin to express my gratitude to the many people in Israel who helped me while I was there and in some cases after my return. Rather than offend any by omission from a long list, I prefer to leave all of them nameless and thus exclude none from my heartfelt thanks. In my own country I am especially indebted to Moses Miller, John Stuart, and Harriet Black Magil, all of whom read the manuscript and made valuable criticisms and suggestions. I am also grateful for the assistance of the personnel of the Labor Research Association of New York, the Labour Research Department of London, Zionist Archives of New York, the Public Information Office of the government of Israel in Tel Aviv, and the Foreign Press Department of the Histadrut, Tel Aviv.

A.B.M.

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I. Meet the People

I first met Israel on the ship that took me there. It was an April crossing, mildly stormy. And the Soviet steamer *Rossia*, an Hitler heirloom—acquired as reparations—was carrying a group of Palestinians and about-to-become Palestinians to the greater storm lashing their homeland and its still unborn state. Imperceptibly our lives aboard ship began to assume a distinct pattern. These Palestinians had a sense of organization, and soon we were all drawn into it: the meeting to welcome the refugees, the non-religious Passover seder, the circle of discussion and play. We became part of a compact community, a microcosm of the Yishuv itself. And through the tapestry of our talk there wove the crimson thread of far-off battles: Mishmar Haemek, Kfar Etsion, Castel, Ramat Rachel—names that for these men and women were laden with life and labor.

The moving spirits in the group were three young men of Hashomer Hatsair,* a Left labor Zionist organization which had become part of Jewish Palestine's second largest party, the United Workers Party, known as Mapam. These men were returning after two years of work in the Hashomer Hatsair youth movement in the States. One of them was a former American, another had been a refugee from Germany, the third was a former Polish Jew. Now all three were Palestinians—soon to become Israelis.

What struck me about the returning Palestinians was their serenity. They were going back to a land at war; their homes were battlefronts; their relatives and friends were in arms. Yet they showed no tension or fear, no flicker of regret at leaving America, no hint of wanting to be anywhere but in Palestine. The deep

*For an explanation of Hebrew and Arabic terms see Glossary of names and terms, p. 219.