BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

HISTORY, POLITICAL ACTION AND CHANGE AS "ABERRATIONS", AND ZIONISM AS AN IRREMEDIABLE "CONTRADICTION"

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ARABS IN THE JEWISH STATE: A STUDY IN THE CONTROL OF A NATIONAL MINORITY, *by IAN LUSTICK.* Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1980.

There is much to recommend in Lustick's book. This is so especially in the chosen area of his study, in the way he spells out systematically how the Israeli regime has maintained control over its Arab national minority (approximately 14-15% of the 3,725,000 Israeli population). There is no gainsaying most of the facts, reports and assembled interviews in this well-researched document. I find serious fault, however, with the model that Lustick, a political scientist, follows in his work (variants of the model can also be found among sociologists who relate to the subject, e.g., Smooha, 1978; Zureik, 1979), with his interpretation of many of the facts, and with the theoretical cushion upon which he allows his model to rest. In brief, my main criticism is that Lustick treats the forces that contest and mitigate the political control system as "aberrations", outside the model. Moreover, once such forces are taken into account in the study, they are vitiated by the raising of a spectre of irresolvable contradictions inherent in Zionism and in the immanent "Jewish character" of the Israeli state. Whatever else, these contradictions will keep the control system (and the model) ever operative, and the controllers and controlled ever in their place. This is no small matter since, finally, according to this guiding (non-dynamic) methodology, there is no hope whatsoever that political and ideological activity may change conditions.

The three components which together form the system of control are segmentation, cooptation and dependence; each is analyzed at the structural, the institutional, and the pragmatic level. "Segmentation" is discussed in terms of pre-existing structural divisions, but mainly in regard to ongoing systematic segregation (e.g., social contacts are few). Meanwhile, the number of Arabs in government ministries is negligible; Arabs (with the exception of Druse) do not serve in the armed forces and, therefore, are not eligible for certain public assistance programs; there are no Histadrut-owned firms in Arab villages, and Arabs have no access to "national" (state-owned) land. Pragmatically, the regime operates directly to preserve existing structural differences within the Arab community and to discourage by all means (harassment, bribery, interrogations) independent Arab organization, leadership and frameworks for political action. The most effective instrument towards fulfilling these ends was the Military Government (1948 - 1966). It implemented a policy of travel restrictions, manipulated village clans and clan leaders, banned rallies, and arrested activists.

Through "cooptation", the Israeli Government gains access to Arab votes and information, monitors social and political trends, and operates a comprehensive surveillance system for the identification of dissidents. The methods employed have been operation through the traditional, tractable elders and notables of the *hamulas* (clans) and religious sects and, more recently, "cultivation", "grooming" and "capturing" (p. 211), as their replacements the younger educated generation (and especially the ambitious among them). This is done by dispensing jobs, i.e. as clerks, coordinators of sports activities, secretaries of labor councils, etc. Extremists are thus "bought-off" (p. 227), and they and the coopted notables convey a democratic image of Israel to the outside world while informing to the authorities against other Israeli Arabs (p. 219).

"Dependence" explains the economics of subordination whereby Israeli Arabs are dependent on the "Jewish economy". Because of this they lack autonomous bases of economic power and therefore cannot support dissident political movements (p. 197). Essentially, according to Lustick, the dependence of the Arabs on the Jewish population stems from the "Zionist character" of Israeli institutions (p. 157). Hence, his explanation of the gaps between the economic levels of the two groups, the "non-encouragement of industrial development of Arab areas" (p. 183), the "stagnation" of the "Arab economy" alongside the "industrial growth" of Jewish settlements, the "restrictions placed upon the employment of non-Jews" (p. 168), and the "discrimination" against Arabs in welfare payments, housing, development loans to Arab councils (pp. 185-88). And it is exactly the "Zionist character" of Israel which has brought the regime to close the "social gap" in occupational distribution, educational achievement, living standards, etc., between Oriental and Ashkenazi Jews, while conducting a policy of "*not*" doing the same between Arabs and Jews in "...a conscious effort to create and sustain ties of dependence" (p. 169).

In his final chapter Lustick reiterates his model of control as a system: "the point should now be clear. Deprived of facilities for united political action (segmentation), Israeli Arabs have found it difficult to protect their economic interests and to develop autonomous centers of economic power. Economically dependent, then, on the Jewish sector, Arab elites and potential elites have been relatively easy to coopt" (p. 237). At this point he also introduces as "trends", certain "challenges to the system": "the slow but steady erosion of traditional beliefs"; "the development among Israeli Arabs of a sense of themselves as members ... of the Palestinian nation"; and "the crystallization of frameworks for the expression of Arab discontent and opposition to Government policies" (pp. 237-238).

These are indeed true "challenges" to the system of control. However, the methodological problem is not merely that they are broached only in the last chapter, but also, and mainly, that they are external to the model. It is as if they did not take place at the same time as segmentation, dependence and cooptation, lacked a historical explanation and had no dialectical relationship with them. They merely "interfere". This is so much so that in order not to sully the model, the author reduces these fundamental processes to "aberrations", to "breaks" in the institutions: "Each of these trends undermines the three components of control. Their emergence can be traced to aberrations in otherwise "appropriate" structural and/or institutional conditions" (p. 238).

Some of these aberrations are the interruption of "the dominant pattern of isolation ... by the exposure which tens of thousands of commuting Arab workers have had to the opportunities, lifestyles ... in Jewish metropolitan areas ... Arab workingmen have derived a measure of autonomy ... often ... provide their families with ... economic security ..." (p. 238). Here are some "breaks" of fundamental importance: "Along with universal suffrage, the extension of essentially modern educational norms into the Arab sector has been one of the most significant consequences of the existence of a 'civic realm' where *Israelis*, Jews as well as Arabs, share certain rights and privileges qua Israeli citizens ... such a civil realm ... stands in opposition [elsewhere: "represents an aberration in the pattern of institutional segmentation" (p. 117)] to the dominant motif of Israel as a Jewish state and constitutes an important break in the institutional isolation of the Arab minority ... near-universal primary schooling for Arab boys and girls and the graduation of thousands of Israeli Arabs from high schools and colleges ... The presence of intellectually articulate young men in the villages ... coeducation in Arab schools systems ... have contributed to the general disintegration of the traditional social structure" (pp. 238-239), "and interfere with cooptation of attractive young leaders" (p. 251).

Either because of the inadequacy of his model, and/or because of his convictions, Lustick disposes with the problem of "aberrations", "the civil realm" (i.e., "Jews and Arabs qua Israeli citizens"), etc., by reverting to final causes and essences: "Jews *are* Jews", "Israel is a ... Zionist state". Thus, in his treatment of the growth of the Israeli Communist Party (Rakah), which won 50% of the Arab vote in the 1977 national elections (and perhaps 40% in the 1981 elections, as both Jews and Arabs moved further to the right – H.R.), he finds further "aberrations". Here they appear in the guise of left-wing Jews who "nevertheless *are* Jews": "Rakah has become *the* electoral repository for Arab voters ... Within the frame of reference of this study they represent aberrations in the structural and institutional isolation of the Arab minority. Communist party activities cannot be suppressed without harassing Jews as well as Arabs – Jews, who in spite of their left-wing sentiments and their ostracism from the mainstream of Jewish society in Israel nevertheless *are* Jews, with Jewish friends, relatives, and acquaintances" (pp. 243-244).

This is the crux of the matter for Lustick, as stated in his conclusions on the "basic problem": even the most radical elements of the Zionist left, those who demand equal treatment for Arabs and economic development of Arab villages, who oppose land expropriation and so on ... have continued to support the idea of Israel as a Jewish and Zionist state" (p. 270). And, if Zionism endures, if the Jewish state exists, Israeli Arabs will always be dominated and excluded from democratic rights. "Thus these groups [the left] have not faced the basic problem: whether their support for the symbolic and institutional expression in Israel – e.g. *Hatikvah* as the national anthem, the Star of David on the national flag, the Law of Return, the continued operation of the JNF and the Jewish Agency, the massive involvement of the Government in immigrant absorption and other Zionist tasks – is compatible with the reforms which they advocate (including Arab participation in the governance of Israel's major institutions)" (p. 270). Lustick seems to gain satisfaction from the statistical evidence he presents when stating that, "at any rate, Israeli Jews who hold such [left wing] opinions comprise not more than 5 percent of the Jewish population ...". This leaves his model (?) intact, despite a "break" here and a "civic realm" there and elsewhere a "challenge" and a "trend", while impos-

ing upon the left wing "the fundamental contradiction" (as it simultaneously waves "the national flag"). Thus, he continues "since the political program they espouse is not likely to be implemented, the contradiction within it is not likely to be experienced" (p. 270). In other words, for Lustick, because their numbers are small, the opinions they hold are wrong and they are, moreover, hypocrites. There is, I believe, more than a whiff of arrogance in the views of the author who devised the "basic problem".

At any rate, the "challenges" do not constitute a problem for Lustick, who claims to know Zionist arithmetic and understand Zionist carrot and stick tactics; they will not become "a critical issue for the Jewish state." Aware of the "trends", Government Arabists may adopt either the hard-line position of encouraging "positive elements" by using "rewards and punishments" and practicing coercion, or the liberal position of increasing welfare and development expenditures, while still opposing extremists or nationalist activity (p. 255 ff). For Lustick, the two positions are fundamentally similar, coming down to the cost mechanics of control: "...a decision between accepting a lower level of control ... or paying the costs (in time, energy, money...)" p. 269. In any case, "... it is unlikely that policy...will diverge more than incremently" (Ibid.). Meanwhile, annexation of the occupied territories on the one hand, or a comprehensive peace settlement and the emergence of some kind of Palestinian entity on the other hand, hold much the same implications: In the former instance, the existence of a large population with loyalty to the PLO would justify the use of coercive policies while in the latter instance "...the regime would redouble its efforts to develop Israel proper as a Zionist state ... suppress dissent", etc., and implement equally coercive policies (pp. 267-268). Quite simply, if withdrawal from the occupied territories occurs, the entire apparatus of the Military Government "... would be available for use inside Israel" (p. 268).

So it is the irresolvable contradiction ostensibly inherent in Zionism which forever keeps equality, economic development, top jobs and full participation in society beyond the reach of Israeli Arabs. This is no simple problem (indeed national movements are generated by explicit and implicit discrimination). In Lustick's mechanical treatment, however, historical and social processes and political economies (e.g., Jewish and Arab socio-economic structures under the British Mandate, conflicts between and within national movements under a colonial regime, the 1948 War and other wars, the transformation of a Jewish minority into a majority, and an Arab majority to a minority, the development of Israel, etc.), are eliminated and internal processes rendered meaningless as "aberrations". In addition, they are, finally, reduced to manifestations of the "Zionist character" of a "Jewish state". Since there are many who, for the same and different reasons, would agree uncritically with Lustick on this latter point, some brief comment is in place on a subject we treat in theoretical detail elsewhere (Carmi and Rosenfeld, 1981).

Zionism, from its inception within and outside what was then Palestine, has been a national and political movement with internal divisions among left and right, liberal and religious camps (and competing non-Zionist and anti-Zionist ones). These camps have competed among themselves and each within itself for political power, the possibility of controlling and directing development plans and resources, and have differed on international positions, class relations, and policies on religion, ethnicity, education, welfare, etc.

The "Zionist", i.e. Jewish 'political economy' during the Mandate period in Palestine was politically and socially dominated by socialist parties, groups and organizations which, among other things, emphasized parity and equality with Arabs, and advocated the recognition of the existence of two nations, and the non-domination of one by the other. Thus, there were decades when the "Zionist character" was strongly inclined to parity, while the "Arab mentality" (cf. Zureik, 1979), forcefully rebelled against it. For different reasons (new global political alignments, large scale financial and economic aid, mass Jewish immigration, mass exodus of Arabs, the transfer of Arab property to the state, etc.) , the Israeli state took political advantage of war gains after 1948 and fostered a nationalist étatism that emphasized the non-validity of an Arab Palestine nation. This process can be explained (Rosenfeld and Carmi, 1976; Rosenfeld, 1978; Carmi and Rosenfeld, 1981), and demands further investigation. The point is that "Zionist character" once had another meaning, and could be other than it is within a Jewish state. The situation and conditions of Israeli Arabs and Jews could be different from what they are today, encompassing, for example, the settlement of the Arab refugee problem.

One cannot deny that Zionism was never of one piece, nor is the Jewish state, unless, that is, one wishes to deprive history of content, or not to recognize it at all or unless one claims that Zionism is a national movement like other national movements but, unlike all other such movements, exists without internal class perspectives, conflicts, struggles and historical change. This implies that the researcher is relating, not to an actual political economy but to an abstraction – to which he conveniently anchors his model, establishing a simplistic "frame of reference of this study" and contentedly watching the mechanical control system purr on.

Moreover, by treating Zionism as an unchanging (psychopolitical) predisposition, he can see political and other factors not only as "aberrations" but also, equally mechanically, as having nothing to do with human agency. Thousands of Arab workers, students, intellectuals, and villagers actively voice opposition to the internal (and external) policies of the state. This is evident in national elections, organized political parties and groups (Rakah, the Organization of Arab Local Council Chairmen, Arab student committees in all the Israeli universities, and others). The "very existence of a civic realm" which guarantees Israeli Arabs and Jews education, health facilities, welfare and workers' benefits is an historical product with extremely strong roots, dating back to the pre-state Jewish community. Implementation of programs in all these, and other areas is fought over by different groups. They are encroached upon, or liberalized, or made to suit religious dogma, or extended to cover larger numbers of individuals. Thousands of young Arabs continue on into secondary schools and universities rather than into the labor market, aided and subsidized by the efforts of their families, because of their appreciation of the importance of education. These processes take place in the very face of "segmentation", "dependence" and "cooptation".

Israeli Arabs are no longer unskilled, low-paid workers, but rather most often skilled and paid at the same rates as Jewish workers. Sometimes they are also middle-class work contractors and sub-contractors with jobs to distribute to kinsmen and neighbors. Arab employment throughout the Israeli economy is due to no acausal apparition termed a "trend" or worse yet, to "exposure to modern Jewish lifestyles" (p. 87), but rather to the Arabs' ongoing struggle for work and work conditions for more than 30 years. They achieved this through the work process, through being real human agents of change (Rosenfeld, 1978).

Would an end to occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip really be as completely meaningless as Lustick projects for Israeli Arabs and Jews? Should we not take into consideration the kind of organized political and educational struggle that would be required to persuade Israel to terminate the occupation, and to bring Israel and the surrounding Arab states to recognize a self-determined Palestinian state in the occupied territories? What happens to Israeli Jews and Arabs who support such a struggle? Perhaps a change in the supposedly inherent "character" creating different Jews-(Zionists), different Arabs-(Palestinians)? It is not beyond conjecture, any more than the idea of Arabs as first-class citizens of Israel, under these conditions and in such an atmosphere, singing the Palestinian national anthem in Tel-Aviv is beyond the realm of possibility. After all, the Egyptian and the West German national anthems are played there.

Zionism is a national movement that developed out of historical circumstances that included ongoing persecution of, and discrimination against, Jews, and the formation of nation states of that time period. It cannot simply be dismissed as containing in its "character" the oppression of another people, just in order to guarantee the ideological framework for a model. Israeli Arabs have been demeaned, depressed, declassed – like many other national minorities in other lands – and rightly, they fight back, together with many Zionist and non-Zionist Jews. All in all, many, perhaps most, have found political avenues for their struggle and for this reason they can no longer be demeaned, depressed, declassed. No "aberration" this.

Finally, some words on "dependence" as one of the components in the system of control, because I believe the term is misplaced by Lustick as a concept, and because of what it perhaps intimates. Arabs have been discriminated against and exploited as a source of cheap labor, and have suffered Military Government restrictions and intervention in their daily life and their politics. Much of their land has been appropriated; there is no industry in the villages and agriculture is backward (in a state where industry continues to develop and agriculture is most advanced). There are different grades of discrimination, none of them pleasant. In Israel there are exploited Oriental Jewish workers, who suffer discrimination because they usually do not have access to power. There are exploited Ashkenazi and Oriental Jews who live in underdeveloped "development" towns; there are poorly housed Jews and Arabs in urban quarters. Israel is not an egalitarian society with all citizens living in symmetrical equality. It is no secret that there is no symmetrical class society. Similar and worse fates are suffered by different rural and urban outcast, declassed and underprivileged ethnic, national and class groups all over the world.

Generally, and for good reasons, we do not blur concepts by explaining away all such fates and conditions, notwithstanding the vogue, as "dependence": " 'Dependence' has become the latest euphemism in a long list of such terms" (Wallerstein, 1979:66). The concept was developed in the 1960s and its value lies in the sharpness of its critique of developmentalism-modernization approaches to an explanation of inequality, and in its provision of a deeper sense of the historical arena which capitalism has set out for the world at large. In these two senses the concept is linked to the names of Baran ("two faces of the same coin"); Frank ("the development of underdevelopment"); Dos Santos ("the structure of dependence"); Emmanuel, Samir Amin and others, for different explanations of capital accumulation in the spread of imperialism; and, on the historical emergence of a "single capitalist world-economy", to Wallerstein (1979:49-55).

I make much of this (after all, dependence is not only just a concept in a model, it is also just a word, as I used it (Rosenfeld, 1968) only to be misconstrued by Lustick on p. 156), not simply to set the intellectual record straight. If, as in the case before us, 'dependence' is used out of hand, that is outside the historical or colonialist context, without emergent capitalist or world-system perspective, then it trades indiscriminately on connotations and implications raised elsewhere without explaining why the concept is applicable here. In so doing, the original historical sense of 'dependence' is forfeited, along with the (mainly Marxist) debate that surrounded it and, certainly, the main loser has been the class struggle.

Indeed, it is not at all strange, given the delayed arrival in Israel of the concept of dependence, and the imprecise manner in which it has been used to explain anything related to discrimination and inequality (preferably through ethnic, rather than historical and class explanations) (Rosenfeld, 1981), that some Israeli "dependency sociologists" would not share Lustick's view that the regime's "Zionist character" has led it to close the "social gap" between Oriental and Ashkenazi Jews. Swirski and Katzir (1978) analyze structural relationships between these two groups exactly in terms of 'dependency' of Orientals on Ashkenazis ("... the structure of the relations between the two ethnic groups today is a structure of dependency ... with the Oriental Jews being dependents of the Ashkenazi Jews"). Smooha says that Ashkenazis admitted Orientals to the lower and middle rungs of Israeli society, thereby neutralizing them as an independent force; they were and remain dependants (1978:95-99). (Utilizing much the same reasoning and lexicon as Lustick, Smooha also believes that the Israeli Arabs are the economic and political dependants of the Israeli Jews [Smooha, 1978]).

If I follow Lustick's argument correctly, "dependence" on the "Jewish (sic!) economy", "Jewish-owned banks", working for "Jewish owners" means that Arabs lack "...autonomous bases of economic power which could have been used to support dissident political parties or movements" (p. 197), and also makes them easy marks for co-optation. However, as we have seen, on the contrary, the problem of the Israeli Government today, with regard to Israeli Arabs, is that Arabs (who do not own banks) are politicized (Rosenfeld, 1978). Why a "Jewish" economy, when in fact it is a single Israeli economy within which different groups and classes struggle to find their place and/or to alter the political economy. (I do not know if Lustick is hinting at a solution whereby Israeli Arabs should seek a separate economy, seek full autonomy, opt-out of Israel by setting up a territory or state of their own within the (pre-1967) borders of Israel. That is, I believe, the logic of his presentation, but it is not stated. Zureik (1979) does advocate such a position.) In any case, for Lustick, the Arab political struggle inevitably comes smack up against the impasse of Zionism, and so, comfortably deterministic, he relinquishes, on behalf of others, the possibility of changing their circumstances and insists on their "dependence".

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