CHAPTER IV

ISRAEL’S QUEST FOR LINKS WITH ASIA: INDIA

How was Israel received in Asia in the initial years

The post-World War II era has been distinguished by the emergence of a number of independent nations in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The Jewish national survival also had coincided with the rise of Afro-Asian independence. But, whereas the nations of Asia and Africa came under the foreign rule only since the seventeenth century (and they were never uprooted from their own lands), the Jews were the victims of one of the earliest "imperialisms" - that of the Romans - and they were uprooted from their land. Consequently, the Jews lost their natural ties with the peoples of the region. And when Israel came into existence as a sovereign independent State in 1948, the reception it got from Asia, was positively cool. In fact, most of the Afro-Asian countries, then represented in the UN General Assembly, opposed the resolution of November 1947, calling for the partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab States. Even after Israel's independence, these countries were hesitant about recognizing Israel and it took almost two years before Philippines, Thailand, Burma, India and Ceylon recognized it.

Thus, this negative attitude of the Asian countries which was subsequently brought into more prominence by the

1. Among the Asian nations Afghanistan, India and Pakistan voted against partition, Nationalist China abstained, the Philippines voted for, and Thailand was absent from the hall. (Iran and Turkey were also opposed). Of the three African countries, Liberia voted for and Ethiopia abstained. Union of South Africa is not necessary for our purpose.
Bendung Conference (1955) leads us to ask some fundamental questions as to where actually Israel belonged. Is it to be an integral part of the Middle East on the Western border of Asia - at the same time a part of the West - or would it be an outpost of the West in Asia, but not of Asia? Is it possible for Israel to have some sort of special political, economic and cultural relations with the countries of Asia and Africa? Moreover, is it possible for Israel to dissociate itself from the present decisive dependence on the West - militarily, economically, politically and culturally? So let us try to find out, very briefly if Israel can be called a part of the Third World.

To start with, economically speaking, Israel is not underdeveloped in the same way as most of the Afro-Asian nations are. (We have discussed the economic capability of Israel in the first chapter. Here we will talk about the initial economic condition of Israel very briefly). If we take the various indices of economic development like capital, per capita income, industrialization, employment skill, literacy, public health etc. we will find that Israel is more a European country than an Afro-Asian one. Moreover, massive economic aid from the Diaspora Jewry and other sources (Chapter I) has been a major cause of Israel's economic development. But that should not blind us to the fact that in the initial years of its statehood Israel faced tremendous economic strains like the paucity of

resources, the desert character of much of its land and above all, the problem of absorption of large number of unskilled immigrants. Thus the dimension of economic effort that Israel had to make was as massive as those of the Afro-Asian nations which suffer from shortage of capital and skill. Moreover, talking about external economic assistance, it may be pointed out that other Afro-Asian nations also received huge amounts of foreign aid from various sources. Thus initially, at least, Israel faced the same problems of development as the Afro-Asian nations had felt.

Secondly, Israel is essentially the creation of the movement called Zionism. This movement of national liberation is closely linked to the wave of nationalism which had swept the world in the last century and a half and which has resulted in the liberation of number of Afro-Asian nations. It is true that the very basis of a "Jewish Nation" has been questioned. But without going into the controversy, it may safely be maintained that Israel's struggle for national self-determination was also lengthy, at times violent and bitter, like any other Afro-Asian nation's struggle for liberation.


4. For comprehensive account of Israel's struggle for national self-determination see, Natan Safran, The United States and Israel (Harvard, 1963), pp. 2-46.
Thirdly, as we have discussed in the First Chapter, demographically also Israel presents a picture of almost half the people being non-Westerners. Initially, of course, in its racial composition, Israel was overwhelmingly (90 per cent) Western. But because of the "in gathering of the exiles" in the 1950s, the demographic picture changed and in 1969 about 40 per cent of Israel's population was of Asian and African origin. (In 1968 the non-Westerners comprised 55.5 per cent - that is out of a total population of 2.81 million, 1.56 million were non-Westerners). Thus racially, Israel is as much "white" as they are Afro-Asians.

Fourthly, with regard to the independence and political and economic development of the Third World countries and their impact on the newly emerging international system, we can point out that Israel, who had had its national self-determination in 1948, had definitely acted as a subject in international relations as is evident from its role in the 1956 Sinai War (and again in 1967) and the subsequent repercussions it had on the relations of the various states and blocs and military alliances.

Fifthly, Asia was the soil from which sprang most of the legends, beliefs and ideas which served as the basis for future developments in the spiritual life of the Jews. Moreover "the Islamic tradition which incorporates and endorses

5. See Chapter I.
much of the Judeo religion has consistently regarded the Jews as a fraternal people of the Book. Thus, Judaism exerted profound influence in West Asia.

And, last but not the least is Israel's geographical situation. Geographically at least, there is no doubt that Israel belongs to Asia. If we look at the map we will see that Israel is situated very near the place where the continents of Asia and Africa have joined.

As we have stated, it is almost impossible to give a proper definition of a Third World country. But if we apply the various broad criteria that we have mentioned above, Israel definitely qualifies as an Afro Asian country.

Then, how is it that Israel was given such a cool reception by the Third World in the initial stages? The reasons for this attitude are complex and varies. To start with, Asia's "indifferent tolerance of Israel" is sometimes ascribed to the Asian intellectual's unawareness of the Judeo-Christian heritage that underlies the emotional ties of Jewry to the Holy Land. According to this view there was no difficulty for the Zionists to exact sympathetic support from the West for


7. We have discussed the geo-political situation of Israel in Chapter I.

8. Since most of the African countries were yet to attain independence till late 50s, our reference here will be mostly to the Asian countries.
the cause of a Jewish State because "the Bible and the spiritual kinship of Jews and Christians maintain a continuous knowledge of the Jewish connexion with Zion".\(^9\) This contention would not bear scrutiny in the light of empirical evidence; after all, Europe's Judaeo-Christian heritage did not prevent the sustained persecution of the Jews. On the other hand, the Western-educated Asian elite which provides political leadership in the modern states of Asia, was not so unfamiliar with the Judaeo-Christian heritage as not to comprehend the Jewry's religious connection with Palestine. The two Asian nationalist leaders, Gandhi and Nehru were very well conversant with Jewish history and the Jewish problem. Two of Gandhi's closest colleagues in his political struggle in South Africa were Jews and staunch Zionist—Herman Kallenbach and H.S.L. Polak. It was this close, early connection which led Gandhi to remark to two Zionist emissaries many years later, "I am half a Jew myself". Moreover, Gandhi had read all the Zionist literature that Kallenbach had and hence his was a well-informed opinion. Thus, writing in Harijan on 26 November 1933, Gandhi said: "They (the Jews) have been the untouchables of Christianity".

Nehru, as a student of world history, was well aware of the Jewry's tie with Palestine. In one of his letters to his daughter (from prison), dated May 1933, Nehru made a comprehensive statement of his views on the Jews, Zionism and the Palestine problem. He said: "The Jews are a very remarkable

Rather conceited they were thinking themselves the chosen people. But this is a conceit in which nearly all people have indulged." After describing the long centuries of persecution in Europe he describes Zionism as "this call of the past which pulls them to Jerusalem and Palestine".

Thus, these two Asian leaders could not possibly be accused of being unable to comprehend the Jewry's spiritual links with Palestine. Yet Gandhi and Nehru have been consistent over the years over their anti-Zionist stand. Modern Asia has thus viewed the Zionist claim with suspicion and disapprobation. The reason for this is to be found in the basic dissimilarity between Asian nationalist movements and Zionism.

Modern Zionism was the product of Europe of the nineteenth century, though the idea of the return to Zion is as old as the Jewish dispersion. Moreover, the Zionist movement was Western-oriented. The obvious reason for this was the fact that its origin may be traced to the numerous Jewish communities of Europe and America. The Jewish movement, further, is bound to differ from the Asian nationalisms in one very obvious respect: the latter were freedom movements, by people living in certain territories, to remove foreign rulers and thus become masters of their own destiny. "A territorial base was the starting point of all the Afro-Asian nationalist movements; to achieve a territorial base was the end, the prime objective of Zionism."^10 Because of the fragmentation of Jews in the Diaspora, Zionism obviously could not use the same methods

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as the Afro-Asian nationalists. The Zionists relied instead on external allies, such as Britain and the United States and concentrated upon influencing them by means of persuasive interviews, discreet lobbying, fund-raising and propaganda campaigns and pressure from highly organized groups whose influence was out of proportion to their actual support from Diaspora Jewry. Thus, even a casual comparison of the chronology of Zionism with that of the Afro-Asian national movements up to 1919 reveals that while the latter continuously asserted the nationalist claim for independence against the colonial powers, Zionism consistently remained a movement of co-operation with those same powers. 11

The diplomatic bargainings of Herzl, described as the founder of the State of Israel, very clearly reveal that intention of co-operation. In order to get support for his plan of a Jewish State, in April 1963, Herzl pleaded with the British imperialist Joseph Chamberlain: "We shall be used as a small buffer-State. We shall get it not from the goodwill, but from the jealousy of the powers! And once we are at El-Arish under the Union Jack, then Palestine too will fall into the British sphere of influence." 11a Weizmann's approach was also no different from Herzl's. The Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917 was the product of such efforts. By the Balfour declaration, the British Government promised to view with favour the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. And that

11. For a very comprehensive and well-argued account of Zionism's collaboration with the Imperial Powers, see "Zionism in Action", in G.H. Jansen, ibid., pp. 80-132.

Declaration was a symbol of British imperialism planting 'alien' Jews on Asian soil. The Military Governor of Jerusalem during 1917-20, Ronald Storrs, expressed the hope that the enterprise launched by the Balfour Declaration would yield "for England a little loyal Jewish ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism".12 Weizmann also envisaged a combination of the interests of Britain and Zionism in the Middle East. In a letter to Winston Churchill, the then British Colonial Secretary, at a time when the future of the area was under review, Weizmann very clearly reflected the Zionist attitude:

Nor need I dwell on the proposition that this alliance with Zionism is a waxing asset or on the fact well known that those greatest soldiers of history, Julius Caesar, Alexander, and Napoleon, all recognised the immense importance of Palestine in their Eastern schemes and were markedly pro-Jewish in their foreign policy. Napoleon may even be claimed as the first of the modern non-Jewish Zionists....If there were no Palestine, it would, I believe be necessary to create one in the imperial interests. It is a bastion to Egypt. On the one side, the existence of a Jewish Palestine leaves you absolutely free to follow whatever policy may be most convenient to you, and enables you, if you wished, to evacuate Egypt altogether and to concentrate on the Canal Zone with your army based on Palestine....It is an asset on which you can draw almost indefinitely in case of danger....It is difficult to understand how one can build on Arab loyalty so near the vital communications across the Isthmus of Suez. All one has seen and heard of the Arab movements leads one to believe that it is anti-European. The Palestine Zionist policy, far from being waste, becomes a necessary insurance that we quote to you at a lower rate than anyone else could dream of. 13

Thus, one of Weizmann's biographers has said that Weizmann "assumed that one of the tasks of the Jewish nation would be to protect Britain's imperial interests on the Suez Canal."\textsuperscript{14}

Thus, this "conscious and transparent dovetailing of Zionist aspirations and Britain's imperial interests in the Middle East and Asia,"\textsuperscript{15} deeply ruffled Asian susceptibilities and shaped their outlook on what came to be known as the Palestine question.

A second reason why Asia has viewed Zionism with suspicion and disapprobation was the latter's continuous opposition to self-government by the Palestinians. The underlying assumption of the Balfour declaration (which is important like in most other important statements of policy) is contained in seven words which are key to the Declaration; these are "the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". In the year 1917, the Jews in Palestine were about 2% of the population; but by these seven words the Arab people of Palestine, who had inhabited the land since time immemorial, were relegated, under the negative label of "non-Jewish Communities" to a subordinate position. The assumption is the Arabs were not something in themselves, they were non-something else, they were merely non-Jews. With this basic Zionist bias at the outset, everything that happened later in Palestine was only consequential; the Zionists firmly got wedded to frustrating any advance towards

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 36.

\textsuperscript{15} M.S. Agwani, \textit{Asia and Palestine} (New Delhi, n.d.), p. 3.
self-government in Palestine. This was very well perceived by
the Asian leaders. Commenting on the Balfour Declaration,
Jawaharlal Nehru said: "But there was one little drawback,
one not unimportant fact seems to have been overlooked. Palestine
was not a wilderness, or an empty uninhibited place. It was
already somebody else's home." Writing in Haritan on 26
November 1938, Gandhiji said:

The cry for national home for the Jews does not
make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is
sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which
the Jews have hankered after return to Palestine.
The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a
geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But
if they must look to the Palestine of geography
as their national home, it is wrong to enter it
under the shadow of British gun.

Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense
that England belongs to the English or France to
the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the
Jews on the Arabs.... Surely, it would be a crime
against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that
Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or
wholly as their national home.

The twenty years between the two world wars might
well be recorded in history as the classic period of Asian and
north African nationalism. During this period, the mass movements
went fully into action on all fronts and fought their greatest
battles, some violent - others non-violent.

Writing about the Palestinian struggle for self-
determination, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

In April 1936, the Palestine Arabs declared a
general strike which lasted for nearly six months,
in spite of every attempt by the British authorities,
through military force and reprisals, to crush it....

16. Jawaharlal Nehru, Glimpses of World History (New York, 1939),
p. 763.
During the last few months this has taken the form of a vast national movement, aggressively hostile to British rule and gradually displacing it in large areas of Palestine, which passed under the control of the Arab Nationalists. These people have committed many wrong and terroristic deeds but it must be remembered that they are essentially fighting for national freedom.

But if we look at the activities of the Zionists during the twenty years under the British Mandate, we will see that "they have preferred to take sides with the foreign ruling power, and have thus helped it to keep back freedom from the majority of the people". To Nehru the problem of Palestine was fundamentally a nationalist one: "The Arabs were struggling against imperialist control and domination: "It was a pity that the Jews of Palestine, instead of aligning themselves with that struggle, had thought fit to take the side of British imperialism and to seek its protection against the inhabitants of the country."

These statements of the Asian leaders very clearly express the fundamental incompatibility of Zionism with Asian nationalism. Thus, these two are the fundamental reasons for Asia's suspicion and disapprobation of Zionism.

Added to the factors mentioned above, the Zionists themselves contributed to the Asians' holding the image of Israel's struggle for independence as they did by their own

17. Ibid., pp. 766-7.
18. Ibid., p. 765.
action - "they did not even show a superficial moral sympathy with the colonial people striving for their freedom". An enquiry into the links between Zionism and Asian nationalist movements produce a negative finding - there was no link of friendship, only of hostility. This was partly due to Zionism's hostile contact with and rejection by the local Asians, i.e. the Arabs, but partly also to the fact that the fact that Zionists, despite several opportunities, did not seek to have relations with Asian nationalists. "If the British held open the door of Palestine for the Zionists, the Arabs guarded the gate between Zionism and Asia, for after 1918, friendship with the Zionists would have meant the renunciation of friendship with the Arabs. No Asian seeking Zionist friendship could ignore loud Arab protests that they were being dispossessed by these Europeans and their European friends." The interesting point to note in this connection is that there was no record of the Zionists trying to make direct connections with any of the non-Arab Asian national movements in the tumultuous twenty years between the two world wars. There is no mention even of the Congress of oppressed Nationalities, the most important anti-colonialist gathering to be held prior to the Bandung Conference in 1955, that was held in Brussels in 1927, in the history of Zionism. Moreover, during this period, the


hard-pressed Asian nationalist movements maintained some contacts among themselves; in spite of the fact that obstacles were raised by the colonizing governments; but the Zionist with all their resources and world-wide links, did not care to maintain such contacts. There never was any public pronouncements whereby they could have allied the Asians' nationalist aspirations with those of the Zionists. After all, as Michael Brecher poignantly points out: "There was nothing to prevent left-wing Zionist leaders from championing the cause of anti-colonialism". 22 Thus Israel got alienated from the mainstream of Asian nationalism.

Another factor, obviously marginal, which contributed to the lack of support of the Jewish claim to Israel was the absence of anti-Semitism in Asia. "The record of most Afro-Asian countries is" in the cogent words of J.L. Talmon, "as clear of anti-Semitism as it is empty of the Jews". 23 Moreover, throughout the ages, the Afro-Asian people have had hardly any live contact with Jews in appreciable number. Today, only scattered and virtually isolated individual Jewish communities exist in Africa and Asia. In India and other Asian countries the number of Jews was so small that people there were hardly aware of their existence.

22. Brecher, n. 9, p. 128.
23. Dharma, n. 20, p. 129.
24. Ibid.
And finally, though again marginal, the race factor also played its role in the Asians' not accepting Israel as an Asian state. "Though white men, Israelis consider themselves Asians. In these words did a leading Burmese newspaper, probably unwillingly as the sentence appeared in an article in praise of Premier U Nu's enthused visit to Israel, put its finger on the number one problem that faces Israel on the Asian mainland. This psycho-political step revealed how deeply colour consciousness, this time with the bias in the opposite direction, is ingrained in the Asian mind."

Till the State of Israel came into existence, the overwhelming majority of the Jews were "white". Asians consider the Israelis as "white" and so cannot accept them as Asians. This image persists.

Thus, these are the various reasons why Israel was given a cool reception by the Asian countries in the early period of Israel's Statehood.

**Israel India Relationship**

In the first few years after independence, the chief objective of Israel's efforts in Asia was gaining diplomatic recognition. And this effort started with Israel's concentrating on New Delhi, because India, the leading non-Communist power on the Asian mainland, was naturally uppermost in Israel's mind for various reasons, not least of which was the personal prestige

of India's Prime Minister Nehru in Asia and also in the world in general. Nehru's autobiography was translated into Hebrew in the thirties itself. The Israeli leadership had taken keen interest in Nehru for his rationalism and modernity. As Ben Gurion had said later: "It was headed by one of the most prominent statesmen in the world, Nehru, until his death. He did great things for India... He showed imagination, ability and courage. I thought well of him; I followed his career closely." Moreover, Gandhi was held in high esteem by the Palestinian Jews. Nehru's personal esteemed position apart, it was only natural for Israel to take interest in India because that was the time when India had given all the promise of its becoming a prominent factor in world politics, particularly in Asia. Japan was relegated to a second rate power and China was yet to present a clear picture of itself.

Under the circumstances, some Israelis entertained the fond hope that India might as well play the role of an intermediary between Israel and the Arab States. Moreover, establishment of diplomatic relations with India would have given Israel an "entree to the society of Asian nations." But right from the beginning, India's response has been disappointing from Israel's point of view. "I was disappointed in Nehru",

27. Interview with Ya'cov Shimoni, The Deputy Director-General in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in charge of the Asian and African Departments, on 21 May 1972.
Ben Gurion had said. 29

It is not our purpose here to survey the evolution of India's policy towards Israel and the factors responsible for that. But we will briefly mention them as we proceed on to explore the Israel's relations with India.

As we have mentioned above, India had opposed the Palestine Partition Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. In May 1948, India formally opposed in the General Assembly the admission of Israel to membership in the United Nations. Further, the birth of Israel hardly evoked any official reaction in India. 30 The stand India had taken on these two occasions was perfectly in conformity with the earlier stand of the Congress Party. As mentioned in the foregoing pages, both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, as well as the Indian Congress Party, were actively hostile to the ideological notions of Zionism and its counterpart the creation of the Israeli State. In October 1937, the All India Congress Committee had protested against the partition proposals (as well as the reign of terror) and had pledged solidarity with the Arab struggle for national freedom. In March 1939, the Congress wished the Arabs "complete success in the fulfilment of their objectives", and appealed to the Jews "not to take shelter behind British imperialism". 31

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30. India and Israel (Bombay), vol. 1, no. 2, August 1948, p. 2. In his message to the journal on its publication, Nehru expressed the hope that "a brighter day is coming" for the Jews of the world.
Again, while the question of according recognition to Israel came, India waited. In this connection Nehru opined that the Government "had to be satisfied and know exactly what the international position is before taking any step". 32 This is a sort of formal reason given by any state under such circumstances; but Nehru came out with the real reason for India's delaying recognition when he said in the Constituent Assembly:

The Government of India would like to act in this matter, which has been the subject of this controversy among nations with whom we have friendly relations, that would avoid misunderstanding or ill-feeling and a hope that satisfactory decision will be possible in the near future. 33

It needs no imagination to find out that the reference was to the Arab states. Ultimately, on 17 September 1950, it was announced that "the Government of India have decided to accord recognition to the Government of Israel"; but a press communique that followed the announcement emphasized the point that the recognition should not be regarded as if there was no difference between "India's attitude and that of Israel over questions like the Status of Jerusalem and Israel's frontiers". 34 India accorded de jure recognition only. Diplomatic missions have not been established between the two countries. Israel is represented in India by a Consulate in Bombay. There is no

34. The Hindu (Madras), 18 September 1950.
counter Indian diplomatic mission in Israel. This situation remains the same till today.

In February-March 1952, the Director General of Israel Foreign Office, Walter Eytan, had conducted negotiations in New Delhi as a guest of the Government of India to explore the possibilities of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. But it never worked out. Now since no explanation has been given by the Government of India, we would rely on the account given by Eytan:

Before Israel's representative left New Delhi, he was informed that the Prime Minister had approved the proposal. He was now questioned in detail on housekeeping problems. A draft budget for the Indian legation was being prepared, though the formal decision to establish diplomatic relations remained to be confirmed by the Cabinet. This was to be done as soon as the new government was set up following the elections a few weeks later.

And nothing came out of that. Thus Eytan said: "Nobody, in fact, outside Nehru's most intimate circle has ever discovered why the Government of India did not establish diplomatic relations with Israel in the Spring or Summer of 1952, and no convincing explanation has been given for its sudden change of mind." Todate, "no convincing explanation" for this sudden

35. In an interview with Yediot Aharonot, the Foreign Minister Abba Eben said that in 1950, India had proposed the establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel. The offer was directly made to Eben by the then Indian Representative at the U.N., Mrs Vijayalekshmi Pandit. "I still believe that what Mrs Pandit wrote to me continues to express a basic truth." Asian Recorder, vol. 12, no. 22, 28 May-3 June 1966, p. 710b.


37. Ibid.
change of mind has been given by the Indian Government-sources, nor have they contradicted Eytan's statement, nor any diplomatic relation has been established. 33

Israel's disappointment in this case is understandable. But looking from India's standpoint it may be said that India could not have done otherwise. The crux of the matter is that "the Arab world has been more important to India than India to the Arab world". 39 So, the policy of the Government of India towards Israel, at all levels "was evolved and continues to be measured in terms of its likely repercussions on India's interest in the Arab World." 40

Michael Brecher has bluntly put the blame for India's deciding not to have diplomatic relations with Israel on Maulana Azad. In his own words:

The sudden change of mind in the Spring of 1952 was due to the forceful intervention of Maulana Azad, intimate friend of Nehru, respected leader of India's forty million Muslims, and Minister of Education in the Indian Government. Until his death in 1958, the Maulana exerted great influence on India's Middle East policy, as well as on domestic and party affairs. 41

Nobody disputes Azad's position in the Indian Cabinet, and personal prestige and influence he had in the Government. He

33. In 1953 Eytan again met Nehru at Berne in order to discuss the matter, but by this time, the Government of India had decided firmly not to have diplomatic relations with Israel.


40. Ibid., p. 338.

41. Michael Brecher, n. 5, p. 130.
might as well safely assume also that he had influenced Nehru's decision. But the arguments Izadi was supposed to have put forward would have been convincing to any Prime Minister under the existing circumstances.

Now, since recognition did not follow immediate normal diplomatic relations, the situation gradually became complex because with the delay in taking a decision, the decision itself became more difficult. This point was made clear by Krishna Menon when he said: "If we had sent an ambassador at that time there would have been no difficulty."42 Thus, by 1952, Israel realized that it would not be in a position to make much headway as far as India was concerned.

Now, going a couple of years ahead we find that Israel was not invited to the Bandung Conference of the Afro-Asian countries. India was in favour of inviting Israel. But here again the Arab factor dominated and India acquiesced. Nehru was absolutely categorical about it when he said: "I cannot argue this logically or with reason; this is the position: the Arabs will not attend if Israel is invited."44 Moreover, India had to be constantly on guard against anything that Pakistan might do. Even in Bandung, Pakistan took advantage of India's willingness to invite Israel to the conference.


43. We have discussed Bandung Conference in details in Chapter VII. Here we will discuss it as far as India-Israel relations are concerned.

44. Michael Brecher, n. 42, p. 79.
As Krishna Menon has put it: "Pakistan made use of our attitude to Israel's presence at Bandung in propaganda with the Arabs." Thus though obviously not decisive, Pakistan has also been a factor in India's relations with Israel. Hostile relations that exist between the two countries, India cannot afford to let Pakistan have any active support from the Muslim Arab countries in case of a war with India and hence wants to stop Pakistan from forming a Muslim bloc for such purposes. There might not be much ground for such fears (as Pakistan is a member of the Western military alliance); but India must always be on guard and it must therefore avoid any action that would antagonize the Arab world; after all, "India appeared in the calculations of Arab states mainly for its policy towards Israel." On the political plank what we perceive is that the Government of India must have calculated that India's policy of non-alignment would have less influence on the countries of Middle East if India had close diplomatic relations with Israel.

Another consideration - important, practical and utilitarian - is a simple numerical question of one vote versus ten or more Arab votes (with probably sympathy of some other Muslim countries like Afghanistan, Indonesia etc.) in the United Nations and elsewhere. For the hostile relations that India

45. Ibid. In this connection, it might be interesting to note the comments in Dawn of 1 June 1967. Dawn declared that: "Certain common features in the policies and practices of the two countries (Israel and India) have naturally drawn them towards each other. Both have driven millions of Muslims from their territories..." (emphasis added).
46. Srivastava, n. 39, p. 244.
47. Nehru must not have overlooked Egypt's potentiality after the 1952 revolution. Later, Nehru-Nasser personal friendship became a contributing factor to India's cold relations with Israel.
has with Pakistan and China, the importance of their votes cannot be minimized. 48

Moreover, the Government of India cannot afford to overlook the sentiments of the Muslims at home; after all, fifty million Muslims with their fraternal and sentimental feelings for the Arabs cannot just be brushed aside. In answer to a point raised by a Muslim member in the Constituent Assembly maintaining that the sentiments of the Muslims (that they were opposed to the recognition of Israel) should be taken into account, Nehru had said: "Of course, the Government had to keep in mind all the factors governing a particular situation." 49

Further, one psychological factor that had to be taken care of in the earlier years of India's freedom was that if India offers some friendly gestures to Israel, Pakistan definitely would try to fan the flames of communal feelings among the Indian Muslims. Partition had left some bitter memories in the minds of the peoples of the two countries. The Government of India had to be very careful so that no ingredient is added for the deterioration of a situation which is already bad.

The question of the Arab refugees is also another factor. India still regards the responsibility for their plight as being linked with the original decision to partition Palestine. 50


49. Constituent Assembly of India, (Legislative) Debates, Part 1, vol. 6, no. 14, p. 381.

India has always advocated the "legitimate rights" of these refugees.

Another factor which might as well have been considered by the Indian Government is the presence of some 25,000 Indians in the Middle East. The Government of India is obviously interested in their welfare, specially in the event of the outbreak of war. 51

Now, one of the most fundamental reasons for the existing non-relationship between India and Israel is the economic one. 52 And this has strategic implications also. India's dependence on oil from Saudi Arabia and cotton from Egypt is a major factor in its deficit trade relations with the Middle East. India cannot do away with the import of oil since it has to industrially develop itself. On the other hand, neither the resources of Israel nor its export or import potentials have been or are likely to be, of any consequence to the foreign trade of India. As a result, India definitely would not be in a position to improve its trade position in the Middle East if it comes closer to Israel.

51. See Kozicki, "Indian Policy Towards the Middle East", *Orbis*, vol. 11, Fall 1967, pp. 792-3.

52. We will discuss this point later in detail.
And, another basic factor for the non-relationship between the two countries was very clearly expressed by the Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi, during a visit to Cairo in 1966: "Our support is not only due to our traditional friendship towards the Arab people but to our belief in and commitment to secularism and to the principle that states should not be carved out or created on the basis of religion." This basic ideological disparity - that is - whereas India's basic tenet is secularism, Israel's basic ideology has been religious (a Jewish State), is only very well perceived by the Government of India.

For these various basic and practical reasons Israel's overall relations with India has been just marginal.

We have talked about the Bandung Conference of 1955 above. But the Sinai war of 1956, in which Israel joined hands with France and Britain, made things more strained between Israel and India. India predictably condemned Israel for committing

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52a. As quoted in Jensen, n. 3, p. 302.
"clear naked aggression". Again, about the gulf of Aqaba India maintained that it is an "inland sea" and Egypt has complete control over the Strait of Tiran. Israel's collaboration with the "imperialists" cost it considerable amount of prestige and goodwill as far as India was concerned. Egypt has been India's good friend, and the attack has been absolutely unjustified in the eyes of the Government of India, and under such circumstances if it is found that Israel has been collaborating with the imperialists, Israel cannot possibly expect to have friendly relations with India.

Thus things dragged on and there was no improvement in the relations between the two countries. At various times and in various places, Israeli envoys raised the question with India's Prime Minister or Indian diplomats. Each time they were told that the time was 'not ripe'; each time it became more embarrassing, and each time Israel was rebuffed. In February-March 1959, Yigal Allon (Deputy Prime Minister in Mrs Meir's cabinet in 1968) came on a visit to India as a member of his party. During that visit it was reported that Nehru had to tell Allon that India's "failure to establish normal diplomatic relationship had resulted from a series of unfortunate coincidences. We have no wish to aggravate by any positive action at the wrong moment of the tension in the Middle East." And

54. Michael Brecher, n. 5, p. 131.
55. The Hindu, 22 March 1959. According to Allon, Nehru hoped that one day normal relations would be established between the two countries. Asian Recorder, vol. 5, no. 14, 4-10 April 1959, p. 2594.
this was the period when the critical Sino-Indian relations got exposed to the world and it was noticed that Pakistan was slowly getting friendly to China. Under such circumstances India could not afford to lose the good wishes of the Arab countries which it had cultivated so assiduously over the years. And India would have done just this if it had established diplomatic relations with Israel. Thus Nehru said: "It was not logical but it was practical." 56

And the same situation continued for another quite some time. There was no visible serious attempt on the part of Israel to improve the situation. And then came the engagement between the armed forces of India and China in the Himalayas in October-November 1962.

Looking at the situation, it appears that it was an opportunity for Israel to improve its relations with India. After all, China had already refused to exchange envoys with Israel. 57 Moreover, even in international conferences, China had started espousing the Arab cause and had pressed for more anti-Israeli resolutions than even the Arabs. Further, "it was also known for having instigated and harboured such Arab elements as stood for complete annihilation of Israel at the earliest". 58 At the same time, America was definitely backing

57. Michael Brecher, n. 5, p. 132.
India at that period. 59 Obviously, there was no question of America putting pressure on Israel not to support India. Moreover, on principle also, both India and Israel were democratic countries (a point which is frequently referred to by almost all the writers writing about Indo-Israel relationship) and China by now having been Israel's enemy - enemy's enemy could have been a friend of Israel. This was an opportunity Israel missed, for Israel's response to the letter Prime Minister Nehru had written in which the Indian Prime Minister had requested the support of India in its border dispute with China, was most disappointing from the Indian point of view. Anybody going through the letter Ben Gurion had written back, 60 would see how deliberately Ben Gurion had tried to be non-committal. Apart from acknowledging "India's restraint and forbearance as evidenced during the various stages of the border dispute described so eloquently in your message", it assured Nehru that all efforts at "peacefully settling the differences" will be met with "sympathy and understanding" by the Israelis. On top of all this Ben Gurion utilized the occasion to deliver a long lecture on how Israel was trying to maintain peace in the Middle East.


60. The full text of the letter was published in The Israel Digest, vol. 1, no. 23, 9 November 1962.

61. Ibid.
It was an opportunity missed from another angle also. India has always gone all out to champion the Arab causes—like they did during the Suez Crisis, the Palestine Refugee question, the division of Jordan water etc. But during the 1962 Sino-Indian border disputes India's good friends like Egypt, Syria, Iraq decided to remain mere objective spectator, not coming out with any pro-India stand. A friendly gesture by Israel at this time would possibly have resulted in some rethinking on the part of Indian Government and, may be, better relationship between the two countries would have ensued. Moreover, a friendly gesture at that time would have definitely strengthened the hands of the friends of Israel in India and they could have definitely put pressure on the government. Israel did not do that. The situation did not improve.

After Nehru's death in 1964, it was expected that there might be some change in India's policy towards Israel as Menon, a staunch supporter of Arab cause, was out of the cabinet and some of Shastri's advisers (like Jayaprakash Narayan) were known to be favouring India's having close relations with Israel. But, nothing tangible happened. On the contrary, on Shastri's first visit to the UAR, he unconditionally endorsed the Arab positions and demands, which to some, was going ahead of what his predecessor did. Moreover, during his tenure as the Prime Minister, full diplomatic status to the League of Arab States was granted in July 1965. But Shastri stayed on in the office for nineteen months only and there did

not seem to be any deviation in Indo-Israel relationship from
the course his predecessors had taken.

And it appears that Israel also did not make much
effort to improve the relations. The undeclared war between
India and Pakistan took place in September 1965. Again, Israel
was absolutely non-committal. The speech Mrs Meir, the then
Foreign Minister of Israel, had made in the UN General Assembly
on 7 October 1965 was a deliberate attempt not to take any side
in the dispute. Mrs Meir spoke of the futility of "local wars"
as a means to settle the disputes. Besides, she praised the
efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary General for
bringing about a ceasefire.63

Israel obviously had its own reasons to have such
an attitude towards India. After all India has always
positively been supporting the Arab causes. Moreover, in
Israel's calculations, India and Pakistan may be equally hostile
factors in its policy decisions. Moreover, Israel must have
thought that even if it had taken a pro-India stand, India is
not likely to have friendly relations with Israel at the cost
of the Arabs. The situation obviously would not improve, but
in the bargain it would unnecessarily antagonize Pakistan (and
China also) with whom it might, in future, try to improve
relations. In any case, this time also Israel did not consider
it necessary to befriend India.

63. GAOR, sess 20, plen mtg 1352, p. 8.
The Tashkent Declaration of January 1966, kindled hope in some quarters in Israel that similar agreements may bring about peace in the Middle East. In that case, friendly relations with India would definitely have been easier. Immediately after the Tashkent Declaration Shastri died and Mrs Indira Gandhi succeeded him.

Israeli decision-makers now saw the scenario in a different light. They thought that the Tashkent Declaration had, in a way, normalized the relations between the two countries; the Arab countries' stand during the Indo-Pak undeclared war has been disappointing to many Indians. As such India now would be in a better position to have greater maneuverability in its dealings with the Arabs. And it could be an opportune moment for Israel to make an effort to come closer to India. This attitude is reflected in the utterance of Israel's Foreign Minister, Abba Eban, when speaking to the international press in January 1966 he said: "The institution of the new Government of India...on the morrow of the Tashkent Conference...seems to be a suitable opportunity to renew our hope and wish to see our relationship draw closer." That apart, officially also (which, may be, is the formal procedure) Israel conveyed its appreciation of India and Pakistan for the spirit they displayed at Tashkent and sent a message of condolence at Shastri's death. Further, Israel greeted Indira Gandhi on her becoming the Prime Minister of India and expressed the hope

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64. See Jerusalem Post, 30 January 1966.
that there would be closer relationship between Israel and India. 66

But two months after Mrs Gandhi took office, an unpleasant incident took place which obviously was not conducive to the improvement of Indo-Israeli relationship. On his way to Kathmandu the President of Israel Zalman Shazar stopped over in Calcutta for twenty-four hours. This brief stay was made unpleasant by an anti-Israeli demonstration of a group of Arab students in front of his hotel. 67 Moreover, President Shezar did not receive the honour and respect due to his high office. 68 The Israeli Knesset passed a resolution expressing regret at the treatment of its President in India. 69

Normally under such official unfriendliness Israel has adopted a policy of silent restraint which some time reaches the height of more or less accommodating the Government of India's request "to restrain from publicizing certain measures, lest they embarrass it in the eyes of the Arabs." But, "by agreeing

66. Ibid., pp. 2-3.
67. Upon his return to Israel President Shazar bluntly said: "The Indian administration could have prevented the demonstration but did not want to". Jerusalem Post, 10 March 1966.
68. It was reported in a signed article by Frank Morses, the Editor-in-Chief of the Indian Express that two cars were made available to drive the President and his party to and from his hotel; but a bill for Rs.400 was submitted for this service. Jerusalem Post, 4 March 1966.
to these requests, we (Israel) have only strengthened the Indian Government's argument that the present state of affairs is satisfactory." This obviously is not a happy state of affairs. So in order to get rid of this the Government has been asked-

- to make use of the means channels and friends available to us in India, and we have many good friends in that country, and to induce an awareness of the petty, narrow, short-sighted and petulant policy India employs towards Israel, among the intellectuals, politicians and even some government officials. In that case all reservations concerning publicity should be renounced. 70

The Israeli Government did not seem to do anything though in the meantime, "Israel's friends in India renewed their call for closer collaboration with Israel in the field of nuclear, aeronautical and ballastic technologies and in establishing the defence-cum-agricultural settlements in Rajastan deserts on the pattern of Israeli kibbutzim." 71 The Government of India, of course, is consistently refusing to accept any of the offers. 72 In February-March 1967 Abba Eban, the Foreign Minister of Israel had made a trip to a couple of Asian countries. On his return he had reported to the Knesset his impressions about the tour. At that time also he expressed the hope that the new Government of

70. Ibid., 13 April 1966.


72. David Ha Cohen told this writer that on his trip to India as a member of the parliamentary delegation, he found many persons in India who wanted collaboration on the fields mentioned above, but Mrs Gandhi's Government just would not accept this advice. Interview in Haifa on 16 August 1971. Further, the Central Food and Agriculture Minister of India, C. Subramaniam, told the Lok Sabha on 10 May that the Government of Israel had offered to supply fertilizers, but India could not accept the offer because of "political considerations." Asian Recorder, vol. 12, no. 26, 18-24 June 1966, p. 7137.
India would now care to improve relations between the two countries. Thus he said:

In India, important and frequent voices are raised in favour of establishing proper relations with Israel and a recent utterance by External Affairs Minister, Mr Chagla confirms our contention that the unjustified adverse attitude of India towards Israel does not ensure progress in India's relations with the Arab States. It is precisely those states in Asia and elsewhere that maintain close relations with Israel which have succeeded in attaining a strong and respected standing among the States of Middle East. I express the hope that the newly elected Government in India will give its consideration to the possibility of entertaining natural and normal relations with Israel. Such a policy of direct and full relations would be consistent both with the principle of international co-existence and with a realistic appreciation of mutual advantage in various fields... 73

And then came the Six-Day War of June 1967. On 6 June 1967, immediately after the outbreak of war between Israel and the Arab countries, Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi said in the Parliament: "I do not wish to utter harsh words or use strong language. But on the basis of information available, there can be no doubt that Israel has escalated the situation into an armed conflict, which has now acquired the proportion of a full-scale war." She further said that India was making "earnest efforts" in the Security Council (India was a non-permanent member of the Security Council at that time) for a ceasefire and

73. Address by Abba Eben, Foreign Minister of Israel, to the Israeli Parliament summarizing his visit to a number of Asian countries. It was delivered on 12 April 1967.

74. The Israeli Prime Minister, Levi Eshkol sent a cable to the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, on 6 June asking her to condemn "the aggression that has been perpetrated against us by Nasser." Mr Eshkol hoped that the Indian Prime Minister would do her utmost to prevent "outside forces for exploiting and enlarging the tension." Asian Recorder, vol. 13, no. 22, 9-15 July 1967, p. 7796.
withdrawal of "all armed forces to the positions they occupied on June 4. We shall persevere in these efforts." 75

However, it was very tragic that several members of the Indian UNIF force had to lose their lives because of Israeli firing on the UNIF force. Mrs Gandhi described this action as "wanton...deliberate and without provocation" and called upon the Members of Parliament to "unreservedly condemn this cowardly attack". 76 The Indian delegate to the UN Security Council also condemned the action as "brutal" while lodging a protest to the Security Council. 77

The Government of India completely aided with the Arabs in this war with Israel. Israel's relations with India has been all time low after the Six-Day war and the situation has not improved ever since (till the period under study).

This having been the state of Israel's political-diplomatic relations with India, let us now probe a bit into Israel's other relations with India, like economic and cultural etc.

The economic relations between Israel and India have been marginal. India is dependent on Arab oil and cotton (from Egypt). Moreover, India has a market for its manufactured goods in the Middle East. In comparison, as stated above, "neither the resources of Israel nor its export or import potentials

75. Hindustan Times, 7 June 1967.
76. Ibid.
77. Israel later sent a letter to the Government of India apologizing for the "unintentional" incident.
have been or likely to be of any consequence to the foreign trade of India. 78 In May 1962, Manubhai Shah, the then Minister of International Trade, told the Lok Sabha that the negligible trade with Israel did not warrant exploration of that market. He further said that Israeli and Indian trade representatives visit each other’s country but since Israel market afforded only limited prospects for Indian goods, there was no necessity for making any special effort for accommodation. 79

Indo-Israel trade is non-complementary - rather it is competitive: Israel exports citrus fruits and its products, chemicals and fertilizers and polished diamonds etc. India, on the other hand imports mainly mineral oil, heavy and light machinery and foodgrains. Again, traditional Indian exports are tea, jute products, cotton and fibre textiles, tobacco, spices etc., whereas Israel’s imports are mainly foodgrains, machinery for wide range of development and engineering projects, raw material for canning industry etc. etc. Thus, it becomes apparent that there is not much scope for accommodation and as a result Indo-Israel trade does not present much scope for expansion. All the same if we look at the tables 1(a)(b) we will find that there has been some improvement in Indo-Israeli trade ever since 1960. Moreover, we must not forget the fact that,


Table 1

(a) India's Trade with Israel: 1947-48 to 1955-56

(Values in Rs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exports and Re-exports</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Balance of Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>74,60,659</td>
<td>49,92,127</td>
<td>+ 24,68,532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948-49</td>
<td>35,70,542</td>
<td>2,06,653</td>
<td>+ 33,63,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-50</td>
<td>20,89,848</td>
<td>53,551</td>
<td>+ 20,31,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>10,44,425</td>
<td>63,526</td>
<td>+ 9,80,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>23,69,662</td>
<td>42,784</td>
<td>+ 23,26,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>17,53,920</td>
<td>3,19,529</td>
<td>+ 14,34,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>5,01,126</td>
<td>40,331</td>
<td>+ 4,60,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>16,190</td>
<td>33,767</td>
<td>- 22,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>17,402</td>
<td>78,760</td>
<td>- 61,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 (April to December)</td>
<td>15,669</td>
<td>74,415</td>
<td>- 22,746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

(b) **India Trade with Israel 1957-1968**

(Value in Rs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exports and Re-exports</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Balance of Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1,84,522</td>
<td>3,13,347</td>
<td>- 1,18,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>2,04,747</td>
<td>38,370</td>
<td>+ 1,66,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1,18,233</td>
<td>45,237</td>
<td>+ 73,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>86,303</td>
<td>1,91,303</td>
<td>- 1,04,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1,78,974</td>
<td>4,46,882</td>
<td>- 2,67,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1,40,698</td>
<td>5,09,781</td>
<td>- 3,69,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>5,27,113</td>
<td>8,27,733</td>
<td>- 3,00,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>8,45,320</td>
<td>47,11,762</td>
<td>- 33,66,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>7,52,435</td>
<td>9,57,225</td>
<td>- 2,04,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>8,33,660</td>
<td>16,99,720</td>
<td>- 8,11,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>9,25,234</td>
<td>12,02,896</td>
<td>- 2,77,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>20,61,682</td>
<td>9,33,945</td>
<td>+ 11,27,737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

whatever political stand India might have been taking, neither the Suez crisis nor the Six Day war of 1967 broke down Indo-Israeli trade relations.

All the same, it might safely be concluded that there is not much scope for expansion of Indo-Israeli trade for various reasons. To start with Indo-Israeli trade is more competitive than complementary. In the Afro-Asian markets (more in Africa), India and Israel are rivals. Secondly, Indo-Arab trade have been complementary and the Arabs having alternative markets, India cannot afford to improve trade relations with Israel to the displeasure of the Arab countries. (See tables 2(a)(b)) Thirdly, both Israel and India need the investment of foreign capital in their own countries and cannot afford to export it. Fourthly, Israel exports know-how to the developing countries which India does not lack in the fields Israel exports them.

Thus for these various reasons the economic relations between these two countries have remained nominal and are likely to remain so.

But despite the official coolness between the two countries, a number of links between Israel and Indian institutions and associations have been created over the years. A number of Indians have shown very considerable interest in the progress of Israel and in its experience and experiments in many phases of its constructive work, economic and social. Indian visitors to Israel included senior civil servants, Members of Parliament and leaders of the Socialist Party (an opposition party in the Parliament of India), journalists,
Table 2

(a) India's Exports to the Arab States and Israel: 1957-1968

(Value in Rs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exports and Re-exports to the Arab States</th>
<th>Exports and Re-exports to Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>45,47,55,743</td>
<td>1,94,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>40,56,08,105</td>
<td>2,04,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>46,61,86,750</td>
<td>1,18,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>45,50,92,917</td>
<td>56,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>49,76,62,575</td>
<td>1,78,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>47,22,59,633</td>
<td>1,40,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>48,48,07,706</td>
<td>5,27,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>51,04,28,831</td>
<td>8,45,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>62,90,19,369</td>
<td>7,52,435</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>73,53,23,651</td>
<td>8,88,660</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>90,10,21,424</td>
<td>9,25,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1,04,82,44,612</td>
<td>20,61,682</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of India, Monthly Statistics of the Foreign Trade of India, Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta.
Table 2

(b) India's Imports from the Arab States and Israel
1957-1968

(Value in Rs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports from the Arab States</th>
<th>Imports from Israel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>56,59,77,984</td>
<td>3,13,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>48,64,22,417</td>
<td>38,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>53,00,10,640</td>
<td>45,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>61,59,42,721</td>
<td>1,91,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>54,63,22,230</td>
<td>4,46,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>52,46,87,657</td>
<td>5,09,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>52,85,98,443</td>
<td>8,27,733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>52,20,27,923</td>
<td>47,11,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>45,35,92,163</td>
<td>9,57,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>53,32,96,244</td>
<td>16,99,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>86,73,78,497</td>
<td>12,02,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>95,43,80,152</td>
<td>9,33,945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Government of India, Monthly Statistics of the Foreign Trade of India, Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Calcutta.
prominent public and political figures etc. Israeli authorities willingly provided facilities for these visitors to study co-operative farming, afforestation in arid zones, labour unions, social services and other aspects of Israeli life. Israel has also supplied India with a number of technical advisers under the United Nations Technical Assistance Program, and independently under its own modest "Point Four" programme. Israeli experts and expertise in agricultural developments, conservation and irrigation has been put at the disposal of numerous trainees. The Afro-Asian Institute for Co-operative and Labour Studies in Tel-Aviv has enabled quite a few Indian students to engage in specific and detailed studies of co-operative and trade union problems. Even as early as March 1953, the Government of India sent some officials in response to the invitation of the Government of Israel, to study co-operative system of agriculture and marketing in that country. On 15 March 1956 again an official Indian Government delegation arrived in Israel to study regional and communal development. Again in 1959 also a five-member official delegation was sent to Israel to study co-operative farming and marketing. Some Indian students (though very few in number) are known to have pursued scientific and technical subjects in Israel, including nuclear physics. Some Indian nuclear scientists notably Homi Bhaba and B.D. Nag Chaudhury have paid visit to Israel.

80. Jerusalem Post, 28 March 1953.
81. Ibid., 17 March 1956.
82. The Hindû in its edition of 22 June 1955 published a news item (quoting Reuter from Nicosia) saying that India sold some small quantity of uranium to Israel in June 1955.
Further, strongest exponents of the natural friendship between both countries have proved to be the trade union and co-operative movements of Israel and India. The Histadrut, Israel's General Federation of Labour, is linked by many ties with its Indian counterparts, the Indian National Trade Union Congress, Hind Mazdoor Sabha, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Hind Mazdoor Panchayat and National Co-operative Union of India. Moreover, Indian Rotarians have established their own direct ties with Israeli Rotary and Rotary Governors of both countries have exchanged visits. Further, "last but not least, in ninety cities and towns of India, volunteer groups dedicated to the ideal of Indo-Israeli friendship have sprung up lately matched in Israel by the Israel Asia Friendship Council". 83

In the table (3) we see some of the courses where Indians participated.

On the other side, some cultural troupes and students' delegations from Israel also have visited India. Some Israeli exhibitions are also being held in India. 84 Moreover, several prominent Israelis also had visited India in different capacities.

But with all this, it might be concluded that these non-official relations have not been able to exert any perceptible influence in the state of non-relationship between Israel and India.

83. Indians and Israelis - A Story of Co-operation between Peoples, ed. and published by Yair Aran (Bombay, 1970-71).
84. News From Israel, 15 April 1967.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Afro-Asian Institute Seminar on Co-operation Seminar on Adult Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Poultry raising Course, Agriculture Course, Seminar on Agricultural Co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Bhoomden Seminar, Afro-Asian Institute Study Tour - Co-operative Movement, Women's Adult Education Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Irrigation Course, Seminar on Child Care, Seminar on the Role of Women in Development, Seminar on Agricultural Co-operation, Courses on Vocational Guidance for the Handicapped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Course in Agriculture, Course in Poultry-raising, Course in Criminology, 3rd Afro-Asian Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Women's Leadership Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Seminar on Co-operation, Seminar on Adult Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Seminar on Co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Labour Seminar, Seminar on Co-operation, Course of Higher Training in Agriculture, Fertilizer-use Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>14th Afro-Asian Course, 16th Afro-Asian Course, Fertilizer-use Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Fertilizer-use Course, 18th Afro-Asian Course, 'Women's Course in Combating Illiteracy, Seminar on Adult Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this connection, we can briefly mention that though the Government of India's attitude in the official level has been very cold, yet Indian Press and political parties (excluding obviously the ruling party and the Communist Parties) by and large, have sympathetically looked at the situation in Israel. Even after the Six Day war, when the Government of India sided absolutely with the Arabs, the Press did not go the whole hog with the Government. To take a small example: Over 95 per cent of the letters published as late as July 1967, in the leading dailies of India, *The Times of India, The Hindustan Times* and *the Statesman*, were those which were voicing opinions favourable to Israel. Moreover, to give another example, let us quote extensively from a special article written by a prominent Indian political commentator, Inder Malhotra in the *Statesman* on 9 June 1967:

Dissatisfaction with the West Asia policy is as widespread as it is strong. It is by no means confined to the ranks of the opposition... Even within the Cabinet's Foreign Affairs Committee, serious doubts were expressed by some of the most senior members before they agreed to the policy statement eventually made by Mrs Gandhi in Parliament... it would be absurd for anyone to deny that disappointment and disillusionment with our Arab friends, and the disgust with the Government's behaviour towards Israel have influenced public opinion. The irregularities, excesses and distortions of the West Asia policy have apparently become the enemy of its pith and substance. 86

85. We will talk about Israeli Press and the political parties' attitude to Israel's links with the Third World in Chapter VII.

86. For further references of Indian Press' sympathetic attitude to Israel (even after the Six Day war) see the editorials of *The Statesman, 12-13 June 1967*, and *The Hindustan Times, 15 June 1967*. 
This is not our intention to survey the attitude of Indian Press towards Israel but, by and large, right from the beginning the Indian Press, in contrast to the Government stand, has taken a sympathetic stand towards Israel.  

As for the political parties, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh has openly and consistently supported Israel. It has promised that if they come to power, they will "establish full-fledged diplomatic relations with Israel."  

The Swatantra Party also maintained that the failure to establish diplomatic relations with Israel is a situation which is "utterly indefensible." Moreover, the prominent leaders of the party have consistently pleaded for friendly relations with Israel.

The Samyukta Socialist Party seems to stand somewhere between active supporter and positively hostile. They have been critical of the Israeli pattern of socialism though at the same time they have criticized the Government of India for presenting one-sided view of the Six Day war of 1967.  

But the Praja Socialist Party seems to be the most ardent supporter of the Israeli cause in India. Israel's labour
party, Mapai, and PSP are the members of the Socialist International. Quite a few top PSP leaders have visited Israel. In their election manifesto, adopted in October 1966, the PSP has urged for forging friendly relations with Israel. The PSP members have always been most articulate in urging the Government to have diplomatic relations with Israel.

India's relations with Israel is not a major issue for the Indian public. In elections this issue hardly has any bearing on the election results. Thus India's public opinion cannot be determined particularly on this issue. But a survey conducted in mid-July 1967 by the Indian Institute of Public Opinion on the "West Asian Crisis" has revealed that two out of three respondents in the cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras opposed India's extension of unqualified support to the 'Arab cause' and maintain that India needs to take a "more objective and impartial stand" on the Arab-Israeli issue.

Now our survey above brings out the fact that ever since Israel failed to have diplomatic relations with India in 1952, Israel's relations with India have not improved and India, because of its special relation of friendship with the Arab countries has consistently been thwarting any attempt by Israel to improve the relationship between the two countries.


Thus, as far as Israel is concerned, "Israeli attitudes have run the gamut from expectation to hope to disappointment to dismay and finally to anger." Ben Gurion had been the Prime Minister of Israel right from the birth of the State up to 1963 (with a brief break). He should be knowing how it felt to be rebuffed by India in Israel's efforts to establish diplomatic relations with India. Ben Gurion never cared to hide his feelings:

Strangely enough, the one country which has succumbed to Arab pressure is not one of the newest States.... It is India, one of the largest, most populated and most progressive of the new states. It was headed by one of the most eminent statesmen in the world, Nehru, until his death. But he remained aloof and consistently refused to establish diplomatic relations with us.... It was strange that a man of his qualities, his progressive ideals and his vision, should have submitted to Arab pressure... it was a source of personal disappointment for me.... I was saddened that on this issue, he should have proved so weak. 94

Again, as far back as 1959, in an article captioned "Israel's Security and Her International Position", Ben Gurion, while surveying Israel's position in world politics said:

Mr Nehru refuses to establish normal relations with Israel, although he has repeatedly promised our representatives to do so.... Nehru too claims allegiance to neutrality.... He is not even neutral in regard to Israel and the Arabs for he has close ties and normal relations with the Arab countries - but he has stubbornly refused to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, and in his frequent visits to the Middle East he has on every occasion - and not by accident - overlooked Israel. 95

95. Israel Government Yearbook 5720 (Jerusalem, 1959/60), pp. 66 and 75.
In 1968, any Prime Minister of Israel could have said the same thing with equal amount of force and intensity, about any Prime Minister of India.