

Original Sins

Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel

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Preface

Having to prepare a new, American edition of a book less than a year after its publication in Britain must be a source of gratification to any author. I am grateful for the interest in this book and for the many reactions from readers around the world. In revising the first edition I have taken advantage of some of these reactions, and have tried to make the book's arguments sharper.

As the Israel/Palestine conflict is very much on the world's agenda, the basic issues discussed here have not changed.

All outstanding issues in the diplomatic negotiations on the road to peace are easier to resolve than that of equal rights for the Palestinians. Every day, Jewish immigrants landing at Tel-Aviv airport enjoy a warm welcome, watched over, and sometimes financed, by the whole Western world. They are regarded as refugees deserving a homeland, and this is the realization of the Zionist vision. The world tends to forget the innocent victims of this great vision, Palestinians who are still being made homeless because they are expected to make room for the new immigrants. The Palestinians, in turn, are judged to be less than deserving.

Our awareness of so many ethnic conflicts raging all over the world may lead us to despair of finding just solutions. Let us remind ourselves of those conflicts that seemed insoluble not too long ago and can now serve as our models. It is hoped that this book will make a contribution to redressing injustice by enlightening its readers in the broadest possible sense, showing them the human complexities of a conflict which can be resolved by complex humans.

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PROLOGUE:

Dream and Reality

The image of Israel among educated Westerners today is a consequence of a long and incredibly successful campaign to have the Zionist cause adopted by the West. This campaign has been based on old realities and some new images, Jewish history, religious traditions and the promise of a revolution.

Zionism is a dream that cannot fail to move and thrill anybody who knows anything of the tragic history of the Jews. The images of Jews dispersed and persecuted, and then the images of miraculous return and revival, can only lead to admiration and joy. A people afflicted and punished for 2,000 years is coming back to its ancient homeland, to turn its ruins and wastes into a thriving garden which will serve as a safe haven.

The Zionist movement has been able to establish, within a short 50 years, something which seemed inconceivable to most of the world: Jewish political independence. The world realized that Jews could become soldiers, farmers, win wars, and rule natives. Zionism has succeeded in reviving the Hebrew language, and created a vibrant, attractive culture.

Trying to understand the reality of Israel, we are faced mostly with Zionist mythology, deeply entrenched in the public mind, or just as often with ignorance or anti-Semitism. The myths are often expressed in simple and catchy slogans: "The conflict between Arabs and Jews goes back hundreds or thousands of years"; "The conflict is the result of religious fanaticism"; "Israel was created as a result of the Holocaust"; "Israel is a developing country." (Actually, Israel has been, at least since 1975, among the 25 richest nations in the world in terms of per capita income.)

There is much confusion, intended and unintended, between five separate concepts: Jewishness, Jews, Judaism, Zionism and Israel. "Israel is the Jewish state." This is the most common synonym in the international media. Some understand this to mean that Israel is based

on Judaism, which is absurd. Others generalize from their images of Jews and Jewishness. When Israel is referred to as "the Jewish state," what comes to mind often enough are ideas about Jews, including historical stereotypes.

The aim of this book is to examine first assumptions, to look again at the past and restate the terms of the debate over Israel against the reality of West Asia (to expose and overcome the normal Eurocentric bias, the term West Asia will be used to replace the "Middle East").

This book does not aim to present a comprehensive history of Zionism. It is not a biography of a movement, but its examination and dissection. The book offers some narratives, but mostly interpretations and reflections. It is first and foremost about ideas, their origins and their consequences.

Preface to the Jewish Question

In the beginning were the Jews, etched on the world's consciousness for millennia, known to themselves and others as a mystery and a tragedy. The difficulties of defining the Jews have been matched only by the uniqueness of their history. As the outsiders of Western history, they have been the eternal wanderers, always under a curse of difference, exclusion and victimization. The world has known them as aliens: mysterious, inscrutable, elusive. The Jew has been not merely the unwelcome stranger, but also the mysterious Other, the epitome of otherness. Jews were outsiders who wanted to remain just that, a minority looking at the majority with pride and contempt. They have existed as foreigners, always ready to move on, their suitcases packed.

For most of history the Jewish condition has been one of diaspora or dispersion. The Hebrew term used to describe this means exile, and the term has been used for 2,000 years, as if Jews had just recently moved from their homeland. In their synagogues, Jews mourned over their exile and the desolation of the ancient homeland every day, every week, and every holiday. They asked rhetorically, in their prayers, why they were in exile and found the answer in the same prayers. It was a punishment for their ancient sins, a theme common in the writings of Old Testament prophets.

In Jewish mystical tradition, exile is the condition of the whole world, an incomplete universe devoid of the divine presence. This incompleteness of the Jewish condition and the human condition was so total that it could be changed only through divine agency and the coming of the Messiah. While on an abstract, philosophical level we can claim that the incompleteness of the Jewish condition is identical to that of the human condition (and indeed Jewishness has become an emblem of alienation in modern literature), being Jewish meant not just that, but being an outsider, a stranger in a strange land. Whether

they were treated as guests, as refugees or as sojourners, Jews did not identify with the majority. They did not belong.

Jews, the untouchables of the West, could best be described throughout most of their existence as forming a caste. They did not marry non-members or mingle with them, and they were limited to certain occupations. Like untouchables in India today, Jews could escape the caste by conversion to another religion, and some have chosen this option. Jewish history seems like an uninterrupted chain of disasters and suffering, hatred, pogroms and, since the nineteenth century, secularization and success (including political power), together with continued hostility. The riddles of Jewish history include both the source of such enmity, an eternal hatred for an eternal tribe, and the secret of the perseverance of Jewish identity. What amazes us in the 2,000-year ordeal is the relentless hostility of the non-Jewish majority, and Jewish survival, which seems nothing short of miraculous.

JEWISH IDENTITY AND JUDAISM

The unique identity of the homeless people was created by a ritualistic religion, and by life in a closed, culturally self-sufficient community. During most of Jewish history, Jewish identity was coterminous with Judaism, a religion whose beginnings are shrouded in the fogs of myth and legend. Every religion claims that its mythology is history, but we are confronted by too many conflicting claims by thousands of religious traditions and sources, with no substantiating evidence. Most Biblical chronicles belong in the realm of religious imagination. They are purely mythological; their heroes, from Abraham to Moses and David, are fairy-tale figures, as shown by their superhuman exploits. Similar stories are told in all cultures about the great heroes of yore. Yet, within Western culture, Biblical mythology has enjoyed a privileged status, and people discuss Abraham, Moses or Joshua (as well as Jesus) as if they were real people. This is the result of cultural traditions and the formidable legacy of Christianity.

There is no evidence to support the Biblical stories about the wanderings of ancient ancestors from Mesopotamia to Palestine, then to Egypt, and then from Egypt back to Palestine. It is true that ancient Judaic culture developed between the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and was more heavily influenced by the former. What we know from archaeological finds is that around 1,100 Before Common Era there was an Israelite culture, recognized by a distinctive pottery style, in Palestine, and by 900 BCE there was a distinct Judaic culture, religion and language. From Assyrian, Moabite and Egyptian inscrip-

tions we know of the kingdoms of Judea and Israel in the tenth, ninth, and eighth centuries BCE. In 721 BCE the kingdom of Israel was invaded and conquered by the Assyrians. The southern kingdom of Judea existed until 586 BCE, when it fell to the Babylonians. The Jerusalem Temple was destroyed, and many Judeans went into exile to Mesopotamia, starting a Jewish community there that was to exist for 2,600 years. A second temple in Jerusalem was built when the Persians defeated Babylon and permitted Judeans to return home. Among those who returned from exile, there was a group that engaged in codifying Judaic law. In the fourth century BCE the region was conquered by Alexander the Great and later controlled by his successors. After fighting against the Syrian Hellenistic kingdom to the north, the Jews won independence and enjoyed it between 168 BCE and 63 BCE. Then Judea became a Roman protectorate and colony, ruled by Roman governors and subservient Jewish kings. In 66 Common Era the First Rebellion against the Romans began, ending in defeat and the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. There was another rebellion, led by Bar-Kochva, in 132 CE. It ended in a holocaust three years later. Diaspora was a permanent feature of Jewish life quite early on. By the first century BCE, most of the Jewish people were living in Mesopotamia and in Egypt. Later on, a permanent Jewish community was created in Rome.

TEMPLE JUDAISM

The origins of Judaic traditions, myths and rituals can be found all over ancient West Asia, in Mesopotamia, in Canaanite religions, and in neighboring Greek traditions. At the same time, there is clearly something original in the tradition centered around the Jerusalem Temple. What we know is that there was a temple in Jerusalem around 800 BCE which competed with other traditions and other temples in the same hill country of Judea. A silver scroll found in Jerusalem and inscribed around 650 BCE carried the priestly blessing (Numbers 6:24-26): "The Lord bless thee and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." This indicates that some portions of the Old Testament, identical to the texts we have today, were known then in Jerusalem.

Who were the people responsible for these new religious notions of sin, purity and salvation, about an angry God and his prophets, about a holy book of divine revelations, destined to influence countless generations to come? This class of priests developed ideas of superiority, inventing stories of how the Canaanites were sentenced to death

for being pagans. The religion of strict moral admonitions, of the big, angry, father, was also the beginning of religious persecution and intolerance.

The temple rites focused on animal sacrifices, designed to ensure purity and protection from evil spirits, and were conducted by a caste of priests, the keepers of divine law. A variety of rites were being practiced by the people, including the supposedly Canaanite tradition of having a collection of cult objects and fertility statuettes at home, to be worshipped in the family circle. It was only the building of the Second Temple after 500 BCE that led to the codification of the law attributed to Moses.

RABBINICAL JUDAISM

Rabbinical Judaism, the historical tradition that has dominated Jewish life for almost 2,000 years, was created in the days of the Roman Empire, when Jews lived in dispersed communities all over the Mediterranean world. The Roman Empire of 1,800 years ago was the home of many cultures, religions and communities: Christianity was being formed at the same time as rabbinical Judaism.

Rabbinical (or Synagogue) Judaism was codified in the first seven centuries of the Common Era, based on the so-called oral tradition, the interpretation of the law as given in the first Five Books of Moses. The oral tradition first became written after the destruction of the Second Temple: around 200 CE, a collection of rabbinical rulings was composed in six volumes, known as the Mishnah. This became the core of the Talmud, which interprets the Mishnah. The Mishnah claims to be a sequel to the Five Books of the Law, but is actually a new version of Judaism.

The Talmud is a compendium of legal rulings in religious and secular matters, in civil and criminal law, interspersed with legends, proverbs and folklore to create a treasury of ancient wisdom and language. There are two collections of the Talmud, which reflect two geographical centers: the Babylonian Talmud and the Palestinian (Jerusalem) Talmud. Both were sealed around 700 CE. Since then, rabbinical sages have continued to interpret these voluminous commentaries, and to issue rulings, known as responsa, which are answers to specific questions.

The world of rabbinical Judaism is built on the Talmud, not the Old Testament. What we have known as Jewish culture, or Jewish genius, over the past 1,500 years, can be directly attributed to the Talmud, the centerpiece of Jewish cultural identity. It is the Talmudic tradition which has created the culture of Diaspora Judaism, with its

legalism, rationalism and respect for learning. The legalism led to the unique Jewish emphasis not only on literacy, but also on learning, since studying the law was not just a religious duty, but the most important one. Synagogues in Eastern Europe were known as houses of learning; prayer and study were always related. A rabbi has to be a legal scholar, whose prestige is based on erudition. Leading rabbis gain their reputation by demonstrating their ability to quote early and late sources, as needed, from this "ocean of law." Religious leadership and reputation were based not on saintliness or mystical experiences, but on intellectual achievement. An erudite Talmudist was held in the highest esteem, and his reputation gave him the leadership of his community. Another important feature of rabbinical Judaism was the absence of a formal hierarchy. There is no central authority, except that which is willingly accepted.

This incredible edifice of rabbinical Judaism, surviving millennia of persecution and hatred, is almost incomprehensible. Diaspora Jews went on celebrating rituals based on a fascinating collection of ancient customs and taboos, preserved and fossilized, though their original flavor was long forgotten. With no temple to worship in and no king to obey, Jews still studied all the rules covering temple worship and monarchy, constantly referring to an imaginary reality. Orthodox Judaism makes the whole of life into a ritual, with each practice part of a monologue directed towards a silent God and expressing total devotion. All the rituals, prayers and blessings, constantly engaged in by Orthodox Jews, recognize God in daily existence and human indebtedness to Him. The first thing a Jew is supposed to do upon opening his or her eyes from sleep in the morning is to make a prayer of thanks for being alive. The day ends with more worship, and all 613 prescriptions and proscriptions sing the praises of the Lord and the inferiority of humankind. Jewish religious practices are notably lacking in mysticism, as compared to other traditions. The worldliness of rabbinical Judaism permits only one concession, in the form of the idea of a Messiah. According to Jewish eschatology, human history is a battlefield between good and evil. This battle will end with the coming of the Messiah, who will bring the course of history to a stop. This will mean the end to Jewish victimization, revenge on the Gentiles, Judgement Day for all humans, and universal recognition of God and His law. For many generations, Jewish mystics were busy deciphering hidden messages in sacred texts, to determine the exact date of Jewish redemption. But the Messiah never came.

Rabbinical Jewish culture lacked any answers to general political and social issues. Since Jews were always a minority, they accepted whatever political arrangements were in force around them. They did

not worry about questions of regime and civil law, social order and social justice. Whatever did not affect Jews and Judaism directly was a gentile problem. (This can still be observed today among most Orthodox Jews. Such Jews in South Africa, for example, are totally uninterested in the political and moral question of racism, because it does not affect Jews.) The lack of Jewish sovereignty was taken for granted, because it was the historical reality in which Jewish culture was formed. Rabbinical Judaism created a culture fit for a community that was not tied to any territory, and did not have to worry about economic production, defense or foreign policy. This community, however distinct its cultural identity, could never be a fully fledged, complete and normal society.

CREATING BARRIERS

Rituals and taboos of purity and purification are central to Judaism (as they are to Hinduism, Islam and other traditions). The world is divided into the realms of the holy and pure, and the polluted and evil. Jews are born into the realm of holiness and purity. They stay there by performing the appropriate rituals and keeping the prescriptions and proscriptions of the law. Non-Jews can never attain this level, and are, by definition, inferior and unclean. Jews have celebrated their separateness and their uniqueness and have created effective barriers around themselves by not allowing themselves to eat with non-Jews, marry them or drink wine with them. These barriers have indeed preserved Jewish identity for 2,000 years.

What rabbinical Judaism has developed, since 70 CE, has been a system of movable, extra-territorial and communal religion, based on much ritual and taboo, and on very little theology, which defined Jewish identity as a collection of behaviors and practices. Until fairly recently this collection of behaviors defined Jewish identity. Jews were unmistakable. Not only did their environment define them as different, they were also different in appearance and cultural habits. Everything Jews did looked different and felt different. The total regulation and regimentation of Jewish life by religious law created invisible, but impassable, walls around the Jewish community. Within these walls, Jews preserved their identity. The Jewish community was culturally self-sufficient, looking at the non-Jewish world with disdain and contempt. It had its own calendar, its own definitions of every facet of human life, indeed its own definition of humanity.

The Jewish reaction to persecution by others has been one of passive waiting, an anticipation of total redemption coming from heaven. But, for hundreds of years of eager waiting and tearful prayers

for the end of Jewish misery, nothing happened. Jews responded most of the time by cleaving to their faith and identity, and by asserting superiority and uniqueness. To their tormentors over the ages, Jews responded with passivity, but this was a defiant kind of inaction. This passive defiance assured their status as total outsiders.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Xenophobia, strong suspicion of strangers and hostility towards them, is natural and common, but the uncommon virulence of anti-Semitism has been an historical riddle. What is uncommon about anti-Semitism is its unique and special role in Western consciousness. (As the term has been known for more than a century, anti-Semitism is an ideological complex directed against Jews. It is not aimed at "Semites," since there is no such group.)

Historically, the Jew has been the stranger who works at separating himself or herself, creating a distance between him- or herself and the rest of humanity. The Jew is an outsider not despite him- or herself, but because of him- or herself, and will always stand out. Being the eternal stranger, the Jew became the eternal victim: the wandering, accursed Jew, ever fascinating and strange. Even with emancipation, shouldering the burden of their past like a shadow, Jews continued to carry their pariahhood.

Individuals respond to the strange and the stranger with stereotypes, and stereotypes about ethnic groups often reflect ignorance. If you are asked about Croatians you may respond with ignorant stereotyping or guessing because you have heard very little about them. This is not the case with Jews. Everyone knows something about them, because stereotypes about Jews have been part of Western culture for 2,000 years.

If the Jew is the prototypical Other in Western culture, then anti-Semitism is the archetypal Western prejudice, directed through the Jew at all others, those who threaten, disturb and deviate. Hatred for the Jews is the quintessential prejudice, preceding and overriding any other. In Europe, Jews were the familiar strangers, representing all others, because they were there and not in distant lands like Arabs or Africans. They were the strangers next door and so anti-Semitism has served other prejudices vicariously.

Blacks, Arabs, or Poles are historical newcomers to prejudice, compared to the eternal Jew:

"No matter how you figger,
It's tough to be a nigger,

But it's tougher
 To be a Jeeew-ooou-oo!"
 (Crowley, 1968, p. 164.)

One major cause of anti-Semitism is the traditional economic position of the Jewish minority. Several ethnic groups have existed as separate castes in host societies, serving elites and masses as economic middlemen. Middlemen are foreign immigrants who fill a social and economic gap as money-lenders, merchants, craftsmen and small manufacturers. They have strong communal bonds that help them when competing with outsiders. Often they have a dual ethic when dealing with outgroups, and cultivate their cultural separateness and identity. Thus, they rarely assimilate into host societies. Their relative economic success and cultural separatism have often led to expulsion, and even attempts at genocide. Ethnic groups in such roles have been the Parsees in India, Indians in East Africa, Arabs in West Africa, Chinese in South East Asia, Armenians in West Asia, Japanese in East Asia, Greeks around the Mediterranean, and Jews.

The economic role of Jews as the middleman minority has been a distinguishing characteristic and a permanent source of trouble. Jews have been merchants, money-lenders, traders and shopkeepers. This was a source of tension with the farming and working classes. Trading is physically less demanding, and more profitable, than farming or mining. Retail trade, even in the poorest of neighborhoods, leads to some profit, to economic advantage and to resentment.

Not only Jews, but members of all of these groups had to bear the brunt of animosity towards the middleman. In the U.S. one recent example shows that such resentment has been created towards Arab immigrants in Detroit, who have become shopkeepers in the black ghetto. Here there was no historical tradition of anti-Arab sentiment, but a new economic arrangement created the same prejudice that Jews, Chinese or Indians have been subject to elsewhere.

Even when Westerners did not encounter live Jews, anti-Semitism was a natural part of their culture: knowing Jews was never a prerequisite for hating them. The world has known Jews even in their absence, because mythological Jews populated legend, myth and joke. When Jews were victims they were simply living out the curse put on them by history and destiny. When Jews did well in the world, defying the curse, they inspired envy and hatred. And, while the whole world regarded them as living under a curse, Jews proclaimed themselves to be a chosen people, the nobility of the planet. Jewish ethnocentrism was indeed a unique and forceful ideology.

Ethnocentrism, the mirror image of xenophobia, ascribes a special

status to your group. It is expressed in the argument that a certain group is the carrier of special, unique values, to the exclusion of all others. It is not just a recognition of difference, but a claim of uniqueness and superiority, based on extraordinary qualities residing in the group. Ethnocentrism has been common in human history, and has been the rule, rather than the exception, in most religious, tribal or national human groups. Jewish ethnocentrism has been a long tradition, stemming from the idea of election. In the Diaspora, the ideas of being chosen and special were an imaginary compensation for worldly sufferings. Jewish claims of chosenness and superiority certainly have caused resentment, since traditional Judaism is filled with contempt for non-Jews.

A common and justified complaint about Jews, heard in antiquity and in the early days of emancipation, was their refusal to become integrated into host communities. In many nations, the typical reaction to minorities was trying to integrate them, or forcing integration upon them, making them or having them join majority identity. Jews opposed both invitations to integrate and forced assimilation. They adhered to their cultural distinction, just like other middleman minorities whose identity was buttressed by economic differences. But there was also a Jewish rejection of any intimate social contact or association, not unusual in other middleman minorities, but in the Jewish case expressed in an elaborate system of religious taboos.

All religions compete with other religions and challenge them, but the case of Christianity and Judaism is unique. In this religious dispute, Christianity claims both continuity with Judaism and superiority over it. Ever since the early days of the Church, Christianity defined its relationship with the God of Israel as replacing and superseding the old covenant between God and the Israelites. The Church was the new Israel. Christianity proclaimed itself the true heir to divine election. The Jews lost their birthright when they rejected Jesus, according to Christian mythology.

The existence of Jews and Judaism is a problem for Christianity — those who have refused to hear the good news of the Gospel and crucified the Messiah have been allowed to live only as a reminder and proof of the punishment deserved for such a sin. The people who rejected the Messiah must continue to exist, defeated and despised, until they become Christians.

Christian teachings have made sure that Jews existed in Western consciousness even when they were physically absent. Anybody who has read the New Testament knows the Jews as the enemies of truth and salvation. For Christians, connecting the diabolical Jews of the New Testament with Jews living in their midst has always been natural.

Christian passion plays, re-enacting the stories of the New Testament about the life and death of Jesus, serve to remind the believers about the diabolical role of Jews in the crucifixion. All over Christendom, from the Europe of the Middle Ages to the modern U.S., from the music of J.S. Bach to spectacles in South Carolina, passion plays remind us that Jews have chosen to be stiff-necked in rejecting the Christian Good News, and deserve their fate. As one of Joyce's characters put it: "They sinned against the light . . . and you can see the darkness in their eyes. And that is why they are wanderers on the earth to this day" (Joyce, 1961, pp. 34-5).

The strength of Christian anti-Semitism is clearly evident when we consider the teachings of some of the more liberal clergy. Martin Niemoller is known today as a hero of the anti-Nazi Protestants in Germany under Hitler. But it was Niemoller who said in 1935 that Jews carried with them ". . . as a fearsome burden the unforgiven blood-guilt of their fathers" in the Crucifixion of the Christian Messiah (quoted in Conway, 1986).

The results of religious anti-Semitism are reflected in these words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, watching the deserted Jewish cemetery in Newport, Rhode Island:

How came they here? What burst of Christian hate,
 What persecution, merciless and blind
 Drove o'er the sea — that desert desolate —
 These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
 Ghetto and Judenstrass, in murk and mire;
 Taught in the school of patience to endure
 The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
 And the bitter herbs of exile and its fears,
 The wasting famine of the heart they fed,
 And slaked its thirst with marah of their tears.

Anathema maranatha! was the cry
 That rang from town to town, from street to street;
 At every gate the accursed Mordecai
 Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Christian feet.

JEWS AND EUROPE

Jews have been Europeans since the days of the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages they were found all over Central and Western Europe.

After the Black Death of 1348, Jews moved East from the Rhine Valley, which used to be the center of European Jewry. They settled in what is today Poland and the Ukraine, where they lived for centuries in relative stability and developed their own cultural institutions.

Major dates in Jewish European history are usually those of major catastrophes. The Crusades were marked by massacres and suicides, or even filicides, with Jews killing their children, rather than letting them fall into gentile hands. The period of the Black Death, 1348–50, an epidemic which killed one-third of all Europeans, brought about another climax in carnage, as Jews were blamed for the epidemic. Medieval tourist attractions in today's Europe bear witness to the humiliation and persecution of Jews, who never shared in Europe's glories. Cathedrals, tapestries, knights' shining armors — Jews had no part in these. They were always on the outside looking in, excluded by the majority, and by themselves, from passion plays and jousting tournaments.

The year 1492, the beginning of the modern age, the birth of a new era and a New World, meant another Jewish disaster, on March 31 1492, with the expulsion from Spain of 250,000 Jews, the largest and most important Jewish community of Europe. The Jews of Spain were exiled after 1,000 years of history there. They could have converted, but they refused. This was one of the most tragic blows ever dealt to world Jewry. The same year, 1492, also saw the expulsion of Jews from Sicily and Sardinia. In 1516, the first official ghetto was created in Venice, followed by those in Rome (1555) and Florence (1571).

YEARNINGS FOR ZION

Jews prayed every day for a return to Zion, and once a year wished each other "next year in Jerusalem!", but these heartfelt prayers and wishes did not usually lead to action. Messianic attempts have led to more pathetic humiliations. The trauma of the expulsion from Spain, and the disasters of the seventeenth century in Eastern Europe led to an era of messianic hopes. In 1524, a mysterious man named David Hareuveni appeared before Pope Clement VII, offering an alliance with his brother, King Joseph, who ruled in Arabia, in order to expel the Turks from the Holy Land. In 1529 Hareuveni was joined by Solomon Molcho, a Portuguese whose parents had been forced to convert to Catholicism, who had reverted to Judaism and predicted that the Messiah would come in 1540. Both men appeared before Emperor Charles V to plead for another alliance. The Emperor had both of them arrested. Molcho was burned by the Inquisition in Mantua, and Hareuveni was put in prison in Portugal and disappeared.

A century and a half later, in 1648, a major holocaust in the Ukraine (then part of Poland) was followed by the most serious messianic episode in Jewish history. The Hetman Bogdan Chmelnicki led an uprising against the Polish landowners in the Ukraine. It is estimated that 100,000 Jews, 90 per cent of the Jewish population, were killed in this rebellion. This meant that the total number of Jews in Eastern Europe was reduced by 30 per cent, and the calamity was considered equal in severity to the massacres during the Crusades. A short time later, Shabbetai Zvi, born in 1626 in Smyrna, proclaimed himself a Messiah and galvanized the Jewish world, announcing the coming of complete redemption in 1666. Jews all over the world believed that the recent catastrophes were the heralds of final redemption, selling their belongings in the expectation of the end of the world.

The world did not end, but the ending of this particular tragedy came in 1665, with Shabbetai Zvi's conversion to Islam. The only attempt in recent Jewish history to challenge fate and reject passivity led to another shameful defeat. The enthusiasm which engulfed literally the whole Jewish world was matched only by the terrible disappointment felt by the masses of believers. The trauma created more despair. It seemed that Jews were victims of a cruel joke, played on them by a blind, vicious destiny. Only a real Messiah could change that.

The founder of Hassidism, Israel Ben-Eliezer Alter (1700-60), known as the BESHT (Master of the Good Name) reported a conversation with the Messiah about his imminent arrival in a letter written in 1747. But the Messiah never arrived.

JEWES AND GERMANY

A Jewish community existed in Germany without interruption for 1,700 years before World War II. Jews settled in the fortified cities built by the Romans on the west bank of the Rhine. In Cologne there was a well-organized Jewish community in 321 CE and the Rhine Valley was the center of a glorious cultural tradition. Ashkenaz was the medieval Hebrew name for Germany, and to this day European Jews are known as Ashkenazi, named after the country that was the source of European Jewish culture. (The counterpart of Ashkenazi, Sepharadi, comes from the Hebrew name for Spain.) Under Charlemagne, Jews enjoyed liberty and equality, and became prominent as merchants and money-lenders. Important Jewish communities existed by the tenth century in Vienna, Prague, Speyer (the probable origin of the common Jewish name Shapiro), Worms and Mainz. Their leading rabbi, Gershom Ben-Yehuda, the "Luminary to the Exiles" (960-

1028), was responsible for rulings that became the law all over the Jewish world. Among them was the prohibition of bigamy and of sending letters addressed to other people.

The Crusades ended the period of peace and prosperity for Jews. A new era of massacres began in 1096. Blood libels, which accused the Jews of using the blood of Christians for ritual purposes, became common. The Black Death epidemic of 1348 led to anti-Jewish carnage everywhere in Germany. Two thousand Jews were burned at the stake in Strasbourg and 500 in Nürnberg. Following the disasters of the Black Death, many German Jews started migrating eastward. They brought with them the dialect of southwestern Germany, which became Judeo-German or Yiddish, the native language of most European Jews until World War II.

The waning of the Middle Ages and the coming of the Reformation had both negative and positive consequences for German Jews. Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a classical Christian anti-Semite. At first he hoped to convert Jews to Protestantism, and when that failed, he called for the harshest measures against them. At the same time, he translated the Bible into German and made the Hebrew scriptures accessible to the common people. The Bible became a source of inspiration, moderating the effects of Luther's anti-Semitic tracts. The humanism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had a very positive impact on the status of Jews.

Following the Thirty Years War (1618–48) between German Catholics and Protestants, Jews, like the rest of the population, were impoverished. A few "court Jews" are remembered from the seventeenth century for their wealth and influence, but many were reduced to begging or crime. There were gangs of Jewish robbers and thieves, who left their mark on the German underworld in the form of Hebrew words found in the criminal argot of the twentieth century.

The eighteenth century was a time of slow and constant economic progress for Jews and the slow, but certain, coming of the Enlightenment. In 1812, King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia issued an edict giving Jews in certain regions the status of full citizens. Such laws were rescinded, and it was only in 1871, with the complete unification of the German state, that all Jews became equal citizens. Formal equality was accompanied by remarkable success and the prominence of Jews in banking, industry, communications and the arts. Jews were only 1 per cent of the population, but grossly overrepresented among the upper classes. They repaid the German fatherland with fervent patriotism, and 12,000 died in World War I.

During the years of the Weimar Republic, Jewish success and prominence in science, medicine, business, art and politics reached

new heights. Then, when it seemed that the Jewish community of Germany was the most successful and the most assimilated in Jewish history, when more and more Jews were marrying non-Jews and occupying major roles in German culture, Adolph Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. Jews and Germans returned to the days of the Black Death.

JEWIS AND POLAND

The 1,000-year history of Jews in Poland encompasses the highs and the lows of Jewish Diaspora existence. It became the center and the symbol of Jews in Europe, and most Jews in the world today can trace their ancestry to some region of historical Poland. Jews were welcomed to Poland in the Middle Ages, and as early as 1264 King Boleslaw V granted the Jews protection in a special charter. In 1551 King Augustus II recognized the right of autonomous Jewish communities to elect leaders and run their lives. Poland was the only European country never to have expelled its Jews.

The disasters of 1648 were followed by Poland's wars with Swedes and Russians, which affected everybody, and a series of blood libels in the eighteenth century, which affected only Jews. Still, by 1764, there were about 750,000 Jews in Poland and Lithuania (Mahler, 1971). In 1880, historical Poland, between the Vistula and the Dnieper, which today would include parts of Lithuania, Russia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine and Czechoslovakia, contained more than 70 per cent of world Jewry. The map of historical Poland has become the space of Jewish destiny, successes and failures, and attempts to change that destiny. All the significant historical movements in the Jewish world since the eighteenth century appeared there, including Hassidism, *Haskalah* (the Jewish enlightenment) and Zionism.

In 1939, the Jewish community of Poland, 3.5 million in number, made up 10 per cent of the population. Still, Jews were foreigners. Anti-Semitism was common, and Polish anti-Semites supported Zionist plans for emigration, but Jewish cultural and political life was flourishing. Warsaw, the capital, had a large Jewish community. Lodz, the second largest city, "the Polish Manchester," had 150 textile mills owned by Jews and about 20,000 small workshops connected with the industry, with a total Jewish population of 250,000. Most Jews were either small businesspeople or skilled laborers; the proverbial poor Jewish tailor was a living reality.

This Jewish world, with its myriad traditions, thriving culture and competing ideologies, from strict Orthodoxy to revolutionary communism, ended in the smokestacks of Auschwitz and Treblinka, and

in thousands of other locations, where Jews met with a thousand varieties of unnatural death. When the gas chambers stopped working, three million Polish Jews were dead, their ashes mixed with Poland's soil. But this was not the end. When some surviving Polish Jews tried to return home, they were not welcome. In 1946, there was still a final pogrom in Kielce, Poland, in which 42 Holocaust survivors died. After 1948, in communist Poland, there were two major anti-Semitic campaigns, in 1956 and in 1968, directed against Jewish members of the state bureaucracy. These were vicious, virulent affairs, with old Stalinists accused of being Zionists, and expelled from the party they so loyally served for most of their lives.

At the end of the twentieth century, Jews in Poland are a subject of historical and archaeological research, as the Jewish presence has been eliminated. Poland today is filled with Jewish cemeteries, and itself constitutes a huge cemetery for Jews, whose only crime was that of belonging to a doomed human tribe. This sad picture reflects the end to the centrality of Eastern Europe in Jewish life, one dramatic change among others in the history of Jews since 1800.

The Modernization of the Jews and the Origins of Zionism

The story of Zionism as an idea and as a movement begins with the revolutionary changes in the conditions of European Jews. Zionism has intended to create a new stage in Jewish history, and indeed it reflected and expressed a major upheaval. The environment that made Zionism possible included the rise of liberal capitalism in Europe and the corresponding decline of the Jewish community. European nationalism, colonialism and imperialism transformed utopian Zionism into political Zionism, capable of creating the state of Israel.

Zionism became a possibility, and an urgency, when many Jews lost their historical patience. They could no longer just wait passively for the Messiah to come and transform the whole world. Jews lost this great patience, which had maintained their identity and their communities for many generations, when non-Jews around them were giving up their own patience and passivity.

The past 200 years have seen a total revolution in Jewish existence, with the almost complete disappearance of historical Judaism and the traditional Jewish way of life. Through modernization, Jews have changed from an obscure, backward tribe, to a community involved in all the great advances of humanity: in culture, science, arts and politics. Two hundred years ago European Jews were a small, marginal group, completely outside the mainstream of social and cultural developments, a minority of outsiders. In 1800, there were 1.5 million Jews in Europe, out of a European population of 100 million, and a world Jewish population of 2.5 million. Not only were the Jews a small minority in Europe, but most Jewish communities had fewer than 300 members (see Goldscheider & Zuckerman, 1984). The semi-modernization of European Jews, which took place between 1780 and 1880, meant social and cultural dislocation on a massive scale. It took

another 100 years for another cycle of political and geographical dislocation between 1880 and 1980.

Despite the modernizing ideology of a few pioneering geniuses, when the walls of the ghetto started falling it was not because of Jewish initiative, but because of decisions by European regimes in France, Austria and Prussia. Then it was the turn of Jews to dismantle the walls from the inside. The early nineteenth century saw a group of Orthodox Jews in Germany who created a new ideal of a modernized Jew. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Jews took their place in European culture as thoroughly modern individuals.

Emancipation for the Jews, the granting of normal citizenship and political rights, came against the background of the decline of religion and feudalism and the rise of secular nationalism, democracy and socialism. The rise of the new bourgeoisie and the appearance of the ideals of equality, popular representation and pluralism, which ran counter to religious traditions, made emancipation for oppressed and excluded groups possible. The decline of religion also meant a decrease in anti-Semitic prejudice. Emancipation came to many European Jews as one consequence of the great French Revolution, which marked the end of the old order for the whole continent.

In September 1789, it was Count Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre who stated the essence of the coming emancipation: "that Jews should be denied everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals." Emancipation, indeed, was to mean the end of the Jewish community, a process which spread with Napoleon's armies all over Europe. But many Jewish leaders saw only the dangers of equality. Actually, when French Jews were offered equality after the Revolution, there was little enthusiasm among them: they were mostly concerned about surviving as an autonomous community. The Jews of Holland simply refused to accept emancipation, wishing to preserve the Jewish tradition of separateness.

Entering the modern world via the grace of emancipation meant the collapse of the Jewish consensus and society: nothing less than a complete upheaval of the Jewish world, which until then could be regarded as medieval. Tearing down the figurative walls of the ghetto and the concrete limitations on Jewish participation in society have brought about not just the weakening, but the destruction, of historical community structure. The Jewish community might have been a ghetto, but it offered a home. Now Jews lost it. This crisis of consciousness and institutions, the crisis of homelessness, is still felt today through the movements it gave birth to, including Zionism, which are all reactions to the great Jewish revolution. Emancipation brought the Jews into the world, but at the same time it created the Jewish question.

In the First World today, where most Jews live, being Jewish means being highly educated, liberal, cultured, secular and middle-class. This is terribly unlike the Jews of the past 1,800 years, a total departure from historical Jewry. But the liberation from the yokes of the ghetto and persecution was not a completely happy affair. Emancipation also meant a loss, and many emancipated Jews felt like strangers in the new-found world.

Eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge meant leaving the dubious Garden of Eden of the ghetto. It was a Garden of Eden for Jewish identity and for historical Jewish culture:

But the Ghetto, whatever may have been the intentions of the people who have created it, was for the Jew of the past not a prison, but a refuge . . . In the Ghetto, the Jew had his own world; it was to him the sure refuge which had for him the spiritual and moral value of a parental home . . . What mattered it that outside the Ghetto was despised what within it was praised? The opinion of the outside world had no influence, because it was the opinion of ignorant enemies (Nordau, 1941, p. 68).

Liberation from the yoke of tradition meant the collapse of the Jewish community and its institutions, the disintegration of a total system which provided every Jew with a prescribed way of life:

Instead of being faced, as before, with Christianity as such, Judaism was now confronted with the secular state, which had absorbed Christianity into its framework as a complementary factor and was similarly prepared to absorb Judaism, provided it adapted its teachings and precepts to the interests of the state (Katz, 1962, p. 187).

The coming of a new world led to the decline of community and tradition, and the breakdown of the traditional Jewish environment. Today, Jews everywhere are at the forefront of economic and cultural achievements, but the meaning of being Jewish has completely changed. Jewishness has been separated from Judaism, and most Jews today are such only in a sociological sense. They are "assimilated" and far removed from historical Jewish traditions. In most cases, they have no idea what those traditions are. There is a minority of less than 5 per cent of world Jewry that still preserves historical Judaism. If you want to understand what it meant to be Jewish during most of history, look at and listen to them.

The rise of liberal capitalism made possible two related Jewish success stories: political Zionism and the North American Jewish community. The second stage of the Jewish revolution, between 1880

and 1980, when the pace of change had quickened and the dislocations grew more drastic, led to the creation of the state of Israel on the one hand, and to the development of the Jewish community in North America, the most important and most prosperous since ancient times, on the other. By the end of World War II the center of gravity of the Jewish world was firmly in the New World. The main effect of the second stage has been that of increasing assimilation, leading to the gradual decline of world Jewry.

Another, less noticed revolution in Jewish life in the modern period has been a demographic one. Jews in Eastern Europe numbered less than half a million in 1650, and at the end of the seventeenth century, there were only 350,000. After the massacres of 1648-9, Jews in Eastern Europe enjoyed relative calm; during the nineteenth century, their natural increase was staggering, going from one and a half million in 1800, to seven million by the end of the nineteenth century (Goldscheider & Zuckerman, 1984). These demographic changes were accompanied by economic ones, differently affecting two distinct European worlds.

Western Europe was undergoing the Industrial Revolution, and new horizons were opening up for Jews. The new European middle class was forming. Jews became members of it, as well as major capitalists. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, opportunities were becoming more limited, and the world around the Jews was closing up, both politically and economically. There was no emancipation in the Czarist empire until 1917. The economic crisis in backward Eastern Europe led to the pauperization and proletarianization of the Jewish masses in the nineteenth century. This led to a mass migration, which began in the 1880s. There was a wave of migration westward in Europe to Germany, France and Britain, where Jewish communities doubled in size between 1882 and 1914, and there was the great wave of migration to the New World. In the U.S., the Jewish population grew from a quarter of a million in 1882 to three and a half million in 1914.

THE JEWISH ENLIGHTENMENT

One of the most important sources of the energy and ideas that formed Zionism was the Jewish enlightenment movement, which started at the end of the eighteenth century. The Jewish enlightenment was pioneered by Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), who was the first to formulate the idea of combining Jewish identity with modern values and to claim that such a combination was both possible and desirable. Mendelssohn was the first modern Jew who was not just an observer of

European culture, but an active member of a new European intelligentsia, the intended audience for much of his writings (Graupe, 1979). But it was in Eastern Europe that the *Haskalah* (the Hebrew name for the movement) came to full fruition. The most significant effect of the *Haskalah* was the appearance of a secularized Jewish intelligentsia in Eastern Europe, which started a far-reaching cultural revival.

Jewish cultural modernization meant becoming like other Europeans. The *Haskalah* paralleled assimilation in wanting to be a part of European culture, and in rejecting the Jewish past and present. It sought the modernization of Jewish culture and cast Jewish history within a new framework. Its goal was the integration of Jews and Jewishness into modern life.

The *maskilim* (members of the movement) developed a cultural nationalism, which was the foundation of Zionist cultural revival and contemporary Israeli culture. They wanted to throw off the yoke of ancient, repressive Judaism. If possible, they wanted to reinterpret Judaism in their own new image: to make it modern, acceptable or even attractive to Europeans. This necessitated rejecting most of it in practice, and presenting to the world a sanitized, Europeanized version of "rational," "humanistic" Judaism.

Thus, what has become Zionist, and, nowadays, Israeli culture, was invented by the *maskilim* in Eastern Europe. They created the language and the discourse of Zionism, both very much alive in Israel today. They invented the Zionist conception of Jewish history, taught every day in Israeli schools. They invented slogans, terms, questions, answers and modern Hebrew language and literature. An Israeli politician writing a newspaper article today about current political problems is unwittingly using terms and phrases used 100 years ago by a *maskil* in Russia discussing the problems facing the Jewish people.

The first achievement of the cultural revival movement was to make Hebrew an active literary language with the appearance of Hebrew secular publications, periodicals and novels. Mendelssohn founded a Hebrew weekly in Berlin in 1750, but only two issues were published. In 1784 a slightly more successful periodical sprang up in the same place. A hundred years later, there were several Hebrew periodicals in Eastern Europe, catering to the needs of the small Hebrew literary intelligentsia. During the first half of the nineteenth century, a new generation of "enlightened" Jews emerged. Some of them were still Orthodox, but "enlightened": that is, with a broad secular education. Writing modern prose and poetry in Hebrew was a major goal, and in 1851 the first modern Hebrew novel was published. It dealt with life in ancient Judea in a totally new way, glorifying heroes who were brave, romantic and physical.

In the best-known Hebrew poem written in the nineteenth century, the author, Y.L. Gordon (1830–92) asks: “Perhaps I am the last poet of Zion/Perhaps you are the last readers.” The future of Hebrew literature and the revival of Hebrew still seemed very much like esoteric exercises before the success of political Zionism. But it was the literary revival of the nineteenth century which developed a language that could be used for secular poetry, literary prose, journalistic reports and scientific articles alike.

A secular Jewish elite, standing in total opposition to rabbinical culture, developed. “The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living”: this saying, attributed to Karl Marx, was most appropriate in the case of Jewish life, which seemed to be all past tradition, with no present or future. The secular members of the *Haskalah* movement sought to change that. They attacked the rabbinical establishment fiercely, sometimes satirically, exposing every blemish. The most secular wing of the *Haskalah* movement expressed a thorough condemnation of religious traditions as superstition and ignorance. The question of national renewal was presented as a struggle of religion, that is, decline and decay, against the forces of life and progress.

The movement started providing the ideological apparatus for the dismantling of historical Judaism. Most *Haskalah* literature was implacable in its negative attitude towards Diaspora existence. There was nothing attractive or positive to be found in contemporary Jewish life. Jews were described as ignorant parasites.

A more conservative version of the *Haskalah* was developed in Germany. It created the discipline of Judaic studies, which sought to interpret ancient documents and practices within a modern, secular discourse. The new ideal was that of being both Jewish and human, “Jewish at home, and human outside.” In Central Europe, a new kind of rabbi emerged, speaking German and with a broad secular training. This new scholarship tried to praise Judaism with its new exegesis, but unwittingly contributed to burying it.

ASSIMILATION: THE NEW DREAM

The emancipation of Jews as individuals and citizens offered a new solution to the social problem of Jews as a group: assimilation. If Jews were indeed accepted as individuals in the modern state, and invited to share in the duties and responsibilities of normal citizens, then a collective problem had been solved. Emancipation, and then assimilation, were the two stages of a great dream — the integration of Jews into Western society. The assimilationist movement encouraged Jews

to become integrated in their surrounding society. A new world opened up before the denizens of the ghetto as Jews were entering the mainstream of liberal society and presumably losing their marginality. This was the logic of the assimilation process. It involved a complete change in the traditional Jewish attitude towards gentiles, from contempt for the outgroup culture to respect and emulation.

The most direct form of assimilation was a formal conversion to Christianity, an admission ticket to mainstream European society and national cultures. Jews were baptized as a matter of convenience, not because of some profound religious change. Thus, Karl Marx was converted to Christianity, together with the rest of his family, but as a pure formality. The prevalence of conversions to Christianity was significant among the well-educated and wealthy, who formalized their entrance into the ranks of the bourgeoisie, but it was rare among the Jewish masses. According to some estimates, a quarter of a million Jews (about 5 per cent of the total number of Jews in the world by mid-century) were converted during the nineteenth century. (See Marmorstein, 1969.)

In a milder form of identity cosmetics, Jews changed their names to less Jewish-sounding ones as a way of merging quietly into the world around them. The assimilation process still did not eliminate "sociological Jews": the vast majority of individuals who wanted to preserve their group identity, but were not sure what content to give it.

THE SECULARIZATION OF THE JEWS

The secularization of culture has been only relative because of the historical burden of religious traditions in human societies. The idea of modern, secular culture is relatively recent. We can find communities, even today, where it is almost absent. Jewish secularization has been vigorous and thorough ever since it started in the eighteenth century. It meant that Jewish identity was maintained by individuals who completely stopped the practice of Jewish religion. Indeed, secularity is the most prominent characteristic of modern Jews, who are among the most secularized groups anywhere.

The thoroughness of Jewish secularization, the key to many features of modern Jewish life, can be understood only in relation to the nature of historical Judaism. Rabbinical Judaism, as developed and practiced for 2,000 years of Jewish history, is a religion of practice and ritual, not of confessed or professed faith. There is little theology in it, and no required credo or dogma. There are only the required practices, making daily life into a continuous ritual. It was these which created the Jewish community (for most of them cannot be an indi-

vidual matter) and Jewish identity. The absence of dogma and a confession of faith, and the exclusive emphasis on prescribed and proscribed behaviors, made total and rapid secularization possible.

It did not take long for an individual to start breaking one of the many prohibitions, discover that the sky did not fall, nor did lightning strike, and move on to break more prohibitions. In the case of Judaism, secularization meant a change in everyday behavior, not some abstract theological decision. No longer covering your head became the symbol of leaving Orthodox practice behind; after you stopped practicing the rituals, there was nothing religious left, no abstract faith. Jewish identity was still there, because the world defined you as Jewish, but Judaism had gone from your life. Secularized Jews were a European reality by the early nineteenth century, and a significant majority in Western Europe by its end. By the same time the process of secularization was making significant inroads into Jewish communities in Eastern Europe.

Albert Einstein can serve as a good example of the new secular Jew. When Einstein was born on March 13, 1879, in Ulm, Germany, he was listed on his birth certificate as a member of the Israelite religious group, according to German law. But his parents, Herman and Pauline, were totally secular, and there is no evidence of religious observance of any kind in their home. When giving up his German citizenship in 1896, Einstein listed himself as having no religion.

Einstein was ready to assimilate. He saw no value in Jewish tradition or Jewish identity, but it was the reality of anti-Semitism that pushed him back towards Jewishness and Zionism. He encountered anti-Semitism many times in his environment, starting at elementary school. When he was looking for an academic position as a young scientist, his Jewishness was a major obstacle; he had to be satisfied with a non-academic position in the Swiss patent office. When the relativity theory was presented to the world in 1905, it led to violent debates among scientists, and, as is very rarely the case in physics, the author became the issue as much as the theory. Relativity was considered "Jewish physics" by some, just as psychoanalysis was considered by others a "Jewish psychology." Einstein remained a totally secular man, but showed support for Zionism in various ways. As he himself said, he was forced to admit to Jewishness by non-Jews and their hostility. His story was typical of a whole generation of early Zionists.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) can serve as another example of the new secular Jew, who was already in evidence in the middle of the nineteenth century. In his case, as in Einstein's, the secularization process started with his father, Jacob, who did not go as far as his

illustrious son, but left behind the ancient traditions. (See Krull, 1986.) What was true for Freud and Einstein became the reality for countless others. The secularization of the Jews has been one of the main factors in their accommodation to the modern world. Jewish success in arts and sciences, and Jewish prominence among radical political leaders, are both tied to secularism.

JEWISH SUCCESS

The past century has seen a surprising reversal in the fortunes of most Diaspora Jews. Jews have become prominent and visible in every modern, industrialized society, from the U.S. to the Soviet Union. The story of Jewish success in the world in the past 150 years is no less amazing than that of Zionism. Nobody could have foreseen such a development in 1800.

If in previous uncounted centuries they were only despised, now they began to be envied, and this because of a growing material and social success, evident in many and various ways. Suffice it to mention the percentage of Jews among Nobel Prize winners, the highest distinction in science, which apparently reaches 20 per cent. We could easily come up with many other indications of Jewish success and prominence in many fields, from physics and medicine to music and art. The story of Jewish success in modern society seems amazing in view of earlier Jewish history.

As soon as they were given a chance, Jews in Europe moved up. Released from the ghetto, they conquered the world. Liberated from the shackles of their own tradition and of outside hostility, they used the new opportunities to find fame and fortune. By the mid-nineteenth century there were Jewish politicians and bankers who were involved in the ruling elites of Western Europe.

Throughout hundreds of years, Jews have adopted typical occupations and typical behaviors, much in evidence today. We do not expect Jews to be farmers or blacksmiths, and we do not find them in these occupations. We do not find them in heavy industry, either as workers or as managers and owners. In Eastern Europe, where most Jews lived for hundreds of years, they were a middleman minority of peddlers, tailors and small merchants. Many operated taverns, and some were leaseholders for the absentee landlords of the Polish nobility (Mahler, 1971). The historical pattern of Jewish concentration in certain fields was partly created by a forceful exclusion. The basic occupational structure and skew of Jews have not changed, despite emancipation and success. Jews are still rarely found in heavy industries, such as steel, coal or automotive products. They are very rare among farmers.

The Jewish alienation from the land is still real. They are underrepresented among the captains of industry but can be found among industrial inventors. They are more commonly entrepreneurs or developers. Contrary to anti-Semitic stereotypes, Jews have been excluded from modern Western banking, especially in North America. Only recently has banking become more open to Jews, and to other non-WASPS in the U.S. (See Bennett, 1986.)

JEWISH SUCCESS IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Where Jewish prominence has been truly outstanding is in the sciences and the arts. Any major National Academy of Sciences in the world, be it in Russia, in France, or in the U.S., has an inordinate number of Jewish members. Look at the membership lists of these academies and you will encounter the familiar Jewish names of Abrahams, Bloom, Gorenstein, Hess, Hirschman, Kaback, Levin, Osheroff, Rubin, Wasserman, not to mention Cohen and Levy. In the twentieth century, Jews have been prominent in mathematics and the physical sciences. The scientists who developed the first nuclear and thermonuclear weapons for the U.S. between 1943 and 1953 were mostly Jewish; so were their counterparts in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Jews are overrepresented in any field of creative endeavor. Any opportunity for awards or honors brings out Jewish individuals in overabundance.

All over the world, Jews are prominent among writers and journalists. In the human sciences, they are among the best interpreters of cultures, literatures and traditions. They are prominent in the modern fields of psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis, and in the "helping professions."

Since World War II, the academic world in the U.S. has become dominated by Jews, as universities have grown and expanded. Today we might speak of the Jewish professoriat, but this characteristic of the academic profession is not limited to the U.S. The same is true elsewhere, including Russia. If we define cultural life more broadly, beyond the confines of science and the academic world, modern Jews are still overrepresented and prominent. They are rarely athletic champions, but are visible among chess players. Modern Jews have been people of culture, eminent as patrons of the arts and consumers of serious, daring experiments in art and literature. Despite the total lack of a Jewish fine arts tradition, modern art boasts the names of Marc Chagall, Amadeo Modigliani, Mark Rothko, Ben Shahn and many others. Modern music lovers worship Gustav Mahler, Arnold Schoenberg, and countless Jewish violinists and pianists.

This overrepresentation of Jews in the world of science and ideas has been so fantastic as to lead to theories of some presumed genetic superiority. How else can you explain such a phenomenal overrepresentation of one small group? Moreover, the creation of the Jewish intelligentsia is an amazing event, given the historical situation of the community that gave birth to it. The intellect and the creative mind have become the terrain for the greatest victory of Jews in the modern world. Most significantly, Jewish intellect has become identical to and identified with modern cultural sensibilities. Marx, Freud and Einstein are the trinity of the modern spirit, always identified as "Jewish."

EXPLAINING JEWISH SUCCESS

Jewish success in the modern world, as measured by the level of education, income and lifestyle, can be explained on the basis of two main factors: the coming of modernity in the world around them, and Jewish readiness for it.

The coming of the Industrial Revolution was accompanied by the appearance of liberal capitalism, which proclaimed that individuals would be rewarded according to achievement and not according to any innate qualities. Liberal capitalism abolished all barriers to economic advancement. The marketplace is universalistic and color blind. All can compete on equal terms and the fittest will survive. Jews have proved themselves to be survivors in the marketplace. With the coming of capitalism and the liberal state, Jews were uniquely ready. More than any other group, they were ready for modernity, being urban (non-peasants for 2,000 years), literate and experienced middlemen. Compared to other groups, they were more secularized, and in this respect they were more modern, and more modernized than anybody else. Like other middleman minorities, they were mobile people, ready to pack up and move, following or chasing new opportunities and economic niches. Jewish modernity — uprooted, secular and alienated — was just what technological society demands.

Jewish success is thus the result of Jewish secularization and modernity, and of society's liberalism and openness. Jews are indeed most prominent where universalistic criteria are dominant, in science and the arts, where individual talent and intellect are rewarded regardless of personal background. Explaining Jewish success in the sciences and the arts requires looking at the norms of that world and at Jewish attributes. Because of the universalistic norms of science and the academic world, Jews have encountered much less resistance in entering it, as compared to the fields of business and industry. The world of

ideas is even more achievement-oriented than the world of commerce. In the world of ideas, if you make a contribution, nobody cares if you are Jewish, Chinese or Polish.

What do all these successful and prominent (or at least famous) Jews have in common? What they do seem to share is their significant distance from historical Judaism. The vast majority are totally secularized, innocent of any Jewish traditions, or "assimilated." They are Jews minus Jewishness, but their Jewish origins are always mentioned and remembered. Marx, Einstein and Freud will often be mentioned as "Jewish geniuses."

Secularized, marginal Jews have made all these much applauded contributions to modern science and culture. Jewish marginality has played a major role in making Jews what they have been in the modern world — radical (see below), intellectual and successful. "If there is a special Jewish intellectual quality, born out of Jewish rootlessness, perhaps it is that of detached, uncompromising analytical thought" (Feiwel, 1938, p. 355). Jews have been the best interpreters of cultures and civilizations, always as outsiders looking in.

The prevalence of Jews in the "helping professions," charged with guarding the public's mental health, may also be related to the stance of the outsider, the slightly deviant person who can help those who are seriously deviant. And Jews have been the most celebrated critics of modern society, starting with Karl Marx. "The disputations stance, the aggressively marginal sensibility, the disavowal of community ties, the taste for scrutinizing a social event as though it were a dream or a work of art" (Roth, 1986, p. 288). Critical Theory, the product of the Frankfurt School of the twentieth century, which is the most devastating critique of modern society, was developed by a group of alienated Jewish intellectuals: Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm and Walter Benjamin.

But the alienation of the Jewish intellectual is not just the heightened alienation of modern humanity, not just the double alienation of the Jew. It is a triple alienation. The Jewish intellectual shares first in the garden variety disaffection of the normal person in the modern world. Then he or she suffers from the normal estrangement which is the lot of the Jew among non-Jews. And then he or she experiences an alienation from Jewish culture and tradition, supposedly his or her own. That is why Jewish intellectuals have been so successful in expressing and portraying modern alienation, and in playing the role of the social critic in modern culture.

Modern intellectuals and scientists have become a new ethnic group, with intellectual achievement its only tradition and the mind its only homeland. There is now a new international aristocracy, the

intelligentsia of scientist-kings, who truly deserve their kingdom. The discoverers of the DNA structure, the knights of war against dread diseases, the pioneers of new realms of the human imagination are the true heroes of modernity. When Jews join this privileged community, as they have done in large numbers, they are choosing a form of assimilation, and giving up, delightedly in most cases, the last vestiges of traditional identity.

RADICAL JEWS: THE OTHER SUCCESS

The other pole of Jewish prominence in modern times has been the active participation of Jews as members and leaders of radical movements. Jewish success through joining the establishment in science, business and politics has been matched by the commitment to radical change, as Jews have been most often disproportionately on the side of rebellion and innovation. Jews have been prominent among social critics, innovators in literature and the arts, political reformers, crusaders and revolutionaries.

The record of Jewish participation in radical movement is astonishing. We often hear the Zionist grievance about "Jewish blood oiling the wheels of revolution" rather than devoting itself exclusively to Jewish concerns. Many Jews were indeed consumed in the fires of revolution, and they have been overrepresented in every left-wing group in the modern world, from nineteenth century Russia to the African National Congress of South Africa.

From the mid-nineteenth century to the 1990s, Jewish revolutionaries have embodied a tradition of a search for redemption based on total freedom from conventional wisdom. They were always ready to challenge and to question. Jewish radicals refused to limit their concerns to their own tribe. Theirs was a grander, purer dream. Salvation not just for Jews, but for the whole of humanity, and that would eliminate the ills of the Jewish condition once and for all.

The participation of assimilated Jews in radical movements in the nineteenth century has been noted. In Czarist Russia, Jews in the 1870s made up 15 per cent of those deported for radical political activities. Between 1884 and 1890, they were 15 per cent of those arrested for illegal political activities, while making up less than 5 per cent of the total population. (See Yarmolinsky, 1962.) According to the testimony of one Russian leader to Theodor Herzl, in 1903 Jews made up 50 per cent of the members of revolutionary parties (Frankel, 1981). By 1905 they made up one-third of the revolutionaries arrested.

Jews were prominent in the revolutionary movements in Germany following the end of World War I. Kurt Eisner was the premier of the

Bavarian Socialist Republic when he was assassinated. Gustav Landauer, education minister in the same government, also paid with his life, as did Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin in 1919. The short-lived Soviet Republic of Hungary, created in a coup on March 21, 1919, and drowned in blood on August 1, 1919, was led by a group of Bolshevik commissars who were mostly well-educated, assimilated Jews. Their leader was Bela Kun, and among them were Georg Lukács, People's Commissar for Public Education, later a renowned Marxist scholar, and Matyas Rakosi, the leader of communist Hungary after 1948.

Jewish participation in the leadership of Soviet communism has been remarkable. The names of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Radek are only a few among the thousands who played major roles. Many of the leaders and the activists of Eastern European communism between 1945 and 1956 (Stalinist communism, that is), were Jewish. This was reflected in many horrifying episodes. One of them was the infamous trial of communist leaders in Czechoslovakia in the winter of 1952. In what seemed like senseless savagery, a leading group of life-long, committed revolutionaries was eliminated. Of the 11 leaders condemned to death for imaginary treason, eight were Jews.

There can be little doubt that the leading role of Jews in Eastern European communism has affected popular perceptions of both communist regimes and the Jews. It led to a popular image of communist regimes as a "foreign imposition." This is tied to popular notions of a "Jewish conspiracy" behind the regime, perpetuating traditional anti-Semitism.

Jewish participation in various socialist and communist parties in Western Europe and the U.S. has been remarkable; unaffiliated Jewish intellectuals have taken left-wing positions in public and private. Even intellectuals who were not publicly known to take a stand, such as Einstein, had left-wing sympathies. (See Hook, 1987.) In the U.S. Communist Party, it is estimated that Jews made up almost 50 per cent of the membership between 1930 and the mid-1940s (Liebman, 1979). Victor Berger, the first representative to be elected to the U.S. Congress as a declared socialist, elected in 1910 in Milwaukee, was a Jew.

The majority of American whites who took part in the civil rights struggle of the early 1960s were Jewish. They made up two-thirds of the Freedom Riders in the South in 1961, and between one-half and two-thirds of the volunteers in the Mississippi Summer of 1964 (Liebman, 1979). Even in communist parties in the Arab countries of Egypt and Iraq, Jews were founders and leaders. Jews are still overrepresented in radical left-wing groups all over the world, from Buenos Aires to New York, from Paris to Pretoria.

It is often said that the attraction of radicalism for Jews is in its universalism. Their commitment to universal salvation was based on the yearning for a solution to the Jewish problem. Indeed, the universalism of radical socialism must attract those who are keenly aware of prejudice and discrimination. Internationalism should naturally be supported by Jews because of their abnormal situation as aliens. So they dreamed of a world without nations, the solidarity of humankind and an end to their own marginality and alienation when they end for all humanity.

A major factor in explaining Jewish prominence among revolutionaries has to be their economic situation. The world remembers a few Jewish bankers, but most Jews in the nineteenth century lived in grinding poverty, eking out a living in hard work as small shopkeepers, tailors or shoemakers. In reality, there have been many more Jewish revolutionaries than bankers. Another factor was the rejection Jews experienced in other political movements. There were sometimes socialists who were anti-Semitic, but no communists. Historically, communist movements have been the least anti-Semitic among European parties because of their secularism and internationalism. That is one reason why Jews were more likely to be involved with them, since they were excluded from most other parties. But beyond that, Jews were the best candidates for membership in universalist, secularist revolutionary groups because they were secularized, free from particular prejudice and religious dogma and filled with contempt for conventional bias. These radicals came from assimilated backgrounds. They were free, intellectual, cosmopolitan, real universalists because they had no attachments and few prejudices.

We have uncovered two separate Jewish success stories. One is success in the marketplace, in the world of commerce and exchange. The other is in the world of ideas, both academic and political. The secret of Jewish success in business and the professions may be found in the Jewish history of being a middleman minority, with an unbroken record of mobility, urban living and high literacy. The secret of Jewish success in the world of abstract intellect and applied dreams of revolution may have to do with modern Jewish secularism and alienation. The triple alienation described above is typical of both scientists and radicals. Both groups achieve originality by experiencing alienation and ignoring tradition. They liberate themselves from tradition in every respect, and secularism plays a major role in the process. Theirs is a contempt for convention and tradition which only a total secularism could achieve.

What prominent modern Jews have had in common, whether laboring for capitalism or working to destroy it, has been the psychological

prerequisites for modernity and social marginality. They were individualistic and nonconformist. The process of modernization today still means the destruction of the old traditions of the peasantry. Jews clearly did not have those. Modern Jews were devoid of the attachments to land, hearth and home, which most humans still possess, and of respect for authority and hierarchy.

Zionism in Europe: The Dream in the Making

The main Jewish reaction to modernization has been integration and assimilation, either conformist (entering the European middle class or even high bourgeoisie) or nonconformist (joining revolutionary movements). Opposite the road to the gentile world lay the other option of separatism, either through Orthodoxy, or, in the latest form to develop, secular nationalism. Jews could still turn away from the gentile world, either by keeping the tradition, or by adopting secular Zionism, the progeny of European nationalism and the Jewish predicament. As Talmon (1965) pointed out, the rise of nationalism (and of socialism) in Europe coincided with the decline of religion. This was also true in the case of the Jews. The European idea of nationalism was capable of making inroads into the Jewish community only because of the decline of tradition.

During the nineteenth century Central Europe, South Eastern Europe and Eastern Europe were ruled by three multi-ethnic empires: the Hapsburg, the Ottoman and the Czarist. With the decline of these empires, Jews became involved in the new movements of nationalism and socialism. The development of national movements in these empires followed a familiar pattern: an upgrading of the spoken national language, with literature being written in the vernacular, the search for national distinctiveness and the creation of myths and symbols. By 1914, most national groups had a national language, literature and ideology. Many Jews took an active part in national movements in Poland, Hungary, Italy and Germany, expressing complete identification with them. In Italy there were only 30,000 Jews in the middle of the nineteenth century, but their presence in the Risorgimento was remarkable.

Zionism became a viable movement in the Czarist empire and in the Hapsburg Austro-Hungarian empire — two crazy quilts fragmented

into ethnic, religious and language groups embraced in violent struggle to assert their separate identities. Czechs and Slovaks, Croats, Hungarians, Romanians, Poles and Ukrainians struggled to express their identities and cultures. National identity in these movements was based on language, an earlier national sovereignty, and real or imagined memories of medieval glories.

These movements served to reinforce Jewish self-awareness because the resurgence of nationalism reminded everybody that the Jews had no share in recently revealed national histories. Jews were again shown to be outsiders: they did not share in the celebrated medieval exploits of Hungarian knights and Polish kings, save as outsiders and aliens. At the same time, the national movements of Greeks, Italians, Romanians and Hungarians served as an inspiration for early Zionists.

ZIONISM: THE MOVEMENT AND THE ENERGY

A movement that raises the flag of a revolutionary, novel nationalism needs a class of alienated intellectuals to sustain it. There were two sources for committed Zionists in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe. In Eastern Europe, which supplied the numbers, the followers of Zionism came from the more traditional Jewish communities, namely the Yiddish-speaking masses. Many of them still had some (or much) traditional Jewish education, and were immersed in Hebrew language and culture. They were much closer to historical Judaism than Western European Zionists, whose background usually included little Jewish education or culture. The latter were post-assimilationists who had experienced the great disappointment with the dream of emancipation and integration. They were well-educated, often in technical professions, but their numbers were small. The Zionist movement represented a fusion between a majority of East Europeans and the minority of West Europeans. Thus, a bridge was created between the alienated intellectuals of Western Europe and the suffering masses of Eastern Europe. Once political Zionism was in place, the latter were its backbone and muscle. Zionist activists were a self-selected minority within the Jewish masses, well-educated, elitist and committed.

THEODOR HERZL AND HIS CONVERSION TO NATIONALISM

Theodor Herzl, whose name has become synonymous with political Zionism, was a Jewish outsider with an idea, an original plan, that grew out of the originality of the marginal man. He created a utopian

vision that turned out to be amazingly practical. Herzl was a mediocre writer and playwright, as he himself admitted (see Bein, 1983), but a brilliant journalist, endowed with the ability to observe and report delicate political maneuvers. After years of reporting on the power politics of Europe, he decided to try his own hand at it.

Herzl's road to Zionism was long and winding. He was concerned about the Jewish condition, but suggested strikingly non-nationalist solutions. He was a committed assimilationist, sometimes even more committed than most. In 1893, only two brief years before his conversion to Zionism, he prepared a detailed program for the complete assimilation of European Jews through conversion to Christianity and intermarriage. Later, in 1893, he proposed that in Germany the Jews should join the socialist parties, and in Austria, the Catholic church. He even talked about leading a conversion movement and meeting the Pope to arrange it.

Herzl personally recognized and experienced anti-Semitism, considering it at first only a nuisance and then a real danger. In 1887 he wrote that "Jews are criticized for their crooked nose, and for money, even if they don't have any" (quoted in Bein, 1983, p. 39), and by 1893 he described Jews as, "living in an enemy country." In 1891 he described a visit to Lourdes, during which he observed an old man trying to improve his eyesight through the use of blessed water:

He kept his eyes closed for a while, then blinked, and when he opened them again, his eyesight was just as bad as before. He tried this several times and stopped. Shrugged his shoulders and reached with a shaking hand to grab his cane. When he walked away, his sighs were deep and hard. He sighed like a Jew. (Quoted in Bein, 1983, p. 48.)

A few years later, Herzl was convinced that he knew how to eliminate the situation in which Jews were known for their sighs and tears.

The story of Herzl's conversion to Jewish nationalism as a result of the Dreyfus Affair has been told many times but still deserves retelling. Captain Alfred Dreyfus, of the French General Staff, was accused of treason on the basis of forged documents. He was arrested on October 4, 1894, tried for giving French military secrets to the Germans, and found guilty.

Dreyfus was actually a victim of a conspiracy by right-wing officers. After his conviction, he was stripped of his rank in a public ceremony held on January 4, 1895. Theodor Herzl was there as correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna. He watched as Dreyfus was humiliated, with the rank insignia torn off his uniform. He heard a French mob yell "Down with the Jews — *a bas les Juifs!*" Dreyfus was

Herzl on the Jewish Question and Its Solution

. . . The Jewish question exists. It would be foolish to deny it. It is a relic from the Middle Ages, which civilized people could not eradicate with the best of intentions. They have shown their generosity in giving us emancipation. The Jewish question exists wherever Jews live in significant numbers. Where it doesn't, it is dragged in by Jewish emigrants. We move where we are not persecuted; when we arrive, so does persecution. This is the truth, and it will continue to be the truth, everywhere, even in the most developed countries — see France — as long as the Jewish question is not solved through a political solution . . . I do not consider the Jewish question as a social one or a religious one . . . It is a national question, and to solve it we have to make it into a global question, to be solved in the councils of civilized nations. We are a people, one people. With integrity and sincerity we have tried everywhere to assimilate into the people around us and to keep only our ancestors' faith. They will not let us. In vain we are faithful patriots . . . In the countries of our birth . . . we are denounced as foreigners . . . (Theodor Herzl, quoted in Bein, 1983, p. 124).

sent to Devil's Island, off South America, for long years of solitary confinement.

The Dreyfus Affair led to anti-Semitic outbursts all over France, and to the division of the population into two camps. On January 13, 1898, Emile Zola published his renowned *J'accuse*, an open letter to Felix Faure, the President of the French Republic, bringing about a dramatic reversal in public opinion. The officers who framed Dreyfus were exposed. Colonel Robert Henry, who forged incriminating documents, committed suicide. In May 1899, a new trial was granted. Dreyfus was officially found guilty again, but pardoned in 1904. In 1906 he was completely exonerated and regained his army rank; by that time Herzl had been dead for two years.

Dreyfus himself was an assimilated Jew, oblivious to Zionism and to Jewish communal life. Actually, it was the Jewish community in France who eventually accepted emancipation and assimilation as its guiding lights. Zionism had no support at all in France until World War II, as French Jews believed in the new religion of the French Revolution. Organized French Jewry refused to support pro-Zionist moves by the French government during World War I and afterwards. They regarded Zionism as a rebellion against emancipation and equality. Only the shock of the Holocaust turned things around (Abitbol, 1989).

The events of 1894–5 were a turning point in Herzl's life and in the

history of Zionism. Political Zionism was born during that brief ceremony of degradation. Herzl became convinced that Jews could not stay in Europe. Addressing the Jewish people, he wrote:

You are pariahs. You always have to worry about being deprived of your rights and your property. On the streets you are subject to ridicule, if not more. When poor, you doubly suffer. If you are rich, you have to hide your wealth. You are not tolerated in respectable professions, and if you deal in money, you are sevenfold endangered and humiliated. You are blamed for socialism, like everything else. This will not change, will not improve . . . There is only one way out. To the promised land! (Quoted in Bein, 1983, p. 92.) The promised land, in which we can have a crooked nose, a black beard, or a bent leg, without being shamed . . . so that the epithet "Jew!" will become a term of honor, like German, British, French. (Quoted in Bein, 1983, pp. 102-3.)

As an outsider, Herzl could ignore the realities of Jewish communities and offer a grandiose political design. He had little knowledge of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, where the greatest potential for Zionism existed. He had no knowledge of the Zionist movement which had already existed, of the vast Zionist literature and of the Zionist organizations all over Europe. Only after publishing *The Jewish State* and forming his own organization did Herzl realize he had so many predecessors.

Herzl was a convert to a movement that already existed, not a completely original thinker. Only after developing his own ideas did he discover that there were Zionists in the world, especially in Eastern Europe. He was not aware of the revival of Hebrew, had no knowledge of the language himself and did not mention it in any of his writings.

Neither was he aware of the 18 Zionist settlements already in existence in Palestine. Herzl had only contempt for the practical work done by Zionist settlers, which he referred to as "infiltration." "My plan is to stop the infiltration and to concentrate all forces in purchasing Palestine according to international law" (quoted in Bein, 1983, p. 151). His idea was "The acquisition, according to international law, of a territory for those Jews who cannot or will not assimilate" (quoted in Bein, 1983, p. 160). Nevertheless, the less grandiose work done before and after his version of Zionism took center stage was crucial to the eventual success of the movement.

ZIONISM BEFORE HERZL

Herzl and his ideas arrived at the right moment, as the air of Europe was filled with plans for a Jewish state. They came mostly from

non-Jews. Before 1895, there was a utopian Zionism, calling for a national renewal in Palestine, but without a large-scale plan for the creation of an actual Jewish state through political means. It was a modest, romantic Zionism, which did not dare to dream about grand political designs.

What Herzl did not know about, and what many today still do not realize, was the Zionist zeitgeist of the nineteenth century. John Adams, second U.S. President, wrote in 1825: "I really wish the Jews again in Judea, an independent nation . . . once restored to an independent government, and no longer persecuted, they would soon wear away some of the asperities and peculiarities of their character . . ." (quoted in Sokolow, 1919, p. 59). Even in Czarist Russia, members of the Decembrist conspiracy, one of the first groups to harbor revolutionary ideas, proposed a Jewish state in Asia Minor or "the Orient," if Russian Jews were not ready to assimilate. (See Yarmolinsky, 1962.)

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, there were hundreds, if not thousands, of suggestions, schemes and plans for the settlement of European Jews overseas, in Brazil, Argentina, the U.S., Canada, Africa, the Arabian peninsula, Angola and Manchuria, among others. Hundreds of individuals, in books, pamphlets and speeches, promoted the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine or elsewhere. Many of these ideas originated in the great European powers fitting in with their growing imperial interests in the East. Zionism among gentiles seemed to have two sources: either religious dreams about hastening the Second Coming through the restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land, or imperialist dreams of establishing a European beachhead in the East. (See Hyamson, 1918; Sokolow, 1919.) In Britain, the idea of the restoration of the Jews to Palestine was popular among Christians who were hoping for an eventual Jewish conversion and the Second Coming.

Plans for the mass migration of Jews from Eastern Europe were heard more and more often toward the end of the century, as economic conditions in Russia worsened, and violence against Jews became more common. The year 1881 turned out to be a momentous date in modern Jewish history. Pogroms in Russia started a mass migration and a significant Zionist movement. One of the first settlers to come from Russia to Palestine in 1882 wrote: "Our ultimate goal is, with time, to gain Palestine and to return to the Jews that political independence which they lost 2000 years ago" (Dubnov, 1882, quoted in Frankel, 1981, p. 97).

The decade of the 1870s saw a movement for the settlement of Palestine among Jews in Romania, which held its first congress in 1881. This movement created two settlements in Palestine in 1882:

Rosh-Pina in the Galilee and Zichron-Yaacov, south of Haifa. *Hatikva*, the Zionist anthem, was composed in Romania in 1878. It soon became known all over the world, and is quoted in James Joyce's *Ulysses* as being known in the Dublin of 1904. Since 1948 it has been Israel's national anthem. In November 1884 there was a congress of "Lovers of Zion" from Russia, Romania, Austria and Germany in Kattowitz (now Katowice), Poland. Zionism in Eastern Europe was very much alive, and led to more settlement activities in Palestine. Between 1882 and 1904, approximately 25,000 Jews from Russia and Romania came to Palestine.

J.L. Pinsker, a Jewish physician from Odessa, published a modest pamphlet in September 1881 which contained the essence of Zionism. It presented a diagnosis of, and a cure for, the Jewish anomaly. A Jew was "The eerie figure of a dead person appearing among the living," because of the condition of Jews as a homeless, dispersed nation. This causes anti-Semitism, which is an incurable illness. The only solution is for the Jews to migrate and settle in one territory, living the natural life of a normal nation.

Fifteen years before Herzl proposed a Jewish state away from Europe, Pinsker stated:

The proper and only remedy would be the creation of a Jewish nationality, of a people living upon its own soil, the auto-emancipation of the Jews, their emancipation as a nation among nations by the acquisition of a home of their own (Pinsker 1881, quoted in Hertzberg, 1975, p. 198).

When Pinsker proposed a national auto-emancipation, he did not specify a location. But two months later, another Russian Jew presented a complete plan:

It is not our fault that chance has dispersed us among you. If we, like all humans, have the right to normal life, and you cannot tolerate us, then you have to find a place for us, so that after a few decades we could settle there and live as citizens and masters of the land, and not as foreigners. In this way you will get rid of harmful competition, and we will be saved from our endless agonies, inflicted upon us through no fault of our own. Such a place, in my opinion, could only be in Palestine! And even if oppressor Europe will seal its ears to the voice of our just claim, we cannot afford to ignore present and future realities. We should realize that in the book of our tragic history Chapter II is about to start, titled "National Extremism," and the relative ease in recent times was only like the blank page between two book chapters, whose size depends on the typesetter. None of us knows in

advance how many blood-written pages the new chapter will have, and what chapters will follow.

So we should make an effort to settle Palestine by Jewish farmers, in such a way that during the next 100 years our brethren will be able to leave Europe, which has turned on them, and settle in the nearby land of our ancestors, to which we have an historical right, that was not voided or ended by the loss of our independence, just like the rights of the Balkan nations were not lost when their sovereignty ended. In this way, Palestine has a great advantage over the United States, which is still another foreign country, in addition to the opportunity to practice not only farming, but industry and trade necessary for every nation (especially in a country where three continents meet: Asia, Africa and Europe), which will not be so easy in the United States, because we cannot compete with its wealthy citizens.

According to the above we need, in my opinion, to forget America and put all our energy into settling Palestine (Moshe Leib Lilienblum, November 2, 1881, originally published in Russian in *Razsvet*).

As we shall see, Lilienblum was correct in regarding the New World as the toughest competition for emigrating to Palestine.

So Herzl appeared at the right time and place, and was not just a solitary hero, one great man who changed history by himself. Zionism was in the air, and historical forces made it acceptable. Since the historical milieu was ready for political Zionism, Herzl can be viewed as an instrument of historical processes and social determinism. But, beyond the *zeitgeist*, Herzl made an important contribution of his own by formulating the grand political design. He became a legend, and a secular messiah, because he was the first modern Jewish statesman. Herzl was the first Jewish leader in 2,000 years to speak to kings, emperors and ministers on their own terms, proposing deals and partnerships, and offering political ideas which were practical in the context of contemporary colonialism. To the Jews, his message of pragmatic nationalism could not have come at a better time.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT WITH ASSIMILATION

Herzl experienced, and expressed, the terrible disappointment with a Europe that did not really accept the assimilated, secular Jew. He was only one among a class of Jewish intellectuals who became alienated from and disappointed with the reality of rejection and the rise of political anti-Semitism. He was a jilted lover of Europe, and, like many others, converted to Jewish nationalism despite his own sincere

wishes. Herzl was a nationalist despite himself, with Zionism his last resort, representative of many Zionists who were trying to become part of something greater than Jewishness. They had a dream of a new Europe in which modernized Jews would be full partners, as messianic cosmopolitanism would follow political emancipation. No one can fail to be touched by the genuine pain and disappointment of assimilated Jews at the persistence of anti-Semitism, which they experienced in the most direct way. They were tired of feeling like outsiders despite all their sincere efforts. They had tried desperately to assimilate. They had left the Jewish ghetto, but they were now facing invisible walls outside.

In Czarist Russia there was still no formal emancipation, but there were revolutionary stirrings, which Jews not only shared but to which they were committed. Most Zionist activists came from Eastern Europe, pushed by real oppression, real poverty and the absence of formal emancipation. Zionism grew among a class of Jewish intelligentsia in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These intellectuals created a new vocabulary and a new, revolutionary rhetoric. While they rejected internationalist socialism, they were all deeply affected by the revolutionary movements in Eastern Europe which started in the second half of the nineteenth century. For many, the revolutionaries were a model of dedication and selflessness.

On March 13, 1881, Czar Alexander II was assassinated by revolutionary terrorists. The assassination led to a wave of anti-Semitic violence. The 160 pogroms of 1881-2, coming after a period of relative liberalism (and later waves of pogroms in 1891 and in 1903-5), shattered the hope of integration, not only because they proved the persistence of popular anti-Semitism, but because they were greeted by many revolutionaries as part of the coming revolution. Young Jewish intellectuals, committed to the salvation of the Russian peasants and to their own Russification, were shocked. This is how one of them described the disappointment on January 1, 1882:

Our best people for the past thirty years have done everything in their power to advance a merging in which they saw the most reliable cure for all our ills and for the sake of which they were ready even to give up our traditions and social peculiarities . . . And this development had gone so far and so fast and so deep that it appeared to be close to success. But what can one do if those with whom one so wants to merge shun the merger . . . with crowbars and clubs in their hands . . . ? It is not with joy that many of us are now devoting themselves to the most unheard-of plans. Even the

dreamer . . . who dreams of an independent Jewish state does so, we believe, only because people and events are driving us into the kingdom of darkness . . . If events changed he would join the chorus that would be singing: I am a Russian and love my land (Lev Levanda, 1882, quoted in Frankel, 1981, p. 87).

THE RISE OF POLITICAL ANTI-SEMITISM

Jewish emancipation was followed by the final, and most brutal, spasm of European anti-Semitism, between 1880 and 1945. Coinciding with assimilation, political anti-Semitism appeared for the first time all over Western Europe as part of a general wave of ideological racism. Jews were portrayed as a threat to Western civilization and to the progress of European nations: such notions were expressed on party platforms and in election campaigns.

Two forms of historical anti-Semitism have to be differentiated. The first is popular, folkloristic and unsystematic. The second is ideological anti-Semitism, systematic and political. The first is expressed informally, through idioms, jokes and popular art. The second involves political goals, slogans and plans of action.

The term anti-Semitism was coined in Germany in 1879. In May 1882, the First International Anti-Semitic Congress was held in Dresden, Germany. The late nineteenth century saw the appearance of systematic, theoretical anti-Semitism which moved beyond traditional prejudices and claims, most of them religious, to present a secular, modern conspiracy theory.

Fascism always attacks modernity and its reflections in liberalism, socialism and Marxism. Modern anti-Semitism, paralleling the appearance of scientific racism in the nineteenth century, was a clear backlash against Enlightenment ideas of equality and universalism. Political anti-Semitism was connected to attacks on capitalism, liberalism and socialism by representatives of farmers and the lower middle class (see Pulzer, 1964). The historical background of modern anti-Semitism included the upheavals of revolutionary economic changes and modernization. The industrial revolution in Western Europe created a new middle class, in which Jews and non-Jews were in economic competition, while the lower middle class and peasants were left out in frustration, envy and resentment.

In Eastern Europe, the disintegration of feudalism led to economic decline and mass pauperization among Jews and non-Jews alike. This in turn led to desperate economic competition. Traditional Jewish occupations disappeared with the decline of the rural economy, and

Jews became proletarianized. Jews everywhere were better able to cope with economic changes than their neighbors, being urbanized, literate and mobile. So they became the targets of envy from those less well-equipped. The new anti-Semitism reflected the new reality of emancipated Jews, free to enter civil society and compete, thus threatening non-Jews of certain classes.

The advent of modern, secular anti-Semitism coincided with a resurgence of the blood libel, a throwback to the Middle Ages. In 1882 there was a case of blood libel in Tisza Eszlar, Hungary, which was followed by hundreds of similar cases all over Central and Eastern Europe, well into the twentieth century. In 1911 Mendel Beilis was accused of ritual murder in Kiev, and the government of Czarist Russia put its full weight behind the prosecution. He was acquitted in 1913, after the case had attracted international attention.

All our sophisticated historical explanations, aided by hindsight, about the economic and political causes of modern anti-Semitism could not help any of the millions of Jews who experienced it directly, often losing their lives in the process. Even for those who did not, the disappointment was heartbreaking.

The story of the man who was born as Simon Suedfeld to a poor Jewish family in Pest, Hungary on July 29, 1849, and died as the world famous author Max Nordau in Paris (almost as poor) on January 22, 1923, should serve as the best example of a Jewish intellectual's disappointment with liberal Europe.

Today, only a few remember the man who was one of the leading writers of the late nineteenth century. Nordau was today's social philosopher, a critic of society and modern literature, who took on many of the best-known writers and philosophers of his time, such as Tolstoy and Nietzsche. His ideas seem typical of the nineteenth century, irrelevant, and well-deserving of their oblivion. But we have to remember that he was probably the best-known Jewish intellectual of his time, and probably the only Jewish intellectual before 1900 whose fame was global. Trained as a physician, specializing in psychiatry, he put most of his energies into writing scathing critiques of nineteenth century culture, as well as novels, plays, political essays and journalistic reports. Nordau's story, the first man Herzl converted to Zionism, is more significant than Herzl's own, because Nordau experienced the literary fame that eluded Herzl and was embraced by the leading intellectuals of his time.

In his role as a journalist, Nordau was present, together with Herzl and hundreds of others, at the ceremony on January 4, 1895, when Dreyfus was publicly stripped of his officer's rank. He was shocked and moved. In July 1895 Herzl and Nordau spent three days together,

during which Herzl presented his ideas of political Zionism. According to some sources, Herzl asked Nordau to ascertain his sanity. At the end Nordau is reported to have said: "You may be mad, but if you are, I am as mad as you" (Netanyahu, 1941, p. 46). Nordau was converted.

Nordau described the disappointment with assimilation, which was undoubtedly his own experience, as that of a man who

lost the home of the ghetto, but the land of his birth is denied to him as home. He avoids his fellow-Jews because anti-Semitism has made them hateful. His countrymen repel him when he wishes to associate with them. He has no ground under his feet and has no community to which he belongs as a full member. The emancipated Jew is insecure with his fellow beings, timid with strangers, even suspicious of the secret feelings of his friends. His best powers are exhausted in the suppression, or the difficult concealment of his own real character. He becomes an inner cripple. (Quoted in Vital, 1975, p. 363.)

Material security and comfort are no consolation for being a marginal man. Looking at European history since the Middle Ages, Zionist intellectuals saw first the Reformation, which did not help the Jews, and then European liberalism accompanied by anti-Semitism. As Nordau put it: "The Western Jew meant emancipation to be real liberation, and hastened to draw the final conclusions therefrom. But the nations made him fear that he erred in being so heedlessly logical" (Nordau, 1941, p. 64). These intellectuals predicted that socialism would end up with a large dose of anti-Semitism in it. So, anti-Semitism was ineradicable and they had no choice left but Zionism.

Thus, the Zionism of these modern Jews is reactive and defensive, the result of having no real choice. Later, we shall see that most Jews who actually moved to Palestine had no real choice. They did not want to be nationalists but were forced into it. The failure of assimilation is resounding, as Jews are driven back, pushed back, into their community. It was anti-Semitism, in both its milder and stronger forms, that forced Jews into their own nationalism and formed the profound pessimism that made Zionism possible. This pessimism about the human condition has remained the hallmark of the movement.

Anti-Semitism has created the bond of common Jewish fate. What all Jews had in common was the externally imposed definition of being regarded as Jews. Even in the modern era, since the formal emancipation of the Jews, being Jewish has remained a handicap, if not a misfortune or a tragic fate. What has united Jews in the modern period, following secularization and emancipation, is anti-Semitism in

more or less brutal forms. It is the gentiles who have kept the Jewish identity alive and have revived Jewish nationalism. Jews have been forced into adopting their nationalism because Europe has rejected them.

ZIONISM AS A MINORITY

Zionism was also a “biological” or a psychological rebellion in which young people stood up to their parents and grandparents and rejected the tradition of their ancestors. The struggle of sons against fathers, and the rejection of the generation of parents, fueled the movement, but the youthful energy also went in other directions. Imagine an Eastern European Jewish family with seven children in early twentieth century Poland. One ended up in New York, another in Palestine, the third became a communist leader, a fourth became a scientist in France, the other three died in the Holocaust. Such a family would not be entirely fictional, because it represents some of the roads taken by Jews in this turbulent century. Zionism was just one among several political commitments available to young Jews who sought a change in the world and in their situation. Zionism was always a minority option, attracting a small number of Jews. When it came to active Zionism, which entails settling in the homeland, even fewer were involved, a pattern which has remained in effect for 100 years. Zionism had to face opposition from the Orthodox, from Jewish communists and socialists, from the socialist Bund, which believed in Jewish self-determination in Europe and from liberal intellectuals who supported assimilation.

There were alternatives and competing movements, but it seems that most Jews in Europe did not actively oppose Zionism; they were indifferent to it. They regarded it as too fantastic and impractical, at least for themselves. They assumed that the Diaspora was here to stay. They could not visualize such a revolutionary change in Jewish existence. This is still the Jewish majority view 100 years later.

The same class of Jewish intelligentsia that gave birth to Zionism in Eastern Europe was also filled with other ideas. There were a variety of Jewish ideologies to choose from, in addition to several options for integration. The Jewish ideologies, all those movements that wanted to preserve Jewish identity, included Orthodoxy and various shades of liberal Orthodoxy. They included cultural autonomy, based on continued Diaspora existence with full individual rights and a separate cultural identity. There were several attempts to combine socialism and Jewish nationalism, the most important of which was the Bund.

The Bund, the Jewish Workers League, formed the mainstream of

Jewish socialism in Eastern Europe in the early twentieth century. It was founded in October 1897 in Vilna (Vilnius) at a meeting of 13 representatives of Jewish workers' organizations in five major Polish and Russian cities. Contrary to Zionism, Bund leaders stated that Jewish workers shared their fate with other workers of other nationalities. Zionism was regarded as a bourgeois ideology, a reactionary regression from progress, diverting workers from their struggle for better working conditions and political rights, and from the class struggle for a socialist society. According to the Bund, political anti-Semitism was based on the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie, and would disappear with the rise of the proletariat as the dominant political force.

The Bund promoted the idea of a national-cultural autonomy for all nationalities in Czarist Russia, and defined the Yiddish-speaking people of Eastern Europe as a nation entitled to cultural autonomy. Its goal was to build a better Jewish life in Eastern Europe, where most Jews lived, namely under Czarist rule. Its leaders promoted secular Yiddish culture as an alternative to the religious tradition which they actively opposed. What they shared with Zionism was the rejection of rabbinical tradition. What they did not share was the belief that Yiddish culture was the authentic Jewish culture and worth preserving.

Bund members were among the leaders of social-democratic forces in Russia. Their hero was Hirsch Lekert, a Jewish shoemaker from Vilna, who tried to assassinate the city's governor in 1902. This was in response to the governor's decision to whip Jewish workers who demonstrated on May Day. Lekert went to the gallows proudly, to become the Bund's martyr and legendary hero. The Bundists won the enmity of the Orthodox, the Zionists and the Russian social democrats. The Orthodox saw them as heretics, the Zionists saw them as traitors to the Jewish nation and the social democrats condemned them for nationalism. After the 1917 Revolution and the Civil War, most Bund members in the USSR joined the Bolsheviks and the social democratic Bund disappeared, but the Bundist conception of Jewish nationality was adopted by the Soviet Union. The Bund continued its activities in Eastern Europe, especially Poland, until the Nazis destroyed its constituency and its faith.

In addition to the various Jewish nationalisms, Zionism was in competition with universalist alternatives which called either for integration and assimilation, or for a commitment to revolutionary ideals. There was still among many the belief that liberalism and secularization would lead to complete assimilation, and that participation in revolutionary movements was a major alternative to Zionism.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, three life choices became practical for the Jews of East and Central Europe, who started migrating en masse. One was to move to the New World, a second to move to the old-new homeland in Palestine, and the third was to stay in Europe and make their life in the most familiar environment. In the 1880s, about 120,000 Jews migrated from Czarist Russia (which included Poland) every year. (This was equal to the natural increase in the Jewish population, and so the number of Jews in Eastern Europe around 1920 was still five million.)

The choice, for Jews leaving Eastern Europe, was between migration to the New World or migration to the ancient homeland. The vast majority rejected the Zionist project, possibly without even considering it seriously, by emigrating to the U.S. or to Western Europe. The romantic idea of leaping over 2,000 years of Diaspora existence could not compete with the pragmatism of a promising new home in the West. Zionism, the most radical expression of Jewish nationalism, attracted the smallest number of adherents. Whenever there was a free choice, the vast majority of Jews has consistently preferred staying in the Diaspora to moving to the ancient homeland.

Zionism: Diagnosis and Solution

A political action plan is made up of four components: (a) a diagnosis of a given political situation; (b) an ideal vision of the corrected situation; (c) a definition of a group that will carry out the needed action; (d) a strategy that will take the group from (a) to (b).

The Zionist plan initially focused on diagnosis and then on a suggested cure. The diagnosis of the Jewish condition in the Diaspora, known as the "Jewish question," stated that the condition was abnormal and would lead to abnormal and destructive consequences. Being a mostly persecuted minority, deprived of material and psychological security, Jews could only fail to become complete, happy, human beings. The incompleteness and deprivation of the Jewish condition could only be corrected by radical therapy. The Jewish condition was abnormal, first because Jews were a minority within host populations, and then because the majority never really accepted them. The main problem of Jews, as shown time and again, was powerlessness in its most basic sense.

The declared aim of the Zionist movement was to solve the "Jewish question," which was not only the Jews', but very often the problem of non-Jews having Jews in their midst. The "Jewish question" was without solution in the Diaspora, because of the persistence of anti-Semitism. Non-Jews could not be trusted, and events in Jewish history, distant and recent, could be marshaled to prove that.

Zionism agrees with anti-Semitism that the root of the "Jewish problem" is not in the non-Jewish majority and its prejudices and intolerance, whatever their sources. According to Zionism, the effects of Diaspora-living on the Jewish people have been thorough and devastating. The abnormal state of Diaspora has created physical, psychological and social abnormalities that became typical of Jewish life. Two thousand years of death in life created a sick human group, profoundly perverted and parasitic.

Zionism created the term "Diaspora mentality" to denote the weak-kneed, passive Jew of the ghetto, the human dust that made up the Jewish people. This negative diagnosis became the motivation for change, as the Diaspora was disowned. The rejection of Diaspora culture, the disowning of one's parents and one's ancestors, had to be complete and unconditional.

Zionist intellectuals were deeply shamed by Jewish culture and history. There was little in Jewish history and tradition that they wanted to maintain or emulate. Zionism directed the spotlight towards all the deformities and deficiencies in Eastern European Jewish culture, and there was nothing in that culture which was judged worthy of preserving or cherishing. It was wholly rejected and chosen for derision. Future Jewish existence should be as far from it as possible, and any memory of the shameful reality was to be obliterated. Diaspora Jewry was referred to as a human desert, cut off from physical work and the land. The most hated and often mentioned image of the Diaspora Jew was that of the *luftmensch*, an "air-man," who was engaged in *luftgeschäften*, "air-business," a parasite who made a miserable living by selling nothing for next to nothing, never being productive or making a real contribution to society.

Diaspora Jews were cut off from nature, the land, physical labor, the arts, aesthetics and pleasure. Zionism (and Jewish assimilation) set out to change all that, to cure the diseased Jewish society. Judaism succeeded in surviving against great odds by becoming frozen in time. Zionism rebelled against this success. The rhetoric of normalization meant that Jews were indeed viewed as abnormal, and Diaspora was a disease or a neurosis. Zionism offered a program of therapy and rehabilitation for Jews, who needed such treatment because they were psychologically and morally deficient. Little in the Jewish image and in Jewish reality seemed attractive or worth preserving, because most of it was contrary to Western, secular, modern ideals. The strange appearance and customs of Jews, always different in every way, were embarrassing to their modernized, secular brethren.

THE ZIONIST VERSION OF JEWISH HISTORY

Zionism must claim continuity with the Jewish past, since it has presented itself as speaking for the Jewish people and as the culmination of their history, but it also attempts to create discontinuity, through a new space of a national homeland and a new time of secular nationalism.

To resolve the paradoxes and ambivalence, Zionism creates (or invents) a new Jewish history, based on two ideas: first, the claim that

***The Preamble to Israel's Declaration of Independence,
May 14, 1948***

The Jewish people first emerged into history in the Land of Israel [Palestine], and there were formed its cultural, religious, and political features; there it lived a life of independence and created national and universal cultural assets, and left the world the legacy of the eternal Bible. After being expelled from its homeland by force, the Jewish people remained faithful to its memory in all the countries of its dispersion, and never stopped praying and hoping to return and to renew its political independence. Out of this traditional and historical tie to the land, Jews in every generation over the ages tried to return and settle in the ancient homeland; in recent generations they came home in great masses, and pioneers, underground immigrants, and defenders made the desert into a blooming garden, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a growing community, a master of its own economy and culture, peace-seeking and self-defending, bringing progress to all residents of the Land, and wishing for political sovereignty. In 1897, the First Zionist Congress was assembled in response to the initiative of Theodor Herzl, the author of the vision of a Jewish state who proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to a national revival in its homeland.

This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, and confirmed in the League of Nations mandate, which gave international affirmation to the historical tie between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, and to the right of the people to rebuild its national home. The Holocaust visited on the Jewish people recently, in which millions of Jews were slaughtered, proved again that the solution to the problem of the Jewish people, lacking a homeland and sovereignty, is in reestablishing the Jewish state in the Land of Israel, which will open the gates of the homeland to every Jew and will give the Jewish people equal status in the family of nations. The survivors of the terrible Nazi slaughter in Europe, and Jews of other countries, never stopped trying to come to the Land of Israel, despite all the difficulties and the dangers, and never stopped claiming their right to a life of honor, freedom and honest work in their homeland. During the Second World War, the Jewish community here did its full share in the struggle of peace and liberty loving nations against the forces of Nazi evil, and in its war effort and with the blood of its soldiers, won the right to be numbered among the founders of the United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution advocating the creation of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. The General Assembly demanded that the inhabitants of the Land of Israel should take steps to realize this resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to found its state is inalienable. It is the natural right of the Jewish people to be like all other peoples, independent in its sovereign state.

Jewish identity was formed in Palestine and not in the Diaspora; second, the claim that Jews were forced into exile, or Diaspora, against their will, and then yearned to return to the homeland.

According to this version of history, there was an exile in Egypt,

followed by a settlement in the Land of Canaan, then the Babylonian exile (which was actually quite limited) followed by a "return" around 500 BCE. According to the Zionist conception, the major rift in Jewish history occurred with the creation of a permanent Diaspora, which took place only after the Romans destroyed Jewish national existence in Palestine. According to the preamble to Israel's Declaration of Independence, representing the Zionist summary of Jewish history: "The nation was expelled from its homeland by force," i.e. by the Romans. This is the history that every Israeli schoolchild learns today.

Actually, dispersion was part of Jewish history long before 70 CE (the end of the Great Rebellion against the Romans) or 135 CE (the end of the last rebellion). There was a thriving Diaspora, with centers in Mesopotamia and Egypt, starting in the sixth century BCE, and there were Jewish temples in Egypt, competing with the one in Jerusalem. What happened in 70 CE and 135 CE was that the Palestinian center of Jewish life was severely weakened, not totally destroyed. Diaspora centers had coexisted with the Jewish community in Palestine for hundreds of years before 70 CE and 135 CE, and this did not change. Then, according to the Zionist conception, Diaspora life and identity focused on the ancient homeland, as Jews remained loyal to its memory and prayed every day for the return. Here we encounter a major logical and ideological difficulty. The problem with the Zionist version of Diaspora history is that it tries to paper over obvious contradictions. While it is true that Jews prayed three times a day for the return of divine grace to Zion (as Orthodox Jews still do), this did not lead to any concrete actions. That is why Zionism had to be created. If the yearnings were so strong, what did we need Zionism for? Zionism attempts, at the same time, to claim continuity with the Diaspora yearnings for Zion, which were part of traditional ritualism and little more, and to reject Diaspora life and culture, because, indeed, Diaspora meant national passivity, and nothing really happened in terms of secular, modern nationalism. Despite the many anomalies of Jewish history, Zionism assumed a Jewish national spirit seeking to get out of the abnormal situation. This national spirit, or national ethos, was responsible for everything positive in Jewish history. It is this Jewish national genius which should be preserved, not its religious trappings. Judaism, with its calendar, laws, festivals and faith, reflects this genius, but is still deficient. To preserve the real national spirit, we need a nation-state.

THE CURE

The stated aim of the movement was to be a rebuke, a breaking away, an ending of Jewish history, a total rebellion against it. Zionism is a rebellion against Jewish fate and history. It was created to bring about a revolution, not by mending, but by ending Jewish history as the world has known it for 2,000 years, and abolishing the Jewish condition once and for all. If the Jewish condition was seen as an incurable disease, Zionism was the miraculous remedy. At a deeper level, at least some Zionists were trying to cure the incurable disease of Jewishness. The goal of Zionism was nothing less than waking up from the long nightmare of the Jewish past. Bringing back to life the living dead, the accursed dry bones, would mean the end of Jewish victimization in history. The victory of Zionism would end Jewish history as we know it, and start a new era of Jewish normalcy and happiness.

The cure for Jewish passivity would be a rebellion against history. Zionism was the revolt against passivity and messianic dreams, in favor of entering history as real actors and accepting responsibility for the collective fate. Jews were spectators and victims, while history was continuing on stage. Jewish history was always made by others; now it would be made by Jews. This became a popular slogan. Jews were going to get back on the stage of history, and become players just like everybody else.

Zionism meant moving redemption from dream into history, from religion to pragmatic politics, from prayers and wailing to resolute, public secular action. What made it different from messianic dreams was the need for human action. If the Zionist dream was in any way similar to earlier dreams of religious redemption, it was going to be a redemption by human hands. The yearnings and sufferings of untold generations, who dreamed of and prayed for the return to Zion, went into the human energy that formed the movement.

NORMALIZING THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The declared aim of the Zionist revolution has been to overcome the abnormality of Jewish existence once and for all. Because Jewish culture and the Jewish situation were considered abnormal and beyond salvaging, a program of healing and rehabilitation was proposed. The question was: how to cure the Jewish anomaly and create a Jewish normality. Zionism wanted not only to solve the problems within Diaspora existence, but to abolish that existence altogether, and with it existing Jewish culture and identity.

The normalization of the Jewish people would come about through

self-help, self-emancipation, and self-liberation. Zionism is, rightly, obsessed with Jewish victimization and passivity. The proposed cure was a revolutionary change in the Jewish condition, making the Jews a majority in their own homeland, with their own sovereignty. Jews would stop being homeless and would become masters of their own fate for the first time in 2,000 years. This would shift them for the first time into the normal human condition, to suffer or enjoy life by their lights with the rest of humanity. The Zionist dream was to end, by means of a radical transformation, the anomaly of the Jewish people as a homeless, rootless, powerless people that would become another normal nation-state. It was succinctly and movingly expressed by Szold (1915, p. 92): "Jewish colonization in Palestine to be the means of securing another happy home for . . . [the Jewish] people, in which besides normal tears also normal laughter may be his portion."

The cure for the Jewish status of economic middlemen, who never worked in the basic sectors of the economy, would be "productivization," with Jews occupying the whole spectrum of economic activities. The actual physical migration of Diaspora Jews to the old-new homeland would bring about a major transformation. The return to the land, touching the earth again, would create a psychological bond that was seen to be typical of real peasants. A normal nation will grow out of the earth like a plant, will flower and bear fruit in the form of a new human being, and a living, vibrant people.

Zionism contrasts the terrible reality of Diaspora with the vision of redemption in a rejuvenated homeland. Leaving behind the wretched life of the Diaspora, to find another life, away from hated and hateful Europe, was the essence of the Zionist dream. The cure for the disease is the creation of a revolutionary antithesis, a utopian dream, created with the help of utopian emotions and great imagination. The goal was that of destroying the Jewish present in favor of a future based on a return to the imagined past glory. Every feature of Jewish life in Europe was rejected. A new economic structure, a new language, nationalism replacing religion, Asia replacing the Jewish reality of Europe were the new goals.

Zionism's loftiest goal was the total elimination of the Diaspora, through the ingathering of the exiles in Palestine. Herzl dreamed of a Jewish exodus from Europe to Palestine en masse. Even today, there are ardent Zionists in Israel who still have such dreams, because without them their Zionism would die. An independent state with the majority of world Jews as residents, progressive, productive and democratic; a new human being, liberated from Diaspora psychology, tied to the new-old land: this was Zionism's most daring, but also most basic, hope.

THE LEAP

According to the Zionist version of history, dispersion and exile were an interruption in Jewish history, a transition into passivity. In 135 CE, Jewish history was interrupted, to be renewed 1,800 years later by Zionism. Now Zionism would bring Jews to the original place for a second chance. The dream was to get back to where Jews left off in 135 CE and remake history, take revenge on history, return to the scene of the original failure and then rewrite history correctly. Zionism plans a leap backward, which is a leap forward, over 2,000 years of history.

What Zionism has tried to accomplish is first a material revolution, in changing the material reality of the Jewish people, and then a cultural revolution, in changing radically the content of Jewish culture and identity. First, a homeland was to be built, and then a people created. The material revolution aimed at returning Jews to an earlier historic existence, living on the land, close to nature and physical labor. The cultural revolution aimed to revive the spirit and the language of ancient sovereignty. The romantic dream was that of a leap over 2,000 years of exile. A new society and a new identity would be created, in total contrast to the Jewish condition of the Diaspora.

JEWISH IDENTITY: A ZIONIST PARADOX

Zionism has obviously been committed to the survival of Jewish identity; but justifying that, from its own vantage point, is neither simple nor obvious. Why remain Jewish? Why should anybody maintain and preserve Jewish identity, individually or collectively? What is the value of preserving Jewish identity, and what are the values embodied in it that should be preserved? Ever since the coming of emancipation and assimilation, these questions were being asked by more and more Jews.

The traditional religious answer was that Jews were a chosen people given a sacred mission. This started with a divine revelation at Mount Sinai, which told Jews to create a realm of holiness and worship God on earth. The promised rewards for keeping the faith rarely materialized; but even if they were meager or non-existent, Jews had to go on being holy.

The Zionist paradox is that it rejects Judaism and its conception of Jewish history and uniqueness, while claiming the desire to preserve Jewish identity. Zionism clearly does not embrace Judaic traditions. It rejects them, while still claiming that: (a) their rejection by gentiles was unjust, and (b) it is important to preserve Jewish identity. The

ambivalence about Judaism as the basis for Jewish identity is very much in evidence. On the one hand, Zionism claims continuity with Jewish history and identity. On the other, it wants to create a complete discontinuity.

Assimilationist Jews have answered the question of Jewish identity by suggesting that the Jewish collective has a mission: but it is a mission to spread a special message revealed initially only to Jews, the message of a truly ethical lifestyle. There were indeed some secular Zionists who proposed a version of the "secular mission" idea, speaking of Israel's true destiny of being a moral example, a "light unto the nations," but this has never been the mainstay of Zionist nationalism.

For some Zionists, the mere survival of Jewish identity for 2,000 years, under such adverse conditions, becomes an argument for survival, but this cannot be seriously sustained. Endurance in itself is no proof of value. The real Zionist answer has been the national argument, and this is indeed the uniqueness of Zionism as opposed to other modern Jewish movements. We are a nation, says Zionism, so the question of preserving our identity is no more reasonable than the same question about the French or the Hungarians. Preserving identity, culture and history is natural, just like guarding one's own personal identity. The idea of the nation then leads to nationalism, and the nationalist argument (in any nation) is that we are not just preserving an identity, but a great and glorious tradition of heroism, greatness and uniqueness. Defining Jewishness as a nationality has created the possibility of, and the need for, a new Jewish nationalism, modeled after the European kind.

THE JEWISH QUESTION AND THE QUESTION OF JEWISHNESS

What and who is a Jew, and who are the Jewish people? Does Jewishness reflect the existence of a tribe, race, religion, nationality, ethnicity or kinship group? Throughout most of Jewish history, Jews lived as a caste whose boundaries were visible and impenetrable, so the definition of Jewish identity was almost palpable. Religious practices erected barriers between the Jewish community and the rest of the world. Being Jewish meant acting according to Jewish law in every aspect of life: food, clothing, sex and calendar.

The need for a new definition grew out of the obvious discontinuity with the past. In the worldwide and humanity-wide process of secularization, Jews have been the leading community, and their rejection of religious tradition has been the most radical. Jewish secularization has been unique and extensive, changing a religious caste into a mostly

secular tribe, considerably more secular than most European nations. To add to the earlier strange and tragic history of the Jewish tribe, this introduced a new crisis, a new dislocation. The process of secularization has created sociological Jews, people who are defined as Jewish, but have no visible attachment to Judaism. Historical Jewish identity, based on rabbinical Judaism, is unknown to most Jews today, totally remote from their own experience. Most Jews born after World War I have only a vague idea about rabbinical Judaism and classical Jewish culture.

The radical secularization of most Jews has created the need to redefine the content and boundaries of Jewish identity. The separation of Jewishness from Judaism created the problem of redefining Jewish distinctness, which had never been questioned before. The question now is: what is the meaning of Jewish experience? Is being Jewish a burden by accident of birth or a mission? What could be a secular approach to this question?

Jewry has remained a kinship group, its membership still measured and quantified in (false) biological terms. One was Jewish, or "half-Jewish," just as some people had some "Jewish blood" (or possibly Jewish DNA). In the U.S., some people are considered to be $1/32$ Cherokee or $1/8$ Hopi: this reflects either a self-perception or a social judgement of affinity. Expressions such as "half-Jewish" reflect both the Jewish tradition of biological identity and common views of ethnicity and race. Thus, Marcel Proust, who had a Jewish mother, is a Jew according to rabbinical definition (which considers only the mother) but "half-Jewish" in the eyes of the rest of the world. J.D. Salinger had a Jewish father, which makes him a non-Jew for the rabbis, but still a "half-Jew" in the eyes of most of his readers. Such judgements reflect the sense that there is still something different about the "half-Jew," even when s/he does not see himself or herself as Jewish at all.

A new definition became necessary, and is necessary today, because Jews have become secularized; their definition as a "religious community" does not make sense. By the end of the nineteenth century, most Jews were either secularized or in the process of becoming secular, whether as assimilationists or as nationalists of various hues. Some critics of Zionism feel that they have demolished it by proclaiming Judaism to be a religion, not a source of national identity. This is undoubtedly true, but is totally irrelevant to modern realities. Judaism is indeed a religion, but one that has little to do with the lives of more than 90 per cent of Jews.

Those critics of Zionism who claim that Jews are only a religious community based on Judaism, and that Zionism has created an

artificial definition on a secular basis, are behind the times by about 200 years. (The question of whether Zionism is faithful to the heritage of Judaism is even more irrelevant.) Today there is a minority that does fit the definition of a religious community, and for them the problem of Jewish identity does not exist; but there is a question about the majority of sociological Jews.

At the same time, Jews still often feel different, and are defined as different, so there is still a question of definition, of identity and community. What does the non-believer from Buenos Aires have in common with the non-believer from New York City? Many Jews feel they are members of a tribe unified by the common experience of being different, secular, modern and liberal. They are also unified by others' definition of them as "the others." Zionism has made its most original statement, and has created the most serious challenge to itself, by offering the world a new definition of world Jewry.

THE ZIONIST DEFINITION OF THE JEWS

The Zionist definition of the Jewish people was an original diagnosis, and the Zionist action plan was based on the new notion of Jews as a dispersed nation. Zionism claimed that Jews in Poland were not Poles and Jews in France were not French. They were all members of the Jewish nation, dispersed and destined to be repatriated and united. Zionism revolutionized the discussion of Jewish life by defining Jews as a people, not as a religious community or a religious minority within modern nation-states. It created a new critical awareness of Jewish identity by telling Jews that they were a people, not a caste; a nation, a homeless nation, but not a community of believers, because religious beliefs indeed no longer unified Jews.

Zionism began by defining Jews as a normal nation and then set up a plan making them into one. It offered a normalization of Jewish identity by offering a normal definition. There was a wish that following the abstract definition, reality would change and normalization would develop. While it was inspired by national movements in Europe, Zionism's problems were far different because of the anomalous situation of the Jewish people's having no common country or language.

For national movements in Europe, after which Zionism first modeled itself, the process of gaining independence meant getting rid of a foreign ruler. But unlike the Hungarians, who wanted to achieve self-determination which would express the living reality of a national existence and culture, Zionism lacked the two basic elements of national liberation: territory and population. It first needed to create a

new nation, according to plan, and then achieve self-determination. For Zionism, the problem was first to create a nation, then a nation-state. As put by Halpern (1961, p. 24):

Zionism had first to bring the Jewish people into that land where it hoped ultimately to exercise sovereignty. Also, many felt that it was a primary task to transform Hebrew into a "living language" so that it might be the medium for crystallizing an active national will.

An even greater anomaly in Zionism became clear later on. Its desired national territory was occupied by another national group, with its own normal existence. The natives of Palestine shared language, culture and territory. For Zionism, the problem then became first to create an immigration movement and then to take over a country from its natives. While European national movements had a country and a people to be liberated, Zionism had to create the people and conquer the country. Such tasks were totally different from those facing normal European national movements in Poland or Hungary.

The definition of nationality, or peoplehood, in Europe was based on the commonalities of history, language, culture and territory. This normal definition clashed with the reality of Jewish existence. This anomaly created an abnormal national liberation movement and became the most serious obstacle to realizing Zionist goals.

Defining Jews as a nation creates unique problems in terms of the way nations are regarded in the modern world and in international law. It creates a new extraterritorial nationality, which is plainly contrary to logic and international law, and which makes Jews outside Israel foreigners by definition. If a Jew in the U.S. really has a Jewish nationality, what about his or her U.S. nationality, which is documented by citizenship papers and legal rights? If all Jews in the world form one nationality, then every Jew in the Diaspora is a dual national, whether he or she likes it or not. Even if an individual Jew defines himself or herself as a loyal citizen of his or her nation, by Zionist definition he or she is still a foreigner. According to the Zionist perception, being Jewish supersedes any other classification. In this respect Zionism accepts the anti-Semitic view of Jews as immutable aliens.

One's country of birth, by which people have been assigned nationality since the eighteenth century, is irrelevant in Zionism because Jews are by definition foreigners, wherever they live. Charles Cohen of Paris is not really French, even if he claims to be that; Charles Cohen of New York is first and foremost a Jew. We can see this definition in action in Israel, where Jews everywhere are identified

by their Jewishness. When a woman in the U.S. was elected the Mayor of Houston in 1987, this was reported in the Israeli media because she was Jewish, sociologically speaking. Her own wishes for self-identification were irrelevant. For Israelis, she was an American citizen second, a Jew first.

JEWISH SEPARATISM

Zionism had the good and noble intentions of solving the Jews' problem with non-Jews, and the non-Jews' problem with the Jews. Herzl wrote in *The Jewish State* that Zionism was the peace treaty between Jews and the whole world. The longest war was about to end. The treatment for the Jewish condition was based on an ideal of Jewish separatism and exclusivism. Since emancipation and assimilation did not work, as proved by the persistence of anti-Semitism, the cure was the preservation of Jewish identity in a separate political framework.

Zionism was a counsel of despair. All other solutions based on Jewish integration within non-Jewish frameworks, such as international socialism or Jewish self-rule in the Diaspora, were rejected. It was the prospect of eternal anti-Semitism that justified the rejection. There was the realization that anti-Jewish prejudice would never go away, so Diaspora existence meant hopelessness. Naturally, the idea of Jewish separatism seemed quite attractive to some Europeans, especially anti-Semites. Here was a chance to get rid of the Jews of the Occident by putting them straight in the middle of the Orient.

POLITICAL ZIONISM: A SUMMARY OF ASSUMPTIONS AND GOALS

Zionism is an expression of a double disappointment, first with the traditions of Judaism, and second with modern assimilation. The traditional religious answer to the Jewish question has been one of passivity and separatism, accepting suffering without questioning and waiting for the coming of the Messiah. The assimilationist answer encouraged Jews to become fully integrated European citizens.

The Zionist plan of action starts with two basic assumptions: the continuity of the Jewish people in time — the historical continuity between ancient and modern Jews, and the continuity of the Jewish people in space — and the unity of Jews all over the world. Political Zionism is the outcome of confronting these two assumptions. Its practical plan deals with the gathering of all, or most, Jews into a defined space in order to ensure their continuity in time. Since Jews

are a nation, with a common culture and identity, they are entitled to a territory, as a matter of right, like all other nations.

If Jews all over the world form one nationality, and they will never become integrated into the nations within which they live because of the permanence of anti-Semitism, the only way to ensure Jewish existence is through territorial concentration and sovereignty. This territory would be Palestine, in which justice would be established and the blessings of liberty secured for all Jews. The Zionist political goal is a government of Jews, for Jews and by Jews in Palestine. Initially, according to Herzl, this new sovereignty was supposed to be established only for those European Jews who did not want to assimilate and stay in the Diaspora, as assimilation was still considered a legitimate option.

THE ZIONIST POLITICAL PROJECT

For many generations, the only exceptions to the universal hostility towards Jews were expressions of compassion, but political Zionism did not want pity. It offered a tangible political deal, with tangible benefits. That was the essential difference between utopian Zionism and political Zionism. The originality of the political Zionism project was in its bias towards big-power politics, rather than internal Jewish action or philanthropy. Political Zionism demanded not charity, but justice, and this meant international recognition of Jewish political rights to a territory: first, any territory, later, Palestine. The "Law of Nations" was to be the instrument of salvation.

The Basle Program

Adopted by the First Zionist Congress in September 1897. The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law. The congress contemplates the following means to the attainment of this end:

1. The promotion, on suitable lines, of the colonization of Palestine by Jewish agricultural and industrial workers.
2. The organization and binding together of the whole of Jewry by means of appropriate Institutions, local and international, in accordance with the laws of each country.
3. The strengthening and fostering of Jewish national sentiment and consciousness.
4. Preparatory steps towards obtaining Government consent, where necessary, to the attainment of the aim of Zionism.

(Quoted by Sokolow, 1919, pp. 268-9.)

Political Zionism, from 1897, created a national political reality for Jews. Zionism was to gain international legitimacy in a diplomatic triumph that lasted until the 1960s, when this legitimacy began to be challenged by non-Europeans. Palestine became the focus of the movement because of religious, cultural and historical ties, and because as an underdeveloped territory it was available through an agreement with the Ottoman Empire or with European colonial powers. Once the political solution was articulated, it could have been achieved immediately. It was enough that a relevant foreign power would adopt the Zionist program. Only that was needed. Following an agreement with the big powers or a big power, a Jewish exodus from Europe would begin.

Herzl proposed a "chartered company," modeled after the East India Company and similar groups, which had settled in countries since the sixteenth century. In the 1880s, there were in Britain chartered companies for Northern Borneo, East Africa, South West Africa and New Guinea. Such companies received the rights of ownership and settlement from the sovereign crown.

Herzl was indeed the first Jewish statesman in 2,000 years, and, starting from a position of powerlessness, he began offering deals to those in power. As early as 1896, he proposed to Imperial Germany that the Zionist plan would get the Jewish masses out of Europe, and thus weaken revolutionary parties. On the other hand, Zionism would export Jewish capital, and thus break international financial power. Both were good for Germany and the Jewish state would be a German protectorate in the East.

In 1884, a ten-year-old child named Chaim Weizmann, who would die in 1952 as the President of Israel, called for Jews to go to Zion, with reliance on themselves and an alliance with Britain (see Rose, 1986). As an adult, Weizmann, then a professor of chemistry at Manchester University, forged this alliance, which gave birth to the Balfour Declaration and the 1922 Mandate on Palestine. Seeking the aegis of imperial powers to promote the cause of Zionism and to achieve its goals was not a reflection of evil intentions, but of political realism. This realism has been a continuing feature of political Zionism since Herzl.

AROUND THE CRADLE OF THE ZIONIST STATE

For 1,000 years, European interest in Palestine was focused on religious claims and included an occupation formally sanctioned by religion during the Crusades. Interests changed from religious to secular during the eighteenth century, when West Asia (the Middle

East or the Near East to Europeans) began to be assessed in modern strategic terms. Imperial concerns in West Asia were subsumed under the heading of "The Eastern Question," which meant imperialist interest in the route to India and the Suez Canal, opened in 1869.

The Ottoman Empire, which used to be the scourge of Europeans, was in sharp and precipitous decline in the nineteenth century. Turkey was the sick old man of Europe. Britain and France were in competition over its decaying empire. The competition became serious as early as 1798 when Napoleon set out to conquer the Near East. Early in 1799, Napoleon occupied Egypt, conquered Jaffa and laid siege to Acre. The first imperialist expression of interest in the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine came from Napoleon. While in Palestine, on April 20, 1799, he issued a proclamation calling on Jews to take back what had been taken away from them. Napoleon failed to become the emperor of the East, and Britain was becoming the leading imperialist force in the East. So Zionist ideas, promoted by French officials as late as 1860, became a British interest. (In 1862 Moses Hess, an early socialist, published *Rome and Jerusalem* in which he proposed the creation of a socialist Jewish state in Palestine, supported by France.) Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, the famous British colonial warrior, toured Palestine in the 1870s as a member of a party organized by the Palestine Exploration Fund. This archaeological expedition was a cover for intelligence gathering, in preparation for an eventual conquest of the Ottoman Empire (see Warner, 1986).

Summarizing the history of recent Zionist attachments to world superpowers, Johnson (1984, p. 3) writes:

Of course today Israel is seen as a protégé of the United States, and it is true that America was chiefly instrumental (assisted, let us remember, by the Soviet Union) in enabling Israel to establish itself as an independent state in 1947-8. But until that point the gestation of the Zionist state had taken place almost wholly within a British imperial womb . . .

As early as 1840, Lord Palmerston, Britain's prime minister, informed the Ottoman sultan of an idea, current among European Jews, of returning to the Holy Land. This idea found many champions among Jews and non-Jews in England, including George Eliot, Lawrence Oliphant, the young Benjamin Disraeli and Moses Montefiore.

On March 9, 1840, *The Times* of London published the following notice:

Restoration of the Jews. A memorandum has been addressed to the Protestant monarchs of Europe on the subject of the

restoration of the Jewish people to the land of Palestine. The document in question, dictated by the peculiar conjunction of affairs in the East, and the other striking "signs of the times," reverts to the original covenant which secures that land to the descendants of Abraham, and urges upon the consideration of the powers addressed what may be the probable line of Protestant Christendom to the Jewish people in the present controversy in the East . . . (Quoted in Sokolow, 1919, p. 127.)

Western religious traditions, often the source of Jewish misery, were now used, especially in the English-speaking world, to support Zionist ideas:

Zionism would never have had a chance of success if centuries of Christian teaching and worship, liturgy and legend had not conditioned the Western nations to respond almost instinctively to the words "Zion" and "Israel," and thus to see in the Zionist ideal not a romantic chimera or an imperialistic design to wrest a country from its actual inhabitants, but the consummation of an eternal promise and hope (Talmon, 1965, p. 72).

In 1841-2 Colonel Churchill, the British consul in Syria, sent letters to Jewish leaders in London urging them to organize a mass colonization of Palestine by Jews, under the slogan "Palestine is the national sanctuary of the Jewish people." This was one of many similar ideas proposed by Jews and non-Jews about the colonization of lands outside Europe by European Jews.

The first British statesman to formulate a plan for the Jewish colonization of Palestine was the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-85), the originator and instigator of many British diplomatic moves in that direction, including the 1840 approach to the sultan. In 1876 Lord Shaftesbury wrote:

Does not policy . . . exhort England to foster the nationality of the Jews and aid them, as opportunity may offer, to return as a leavening power to their old country? England is the great trading and maritime power of the world. To England, then, naturally belongs the role of favouring the settlement of the Jews in Palestine. The nationality of the Jews exists: the spirit is there and has been there for 3,000 years, but the external form, the crowning bond of union is still wanting. A nation must have a country. The old land, the old people. This is not an artificial experiment: it is nature, it is history. (Quoted in Sokolow, 1919, p. 207.)

Herzl could not have said it better. When Herzl wrote *The Jewish State* Palestine was still part of the Ottoman Empire, and so he proposed that:

Supposing His Majesty the Sultan were to give us Palestine, we could in turn undertake to regulate the whole finances of Turkey. We should then form a portion of the rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism (Herzl, 1896/1972, p. 30).

The Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, was a seal of approval for Zionism and a recognition of rights from those whose only rights in the matter were those of an imperial power. Israel's Declaration of Independence recognizes the Balfour Declaration, actually a simple articulation of colonialism, as an acknowledgement and a proof of the right of Jews to Palestine.

This British pledge to Zionism was made while the territory in question was still a part of the Ottoman Empire. The wishes of the majority population were not an issue. It is important to note that Balfour mentioned "the civil and religious rights" of the majority, but not political rights, in accord with Zionist ideas. Giving political rights to the "existing non-Jewish communities" would have ruled out a Jewish national home.

The Declaration was regarded as serving imperial reasons: "The British were above all interested in the security of the Suez Canal and

The Balfour Declaration

Foreign Office
2 November 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet:

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

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours sincerely,
Arthur James Balfour

the territories on the road to India" (Talmon, 1965, p. 242). Such ideas, which seem so remote today, were natural in the days of empire.

The imperialist role of Zionism was recognized by Max Nordau, in a speech in 1919 in the Albert Hall, London, before Arthur James Balfour and David Lloyd George:

We know what you expect from us. We shall have to be the guards of the Suez Canal. We shall have to be the sentinels of your way to India via the Near East. We are ready to fulfil this difficult military service, but it is essential to allow us to become a power in order to enable us to do our task. (Quoted in Netanyahu, 1941, p. 57.)

And Winston Churchill wrote in 1920 of "a Jewish state under the protection of a British crown which might comprise three or four millions of Jews" (Talmon, 1965, p. 231).

The Balfour Declaration was later incorporated into the Mandate for Palestine granted to Great Britain by the Council of the League of Nations on July 24, 1922, which went into effect on September 29, 1923. The Mandate Agreement required Britain to "place the country under such political, administrative, and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish National Home . . . to facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions . . . and settlement by Jews." A "Jewish Agency" was "recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish National Home."

Jews were thus recognized for the first time, by an international body, as a nationality, and Zionism was recognized as its legitimate expression. Giving Zionism such privileges, when Jews were less than 10 per cent of the population of Palestine (and most of those were not even Zionists) clearly violated the natural rights of the natives.

One selling point in trying to present Zionism to European powers, such as Czarist Russia and Imperial Germany, was that the Jewish problem of non-Jews would be solved by exporting it to Asia, in the same way that other European problems had been exported. Colonialism created new markets and gained raw materials. The tradition of solving European problems by expansion was once again reflected in the Zionist project.

The reliance on foreign powers was an essential part of Zionist policies on the road to the founding of the Jewish state. France was the first European power to issue a pro-Zionist proclamation, on June 4, 1917, beating the British by five months. In February 1918, the

French government adopted the Balfour Declaration. (The U.S. Congress passed its first resolution on Zionism on September 21, 1922. It called for making Palestine a homeland for the Jewish people. It was the first of many Congressional resolutions expressing enthusiastic support for Zionism.) Moshe Sharett, director of the political department of the Jewish Agency, said in 1942 that he did not have to go to the Arabs to gain an agreement on Palestine, because it would not be they who would have the final word but rather the British and the Americans (see Flapan, 1985).

Following World War II, just as after World War I, the dominant feeling of the Western elite was that things and nations should be reorganized in a just, stable way and persistent problems ironed out. The Jewish problem was one of these, made urgent by the Holocaust. The shock brought about by the Nazi phenomenon helped Zionism immensely, and to this day has been used effectively to promote the Zionist political project.

The early leaders of political Zionism were very much aware of two challenges they had to address energetically: one was that of world Jewry, the masses they had to mobilize to carry out the realization of Zionist programs, and without whose support Zionism was doomed. The second, the real core of political Zionism, was that of mobilizing the support of major world powers. Gaining the support of world powers was the first priority. The challenge nobody was concerned about turned out to be the most serious in the long run. That was the existence, and the resistance, of the Arab natives of Palestine, who at the end of the nineteenth century, and at the beginning of the twentieth, were too weak and insignificant, in Zionist eyes, to warrant much concern.

Zionism in Palestine: The Triumph

On December 11, 1917, Viscount Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby entered Jerusalem, not before getting off his horse and walking beside it, and ended 401 years of Ottoman rule. Only then did the nineteenth century truly end in Palestine. British rule meant more opportunities for Jewish settlement and the dream was getting closer.

Until the end of World War I, Palestine did not exist as a separate political entity. It was part of Syria, which had been ruled by the Ottoman Empire since the sixteenth century. Orthodox Jews came to live in Palestine during this period in small numbers, but their aims were only religious. They wanted to lead a life of prayer and purity and then be buried in holy ground. The idea of Jewish sovereignty was relegated to the messianic age, if it ever came. During the nineteenth century, there was a burst of development in West Asia, as a consequence of European penetration. In 1892, a railroad was built between Jaffa and Jerusalem, and in 1897 the internal combustion engine arrived. It was first used to power water pumps in orange groves, which began to cover the coastal plains around Jaffa. Between 1850 and 1917, various European and American settlers came to Palestine. An American colony named Mount Hope was created near Jaffa in the 1850s; another, started by Mormons from Maine, was built in Jaffa in 1866; a third was begun in Jerusalem in the 1880s. German farmers built prosperous farming communities which existed until World War II. Most of these settlers were moved by messianic hopes and dreams, and most of these ventures were defeated by humankind and by nature.

Jews became increasingly involved in settlement attempts in the second half of the nineteenth century. Mikveh Israel, an agricultural school for Jews, was founded near Jaffa in 1870, and in 1878 the first agricultural colony, Petah Tikvah, was founded by Jews who came

from Jerusalem. In 1891, a new suburb of Jaffa, Neveh Shalom, was set up. It eventually became the first modern, Hebrew-speaking metropolis, Tel-Aviv, destined to swallow Jaffa in its growth. By 1897, there were about 4,000 Jewish settlers in Palestine, some of whom were already thinking and talking about a Jewish state.

Practical Zionism aimed at creating facts on the ground, necessary to obtaining any political victory. Herzl had no patience or respect for the diligent work of settling the land step by step, acre after lonely acre, but it was the other side of grand diplomacy, and eventually it determined the outcome no less than Zionist international politics.

It was the Second Aliyah, the immigration wave between 1904 and 1914, which made the creation of Israel possible. David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Levi Eshkol and Berl Katznelson are the best known of that generation, but there were many others. The total group of activists was small, but they were determined revolutionaries who imported ideas about communal living from nineteenth century Russia, together with a commitment to the secular asceticism of Russian revolutionaries. This revolutionary elite shaped the future state of Israel, and it was in place before World War I.

With the end of World War I and the coming of the Russian Revolution another wave of young Zionist activists came to Palestine. The feeling was that a new world was being born, which would include the Zionist revolution, together with other dreams, in the process of becoming reality. This new wave, the Third Aliyah, joined the earlier leadership core and the eventual leadership of the state of Israel. The first three prime ministers of Israel, Ben-Gurion, Sharett and Eshkol arrived in Palestine before 1914. The fourth, Golda Meir, arrived in 1921. These early pioneers had fantastic visions combined with total realism and great political talent. They started building a military force, patiently and consistently. Before 1910, there was already a very small, armed underground. By 1925, the Haganah was founded, an underground military organization run by the elected government of the state in the making. Israel, as we know it today, was not founded by Herzl in Basel, but by these leaders in Palestine by 1925.

The Nazi nightmare helped the Jewish community of Palestine with an infusion of people and capital. During the 1930s, the immigration of Jews from Germany and other countries in Central Europe gave a significant boost to the Jewish community in Palestine. They brought with them capital, culture and practical expertise. Between 1932 and 1935 the Jewish population doubled (to 360,000), becoming 28 per cent of the total population of Palestine. Tel-Aviv reached a population of 150,000.

Major Zionist Migration Waves to Palestine

Movement	Number of immigrants (in 000, estimate)	Period	Main Origin
First Aliyah	20-30	1882-1903	Eastern Europe
Second Aliyah	35-40	1904-14	Eastern Europe
Third Aliyah	35	1919-23	Eastern Europe
Fourth Aliyah	82	1924-31	Eastern Europe
Fifth Aliyah	265	1932-44	Europe

Note: many of the immigrants of the first four waves eventually left Palestine.

The pre-1948 Jewish community in Palestine had many of the political institutions of a sovereign state. The community was politicized, highly educated and well-organized. It enjoyed internal autonomy and every Jew over the age of 18 was a member of Knesset Israel (the Jewish Assembly). From 1920, Zionists in Palestine held their own elections. They elected governing bodies (Assembly of Deputies and a National Council) by democratic proportional representation, in which even small groups had a voice. There were many political parties, active and well-organized. These parties did everything from economics to education. They operated school systems, labor exchanges and health services, athletic clubs, youth movements, newspapers and theaters, cooperatives, housing projects, settlement organizations and labor unions.

In April 1936, the Arab Rebellion of the 1930s began, with the random killings of nine Jews in Jaffa on April 19, 1936. On April 25, 1936, the Arab High Committee was founded, headed by Haj Emin El-Husseini, the grand mufti of Jerusalem. The High Committee demanded an end to Jewish immigration and land acquisition by Jews and an Arab government, representing the majority of the population. A general strike was declared, in effect until October 1936, which crippled the Arab economy. The Rebellion was used to develop even further a separate, independent Jewish economy. The Jaffa port could not be used, and so, on May 16, 1936, a Jewish port was opened in Tel-Aviv. More Jewish settlements, covering more territory in the Galilee, were set up while the British Army was decimating Arab resistance. Between 1936 and 1939, 53 new Jewish settlements were created. They would play a crucial strategic role ten years later. More Jews were having military training, both openly and underground, as official British support for some military training was utilized to create a trained force of 2,000 armed men.

The Arab Rebellion ended in 1939 through feuds among the divided Palestinian leadership and the superior force of the British Army. Thousands of Palestinians were killed. Its main effect was to

weaken, if not eliminate, the leadership, which was sorely needed ten years later. The years 1939-45, when World War II raged and the Holocaust took place in Europe, were years of economic prosperity in Palestine, the center for British military bases in the region. Unemployment became almost unknown and industry grew, as hundreds of thousands of soldiers passed through Palestine and its neighboring countries. From an economic point of view, this was a quantum leap. It strengthened the Jewish community which came out of the war with two important advantages: improved industrial capacity, and 40,000 individuals who had taken part in the war effort and so had some military training and experience.

Even before 1948, Jews felt emancipated and free because they could develop their own institutions with more freedom than anywhere else. They were superior to the natives in technology and modernity. British foreign rulers were more of a problem on the road to complete Jewish sovereignty than the natives. The Zionist community in Palestine, despite being a minority of the population and under foreign rule, was much animated by the spirit of Jewish sovereignty. British rule was often a hindrance, but Jews raised their own flag over their homes and settlements, knowing that, for the first time in 2000 years, a Jewish state was in the making. The success story of practical Zionism in Palestine was being watched with approval by outsiders. The whole world was enthusiastic, as Jews realized impossible visions and demonstrated cultural renewal. Jewish farmers and Jewish cows struck the world's fancy.

A critical eyewitness wrote in 1938 that the Jewish community in Palestine was

a surprisingly complete, firmly rooted, and self-contained national unit. Here are Jewish villages and fields, Jewish towns with their industrial quarters and shopping centers with traffic blocks in brand-new streets, thronged by crowds of recently-arrived Jews, excited and nationalist, and no longer regarding themselves as strangers in Palestine . . . The Jewish National Home is a going concern. The foothold has been gained. The difficulties of the country, of acclimatization, economic and social transformation of Jewish immigrants, have all been overcome (Feiwel, 1938, pp. 240, 248).

ZIONISM AND THE PALESTINIANS

The encounter between the Zionist ideal and the reality of Palestine was harsh and jarring. There were terrible difficulties in getting Jewish immigrants to go to Palestine, stay there and survive. Another

serious difficulty was that of discovering that the new-old country was inhabited by others. Palestine, the chosen place for Zionist sovereignty, was not vacant property. It was populated by Arabs and the question was what to do with them or about them. In Zionist consciousness, they became a surplus population to be got rid of, a group whose rights would never be recognized or considered. Zionism now involved a new principle: not only the early idea of solving the problem of the Jews by territorial concentration and sovereignty, but the additional principle of privileges of Jewish settlers over non-Jewish residents, necessary to create and maintain a new state; realizing the Zionist dream meant a bitter collision with the reality of the natives. While the basic problem confronting Diaspora Jews was to survive as a minority, the basic problem of Zionism in Palestine was to dispossess the natives and become a majority. Once this had been achieved, the next worry confronting Israelis was to keep the natives from asserting their presence and their rights.

There are stories of how early Zionist leaders were unaware of the existence of a native population in Palestine: they thought the land was uninhabited and were shocked to discover the Arabs. It is hard to believe such stories. It does not seem plausible that this group of educated Europeans was unaware of such basic facts of life. Looking at the writings of Zionist leaders and intellectuals at the turn of the century, we discover that the presence of natives was not only known but recognized immediately as both a moral issue and a practical question.

After Ahad-Haam ("one of the people," the pen name of Asher Ginzburg, one of the leading Hebrew writers of the time) visited Palestine in 1891 to see for himself the reality of the place, he wrote:

Overseas, we are used to thinking that the Arabs are all desert savages, a people likened to donkeys, who do not see and do not understand what is going on around them. But this is a great mistake. The Arab, like all Semites, is of sharp mind and filled with wiles, and all the cities of Syria and Palestine are filled with Arab merchants, who know how to exploit the masses and cheat those who negotiate with them, just like in Europe. The Arabs, and especially the city-dwellers, see and understand our actions and our desires about the land, but they pretend not to, because so far they do not see any danger to themselves in our deeds . . . but, if there comes a time when our existence in the Land of Israel develops so that it starts to push them away by much or by little, they will not let us take their place without a fight . . . (Ahad-Haam, 1891/1954, pp. 23-4).

In 1896, Ahad-Haam was the founder of *Hashiloah*, the leading Hebrew periodical of its time, devoted to literature and political commentary. When we read the old volumes of *Hashiloah*, we must be struck by the extent of first-rate reporting about the reality of Western Asia at the time. During the first decade of the twentieth century, it published scores of articles dealing with the Arab national movement (using this exact term!), together with works of fiction depicting the life of the natives quite sympathetically.

An article by Yitzhak Epstein, published in *Hashiloah* in 1907, which was originally presented as a lecture in 1905, called for a new Zionist policy towards the Arabs after 30 years of settlement activity. His observations are moving and his suggestions prophetic and eloquent. Epstein refers to the Arabs as “. . . those who till the land, its true proprietors . . . In the land of our dreams there is a whole people, that has dwelled there for hundreds of years and never meant to leave” (p. 193). These Arab inhabitants made up more than half a million, 80 per cent of whom were peasants, tilling all the arable land. Like Ahad-Haam in 1891, Epstein claims that no good land is vacant, so Jewish settlement meant Arab dispossession. Zionist organizations have habitually bought land from large absentee landlords, and this meant the dispossession of families that have tilled the same soil for generations. By law, the Zionist buyers are right, but they are committing an injustice and an error. “While we emphasize the love we have for the land of our ancestors, we forget that the people living there now has a sensitive heart and a loving soul” (p. 195). Epstein was an eyewitness to one scene of exile:

Still ringing in my ears is the wailing of Arab women from the village of Jaony, now Rosh-Pina [a Jewish settlement in the Upper Galilee founded in 1882], on the day their families left to settle in the Golan, on the east side of the Jordan. The men were riding the donkeys, and the women followed them walking and sobbing. The valley was filled with their lamentations. From time to time they stopped and kissed the rocks and the ground (p. 195).

Epstein uses not only moral arguments, but also pragmatic ones:

Will the dispossessed keep silent and accept what has been done to them? They will eventually wake up to gain by force what has been robbed from them by gold! They will take to court the foreigners that pushed them off their land, and then they may be both prosecutors and judges . . . And this people . . . is but a small part of the great nation which holds the neighboring countries: Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia and Egypt . . . At least in Palestine there is still no Arab

movement in the national and political sense, but this people does not need a movement. It is big and strong and does not need a revival, because it never died, and never stopped living for a minute . . . Let us not provoke the sleeping lion . . . (p. 196).

Jewish settlements have brought much good to the country and some material benefits to Arab workers,

but all of this will not atone for our transgressions. We will not get credit for good deeds, but our name is chiseled into the evil, which will be remembered forever . . . We must consider every step we take, and solve the question of our relations with the Arabs before creating a new Jewish question . . . Whenever the spurious national good harms universal justice, this supposed good will become a gross national sin, which will never be expiated . . . (p. 199).

Epstein's solution to the problem, so that a new "Jewish question" may be avoided, is the creation of a bi-national, non-exclusivist program of settlement and development. Purchasing land should not involve the dispossession of the poor sharecroppers. It should mean creating a joint farming community, where the Arabs will enjoy modern technology. Schools, hospitals and libraries should be non-exclusivist and education bilingual. Epstein's political conception is that of continuing Ottoman control. But under this foreign rule, Jews and Arabs can develop Palestine together. This action will start with the peasants, the poor, suffering majority, who nevertheless will determine the future of the country. The vision of non-exclusivist, peaceful cooperation to replace the practice of dispossession found few takers. Epstein was maligned and scorned for his faintheartedness.

Typical of the majority view is a brief commentary published in the same volume of *Hashiloah* about relations between settlers and Arabs. The author expresses his concern about the growing cultural influence of the locals, reflected in works of fiction being written about Arab life and incorporating many Arabic words and names. This style of fiction expresses another cultural trend, that of imitating and romanticizing the local culture. This presents a problem, because ". . . our hope of being one day the masters in the land of our ancestors is based not on the sword or the fist, but on the cultural advantage we have over Arabs and Turks" (Ish Ivri, 1907, p. 575). Adopting Arab customs and language threatens this cultural edge over the natives. Another problem is that

the Arab place names Katara, Kastinia, Wadi-el-Hanin, Segara, Milhemia, and others, prevail over the Hebrew

names Gedera, Beer-Tuvia, Nahalat-Reuven and others. Many Hebrew colonies have no Hebrew names and Jews are not concerned, without realizing that as long as a Hebrew property will carry an Arab name it will serve as a reminder of sin for the Arabs: It will always recall that the property once belonged to them, and the Jews are strangers . . . (Ish Ivri, 1907, p. 575).

And indeed, more than 80 years later, some of the old names have survived, reminding us of the Arab past of so many Israeli towns and villages.

Yossef Haim Brenner, one of the greatest modern Hebrew writers who went to Palestine in 1909, wrote in 1913:

Why . . . should we talk about love towards our neighbors who live in this country, if we are mortal enemies? Yes, enemies . . . In the Land of Israel there are only 70,000 Jews and no less than seven hundred thousand Arabs who are, despite their inferiority and lack of culture . . . the lords of the land. There is already hatred between us, and there has to be — and there will be . . . We are surrounded by hatred and we are full of hatred, yes, full of hatred . . . the regions of the country worth settling are already settled and cultivated by the Arabs . . . They rule the cities. Their language is the language of the land . . . The Arab awakening, cultural and political, is a fact and a bad omen (Brenner, 1937, p. 259).

Brenner, who left behind a reality of a Jewish minority subject to periodical pogroms in Russia, perceived the same reality in Palestine. To him the Arabs were the evil gentiles of Czarist Russia. This turned out to be prophetic for Brenner, who was murdered by Arabs in Jaffa on May 1, 1921. A picture of Brenner in death shows a strange, calm smile on his face. It seems that he met his killers with the utmost serenity and the least surprise.

In New York in 1918, David Ben-Gurion and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, later the first prime minister and the second president of the state of Israel, respectively, published a book in Yiddish on Palestine, its past and present. They stated that the country had more than a million natives, but those did not feel at home and showed no signs of attachment. Therefore, according to Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi, Palestine was a land without people, despite the massive presence of natives. This was written after the two authors had lived in Palestine for a combined total of 20 years (Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi, 1980).

The natives residing in Palestine when Zionist settlement was started and when plans for Zionist sovereignty were first made,

constituted an obstacle to realizing the Zionist dream by their mere existence and presence. But they were only an obstacle, not a barrier. From the first, Zionist settlers felt like masters in the new-old country. They were a tiny minority in Palestine, just like in Diaspora countries; but unlike the Diaspora situation, the majority population here was not dominant. The Arabs were not the rulers: they were weak and backward. Before coming to Palestine, the Jewish settlers in Europe had been outsiders. Here they were Europeans and masters, enjoying a technological superiority over the natives who were weak, passive and poor.

The native population was not the main problem because it was powerless. The main problem was the colonial power, which held formal and practical rights over the territory. In Palestine, as in other places, the European view was of a territory waiting to be taken. How has Zionism wanted to see the natives? Preferably absent. The natives were not part of the equation; they were invisible or ignored in visions and plans. "A land without people for a people without a land" was a famous Zionist slogan. Since in reality the land was not empty, the goal became the creation of a "land without people" for the people without land, who were indeed without a land. The natives had to be eliminated because Zionism needed an vacant territory.

THE COLLISION

That the collision between natives and settlers would be both unavoidable and violent was clear even before any significant settlements were started. David Millard, an American preacher who visited Palestine in the first part of the nineteenth century, left us this prophetic warning:

Should the time ever take place when the Jews shall again possess the land of their fathers, a very important overturn must first take place with the nations and tribes that surround it. The land is at present inhabited by native Arabs, who till the soil and mainly people the towns and villages. The question arises, how are these inhabitants to be dispossessed of the land? Is a purchase contemplated? Who, or what power is to enforce such a purchase, and where would the present inhabitants emigrate to? Or is it contemplated that they are to be driven out by the sword? This, I am convinced, is the only means by which the land can be cleared of its present population. But in this case, the native inhabitants would, of course, be driven back upon Arabia, which bends like a crescent round the south and east of the Holy Land. The present inhabitants would not thus be driven out without obstinacy and bloodshed, carrying with

them at the same time, the most malignant inveteracy. From Arabia, aided by other tribes, they would sally from time to time, to ravage and lay waste the whole land (Millard, 1843, p. 348).

The implementation of Zionism led to the inevitable. Settling became a conquest when the natives started demonstrating their resistance. Despite the resistance, the Zionist estimate of native power was correct. They could be divided and conquered. The war against the natives was simply part of the transformation of nature and they were another element of nature to be conquered and fought against, like the swamps, the heat and the malaria.

In the early stages, the Palestinians seemed to be a nuisance at most, and not a challenge or a problem. When they presented a more serious challenge, it was viewed as an expression of criminal violence. Native resistance was always defined as illegitimate. Palestinian fighters were always described as gangsters, robbers and hoodlums. The Arab Rebellion of 1936–9 was known in Zionist discourse at the time as “the disturbances.” At some point, the natives came to be described as invaders and aggressors. Because of Jewish history, it was easy to see the natives as anti-Semitic gentiles, engaging in pogroms against peaceful Jews. Arabs were compared to Eastern European gentiles, Poles and Ukrainians, simply carrying on the historical tradition of victimizing Jews. In Zionist writings, they were even compared to the Spanish Inquisition.

THE PRICE OF THE DREAM

The natives were the unintended victims of the great dream, whose price they had to pay because the vision of the Zionist Jewish utopia could not be sidetracked. Zionists were blinded by their great vision of liberation to the real injustice they were creating. Redemption and victory could not wait so that some innocent bystanders would not get hurt. If sympathy for the natives had been allowed to interfere, it would have been the end of Zionism:

Compared to the growing problem of millions of Jews in Europe, compared with the forces Zionism aimed to arouse, the problem of transferring an Oriental population . . . seemed of a very minor order . . . Examining the Jewish attitude to the Arabs during the years 1933–6, it would be difficult to find other than a frantic belief that the Arab did not exist. Already the official Zionist name for Palestine — Eretz Israel, Land of Israel — emphasized this attitude (Feiwel, 1938, pp. 250, 253).

The moral issue was clear once the existence of natives became known. Then the question became a pragmatic one: how to overcome native resistance. The answer, most of the time, was, very easily. There is a famous story, told during a meeting between Prime Minister Golda Meir and a group of Israeli writers in 1970. A Jew from Poland visited Palestine in the 1920s. On his return to Europe, he summarized his impressions by saying: "The bride is beautiful, but she has got a bridegroom already." Golda Meir responded by saying: "And I thank God every night that the bridegroom was so weak, and the bride could be taken away from him." (The reference to God was purely stylistic: Meir was an atheist.) And, indeed, the bridegroom was weak and helpless in the face of the Zionist enterprise. The Palestinians could be, and were, ignored for a long time because they lacked power. The leaders of Zionism anticipated that this powerlessness of the natives would last forever.

THE PROBLEM OF MAJORITY RIGHTS

For most of the 100-year history of political Zionism, Arabs were an absolute majority in Palestine. This did not stop the Zionist leadership from proclaiming that this majority had no political rights there, and its members were actually foreigners. The issue, in political terms, was that of the relations between a Jewish minority and an Arab majority. In 1917 there were 55,000 Jews in Palestine. This was recognized by General Bols, the British Chief Administrator for Palestine, who said on April 28, 1920: "In no sense will a minority be allowed to control the majority of the population when the time arrives for any form of representative government" (Talmon, 1965, p. 232).

But Balfour, on August 11, 1919, stated British views more honestly when he wrote:

Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land . . . The idea of planting a minority of outsiders upon an indigenous majority population, without consulting it, was not calculated to horrify men who had worked with Cecil Rhodes or promoted European settlement in Kenya . . . (Talmon, 1965, pp. 248, 250).

To create Jewish sovereignty in Palestine, not only had the land to be taken away from the natives. Their own aspirations for independence had to be squashed because they were the greatest danger to the success of Zionism. The natural wish of the Arab leadership was to ask

for independence, exercising the right to self-determination universally recognized after World War I. A congress of Palestine Arabs held in Haifa in December 1920 proposed parliamentary elections and majority rule, but these wishes were ignored by the League of Nations when it conferred the Mandate on Britain in 1922. Granting Palestine independence at that point would have meant the end of Zionism, because it would have been independence for the Arab majority. One threat, against which Zionism successfully fought during the 1920s and 1930s, was that of the creation of a representative legislative assembly in Palestine. It would have represented the population, and thus would have had an Arab majority. This was a mortal danger for Zionism.

Since Palestinian Arabs were the majority population, one of the first and most important goals of political Zionism was to turn them into a minority. This could be achieved either by massive Jewish immigration or by expelling the Palestinians. The official plan was to become a majority through immigration, so that the denial of rights to the natives could be both justified and feasible. In 1917, Ben-Gurion wrote:

The realization of Zionism is now on the agenda . . . History does not wait. Non-Jewish Palestine waited 1800 years without Jews . . . During the next 20 years we have to create a Jewish majority in the Land of Israel. This is the essence of the new historical situation (Ben-Gurion, 1971, Vol. 1, p. 98).

Until 1948, Jewish immigration increased the number of Jews in Palestine from less than 10 per cent in 1922 to more than 30 per cent in January 1948. But the denial of rights to the majority preceded any political plans, because only this denial made them possible. Weizmann presented the Zionist project in 1929 as that of making Palestine "just as Jewish as America is American and England is English." That is to say, eliminating the majority culture at the time, which was that of the Arabs. The next step was explicitly denying the right of the natives either to live in Palestine or to have political rights there. Political power and decision-making should be given only to Jews. Berl Katznelson, the ideologue of socialist Zionism in Palestine, held that:

The Arabs enjoyed rights in Palestine — but not the right to prevent the Jews from creating a new reality in Palestine. The Arabs were still the majority — that much was true — but this fact could be altered through immigration, purchase of land and settlement (Shapira, 1984, p. 168).

Much ink has been spilled in debating the precise effects of Zionist settlement and the land appropriation of Palestinian peasants, but

most of the debaters miss the main point. The essence of injustice in the Zionist plan was not in the expropriation of land from individuals and communities, though this was unjust enough, but in the political plan that called for the denial of the rights of the native majority. Even if nobody lost their land, the program was unjust in principle because it denied majority political rights. The problem was not one of land ownership or finding room for settlements: it was one of human beings and their basic human and political rights. Zionism, in principle, could not allow the natives to exercise their political rights because it would mean the end of the Zionist enterprise.

PARTITION AND VICTORY

On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 181(II) by 33 votes in favor, 13 against and 10 abstentions. The Resolution called for the end of the British mandate and all British presence by August 1, 1948. Two independent states would be created, an "Arab state" and a "Jewish state," joined by an economic union. The city of Jerusalem would be put under a separate international regime. The partition Resolution divided the territory of Palestine into eight parts. Three would constitute the Jewish state, three the Arab state. Jaffa would be an Arab enclave within the Jewish state and the eighth part would be an international Jerusalem.

The General Assembly Resolution 181(II) is one of the most quoted and least read documents in the world. Defenders of Zionism and Israel often repeat the claim that this resolution was accepted by Zionism and rejected by the Arabs, and that this is the root of all evils since then. The Palestinians should have accepted it, we are told, but because they were not ready to compromise and accept partition, they lost the war and all their rights. They should not complain now: they had their chance for an equitable solution and they missed it.

The text of the Resolution takes up 27 pages, so it is small wonder that it is rarely read. Those who take the trouble to read the actual text will discover that Israel has adopted, at its convenience, one element of the Resolution but rejected all the others (see Flapan, 1987). The only element of the partition plan accepted by Israel was that calling for the establishment of a Jewish state.

The other elements, which have never been accepted by Israel, include:

1. The creation of an Arab state, whose boundaries are specified.
2. The creation of a special international zone, encompassing the Jerusalem metropolitan area. A detailed map of the international zone of the City of Jerusalem is part of the resolution.

3. The adoption of a constitution for the Jewish state.
4. The creation of an economic union and a Joint Economic Board for the two states.
5. "No expropriation of land owned by an Arab in the Jewish state shall be allowed except for public purposes."
6. "Palestinian citizens . . . as well as Jews and Arabs, who not holding Palestinian citizenship, reside in Palestine . . . shall . . . become citizens of the State in which they are resident."
7. Jaffa should be an Arab enclave in the Jewish state.

THE GREAT TRANSFORMATION: 1947-9

On May 14, 1948, Herzl's vision became a mundane reality. The dry bones were alive and Jewish sovereignty was complete, 1,813 years after Bar-Kochva's defeat by the Romans. The state of Israel started selling postage stamps, directing traffic, collecting taxes and waging war. The 1948-9 War was another chapter in the miracle of Zionism in Palestine. This was a victory over the natives and their Arab brethren, apparently the final solution of the native question, as the Palestinians moved off stage and seemed destined to remain there, invisible.

The 1948-9 War is still referred to by most Israelis as the War of Independence. This requires an explanation, because the war was not fought against the foreign rulers, the British, who had agreed to leave by the time serious fighting started. The 1948-9 War was fought mostly against the native Palestinians, as well as against the armed forces of neighboring Arab states. It was actually a war of dispossession which seemed to have solved Zionism's greatest problem, at least for a while. But the dispossessed natives do not even deserve recognition, so the war is thought of as waged against foreign rule.

Resolution 181 called for the partition of Palestine, with the Jews, 30 per cent of the population, getting 55 per cent of the land. By 1949, over 600,000 Palestinians were homeless, with Israel covering 77 per cent of the old Palestine, which no longer existed. The great Palestinian exodus of 1948 was a miracle that changed the reality Zionism wanted changed. The triumph of Zionism came, as it had to, in the form of the total disintegration of Palestinian society (see Flapan, 1987). The pre-1948 Palestinian society disintegrated under the impact of Jewish military superiority. The Palestinians were totally unprepared for and totally underestimated the Jewish capacity.

The main aim of Zionism between 1947 and 1949 was "the elimination of the Palestinian people as contenders for, and even as inhabitants of, the same territory, and the denial of their right to an independent state" (Flapan, 1987, p. 49). The greatest achievement of the war was

in actually preventing the independence of Arab Palestine, which had been all along the major political goal of Zionism in Palestine. In 1949, Israeli leaders hoped that the Palestinian refugees would fade, die and disappear into the Arab world. Later, when they became visible again, their aspirations had to be made illegitimate.

The name *Palestine*, which existed as a well-defined unit between 1922 and 1948, had to be eliminated, together with the elimination of the natives from memory and awareness. Zionism has always referred to the land as "the land of Israel," an ancient Talmudic term. After 1948, the name Palestine disappeared and the name Israel was used.

In the war against the natives of Palestine, political alliances with Arabs, and feudal Arab regimes outside Palestine, were crucial ways of denying the natives legitimacy and power. All these alliances had been designed to avoid recognition either of their existence or their rights. Since the 1950s, the official Israeli position has been one of readiness for direct talks with neighboring Arab countries. This is a reflection of the principle of not negotiating with the natives who have no political rights in Palestine.

THE SIN THAT DARE NOT SPEAK ITS NAME

There is one term which is normally beyond the pale when discussing Zionism, but this term may give us the best clue to understanding what had been going on between the Israelis and the Palestinians. That forbidden word is "colonialism." There was a time when the word "colonial" was used freely by Zionists. It appeared in the names of organizations such as the Jewish Colonization Association, the Colonial Bank and others. Later, the word became offensive and revealing and was dropped from usage. Euphemisms had to be created, because colonialism was such a clear, visible evil. "Settlement" was allowed, while any reference to colonization was not.

Colonialism is a frightening word which provokes strong reactions from defenders of Zionism. There is nothing worse than uttering this word in the presence of Zionist Israelis. When the defenders of Zionism hear the term, their reaction is most often temporary deafness or savage personal attacks on whoever dares to pronounce it. These strong reactions tell us that we have hit a raw nerve, an open wound, a festering sore that will not go away. We have delved into the dark secret of Zionism. Once we understand that Israel is indeed a settler colonialist enterprise, all sorts of questions, which until now seemed far from resolution, are answered. Unless this dreaded word becomes part of the vocabulary, unless it is openly used and admitted, little real change can be expected.

Colonialism is an ugly word and an even uglier reality. Zionism is part of that reality, because the dream of Zionism, in practice, becomes a settler colonialist enterprise. We may have to separate Zionism into two levels. There is the level of the dream, a vision of national revival, and there is the level of a plan for action in the real world in West Asia. This plan of action has included, and had to include, the disenfranchisement of the natives. Zionism, as put into practice in Palestine generations ago, and as practiced today in Israel, is colonialism because it defines the indigenous population as foreign, and gives the real foreigners privileges not accorded to natives.

Colonialism is a system under which, in a defined territory, non-natives are entitled to political rights which natives are denied. This has been the traditional way in which non-Europeans were treated by Europeans. For hundreds of years, colonies overseas were a normal part of European reality and discourse. Colonialism always had an ideology to support it. Very often it claimed a civilizing mission, improving the lot of the natives. There has always been a rhetoric of colonialism, a mythology invented by the rulers, be they the British in India and Africa or the Belgians in the Congo.

While responding to the description of Zionism as colonialism, its defenders may claim either exceptionalism (for Zionism) or generality. Some may deny that Zionism has anything to do with such an ugly word; others may point to the undeniable fact that there have been other cases of colonialism in the world. That is exactly the point: Zionism is one among many examples of colonialism in modern history. Almost all the nations of Western Europe have had colonies over the past 500 years: Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Italy. The creation of colonies at will was part of normal political practice. Since the fifteenth century, European colonialism has changed the face of the earth, created new frontiers and engaged in a long border war with the natives, a war which is still simmering in some regions. Zionism is a late and recent addition to that history.

SETTLER COLONIALISM

The specific nature of colonial structures is the result of the interaction between indigenous societies and the policies of colonial powers. Under the system of settler colonialism, the native population is removed to make room for foreign settlers and their new society. The natives are defined as a surplus population, a problem for disposal. Through settler colonialism, such nations as the U.S., Canada, Australia and New Zealand have been created. Settler colonialism has

also been practiced in Africa, from Algeria to South Africa, from Angola to Kenya. Settler colonialism, like colonialism in general, always has its ideological justification, either in the form of political, secular destiny, or in the claims for divine plans. Zionism in action has created one case, among others, of settler colonialism, a phenomenon with a known and respectable history.

The principle setting up the Israeli case of settler colonialism is that in a certain territory (as yet not well-defined, since various Zionist parties claim different borders for the territory) members of the group known in Israeli law as the "Jewish people" have superior and exclusive political rights as opposed to all others, including natives of the same territory.

COLONIALIST IDEOLOGY AND ZIONISM

All European thinking about non-Europeans during the nineteenth century was colonialist. There was no other way of thinking. Colonialism was reflected in many theories of racial superiority which were first developed during the nineteenth century. Before that time there was only racial prejudice. Now there was scientific racism, which reflected European self-confidence and justified domination over the colonized. Innate racial superiority seemed to be the most logical explanation for the easy domination of the few over the many.

Let us recall the Berlin Conference of 1885-6, which completed the division of Africa among European powers. To the civilized Europeans involved in this affair, it was obvious that they were destined and qualified to rule over the uncivilized natives of the non-European world. When any thought was given to the natives of Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century, it was along similar lines.

To the fathers of Zionism, as for other Europeans, the non-European world was seen as colonizable space. When Herzl and other Zionist leaders were considering East Africa as a location for a Jewish state, they were demonstrating the normal colonial thinking then expected of European statesmen. Zionists, who defined themselves as foreigners in Europe, became Europeans in West Asia and looked at the environment through European eyes. The basic Zionist view of the Palestinians was a Eurocentric one, and most understandable. What else could it have been?

The Arabs were seen as essentially backward, not deserving of the same rights as Europeans. As Flapan (1979) states:

Weizmann . . . was insensitive to the nature of imperialism and the struggle of colonial peoples for national liberation.

On these major issues Weizmann betrayed a nineteenth-century mentality — a faith in Europe's civilizing mission among backward peoples. He firmly believed that the Zionist cause was a fight of civilization against the desert, the struggle of progress, efficiency, health and education against stagnation (pp. 25-6).

In a 1918 letter to Balfour, Weizmann argued that: "The somewhat shifty and doubtful sympathies of the Arabs represent infinitely less than the careful and considered policy of the Jewish people which sees in a British Palestine the realization of an age-old aspiration" (quoted in Flapan, 1979, p. 28). In 1930, Weizmann wrote: "We wish to spare the Arabs as much as we can of the sufferings which every backward race has gone through on the coming of another, more advanced nation" (quoted in Flapan, 1979, p. 71).

THE UNIQUENESS OF ZIONISM

For Zionism, colonialism was a means to an end, not an end in itself. Zionism did not start as a deliberate colonialist enterprise. Unlike the French or British varieties of colonialism, its aim was not to take over a territory and then exploit the natives and the natural resources for political and economic gain. Zionism, as settler colonialism, defined the natives as a surplus population. It brought European settlers to take over the territory and live there permanently, creating a new society. As Ben-Gurion put it in 1915: "We are not interested in Palestine in order to control the native Arabs, and we are not looking for a market to sell the products of the Jewish Diaspora economy. We are seeking in Palestine a homeland" (Ben-Gurion, 1915/1933, p. 4). The exploitation of the natives was not a major part of the plan, only their dispossession.

The Zionist plan for Palestine and its natives cannot be construed as some kind of conspiracy to destroy native existence. It was not a plan that focused on the native presence, but on solving the "Jewish question." It became a case of colonialism because the natives were there and had to be dealt with. Any attempt to portray Zionism as a colonialist conspiracy against Third World natives ignores the real motives of Jews seeking a solution to their own problem. It was not that a bunch of Jews were sitting together in Europe, plotting to exploit and dispossess Arabs. Their goal was a positive one, to improve the lot of their own people, not to eliminate the natives. The natives were marginal to the whole enterprise. But the natives were there so Zionism had no choice. Creating Jewish sovereignty in

Palestine was possible only at their expense. They had to be eliminated, pushed away or dispossessed.

Zionism became an intended colonialism once the reality of the natives was "discovered" and the necessity of colonialism accepted. But settler colonialism is always unintended in the sense of not needing and not wanting the natives, since they are always a surplus population. The natives are never part of the plan for the new world to be dreamed about and created, whether in Australia, the U.S., or Palestine. However, once this unintended colonialism was on course, it was no different than an intended one in treating its unfortunate victims. Even an accidental colonialism is colonialism, in principle and in practice. While it is true that Zionism was an accidental colonialism, a forced colonialism, a last choice colonialism, colonialism it was and it faced all the problems and acquired all the characteristics of that peculiar institution.

Zionism as a colonialist movement offered the world the most original and unique defense for such an enterprise. The justification in this case was based not on a civilizing mission, or on commercial interests. Unlike settlers anywhere else in the world, Zionist settlers claimed they were not moving to a new country, but simply coming back to their homeland. They were not foreigners invading a foreign territory, but the real natives coming home after an extended stay abroad; the apparent natives were actually the real foreigners. Theirs was an act of repatriation.

Every case of settler colonialism offers real benefits and a better life to the settlers, as seen in the U.S. or South Africa, but Zionism is the only settler colonialist movement which offered the settlers national liberation. Still, they were European settlers moving into an area where a precapitalist economy and a traditional culture could easily be dominated by them. Settler colonialism is only possible when the natives suffer a clear technological inferiority. Could Zionism have been possible in a Palestine inhabited by French farmers? The uniqueness of Zionism in the history of settler colonialism is its recency. It is the latest and the last of these historical experiments and it is still being carried out today. It is going to be the last case of such an arrangement in human history. Its early success was quite remarkable. Now it is facing difficulties because recent developments have weakened the historical forces that made it possible (see Talmon, 1965).

In the 1950s, Israel was portrayed by its propagandists as just another new nation among the many new nations springing up as a result of decolonization. Today, we hear Zionist apologists telling us that Zionism is just like all Third World liberation movements, just

like the liberation movement in Zimbabwe, part of the anti-colonial struggle. The difference is that in Zimbabwe they threw out the colonial system; in Israel they threw out the natives. "We fought against the British," say Israelis proudly, but so did other settler colonialists in South Africa and the U.S., who also fought against the natives.

A Shadow Behind the Triumph

A national liberation movement, if successful, should have no real victims, only victors. The only victims may be the oppressors, who are forced to go home and end their rule over the oppressed nation. In the case of Zionism, the victims bear no guilt. They are not to blame for the oppression that necessitated this liberation movement.

The success of this national liberation movement meant victimizing others. The realization of the Zionist dream has not only brought redemption to some Jews. It has also created an injured party, the natives of historical Palestine, people who were living there but were not to be included in the redemption plan. If they had a role in the Zionist plan, it was that of becoming the dispossessed and the disinherited. They were destined to be remembered only in the shadow of Zionism, which wanted them to be forgotten forever. But this was not to be.

What has been done to the Palestinians is so fantastic and stunning that many simply cannot conceive of it as real (see Said, 1980, 1986). Invasion, defeat, humiliation and expropriation followed like thunder after lightning. The natives have been robbed, deprived of their identity and history. They had their homeland pulled out from under them. They have the right to ask why all this has befallen them. The answer is that they should not have been a part of the story and have no real relation to it. They were innocent bystanders, in the wrong place at the wrong time. Moreover, they have become invisible, hidden victims. The Palestinian majority became a minority because its members were passive, peaceful and disorganized, no match for Zionism. They have been rejected as superfluous, and defined as strangers in their own land.

Every step forward on the part of Zionism, every victory on the part of Israel, has meant a burning, shameful defeat, a disaster for the natives who become the victims. A coexistence of the victors and the victims has been created, with the former having complete power and

control, the latter powerless and pained. The victors did not want to commit real genocide, but they did want to erase the memory and the identity of their victims. The great success of Zionism has meant necessarily making the Palestinians invisible, faceless and voiceless "refugees" from nowhere, removed from the world's active consciousness. They had "no history" or "consciousness"; they were weaker and therefore their memory was destined to disappear.

THE POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY OF ZIONISM: THE IMAGE OF THE VICTIMS

Thanks to Zionist propaganda and Western bias, the Palestinians look like the invaders, savages interfering with the march of civilization. Zionist settlers were making the desert bloom, while the natives were blocking progress and civilization. They came to be viewed, and are viewed to this day by many Westerners, as the reactionaries who are preventing the progressive Zionist enterprise from blooming peacefully. The Palestinians became the fly in the ointment for the culmination of a great humanitarian dream.

To the First World, victims often look less attractive than victimizers. The next step is the feeling of outrage at the victim, not at the victimization, blaming the victims and damning the innocent (see Ryan, 1971). The victims are callously blamed for their fate. Those who have lost their homes are blamed for their plight, as if they had the power to decide and control their destiny. Those insulted and injured, whose lives have been destroyed and their homeland taken away, are held to be the main culprits. How did this image of the Palestinians as uninvited guests in "the only democracy in the Middle East" develop?

The West regards the Palestinians, and Arabs in general, as different and distant, beyond the span of Western sympathy. The distance is both physical and cultural, and the increase in distance leads to a decrease in the perception of humanity and commonality. In the Western world today, Arabs are outsiders; Jews are not. While Israelis are uniquely attractive to Western eyes, Arabs are equally unattractive.

The image of the Palestinians is tied to the general image of "the Arab." The Palestinians are viewed as identical with Arab governments or "the Arab World." The best kind of guarantee for Israel's positive image is usually provided by its Arab adversaries. Arab regimes look bad and, in most cases, deserve to look even worse. The regimes of the Arab countries surrounding Israel have been, in most cases, every Zionist propagandist's dream. They have been

oppressive, dictatorial and backward. Most Arab regimes have been at war with their own peoples most of the time. They have also been the enemies of the dispossessed Palestinians. Every Israeli diplomat, when confronted with criticisms of his government's policies, could rebut the attack by pointing to Arab governments and their uninspiring records. Making Arab leaders look bad is easy; all you need to do is quote them.

The truth is that by the late 1980s, the Palestinians were no longer completely ignored and no longer thought of as merely "Arabs." People of good will, who had never considered the Palestinian predicament, were now mixing sympathy for the Jews as historical victims with sympathy for the Palestinians as more recent victims. For the Palestinians themselves, the problem is not their image in the West but the continuing process of dispossession and victimization.

ARABS IN THE ISRAELI STATE: THE ENEMY CITIZENS

The most important aspect of Israeli political reality is the definition and division of humanity into political-legal categories. The Israeli system of definitions is based on the Zionist approach to defining the Jewish people and its unity. The idea of the citizen, central in Western liberal thinking since 1776 and 1789, is totally missing in Israel (Finkelstein, 1987). Israel is the only state in the modern world in which citizenship and nationality are two separate, independent concepts. Israel is not the state of its citizens, but the state of the Jewish nation.

Israel does not have a constitution, but it does have basic laws dealing with the government, the Knesset and the president of the state. These basic laws are adopted, and can be changed, only by a two-thirds majority. The Knesset basic law includes an amendment, adopted in 1985, which states that Israel is the "state of the Jewish people." Any political party challenging this view would not be allowed to participate in Knesset elections in the future.

"Under Israeli law, there is no Israeli nationality as such, only Israeli citizenship. Individuals are Jewish or Arab or Armenian or whatever by nationality" (Elazar, 1985, p. 60). Here we have one aspect of the Israeli anomaly: a nation-state without a nationality (or tied to the extra-territorial Jewish nationality). As the Israeli Supreme Court has stated:

There is no Israeli nation apart from the Jewish people and the Jewish people consists not only of the people residing in Israel but also of the Jews in the Diaspora . . . The connection between the State of Israel and the Jewish people needs

no explanation. The State of Israel was established as the State of the Jews . . . the State of Israel . . . is the sovereign State of the Jewish people. (Quoted in Chomsky, 1982, p. 438.)

In other countries, the people are the collectivity of all citizens: it is the meaning of "We the people" in the U.S. constitution. Israel is the only country in the world that does not belong to its citizens, even in principle. At the same time, the state belongs to individuals who have never even lived there. The "Jewish people" which owns the state of Israel encompasses individuals who are anti-Zionist or non-Zionist and are totally uninterested in being shareholders in the state of Israel. The Israeli nation-state is still in the abnormal situation of serving a dispersed nation. If it is the "state of the Jewish people," are Jews abroad its citizens? Can they take part in policy making? After all, it is their state!

If you are U.S. citizen deemed to be a member of the Jewish nation, you are considered a legitimate shareholder, able to claim your rights at any moment. The moment you get off the plane in Israel, you already have more rights than a non-Jew who had the misfortune to be born there. Under the Israeli system of government, a Mr. Cohen from Brooklyn (provided he can qualify as "Jewish") has more rights than any Palestinian native the moment he steps off the plane at Ben-Gurion airport in Tel-Aviv.

The Israeli definition of nationality and citizenship makes foreigners (in their country of residence) of Diaspora Jews everywhere in the world (except in Israel); it also makes Palestinians, who happen to live in Israel, foreigners in their homeland. Arabs in Israel are citizens of the state who have been disowned by it. These definitions precisely reflect the Israeli reality in which non-Jews are indeed foreigners. Thus, you can be an Israeli citizen, with the right to vote and carry a passport, but at the same time, the state is not your home; you are an outsider, not an equal shareholder in the communal enterprise. The government does not operate for your benefit, while benefiting others at your expense. That is exactly your fate if you are a non-Jew in Israel.

Arabs are not just inferior natives, they are foreigners in their homeland. Officially, most of them are citizens with the right to vote in national elections. But they are not nationals, because Israel is "the state of the Jewish people." The problems that Palestinians have with Israel, and the problems that Israel has with the Palestinians, stem from the basic definitions of Israeli state and citizenship, as the following story illustrates.

Samir's Dream

Samir, an East Jerusalem teacher, has been trying for years to purchase a home of his own but his savings have never matched prices. He lives with his family in a rented apartment. Last week he told me that if he had received adequate compensation for the land expropriated from his family in Neve-Yaakov [a new suburb of Jerusalem, built on land occupied in 1967 and expropriated from Palestinian residents], he could have bought a home or at least an apartment. What makes me mad, says Samir, is that every morning, as I take the bus from my rented apartment, I can see across the road the new immigrants from the USSR as they drive their new tax-free cars [new immigrants in Israel are exempted from taxes on cars, which are otherwise taxed at the rate of 250 per cent], leaving their new homes, built on the land expropriated from me.

And all the time, says Samir, there is this mischievous idea worming through my mind: to join the Communist Party on the West Bank [officially illegal and underground], leave through their connections for party training in the USSR and there — convert to Judaism. Then, as a Soviet Jew, I will join the emigration activists there. My Hebrew is fluent, I can be a Hebrew teacher. After a struggle for a year or two, I can emigrate to Israel and get an apartment in Neve-Yaakov. Only in this way I can return to my land, and, as an added bonus, receive a new car, tax-free.

(“Samir’s dream” was reported by Litani, 1985, p. 3 in Israel’s leading daily, *Haaretz*.)

The realities of Israel’s system of government are illustrated in the story of one Palestinian, who had the misfortune to be born in Jerusalem, in the wrong neighborhood and to the wrong set of parents. The logic of Zionism dictates that Samir should lose his home, so that “homeless” Jews born in other countries should have a new home in a new homeland. The paradoxes of Israeli politics are demonstrated by the obvious contradiction between secular law and citizenship granted through religious conversion. Of course, by converting to Judaism, an Arab can become a member of the “Jewish nation” and obtain full rights in the land of his birth. The backwardness of the Palestinians is proved again, because they do not even take advantage of this generous offer.

The term “Jewish” in Israel is a political-administrative one, like the term “white” in apartheid South Africa. The state of Israel classifies individuals as “Jews” by nationality and divides humanity into

“Jews” and the rest. If you are “Jewish,” certain privileges are accorded to you by law.

If you are non-Jewish in Israel, you are classified in two ways: by nationality, registered on your government identity card. Every resident of the state of Israel over the age of 16 is required to have in their possession (and if male, to carry at all times) an identity card. This card lists, among other items, an individual's nationality. For Jewish residents, nationality is “Jewish” and not “Israeli.” The term “Israeli” appears only on passports, where it denotes citizenship, not nationality. There is much confusion over the nationality item on identity cards, because of various “borderline” cases. A Jewish convert to Jehovah's Witnesses was listed as a Jehovah's Witness by nationality. A Romanian spouse of a Jewish immigrant from Romania may be listed as “Christian” by nationality. There are cases where nationality is defined as “unclear” or “undecided” (a Catholic cleric who was born in a Jewish family is so designated). Such listings represent the ignorance of interior ministry officials, rather than official policy, but they also reflect a peculiar legal situation.

You are also classified by religion. According to official government statistics, there are no Arabs in Israel. A look at any volume of *Israel Statistical Abstracts* will show that there are “non-Jews” in Israel, who are further divided by religion into Muslim, Christian, Druze and others. The census figures list the population by religion, but it is understood that all Jews are members of one nationality group, while all Muslims and most Christians are Arab nationals. Listing national groups of non-Jews in the census would be an admission that Palestinians are a national minority, something the government will not do.

In reality, the Israeli legal system perpetuates the division of the population into *millets*, autonomous religious communities. Since the days of the Roman empire, the Jews have been a millet or caste. In the Ottoman Empire, the population was divided into extraterritorial millets of Jews, Arabs, Armenians or Greeks. They lived all over the empire, with biological ties existing among members. The millet member is not attached to a territory. Wherever he or she goes, he or she can join the Jewish or Armenian community, which exists in Beirut or Cairo or Jaffa.

Under Israeli law, religious groupings, recognized by the state, enjoy a degree of autonomy and have their own courts, responsible for family law. From the Israeli government's point of view, this arrangement makes possible the privileged position of Orthodox Judaism, while recognizing Arabs only as members of Muslim, Druze or Christian millets. Israel thus becomes a *confessional* state, in which individuals are classified by religious affiliation. But, in practice, there is

only one important division, that between Jews and non-Jews.

Zionism, as we have seen, attempts to convert Jewry from a millet to a modern nation, but Israel today reflects a structure of both nation and millet. Entry into the Jewish nation is through the historical religious criteria (either being born to a Jewish mother, or a religious conversion). Actually, this definition is the most logical, because all other definitions are under challenge; this one cannot be. Nobody will claim that someone who meets these criteria is not Jewish, but other criteria may be challenged. Despite the fact that Jews in the modern world are a most secular group, and most Israelis are quite secular, the definition of the "Jewish people" has to be historical.

BEING A PALESTINIAN IN ISRAEL

Arabs in Israel are, by definition, foreigners, because Israel is defined as the state of the "Jewish people," and not of those who are its citizens. In practice, they are often defined as squatters. This reality is a direct continuation of Zionist policies before 1948. For Zionism before 1948, and for the state of Israel since then, the goal has been that of separatism and separateness. There is no rhetoric of integrating the natives. They are not expected to share political rights and cultural heritage.

They are native aliens, who become foreigners by the mere act of being born. But they are not just foreigners; they are the enemy, and this fact has been more obvious with every passing day. They are the spoilers of the dream — by their mere presence. Their mere existence is the problem. This is true whether they are Israeli citizens or residents of the West Bank under occupation. There may be other foreigners in Israel who are not the enemy. We can imagine a Frenchman living in Tel-Aviv. He is an alien, but not an adversary. Every Arab in Israel is by definition a threat, because he is a part of the Palestinian people.

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL

Palestinians in Israel live mostly under a separate but unequal system of education and social services. Discrimination against Arabs in Israel takes many forms; it is completely spelled out in legal documents, backed by the Supreme Court. Because they are defined as foreigners and because they are the enemy, Palestinians do not enjoy all the services Israel provides for its real citizens, the shareholders in the state (see Jiryis, 1976; Lustick, 1980). They are excluded from over 90 per cent of the land and have an inferior educational system.

The 800,000 Palestinians who were entitled as of 1990 to Israeli identity cards (i.e. as permanent residents), were treated differently from members of the majority in every area of government activities and services. When the Interior Ministry budgets per-capita allocations to local governments, there are two kinds of localities: Jewish and Arab. The prime minister of Israel claimed in 1986 that the per-capita allocation for Arabs was 30 per cent of that for Jews. This was in response to critics who charged that it was only 10 to 20 per cent of the majority allocation! Similarly, per-capita allocations by the Education Ministry for the separate Arab school system are about 10 per cent of the Jewish standard. One can see Arab schools without doors, windows or running water. There are "Jewish roads" and "Arab roads" in Israel. That means that roads leading to Arab villages have not been resurfaced for generations.

Israelis probably hold the world record in real-estate ownership. More than 90 per cent own their apartments or homes, thanks to massive public housing programs and generous government subsidies. This is true as far as Jews are concerned. Ninety-nine per cent of public housing programs exclude Arabs. When Arabs build their own homes, the constructions are considered illegal — and they are. To receive a permit to build in any locality, a master plan is required. The Israeli government, in its wisdom, saw to it that master plans have been approved in only four out of 150 Arab localities.

LAND EXPROPRIATION

The state of Israel took over the property of 600,000 Palestinians who left their homes during the 1948–9 War and were not allowed to return. The 150,000 Palestinians who remained under Israeli control were also subject to laws and regulations that deprived them of most of their land. The Palestinians living in Israel since 1948 have lost about one million acres of land. This land has been taken by perfectly legal means, by the authority of laws passed by the Knesset, which give the government the right of expropriation under clearly defined conditions.

The Arab peasantry of Palestine has been transformed into the working class. Landless peasants became day-laborers, returning every day to their villages which have become hostels. There is today a complete overlap between class and ethnicity — only Arabs are the real proletariat, relying solely on selling their labor.

What individual Arab villages have been through is a decline in the land area available, together with a huge rise in population. Thus, the village of Sakhnin, in the Galilee, had 3,000 inhabitants and 40,000 acres of land in 1948. In 1988 it had 14,400 inhabitants and only 1,500

acres of land. There is no way of acquiring agricultural land because Arabs are excluded from state lands; Arab farmers are also entitled by the state to smaller allocations of water.

The Israeli government enjoyed the services of some good lawyers — and when you hold the power you do not even need that. Sometimes the land was held communally. Before 1948, the British High Commissioner was nominally the trustee for this land. After 1948, the Israeli government took over the trusteeship of communal land and the land with it. Peasants who had been on lands long before land registration lost all their rights.

The right of eminent domain is recognized everywhere. For the public good, the government appropriates private property so that the public can enjoy parks, roads and schools. In Israel, this right is used to transfer land from Arabs to Israelis. Eminent domain in Israel means the benefit of Jews, which is identical with the public benefit.

Palestinians who left their normal place of residence during the 1948–9 War, but remained in Israeli-held territory, were declared by the Knesset to be present-absentees — a unique concept in the world's legal literature — losing their rights to land and citizenship. In one case, this law covered a group of villages in central Israel, which were occupied by the Jordanians in 1948 while the villages' agricultural lands were under Israeli control. The 1949 Armistice agreements gave Israel control over the villages and their inhabitants. But the inhabitants were by then present-absentees and lost all their lands.

As the Present-Absentee Law, passed by the Knesset in 1950, shows, the government of Israel does not lack good lawyers. Here is another example of their cleverness. Step one: an area is declared a closed military training zone, preventing its cultivation. Step two: a year later, the land is expropriated, because it lay fallow, and, according to Ottoman law, now belongs to the sultan. According to Israeli courts, the state of Israel is the heir to the sultan, as well as to the British crown.

“THE ONLY DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST”

One common claim about Israel is that it is a parliamentary democracy, where all civil liberties are guaranteed and a whole range of political movements exist. The common slogan of “the only democracy in the Middle East” brings to mind visions of something modeled after the U.S. constitution. Americans project what they know and think of as U.S.-style democracy. The reality is quite different. The political culture in Israel is much more similar to those of Europe and the Middle East.

The Western democratic credo, based on the ideas of the essential dignity of the individual, the fundamental equality of all human beings and of the inalienable rights to freedom, justice, and opportunity, is not a part of Israeli political culture. Because of the success of the Israeli public relations effort and the Zionist effort over the past three generations, there is a persistent image of Israeli liberalism and even socialism in many Western minds. Once we set out on a search for those ideologies, we find them not only wanting but totally missing. The basic principle of individual equality is absent. The rights to free speech, freedom of association and freedom of religion do not exist in Israel.

In practice and by law, the ideal of free speech does not play a role in Israeli political discourse. Publishing any periodical requires a permit, which then may be revoked at any time. There is a censorship board for films and plays. Free speech arguments cannot be used as a defense against it. There is even a list of forbidden books.

In 1986, a public storm of protest arose in the U.S. when it was revealed that a nominee for the position of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, William Rehnquist, bought a vacation home to which the deed included a restrictive covenant. This meant that Jews or blacks could not purchase the property. It seems reasonable to assume that nobody paid much attention to the restrictive clause, and the Supreme Court decided in 1948 that such clauses were void. The story is recalled here because in Israel, restrictive clauses preventing non-Jews from owning real estate are standard in the majority of deeds.

The origins of the Israeli political system can be found in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East, but one of the overriding factors in its development is colonialism. The system cannot be democratic or egalitarian in the sense in which such terms are understood in U.S. political discourse. The spirit and the practice of civil liberties cannot coexist with a colonial system. It is as simple as that. A call for democratic liberties in Israel is a call for the end of the state as we know it today, an end to the Zionist enterprise.

Discrimination against Arabs in Israel is often described as a result of the common gap between vision and reality, and as contrary to Zionist ideals. Nothing could be further from the truth. The discrimination exists exactly because of Zionist ideology. The contradiction between professed ideals and actual behaviors, which has been the engine of political change in so many places, does not exist for many Israelis because the democratic creed is absent. There is no promise of equality for all citizens in Israeli political culture and praxis. When liberal supporters of Israel express surprise and anguish over this reality, they display either ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation

of the facts. There is no tradition of civil liberties because such a tradition would mean the end of Zionism. True equality means the dismantling of the state. If Israel belongs to all its citizens, it is the end of Zionism.

Israelis know that very well. In a discussion of a proposed Bill of Rights, which has been under discussion in the Knesset for over 30 years, an editor of the liberal daily *Haaretz* writes:

Article 5A: "Every individual has the right to move, to choose his place of residence, and to leave at will." Sounds logical, clear, obvious. When we look a little deeper we discover problems. What does it mean to choose one's place of residence? Does it also mean that Arabs, for example, will be able to acquire land and homes wherever they want? Is this what the Knesset has in mind? (Golan, 1981, p. 3).

There is a clear opposition between the Zionist ethos and democratic ideals. Equality dooms any colonialist structure. The Zionist system is quite clearly incompatible with democracy. The lack of democracy stems from the colonialist problem and the presence of the natives, who are a population apart, an enemy within.

DEMOCRACY FOR JEWS

Among Jews, there are democratic practices and traditions: majority rule, no political violence and open debate. There is democracy in the sense that the government represents the will of the voters. There is no law which guarantees freedom of speech, but Jews enjoy a great deal of such freedom. This means that Israel is hardly a democracy when this basic freedom is limited to the privileged class. There is a dual system of rights and privileges, so Israel is a "herrenvolk democracy": a democracy for a select group of citizens, defined as both citizens and nationals of Israel (i.e. Jews).

Israeli democracy can be praised like Athenian democracy. Athens had a great democracy, if you ignore the slaves. Israel has a great democracy, if you pay no attention to the Arabs and their plight. The difference is that Athenian democracy existed 2,500 years ago and people then had different ideas about democracy. Some people today still have these classical ideas.

ZIONISM TODAY: WHAT IT MEANS

What is the meaning of Zionism today? Some Israelis claim that Zionism reached the end of its life in 1948, when the state of Israel was founded, and so it is no longer an issue. But Zionism is still an issue

because it is the basis for the system of government inside Israel, the basis for Israel's claims for international legitimacy. In spite of mystification and apologetics, Zionism in practice means one thing: a confrontation with the natives of West Asia. The basic principles of Zionism determine the way the natives are treated today, whether they live in the Galilee or on the West Bank, whether they wash dishes in a Tel-Aviv restaurant or work their vineyards near Hebron. Zionism today is the essence of the political system in Israel which is still based on discrimination against the natives and preference for Jews. It still means one crucial thing: defining the natives as foreigners until further notice.

We can mention here a group of South African Jews who were opposed to apartheid, so they moved to Israel. They settled together in a new village in the Galilee, with fresh air and a beautiful view of the Mediterranean, especially at sunset. The land they now live on was expropriated from Palestinians. This is Zionism today.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

The Israeli government operates a "Center for Demography" which is a part of the Welfare Ministry. The Center collects data on Jewish birth rates in the Diaspora and in Israel and initiates "family policies," i.e. ways of supporting larger Jewish families and higher birth rates. The declining Jewish birth rate is often contrasted with the Palestinian rate of natural increase, which is among the highest in the world. This is a major topic of discussion in the media and political speeches.

The cabinet and the Knesset held open discussion of Jewish and Arab birth rates in 1986. Such public discussions of birth rates in different parts of the population would be inconceivable in most world nations today (private discussions of this kind are certainly prevalent). In Israel the issue is a vital part of the state structure and a major part of reality. It is not a matter of "racism," prejudice or a flawed democracy. It is a matter of a struggling colonialism, under threat from the colonized.

Today it is clear that Palestinians living in Israel are no longer a "minority" but part of the Palestinian people, part of the enemy. As far as the Israeli government is concerned, all Arabs in Israel are present-absentees. They are the Palestinians that did not disappear, a living memorial to the Palestinian nation in exile and suffering. In Israel we can find other unintentional memorials to the Palestinians.

In early 1948, Ein Hud was a small Palestinian village with 650 inhabitants, on the southern Carmel ridge, about eight miles south of Haifa. Its inhabitants made their living tending olives, fig trees,

vineyards and carob trees. The Palestinians of Ein Hud disappeared from sight and consciousness late in the summer of 1948, like hundreds of thousands of others. Today the village of Ein-Hod is a beautiful artists' colony and a symbol of the good life in Israel. Thousands visit it every month in search of art and enjoyment. Parties and shows are held outdoors during the summer, as guests look over the moonlit Mediterranean. This is a community of artists and intellectuals, creative people who delight in beauty and culture. Many of them are reputed to be liberals or even leftists. Founded in the early 1950s, the village now boasts one major museum and countless galleries and ateliers. The current residents still use the old Arab homes, remodeled and modernized. The old village mosque is now a popular restaurant. Four hundred Arab villages were destroyed in 1948-50. This one was saved, because artists wanted to preserve the picturesque homes on the hill. The agricultural lands were divided among neighboring Jewish settlements.

As it happened, not all the native inhabitants disappeared. Some have lived nearby, since 1948, in an illegal settlement, with no water or electricity. They cannot get those since they are squatters and present-absentees, and Israel is a country of law and order. Some of them have worked in Ein-Hod, modernizing their families' homes, the homes of Ein Hud, for the Israeli artists. They are not entitled to the homes they built and rebuilt, to the trees they planted. Most Palestinians in Israel share the Ein-Hod/Ein Hud situation, seeing their land and their homes occupied by others, looking on helplessly.

Palestinian lives and memories are hidden beneath another popular, scenic spot in Israel. During most Saturdays every year, hundreds of Israeli families enjoy picnics in the beautiful Canada Park, midway between Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem. The park is a popular place even during the week, and offers visitors olive trees, water springs, Roman antiquities, Byzantine churches and sports facilities. Canada Park, created with the generous help of the Canadian Jewish National Fund, has been developed on the site where three Palestinian villages — Bet Nuba, Yalu and Emmaus — stood before June 1967. Immediately after the June War, these villages were bulldozed and their 5,000 inhabitants turned into refugees. The Jewish National Fund got to work; millions were spent turning the land into a huge park, erasing every trace of the villages but lovingly preserving the antiquities.

Another planting effort is planned for the same site. It will be named the "Scharansky Hope Forest," after Nathan Scharansky, the famous Zionist activist and former Soviet prisoner. In a nutshell, that is the story of Israel and its victims.

Left and Right in Political Zionism

“Israel was founded as a socialist state.” One can encounter this fantastic claim in numerous sources, even some well-informed ones. Thus, a reviewer in *The Nation* (January 10, 1987, p. 22) states that Israel was formed as “an avowedly socialist state.” This simply has no basis in reality. Israel has never been a “socialist state” by any stretch of the imagination. While it is true that socialist parties held a majority in the Knesset many years ago, the state itself was not socialist in any way.

Different issues are usually recalled and confused in this context. First, the support of the Soviet Union, which Zionism enjoyed between 1947 and 1949. Second, the presence of many Jews in left-wing movements all over the world and the support given by many of them to Zionism. Third, the visibility of the Zionist left, which has served as a major selling point for Zionism everywhere. “Look, we are socialists, and so you can’t believe all this Arab propaganda about Zionist colonialism. You know how reactionary these Arabs are.” While it is true that many Arabs were (and are) reactionary, and that many Zionists were (and no longer are) socialists, left-wing Zionism proves that socialism can be mixed with colonialism, at least for a while, but not for long.

There were indeed left and right wings in Zionism, as it became an active factor in developments in Palestine after World War I. The basic philosophical differences between right and left in Zionism were similar to those found in other cases. Since the eighteenth century, the political left has embodied the belief that human nature is good and can be made better, that it is capable of progress to perfection, that social arrangements rather than individuals need changing and that the future holds the promise of progress and rationalism. The political right prefers the status quo or the return to a glorious past, the

principle of hierarchy rather than equality and the belief that social progress is limited, due to the presumably inherent limitations of human nature.

The tradition of practical, constructive Zionism was developed by the left in Zionism, in opposition to the grandiose ideas of the right, which dreamed about one grand act of war, or a major political victory, which would create a Jewish state.

THE RIGHT WING IN ZIONISM

In the 1920s and 1930s, there was a right-wing movement in Zionism which seemed to be greatly affected by European fascism, then on the ascendant. In the 1930s, before the Holocaust, there was much admiration for fascist regimes in Europe because they embodied the same ideals of toughness, masculinity, militarism and order. There was the admiration for a strong leader, military uniforms (including brown shirts), pomp and discipline, parades and torchlights. There were practical contacts with fascist Italy and fascist groups in Poland which offered military and naval training.

An important element in right-wing Zionist ideology was the hostility to socialism and labor unions. The right grew out of the petty bourgeoisie and expressed its values. Settling on the land and physical work were ideals of the left, which the right did not share: they were happy with the traditional Jewish social structure. Its rhetoric emphasized the superiority of nation over class.

The imagery of the right was filled with references to ancient heroes in ancient rebellions against foreign rulers, fighting for national honor. "In blood and fire Judea fell/In blood and fire Judea shall rise again." This was the battle cry of Vladimir Jabotinsky's disciples. The heroes of the rebellion against the Romans in 66–70 CE and in 132–5 CE were the models for behavior and devotion. A new Jewish people was to be created:

From a cave of rot and dirt
 In blood and sweat
 A new race shall rise
 Proud, generous, and cruel.
 (Movement anthem by Vladimir Jabotinsky.)

Labor Zionism, which has been dominant in the Zionist movement for many decades, has deliberately tried to deny its colonialist nature and even tried to deny the inevitable ensuing conflict with the Palestinian natives. Since the natives would not suffer from the realization of the Zionist dream, there should be no real conflict between them

and Zionism. The Labor Zionist attitude towards the natives and their predicament was one of denial. The right-wing approach, developed by Jabotinsky, stated bluntly that the conflict was real, that dispossession was real and inevitable, but it was justified to fulfill Zionist plans. It was additionally and doubly justified as the way of the world and the unfolding verdict of history. The right-wing Zionist attitude was one of defiance and confidence. The natives would have to accept their fate — namely an historical defeat. Right-wing Zionism has been quite open, even proud, about the colonialist role of Zionism and about its inherent violence vis-à-vis the natives of Palestine.

Jabotinsky, the leader of right-wing Zionism in the 1920s and 1930s, did not play games nor mince his words. He called a spade a spade and Zionism armed colonialism. Jabotinsky never denied the conflict between Zionism and the Palestinians. On the contrary, he made it into one of the basic assumptions of his political program. Palestine, according to Jabotinsky, was the homeland of the Palestinians and only by military superiority could Zionism take it over. The Palestinians, according to Jabotinsky, were a real people with natural patriotism and an attachment to its land. They would not agree willingly to the creation of a Jewish state, making them into a minority.

The Zionist program, according to Jabotinsky, should be founded on the mass immigration of Jews, which would make them into a majority, and the creation of a Jewish army. The result of this program would be a Zionist state with an Arab minority, enjoying cultural rights but not national ones. The revisionist camp in Zionism, led by Jabotinsky, has always stressed the centrality of the military way to reaching political power and the goals of Zionism.

Jabotinsky must be credited with both honesty and foresight for the following conceptions, expressed in 1923:

The iron law of every colonizing movement, a law which knows of no exceptions, a law which existed in all times and under all circumstances. If you wish to colonize a land in which a people are already living, you must provide a garrison on your behalf. Or else — or else, give up your colonization, for without an armed force which will render physically impossible any attempts to destroy or prevent this colonization, colonization is impossible, not "difficult," not "dangerous," but IMPOSSIBLE! . . . Zionism is a colonizing adventure and therefore it stands or falls by the question of armed force. It is important to build, it is important to speak Hebrew, but, unfortunately, it is even more important to be able to shoot — or else I am through with playing at colonization. (Quoted in Brenner, 1984, p. 78.)

The reaction of Palestinian Arabs to Zionism was to him understandable, and the way to deal with them was clear and direct:

Any native people — it's all the same whether they are civilized or savage — view their country as their national home, of which they will always be the complete masters. They will not voluntarily allow, not only a new master, but even a new partner. And so it is for the Arabs. Compromisers in our midst attempt to convince us that the Arabs are some kind of fools who can be tricked by a softened formulation of our goals, or a tribe of money grubbers who will abandon their birthright to Palestine for cultural and economic gains. I flatly reject this assessment of the Palestinian Arabs. Culturally they are 500 years behind us, spiritually they do not have our endurance or our strength of will, but this exhausts all of the internal differences . . . They look upon Palestine with the same instinctive love and true fervor that any Aztec looked upon his Mexico or any Sioux looked upon his prairie . . . This childish fantasy of our "Arabo-philes" comes from some kind of contempt for the Arab people, or some kind of unfounded view of this race as a rabble ready to be bribed in order to sell out their homeland for a railroad network . . .

Colonization itself has its own explanation, integral and inescapable, and understood by every Jew and Arab with his wits about him. Colonization can have only one goal. For the Palestinian Arab this goal is inadmissible. This is in the nature of things. To change that nature is impossible. If it were possible (and I doubt this) to discuss Palestine with the Arabs of Baghdad and Mecca as if it were only some kind of small, immaterial borderland, then Palestine would still remain for the Palestinians not a borderland, but their birthplace, the center and basis of their own national existence. Therefore it would be necessary to carry on colonization against the will of the Palestinian Arabs, which is the same condition that exists now. Zionist colonization, even the most restricted, must either be terminated or carried out in defiance of the will of the native population.

ZIONISM AND SOCIALISM: THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Can the ideals of Zionism, a national movement forced into settler colonialism, and the ideals of socialism, which proclaims universal brotherhood and the promotion of equality, be combined? Historically, it is clear that socialism presented an irresistible attraction, as well as the toughest competition, for many early Zionists. Socialism in its

many varieties was competing at the time with Zionism for the adherence of European Jews. In most places, the contest was bitterly fought, with no side conceding any virtues to the other. Combining the two dreams was one way out of this competition.

The irresistible attraction stemmed from what was seen as a similarity in two great dreams of liberation, buoyed by the currents of history. These two movements were formed in response to great suffering and their visions offered a final solution to that suffering. The romance started quite early, and by 1877 the first Hebrew socialist periodical was published in Vienna, addressed to the Jewish intelligentsia of the time.

Socialist Zionism offered its own diagnosis of the Jewish problem and its own solution. The diagnosis focused on the abnormal class situation of Diaspora Jews which was the real source of all other Jewish anomalies. According to this view, a normal nation has a class structure similar to a pyramid. There is a broad base of farmers and workers, a narrower band of professionals and merchants, and a small top stratum of property owners. Jewish society in the Diaspora looked like an inverted pyramid, with no farmers or working class. The majority of Jews were middlemen, engaged in petty and lowly trades. The lack of a stratum of farmers and workers is the biggest anomaly in Jewish society. Instead of the broad base provided by the farming and working classes, Jewish society had an oversupply of middlemen, parasitical small merchants, shopkeepers and peddlers. The solution was to right the pyramid through the creation of a working class — the productivization of the Jewish people. Socialist Zionism aimed not only at achieving national sovereignty, but at achieving that sovereignty together with the creation of a society founded on justice and equality. This double vision was expressed by all the leaders of left Zionism.

The socialist Zionist dream was not just of creating a Jewish state in Palestine but of creating a Jewish socialist state. This dream was most clearly expressed by Yitzhak Tabenkin in 1953: "The whole of the Jewish people, in the whole of its country (i.e. 'Greater Israel'), living in communes, in alliance with all communist nations" (quoted in Amitay, 1986, p. 23).

What was visualized was not only Jewish sovereignty and the ingathering of Diaspora Jews, but a socialist society, with collective ownership of the means of production. Zionism was going to bring about not only a national revolution, but a social one as well. It was going to raise two flags, the national white and blue and the international red. And indeed for many years these two flags flew together over Jewish settlements in Palestine and over many institutions in Israel.

The socialist Zionist camp did show a great deal of support for international socialism, communism and even Stalinism. During the Spanish Civil War, 8,000 volunteers came from all over the world to join the International Brigades. There were many Jews among them (the U.S. Lincoln Brigade had many Jews), 300 of whom came from Palestine, and scores of whom were killed. Stalinism dealt a blow to socialist Zionism just as it did to many socialist movements around the world. By the 1980s, the red flag had almost disappeared in Israel, and the Internationale could no longer be heard.

SOCIALIST ZIONISM AND THE NATIVES

Socialist Zionism has confronted the rights of the natives, or “the Arab question,” through its own special rhetoric. The key to the left Zionist approach was denial, a denial of the reality of dispossession and resistance, of any objective conflict between the settlers coming into the country and its native population.

Native resistance to Zionism was interpreted by the left as a continuation of Jewish history; Jews were again the victims, not the victimizers. The experience of Jewish settlers in Palestine was continuous with Jewish experience in Europe. The fact that natives in this case were responding to designs on their homeland by outsiders was denied by the left, just as right-wing Zionism saw no need for such denials.

The left-wing view of the collision with the natives went like this: we were returning to our ancient home, and while we were reclaiming the swamps and the desert, we were subject to attacks by alien intruders. The solution to that is self-defense, which was started even in Russia, where Jews were subjects to pogroms. Facing Arab resistance was defined as self-defense, as Jews were once again portrayed as victims of the world’s hostility and misunderstanding. Those killed by Arabs were just like those killed in pogroms. Zionist military organization in Palestine was known as the Haganah, which is the Hebrew word for defense. It was dominated by left-wing Zionism. Dissenters on the right created later a rival organization, Hairgun Hatzvai Haleumi, the National Military Organization.

According to the left-wing view, there was no authentic Arab motivation for resisting Zionism. The official socialist Zionist expectations were that Arabs would accept Zionism because they would realize it was bringing progress and prosperity to the whole region. Socialist Zionism claimed that the real source of resistance was in the traditional Arab reactionary and feudal ruling class. These reactionary leaders felt that Zionist activities in Palestine were radiating social

progress and socialist ideas throughout the Arab world, endangering feudalism. Zionism is the true ally of the Arab masses, because there is no real conflict between the "objective interests of the Arab masses" and the "progressive Zionist enterprise." The Arab masses were being misled, as they should have no reason to oppose Zionism. The references to the "Arab masses," or "workers," were always positive. Their "objective interests" should lead them to support Zionism and they would become the pioneers of progress in the region.

Budding class consciousness among the Arab masses would bring about internationalism and working-class solidarity, which meant solidarity with the Jewish working class. Arab workers would realize that their real enemy was the Arab feudal class; they would recognize that Zionism was good for them.

While the early settlers between 1882 and 1904, who were in most ways like the French settlers in Algeria, became landowners who employed Arab farm-hands, the second wave of settlers, between 1904 and 1914, represented a radical departure. These Zionist socialists wanted to create a Jewish working class that would possess the land communally. But the creation of a Jewish working class in Palestine in the early twentieth century involved socialist Zionism in competition with the Arab working class, which had already existed there quite naturally and did not have to be created. Arab workers demanded and received lower wages and thus were more popular with employers. These Arab workers were to be dispossessed by Jewish workers in the name of socialism and nationalism.

Jewish employers were asked by the leaders of socialist Zionism to forgo profits in the name of nationalism, just as they themselves were ready to defer socialism for the more pressing issue of national interests. The "conquest of labor," which meant the dispossession of Arab workers from any employment controlled by Jews, started formally in 1906 with the founding of Hapoel Hatzair ("the Young Worker"), a Jewish workers' party in Palestine, defined by Bein (1970) as a non-Marxist, social-national movement. Its program called for the "conquest of all branches of labor in the land by Jews" (quoted in Bein, 1970, p. 31). On March 7, 1908, a group of Jewish workers uprooted scores of olive saplings, planted on Jewish land, as a demonstration against the use of Arab workers in planting them. The olives were replanted and the work was completed by Jews (Bein, 1970).

The idea of "Hebrew Labor" contradicted the ideals of socialist internationalism and working-class solidarity. Socialist Zionism became quite clearly Zionist socialism, limited in its concerns to one people only. It was the socialists who led the struggle against the Arab workers, the "Arab masses" always mentioned in abstract discussions

as potential allies for Zionism. Membership in the nation turned out to be more important than membership in the working class.

How did the Labor Zionism view of the natives develop? How was all this possible? Looking back now, this denial seems like a strange fantasy, or a deliberate deception. Why didn't they face the truth? Some have seen this denial as the consequence of moral concerns. According to this view, the Zionist left was "humanistic" or at least human when it denied the existence of the Palestinians, because it could not face the facts of their dispossession. The denial arose out of an attempt to silence the voice of their conscience. A less charitable view of Labor Zionism ideology regards it as cynical posturing, designed to gain maximum political and propaganda advantages. The left argument worked well for internal rationale and for external propaganda.

Nationality turned out to be more important than class in the overall ideology of socialist Zionism, which called for a constructive socialism. It meant collaboration with Jewish capital and Jewish capitalists in the joint enterprise of nation-building, which superseded any class warfare or revolution. Was socialist Zionism a product of a natural union or was it doomed to failure from the beginning, a mismatch and a misalliance? The utopian dreams of socialist Zionism were shattered before the reality of colonialism, before the need to fight the natives and keep them under control. The need to survive by keeping away the aborigine hordes was more important than dreams of internationalism and equality. The dream of socialist Zionism has been just that, a dream. The marriage between socialism and Zionism was doomed from the start, like many other passionate romances.

There were other cases where socialists supported colonialism, but these occurred most often in the mother countries of European empires, such as Britain or France. Sidney Webb, the famous Fabian socialist, was, as Lord Passfield, Secretary for the Colonies in His Majesty's government, 1928-30. French socialists and communists supported French colonial rule overseas; but only in the case of socialist Zionism do we see socialists actively involved in settler colonialism in the name of a new socialist society. This contradiction was bound to dissolve the marriage between egalitarianism and nationalism. Just as it did in many other cases since the first international socialist organizations in the nineteenth century, when nationalism won over socialism, but here the involvement in nationalism and colonialism was more direct. Socialist Zionism in practice created one of the great political paradoxes of the century, something that is hard to comprehend even today: a socialist settler colonialism.

To understand the history of left-wing Zionism, we should look

more closely at one man, who was its best-known leader. Ben-Gurion (1886–1973) became Israel's George Washington while leading the left wing of Zionism. He was born in a small town in Eastern Poland, and was already a second generation Zionist and secularist. He was part of a group of young Zionists in his town when he formulated his dream. Instead of the humiliated Jews of his childhood experience, he wanted to see a new nation of secular, active Jews, like Bar-Kochva in his time.

When we examine Ben-Gurion's voluminous writings, we quickly discover that he was not exactly a flaming revolutionary. His best-known slogan was "from class to nation," the title of an early book, and he regarded socialism as a purely national instrument. Ben-Gurion did visit the USSR in 1923 and admired Lenin, but as a leader, not as a theoretician. Ben-Gurion always fancied himself as an intellectual, a philosopher-king. He studied Spinoza, Plato and Buddhism with much publicity, but not socialism. He knew very little about socialist theories and did not need to study socialism to achieve his goal, which was the goal of the movement: Jewish sovereignty in Palestine. By the late 1930s, Ben-Gurion decided to hitch Zionism to the U.S., because he could see the rise of global American power.

Ben-Gurion, like all socialist Zionists, denied the conflict with the Palestinians, but this was more a clever political charade than a sincere belief. Teveth (1985), one of Ben-Gurion's biographers, regards his subject as a master politician and propagandist, using the denial-of-conflict argument merely to gain political mileage. Whether stemming from moral anguish or from the needs of political propaganda, the Labor Zionist view did not stop its proponents from continuing Zionist praxis, to the detriment of the natives. The denial of the conflict with natives did not stop the actual practice of dispossessing them.

Ben-Gurion, and the rest of the left-wing leadership, always looked moderate and reasonable, denying either a conflict with the Arabs or the wish for a Jewish state. This was a brilliant ruse, a great tactical posture, but behind it he knew that the only way to defeat the Palestinians was through military force, which he created. While right-wing leaders made fiery speeches about a great Jewish army, Ben-Gurion quietly created it. But above all, Ben-Gurion was a minor socialist, and a great, total nationalist. Looking at him, it is easy to see why socialist Zionism could survive only in name.

DISSIDENT SOCIALIST ZIONISM

Two groups of Zionists emphasized the existence not only of natives, but of a people living in Palestine. On one side, Jabotinsky, as we have seen above. On the other side, the Marxist left. There have been

several varieties of Marxist Zionism, including Leninism and Stalinism (see Cohen, 1970, 1976). This was an amazing unity of opposites, which today seems like a sentimental humanitarianism, refuted by the actions taken by the Marxist Zionists at every step along the way.

The historical MAPAM party was always the most radical in its rhetoric, acknowledging almost equal rights for Jews and Palestinians. MAPAM referred to the equal rights for the two peoples of Palestine: the Jewish people returning to its homeland and the Arab people living there. In principle it was the first Zionist group to acknowledge that the Arabs were natives with equal rights.

It defined itself as a revolutionary party of the working class, adhered to Stalinism and mourned Stalin in 1953 as "the father of nations, the rising sun." MAPAM represented the most humane form of Zionism, supporting a bi-national socialist state (see Chomsky, 1974), based on the unity of Jewish and Arab workers. MAPAM saw the 1948-49 War as a confrontation between a progressive movement (Zionism) and British imperialism and its lackeys (the Arab regimes). After 1948, it saw Arab regimes as interested in perpetuating the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to direct the masses' attention away from the real problems.

After the beginning of the 1948-9 War, MAPAM immediately gave up the bi-national idea and supported the founding of the state of Israel. MAPAM prided itself on carrying out Zionist majority policies even when it disagreed with them. Conformity to Zionism was always more important than revolutionary principles.

What was striking about MAPAM was the gap between its rhetoric and its practice. The party slogan was "Zionism-Socialism — Brotherhood of Peoples," proclaiming the unity of class, nationalism and internationalism — but the three were in constant conflict. The Marxist rhetoric could have been used as a convenient fig leaf, as MAPAM, like the other parties of socialist Zionism, was most directly involved in contradicting its own rhetoric through the practice of settlement. In this practice the kibbutz has played a major role. MAPAM's problem was that "its fight for the rights of Palestinians conflicted with the reality that the members were building their lives on the property of an expelled population. This was of course the dilemma of most Israelis who considered themselves both Zionists and socialists or liberals" (Flapan, 1987, p. 116).

THE KIBBUTZ: MYTH AND REALITY

There is obviously a fundamental contradiction between the aim of establishing a "just society" (a favorite phrase of Labor Zionist ideo-

logues, even today), and establishing that just society in the land inhabited by the Palestinians who then have to be dispossessed. Can a "just society" be founded on the injustice done to the Palestinians? Can a good society be built on the ruins of someone else's home?

This question is best illustrated through an examination of the kibbutz. This socialist commune which has existed since 1910 is an impressive human achievement, a community based on equality and sharing. The Israeli kibbutz has been the greatest achievement of democratic socialism in the twentieth century. It is voluntary, democratic and socialist, refuting all the prophets of capitalism as part of human nature.

The kibbutz has attracted so much attention because it has been created by the least likely candidates. European Jews, remote from agriculture and immersed in capitalism, were the last group anyone expected to create a utopian agricultural commune, putting into action the socialist ideal of "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."

The kibbutz has important lessons to teach all those who dream of a workable voluntary socialism, but its success (or its non-failure) is marred, even poisoned, by its being a part of Zionist colonization. Can a socialist utopia be built on the basis of colonialist dispossession?

Looking back, it is clear that the kibbutz was the most efficient way of taking over the land, through semi-military settlements. The main goal of the kibbutz was colonialist settlement and it was the vanguard of settler colonialism. Settling the land with groups of young, vigorous and committed individuals having attachments only to the collective was more promising than the traditional way of family homesteading. It was also more efficient from a military point of view. The kibbutz was the first line of confrontation with the Palestinians.

These communities (more than 250 kibbutzim exist today in Israel) have been established mostly on land taken from the dispossessed Palestinians. In many cases, the former owners can look at their fields, now being ploughed by the kibbutzim, from their homes.

The internal contradiction in kibbutz socialism is expressed in the following item from the Israeli press, reproduced here in its entirety:

Envid the Kibbutz and Set the Wheat on Fire

Muhamad Ibrahim Abu-Kanna (19) of the village of Kara, was envious of kibbutz Harish in the Wadi-Ara area. The wheat in his family's fields was not doing well, while in the kibbutz fields it was ready for harvesting. During May of this year he, together with friends, set the kibbutz fields on fire three times. The damage: 3.5 million shekels. Yesterday,

before sentencing, the judge at the district court in Haifa asked for the probation officer's report. "The kibbutz fields were once owned by the defendant's village," wrote the probation officer, Farhat Farhat. "Once, when he was a child, he crossed one of the fields and was beaten by a kibbutz member. The arson was an expression of an unconscious wish for revenge." The judge sentenced Abu-Kanna to four years in prison, with two years suspended (Sharon, 1984).

This brief report summarizes the history of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict and the story of socialist Zionism. We can speculate about the unintended irony in the probation report — or was it intended? The probation officer, himself a Palestinian (Farhat Farhat, a social worker versed in modern psychology) writes about an unconscious wish for revenge. We need not be surprised if the wish becomes totally conscious, when farmers see their land cultivated by others. The bitterness of these Arab farmers is not alleviated by the fact that their land is being tilled by the most successful egalitarian experiment in history. In this great success for socialism, Arabs have no share.

Most discussions of the kibbutz emphasize the contradiction and the conflict between a socialist community and the surrounding capitalist world. This is undoubtedly a major source of problems. But there is also the conflict between the kibbutz and colonialism, illustrated in the story above. There can be no doubt that the second conflict exerts its toll.

The kibbutz myth is cleverly utilized in Israeli propaganda as the perfect answer to all accusations. "Can't you see we are egalitarian, socialist and humanitarian?" For some with strong reservations about Zionism, the kibbutz has been its only justification, outweighing any criticism. Many foreigners think immediately of the kibbutz when they hear the word "Israel" and think about Israelis as communal farmers. In reality, only 3 per cent of Israelis live in kibbutzim and over 92 per cent of Israelis are urban. Zionism has not made Jews into farmers or workers, and more Arabs work in agriculture today in Israel than Jews.

Israeli propaganda has tried to present the kibbutz as typical Israeli reality. This is false. But the kibbutz represents another reality, that of building Israel at the expense of the natives. Unintentionally, the kibbutz myth reveals an important truth.

THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHT-WING ZIONISM

Socialism and Zionism do not mix very well: the artificial mixture was doomed to extinction. The socialist Zionist position was forced and

artificial. Socialism, with its emphasis on equality and universalism, does not mix with Zionism: the latter is clearly discriminatory and inegalitarian. Israel does not promise "liberty and justice for all," which are guaranteed for Jews only, and socialism aims at promising even more. So the victory of right-wing Zionism was natural and expected. The retreat from socialism started soon after 1948; the Labor Party stopped using the term in its electoral platform in 1955. The slogan of "Socialism in our times!," which was the battle cry of Labor Zionism in the early 1950s, disappeared from the scene within a few years. (In the late 1970s, it was Menachem Begin, their political opponent, who reminded the Labor Party leaders that they were supposedly socialists.) It took the mainstream of political Zionism and the official Zionist leadership at least two generations to adopt the *Iron Wall* conception, as expressed above by Jabotinsky. It is not surprising that the untenability of socialist Zionism became clear to those who had first-hand experience of the reality of settlement against the wishes of natives, and knew no other way of life. One of those was Moshe Dayan.

On May 1, 1956, Dayan, the chief-of-staff of the Israel Defense Forces, gave the eulogy at the funeral for Roy Rotberg, killed by Arabs on the Gaza border. Dayan said:

Let us not heap accusation on the murderers. How can we complain about their deep hatred for us? For eight years they have been sitting in the Gaza refugee camps, and before their very eyes we are possessing the land and the villages where they, and their ancestors, have lived . . . We are the generation of colonizers, and without the steel helmet and the gun barrel we cannot plant a tree and build a home . . . Let us not recoil from seeing the hate which fills the life of hundreds of thousands of Arabs surrounding us. Let us not turn away our eyes, lest our hand weakens. This is our generation's fate. Our choice — to be ready and armed, strong and tough, or if the sword loosens from our fist, our lives will be felled. (Quoted in Tevet, 1971, p. 433.)

This eloquent eulogy contains a startling deviation from the traditional Labor Zionist line of denying the injustice done to the Palestinians. Here we find a full admission of injustice, together with an acceptance of the colonialist reality of Zionism, with no denials or apologies. Dayan, nominally a Labor Zionist, a candidate for Labor Zionism in the 1949 elections, later a Knesset member and minister for the Labor Party, leaves behind the absurd denial-of-conflict argument. The end of Labor Zionist rhetoric was here proclaimed by Dayan, who knew the reality of Zionism.

In remarks made in 1969, before an audience of Israeli students, Dayan said:

We came to this country which was already populated by Arabs, and we are establishing a Hebrew, that is a Jewish, state here. In considerable areas of the country we bought the lands from the Arabs. Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you, because these geography books no longer exist; not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahalal [Dayan's own village] arose in the place of Mahlul, Gevat [a neighboring kibbutz] in the place of Jibta, Sarid [another neighboring kibbutz], in the place of Haneifs, and Kfar Yehoshua [another village] in the place of Tel Shaman. There is not a single community in the country that did not have a former Arab population. (Quoted in Davis & Mezvinsky, 1975, p. 43.)

Dayan, who grew up in Palestine in the 1920s and 1930s, well remembered this forgotten geography of Palestine and saw no need to deny it. The difference between the traditional Labor Zionist view and Dayan's is clear. In the Labor Zionist ideology, there are no real victims. In Dayan's view, as in Jabotinsky's, there are victims and victimizers. The Palestinian Arabs are the victims and should be kept that way.

Ever since the first elections to the Knesset in January 1949, when there was a socialist majority of delegates, there has been an historical shift to the right in Israeli politics. In the January 1949 elections, socialist Mapai won 46 seats (out of 120) and Marxist-Stalinist MAPAM 19. The dominant majority in 1949 defined itself as socialist Zionist. Later, socialist Zionists became the losing side in the ideological struggle; even when it supposedly gained the upper hand, it was no longer very socialist but very Zionist. Both the 1967 War and the 1973 War, despite their opposite outcomes, reinforced the rise of right-wing ideology in Israel.

It is obvious that both Israeli praxis and Israeli ideologies have changed since 1967 and even more significantly since 1973. Today the term "socialist" has been banished from Israeli politics. What has happened is a sea change, with the left wing moving to the center, and the center moving to the right. This does not mean opposition to the welfare state in its Israeli version, but it does mean support for militant Zionism. Today, it is quite clear that the right-wing camp in Zionism has won, so Israeli ideology is not bashful about supporting colonialism and admitting the inherent injustice to the Palestinians.

Major Ideological Blocs in Knesset Elections 1949-92

Year	Zionist Left/Center	Zionist Right	Religious Zionist	Religious Non-Zionist	Others
1949	65	26		16	13
1951	60	32	10	5	14
1955	59	33	11	6	11
1959	63	31	12	6	8
1961	59	34	14	4	9
1965	63	31	13	4	9
1969	56	36	14	4	10
1973	55	43	10	5	7
1977	35	62	13	4	5
1981	48	55	9	4	4
1984	47	54	7	6	6
1988	49	47	5	13	6
1992	56	43	5	10	6

(Total Knesset members: 120)

The definition of Zionist left parties used is conservative, and any party using the terms "workers," or "Labor" in its name was included in the bloc. It should be emphasized that these terms have become milder over the years. The Party of the Workers of the Land of Israel became the Labor Party in 1968, reflecting a clear ideological change. The term "socialism" was adopted by all 65 members of the Zionist left parties in 1949. Today it would be adopted by possibly 10 of 47 Knesset members belonging to "Labor" or "workers" parties. All Zionist parties not using any class terms were classified as right.

The stated goal of socialist Zionism was to create a Jewish working class in Palestine as a way of curing the ills of "parasitic" life in the Diaspora, and of creating the Jewish state as a socialist republic. This goal has not been reached. The Jewish working class in Palestine was not created because most Jewish immigrants settled in urban areas, carrying on Diaspora patterns of occupation. Even at the height of socialist-Zionist success, in the 1930s, under 10 per cent lived on the land. Tel-Aviv, the first Hebrew-speaking city in the world, became the real heart of Jewish Palestine early on. In the 1920s it was clear that the Jews of Palestine were not becoming the physical laborers. The rhetoric of the workers and "Labor" is still heard sometimes in Israel, while the only real proletarians in Israel are Arabs, who are not protected by the "workers" parties.

The general move to the right on the ideological level has been

accompanied by changes in class affiliations. The Labor Party, which still carries the banner of workers' rights, is supported by the upper half of the income distribution. If there is indeed an Israeli working class, it has clearly supported the right-wing Likud bloc. The Labor Party does not use the term socialism and has not used it in a long time. It is a member of the Socialist International, but that is part of its public relations posturing for foreign consumption. The rightward drift in Israel was not only reflected in the relative size of Knesset blocs, but more so in the changing rhetoric. It is significant that the former "Workers Party" is today the Labor Party, universally regarded as centrist, not socialist.

Historically, it was right-wing ideology that won, and its victory has become clear in post-1967 Israel. We might suggest that this victory was inevitable and in some ways positive, since the tension between the Labor Zionist pretensions of denying the existence of the natives and their dispossession, and the reality of oppression, was impossible to maintain for long. Up to a point, the incongruity between socialism and Zionism might not have been too obvious. Today it is clear for all to see. The honesty of the right about colonialist reality is more attractive.

"Right-wing" in Israel used to be a highly derogatory term, rarely applied to anybody in the 1950s and 1960s. From about 1970, the term "leftist" became highly negative, not because it is associated with economic equality issues, but with support for Palestinian rights. In 1985, a public opinion poll in Israel showed that 45.4 per cent of the respondents identified themselves as "right-wing," while only 28.4 per cent identified with the "left" (the rest did not know). These results reflect the decline of historical rhetoric.

The results of the June 1992 Knesset elections have been interpreted as reflecting a switch from right to left, but the change has been quite limited. One reason is that the popular vote still gave a slight majority to the right wing, and the new governing coalition was hanging by a thread (the votes of Palestinians with Israeli citizenship played a crucial role here). Taking a broader historical perspective, whatever changes in policy followed the 1992 elections must be attributed to the effects of the intifada (see Chapter 10).

ISRAEL'S ECONOMY: MIRACLE AND ANOMALY

While asking questions about left and right, it behoves us to look into Israel's economic structure, which must have had an impact on political ideologies and movements. After all, socialist Zionism started with class analysis and a similar exercise may be useful in looking at its

legacy today. What we discover is that analyzing Israeli society in economic terms is difficult because it does not have a normal economic base.

In terms of living standards and development, Israel presents an impressive picture. Israelis are industrious, resourceful and enjoy First World consumption standards. In the early 1980s, Israel held the world record for inflation rates, but inflation did not mean hardship or unemployment. In 1967, 13 per cent of Israeli families owned a car; by 1987, 60 per cent did. In 1987 there was one video cassette recorder for every ten Israelis, the highest proportion in the world.

Between 1956 and 1986, the per capita GNP grew from \$2,560 to \$6,150 (in 1986 U.S. dollars). Between 1948 and 1973, Israel had the highest continuous economic growth rate in the world (see Condor, 1984). This growth, and the rise in living standards, occurred together with huge military expenditure.

One factor which explains much of this prosperity is the influx of foreign capital, imported at levels without parallel in history. Israel is the only country in the world whose economy and well-being are based on the importing of capital without a return, i.e. donations. It has received an incredible amount of financial support from the First World — and only this extent of support enabled it to survive. According to Gad Yaakobi, Economic Planning Minister in the Israeli government in 1986, Israel had received \$64 billion from U.S. sources alone since 1948 (Tal, 1986). If we add to that other sources, such as West Germany, it is possible that the one-sided influx of capital (i.e. gifts) to Israel has approached \$80 billion.

Between 1948 and 1952, the U.S. poured \$13 billion into Western Europe in what was known as the Marshall Plan. At current rates, Israel has received more than the equivalent of the Marshall Plan, for a country with four million inhabitants. In 1988 grants from the U.S. government, from the Federal Republic of Germany and from Diaspora Jews amounted to at least \$5 billion.

Since the 1967 War another major factor in the Israeli economy has been the occupied territories, operated as classical colonies — that is, both an open export market and a source of cheap labor. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have made a generous contribution to Israeli economic prosperity by receiving lower wages for hard, menial work.

The employment structure in Israel is similar to that of First World welfare states, with one exception. Two-thirds of Israelis work in services, and only one-third in agriculture (5 per cent) and industry (29 per cent). Almost 80 per cent of Israelis are salaried workers, and over one-third of them are either directly or indirectly employed by the government, including the armed forces, the state educational

system, the health system, local government and government-owned corporations.

Thus, the state is the largest employer, and the largest sector is defense, appropriately named because the state has to be defended from its neighbors. In 1987, there were 1.2 million employees in Israel, including 60,000 in military industry, 150,000 in the military and police and 250,000 civilian state employees. Most Israeli workers, and all government employees, enjoy a high degree of job security, unlike most workers in normal capitalist countries.

Looking at the economic history of Israel, we may conclude that it has always been a kept Western outpost in the Middle East, maintained in relative luxury compared to its environment. It has been a military colony, with a huge percentage of its workers employed directly by the state bureaucracy. This economic and military reality determines much of Israeli political rhetoric.

Israeli Identity

The greatest achievement of Zionism is the creation of an Israeli identity, which reflects the fact that the dream of a new nation, a new human reality, has been realized. An Israeli culture has been created, expressing Israeli experience through language, music, literature, poetry and art. Israeli culture and identity are the progeny of Zionism.

Those in Israel who are officially defined as Jews do have a choice in defining themselves consciously as more Jewish or more Israeli. In a systematic survey conducted in 1987, such individuals were asked whether they saw themselves as more Jewish or more Israeli.

The responses were: Jewish only 3 per cent, Israeli only 4 per cent, equal degree 27 per cent, more Israeli 28 per cent, and more Jewish 34 per cent (4 per cent had no opinion). In this survey, the "Jewish" side was stronger among observant, older people and the less educated. The "Israeli" side was stronger among the young, the secular, the better educated and second-generation natives (Hassin, 1987). This seems to support the notion of a developing Israeli identity.

What does being an Israeli mean? It means sharing a certain cultural reality, and being ready to adopt a personal label. Not all Israeli citizens will adopt it. Those who do not share Jewishness, as defined by law in Israel, are obvious outsiders. Those who follow Orthodox Judaism and historical Jewishness are not in need of any new labels. Those who adopt the new label willingly have adopted the Zionist message of the need for newness. Their conscious individual identity is the product of Zionist efforts to create a new culture. The content of the Israeli identity proves that.

(When I use the term *Israelis* in this book, I mean it to denote those residents of Israel who are likely to identify themselves this way and adopt this label willingly. This definition excludes the more Orthodox Jews, who do not follow Zionism and carry on historical Jewish traditions. It also excludes most Arabs living in Israel. It includes the majority of those who are listed as "Jews" by nationality on their government identity cards.)

Israeliness comes out of the experience of growing up in Palestine or Israel under the Mediterranean sky, under a set of cultural conditions — especially the Hebrew language — and objective historical conditions. Defining Israeli identity is done by separating it from Diaspora Jewish identity and from all non-Israelis. Israeli identity and culture today are the products of Zionist history and deliberate Zionist efforts to create a new, secular Jewish nationalism, based on a new mythology, unlike anything in Jewish tradition. The cultural heritage includes both Judaism and European culture, together with the will to innovate, to reject the past and to assert novelty, all characteristics of other settler societies. Israelis today, by virtue of their history and their current situation, are still children of Europe. Like settlers in other places, the local scenery has left its mark on them, and the natives have imposed some of their culture; but the orientation is still very Eurocentric.

Most Israelis will say that they are also Jewish, thus confirming the Zionist notion of a worldwide Jewish nationality, of which Israelis are only a subgroup. They are still aware of the boundary separating Jews and gentiles. At the same time, “Jewish” in Israel signifies another boundary — that between Israelis and the native Arabs — and this has figured more prominently in Israeli consciousness. Israeli/Palestinian as a pair of opposites both duplicates and supersedes the Jew/gentile opposition.

CREATING A NEW NATIONAL IDENTITY

In a way, the appearance of a new Israeli identity is a failure of Zionism, which proclaimed that all Jews in the world make up one people with one identity. But this development is still a direct consequence of Zionism, in its rejection of traditional Jewishness and Jewish identity. A separate identity was formed because Zionism proclaimed a contradiction: one nation which must be transformed; a national culture which must be rejected.

The sources of this new identity include the rejection of the past, the positive ideology of a new nationalism and the objective experience of the new reality in West Asia. The creation of Israeli identity started with two total rejections. First, a rejection of the Jewish past and present culture and experience, as known to Zionists in the nineteenth century, which equated Diaspora existence with passivity, cowardice and subservience. Second, a rejection of the image of the Jew, which represented that despised Jewish culture. The almost total rejection of Diaspora traditions is the cornerstone and capstone of the new Israeli identity, the most tangible product of Zionist ideology. Jewish

identity is preserved only on condition that it is redefined and actually negated.

REJECTING JEWISH HISTORY

Defining Jewishness as a nationality has created for the first time the possibility of a new Jewish nationalism, modeled after the European kind. Judaism has claimed religious superiority for the "nation of priests," and outsiders were considered unclean and unworthy of respect: but this was never a secular nationalism.

Nationalism needs heroes, symbols and myths as it engages in a process of selective glorification. For Zionism, heroes were sorely needed. If you want to create a secular Jewish national mythology, modeled after that of the Hungarians or Italians, a mythology of courage and devotion is a problem. Rabbinical Judaism is not a good source. Its huge literature of rituals and legalisms does not exalt the devotion to a homeland or the courage in battle. Jewish history in the Diaspora is not a source of stories about valor and victory. Even using a steamroller, squeezing one drop of admirable secular nationalism out of Diaspora history would be practically impossible. It was filled with massacres and victimization, with Jews dying out of devotion to the ancient faith, slaughtered by gentiles who stood for military prowess and manly bearing. There were countless Jewish martyrs, slaughtered in countless massacres, sanctifying the Holy Name in their martyrdom but dying passively. The Jew who died from the hands of a Christian mob during the Crusades proved his integrity by choosing to die rather than to convert — but he did not fight back. He did not know how.

For Zionism, this was an ignominious death, not to be commemorated but to be forgotten and lost. Proving one's real devotion to the faith by dying had no real value for the secular Zionist vision. Diaspora Jews died for their religious faith, not for secular nationalism. Religious martyrdom was seen as purposeless and wasteful, not just shameful. It did not contribute to the national cause. The only honorable death was fighting, with weapon in hand, while promoting national goals. The only heroic death could be death for the sake of an existing nation, not for a non-existent God.

Some Zionist thinkers sought to erase the shame of passivity by reinterpreting Diaspora martyrdom as self-sacrifice for the collective, and thus heroic. The history of tears and humiliation could be interpreted as embodying the virtues of valor and devotion. Still, neither standard Zionist view nor the current Israeli view consider the Diaspora as a source of inspiration. That is how Ben-Gurion dealt with the ambivalence:

During the long period of darkness, the time of wandering in exile, what helped us survive was the moral heroism that was unique to our people since antiquity. The great quality of "The sanctification of the Holy Name" — total devotion to the principles and mission of Judaism — accompanied us in every generation and in all countries of dispersion . . . Without this moral heroism we could not have survived during thousands of years in exile, but it was a passive heroism. The Jews did not surrender to outside pressure and did not recoil from torture and death in their loyalty to themselves and their people. But they surrendered to their fate (Ben-Gurion, 1952, pp. 14–15).

The Zionist conception of Jewish history offers a division into distinct periods. Jewish history is divided into periods of activity and heroism (ancient history and modern Zionism, before 135 CE, when the last rebellion against the Romans ended, and after 1880, when Zionist settlement in Palestine began), and the long period of submission and passivity (between 135 CE and 1880 CE), 1745 years which should be erased from the collective memory, a black hole. The ancient Jewish past in Palestine was seen as marked by activism, pride and a readiness to fight and die for national independence.

A nationalist mythology was developed by selectively recreating past glories. This started with the *Haskalah*, the Jewish enlightenment, which adopted the judges and kings of Biblical mythology, and King David's generals, as its heroes, to counter the rabbinical martyrs and sages. Zionism claimed a direct continuity with the ancient vestiges of Jewish sovereignty, and with the tragic rebellions against the Romans which had all failed, but left behind images of heroic fight to the death. These heroes were physical and brave, tied to the land. They were no different from national heroes in China or Hungary, subjects of legends, songs and postage stamps.

The two rebellions against the Romans (66–70 CE and 132–5 CE) were the most appropriate choices, because, according to Zionist mythology, they meant the end of Jewish sovereignty and the beginning of exile. So Bar-Kochva, the leader of the second rebellion, became the direct predecessor of the new Jewish fighters of this century. Rabbinical Judaism regarded Bar-Kochva as a false messiah who caused a holocaust. His memory was never resurrected in the Diaspora and children were never named after him. Secular Zionism was ready to embrace him without hesitation, and in Israeli kindergartens every child sings about his valor, facing Roman soldiers and lions.

Similarly, rabbinical tradition was critical of the leaders and fighters in the first rebellion, which ended in the destruction of the Jerusalem

Temple in 70 CE. They were adopted by the Zionist right, because they were the dissenters and militarists of the first century, while right-wing Zionism in the 1930s was a militarist minority within Zionism.

The best-known symbol of the new nationalism is Masada, a desert fortress near the Dead Sea, where, between 70 and 73 CE, after the destruction of Jerusalem, a band of rebels took their last stand and managed to fend off superior Roman legions for three years of siege. According to Josephus Flavius, himself a former rebel and commander of another Jewish fortress, the siege only ended after the 967 defenders committed mass suicide, choosing death rather than slavery. He recorded for posterity the last speech by the rebel commander, Elazar Ben-Yair. Historians today doubt whether the mass suicide ever took place but nobody can fail to be moved by the story, and no visitor to the site of the fortress (today accessible by cable-car) and Herod's winter palace can go away unimpressed by seeing ancient Jewish history come alive. The siege is documented by countless artefacts and buildings. We can see the outlines of all the Roman camps surrounding Masada. The name Ben-Yair was even found on a pottery shard.

For 2,000 years, Jews heard nothing about Masada. Rabbinical sources were hostile to the rebels. They saw the rebellion itself as an act of blasphemy and stupidity which led to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. A reputed mass suicide certainly could not have been condoned by Judaic authorities. The legend of Masada was picked up by secular Zionism in the twentieth century. Not the suicide but the fight became the model for commitment: "Masada shall not fall again!" has remained the Israeli battle cry.

RECREATING THE ANCIENT PAST

Because Zionism leaps over the 25 centuries of Jewish Diaspora existence and claims that the only legitimate Jewish past is tied to Palestine, this ancient past has to be recreated. Rabbinical Judaism has been based for 1,700 years on the tradition of the Mishnah and the Talmud, which is quite distinct from the Hebrew Bible. Talmudic sages reinterpreted Biblical heroes in the image of their own religious ideals. Military heroes were ignored or denounced; mythological ancestors were portrayed as devout scholars.

Zionism, in rejecting rabbinical Judaism, started a Biblicalization of Jewish history and identity. Biblical Hebrew and Biblical mythology became the cornerstones of the new nationalism. The leap over 2,000 years of rabbinical tradition and Diaspora experience, 2,000 years of

history, aimed at landing in a past of glory and power, to be overshadowed only by future grandeur.

The reinterpretation of the Hebrew Bible started with nineteenth century Hebrew literature and the *Haskalah* movement, with new heroes and new ideas being discovered in the ancient text. Those who wanted to revive Hebrew found the Bible to be a source of classical Hebrew style, and a repository of great literature. It is certainly both, and plays a central role in literate Israeli culture. Today's interpretation of the Bible, as it is studied in all Israeli schools, is a direct continuation of the nineteenth century approach.

The Israeli school system treats the Bible not as a religious document, but as an historical source which validates exclusive Jewish rights in the territory of ancient Palestine. The socialist-Zionist view regarded the Bible as a collection of historical accounts, together with a code of enlightened social laws. Thus, the Biblical prohibition on work during the Sabbath is considered a precursor of modern ideas about workers' rights. The ancient tradition of Passover, which combines prehistorical ideas of human sacrifice with layers of later rites and legends, is interpreted as a combination of national liberation (the Exodus) and a celebration of nature (springtime).

Most Israelis today, as a result of Israeli education, regard the Bible as a source of reliable historical information of a secular, political kind. The Zionist version of Jewish history accepts most Biblical legends about the beginnings of Jewish history, minus divine intervention. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are treated as historical figures. The descent into Egypt and the Exodus are phases in the secular history of a developing people, as is the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. The Biblical order of events is accepted, but the interpretation is nationalist and secular.

The historization of the Bible is a national enterprise in Israel, carried out by hundreds of scholars at all universities. The starting point is Biblical chronology; then evidence (limited) and speculation (plentiful) are arranged accordingly. The Israel Defense Ministry has even published a complete chronology of Biblical events, giving exact dates for the creation of the world, the killing of Abel and the exodus from Egypt. Such a chronology is adopted only by the Orthodox, but secular Israeli scholars follow the Bible in dividing ancient Jewish history into the ages of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), the Descent into Egypt, the Exodus, the Wanderings in the Desert, the Conquest and Settlement, the Judges and the Kings. Scholarly literature arranges historical and archaeological data in terms of this chronology (e.g. "this dig is of a site from the Age of Judges"). Archaeological evidence does support the notion of the Age of Kings

in Jerusalem and in Samaria. Speaking of the Age of the Patriarchs is like speaking of the Age of Oedipus in Greek history.

Claiming this ancient mythology as history is an essential part of Zionist secular nationalism, in its attempt to present a coherent account of the genesis of the Jewish people in ancient West Asia. It provides a focus of identification to counter the rabbinical, Diaspora traditions. Teaching the Bible as history to Israeli children creates the notion of continuity. It is Abraham ("the first Zionist," migrating to Palestine), Joshua and the conquest of Palestine (wiping out the Canaanites, just like today), King David's conquest of Jerusalem (just like 1967). The Israelis of today see themselves as another link in the great chain of Jewish history, marching on towards greater glory.

This is no different from countless other national traditions which freely use heroic legends. The uniqueness of the Israeli case is in the liberal use of mythology taken from ancient religious sources while secularizing them, and the leap over Diaspora history. The rejection of Diaspora history leads to the attempt to prove that not only was Jewish identity created here, but that every significant event in Jewish history took place right here too.

Indeed, Zionism has achieved a major victory in creating an amazing cultural continuity, following the leap over 2,000 years of Diaspora. Every Israeli third-grader can read the Hebrew text of the Dead Sea scrolls, written 2,000 years ago. Such a continuity is probably unparalleled in the world today and has been the envy of nationalists trying to revive ancient languages elsewhere. The experience of reading such ancient writings in your own language is powerful and binding. The experience of reading Bar-Kochva's letters, found by Israeli archaeologists, as he pleads for help in ungrammatical Hebrew, is overwhelming. To a literate Israeli, Bar-Kochva, a failed Messiah, sounds like the greengrocer down the street. The tragic, legendary hero becomes real and human. He is a brother to every Israeli who reads his letters today and can hear him begging for help 1,850 years ago.

Archaeology has played a major role in fostering this experience of continuity. Another task for it is to prove ancient Jewish presence, even without continuity. Such presence overrides anything else in terms of what Israelis see as their ownership rights. The relics of ancient Jewish presence serve both as justification and as inspiration for attachment. When visiting Masada, every Israeli looks down from the fortification at the Roman camps through the eyes of Ben-Yair, the doomed hero.

We realize how much this enterprise is new, secular and Zionist when we recall how the Bible and ancient Jewish history are treated by

rabbinical Judaism. According to Talmudic traditions, only the Five Books of Moses, constituting the law, are the body of divine revelation. All other parts of the Bible are interpreted in the Talmudic spirit, which in turn claims to be the true spirit of the divinely revealed writings. The rabbinical tradition shares with Zionist interpretation the idea of historical chronology and regards Biblical figures from Abraham to David as real people; but the authority for this conception lies with Talmudic exegesis. No archaeological evidence is needed by the religious, because for them divine, complete truth has been revealed. The archaeological-historical enterprise is a reflection of the secular-scientific spirit, and is an attempt to put mythology on a historical footing for purely national purposes. Religion simply asserts that mythology equals history. Zionism assumes that but also attempts to provide proof.

THE REJECTION OF YIDDISH AND THE NEW IDENTITY

A major factor in the definition and creation of most European nationalisms has been that of language. Going back to the Middle Ages, people were identified by the common language they spoke. In the nineteenth century, revival of national literature in the national language was a part of every national movement, and dividing lines among national groups coincided with linguistic boundaries.

The various ethnic groups of Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century intermingled to create a heated cauldron of cultures and movements separated by language. There were speakers of German, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Polish, Russian and many others, and language defined identity and social differences. In this *mélange*, Jews were the ones who spoke Yiddish and were defined by it. Although some Jews spoke Polish or Russian, and considered Yiddish only a dialect, it was unique to Jews. Yiddish is Judeo-German, one of the Jewish languages of the Diaspora, like Spanish-Jewish or Jewish-Arabic. It served to unify them and mark off the boundaries of the community. Even today, when it has been disappearing from the world scene, a few words in Yiddish are all that many Jews have to show of their cultural heritage.

In European national movements, cultural nationalism and revival meant the dedication to a national spoken language, sometimes elevating it into a literary language and often collecting folktales representing oral traditions. Among East European Jews, there was a national cultural revival movement, which meant, as in the case of other cultural nationalisms, elevating the spoken language of the masses into

a literary language. In the case of East European Jews, the spoken language was Yiddish, but Zionism was not going to offer it either a new home or a new respect.

It was the authentic spoken language of Jews in Europe but it was despised by Zionism as symbolizing ignorance and oppression. Many well-educated Jews in the nineteenth century considered it not a real language but a "jargon," an inferior dialect used by the uneducated masses. The *Haskalah* movement, and later Zionism, rejected Diaspora culture. This rejection covered not only the traditions of rabbinical Judaism, but also the language spoken by European Jews for at least 500 years — Yiddish.

Yiddish was rejected by Zionism as the language of Diaspora and suffering, part of the Diaspora identity. It had to be eliminated because it was a creation of the Diaspora and any Diaspora attachment had to be extinguished. Yiddish was a bridge to the past and present Diaspora and this bridge had to be burned. It also quickly became identified with movements which opposed Zionism and were based on Jewish autonomy in the Diaspora, socialism or "cultural autonomy." Moreover, it was, and it remains, the language of the Orthodox, who have always opposed Zionism and preserved historical Jewish culture as it was known in the Diaspora.

The choice of Hebrew did not reflect a return to religion but just the opposite — turning away from it. In rabbinical Judaism Hebrew was the language of prayer and religious ritual, not the language of real life. Used in the Diaspora only as the language of ritual, it had to become secular and modern. In terms of ancient history, Hebrew was pre-rabbinical. Jews in the days of the Second Temple already spoke much Aramaic and Greek. The Talmud was written mostly in Aramaic, and rabbinical literature was written in a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic — and in the Middle Ages in Arabic as well. The return to Hebrew was an expression of total secularization.

The end of Yiddish and the revival of Hebrew was another triumph of Zionism. In 1939, there were 11 million native speakers of Yiddish in the world. By 1990, there may have been less than 2 million left. The revival of Hebrew as a spoken and written language used by a whole nation seemed like an impossibility less than 100 years ago, but was an integral part of the Zionist dream. This was not just the revival of Hebrew, but its revival as a spoken language, pronounced in a way totally different from the Eastern European pronunciation which was close to Yiddish. The victory of Hebrew may be Zionism's greatest achievement and the firmest basis for the Israeli identity. Those Israeli intellectuals who promote the idea of an Israeli nationality (among

them some Palestinians) see the language as its foundation and capstone. This is only natural, as Israeli Hebrew is the deepest and strongest reflection of the Israeli experience.

THE REJECTION OF JEWISH NAMES

Individual names are a cultural code, a discourse, a text. In every culture they convey important messages. The story of Israeli names is crucial for understanding the making of a new and different identity. Traditional Jewish last names, such as Shapiro, Landau, Sachs or Kovner, reflect Jewish history in the Diaspora.

Our Jewish
exile names expose us and bring on
memories of flowers and fruit, medieval cities,
metals, knights turned to stone, dozens of roses,
spices that have lost their aroma, precious stones,
lots of red, lines of work that have since
disappeared.

(The workers are gone, too.)

(Amichai, 1985)

Thus writes an Israeli poet, whose last name has also been changed and used to be a Diaspora memory. Jewish family names teach a history and geography of exile and wanderings. Diaspora names, evidence of exile and alienation, of weakness and oppression, of Jewishness and otherness, had to be erased. The foreign geography had to be erased.

The foreign names reflect past realities, and do not mean anything to speakers of Hebrew. The new names carry clear meanings, reflecting new realities and ideals. Popular Israeli last names, replacing familiar Jewish names such as Rosenthal, Rosenberg, Goldberg, Goldstein, Schwartz, Shapiro, Greenberg, Silberberg, Hirschfeld and Finkelstein reflect local geography, the return to nature, and the ideal of strength and forcefulness. They include Golan and Galili (of the Galilee), Sella (rock), Even (stone), Gazit (rock), Shaham (granite), Shamir (rock), Tamir (tall), Peled (steel), Regev (clod), Telem (furrow) and Nir (furrow).

Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, was born in 1886 in Plonsk, Poland, as David Green, a common enough name. When he went to Palestine in 1906, he found a new last name from Talmudic reports about the Great Rebellion against the Romans in 66 CE. In Israel, as in many stories about Diaspora Jews, last names have been dropped because "they sounded too Jewish." In some cases, this included such classical Hebrew names as Cohen and Levy, who still

sounded too Jewish. And so somebody named Cohen ("priest") changed his name to Keidan ("spear") and somebody named Levy (Levite — member of the priesthood) changed his name to Lavi ("lion").

Given names are even more intimately tied to personal identity. The choice of a first name for a child places that child, and his or her parents, in the flow of history, be it the history of the family, the tribe or the whole of humanity. Traditions of naming within human groups are quite persistent over generations. For 1,500 years, Jews used a fairly limited number of names and were known by them. The Jewish rabbinical tradition has used a relatively limited onomasticon (list of names). The rules were very clear. First names were selected from among Biblical and Talmudic figures who deserved to be remembered. (Last names are a recent invention imposed on Jews by European governments.) Biblical figures involved in misdeeds, or simply lacking in religious distinction, were never the namesakes of Jewish children. The onomasticon of Diaspora first names expressed a commitment to Judaism; that is the commitment replaced by Zionism with a secular national one.

The changes in naming traditions since the beginnings of Zionism have included two elements:

1. Rejecting traditional Jewish names which came to symbolize Diaspora culture. Traditional Jewish names became stigmatized, and the most stigmatized were names actually created in the Diaspora, some in Yiddish, which were part of Jewish life in Eastern Europe for generations.

2. Using ancient Jewish or non-Jewish names from the Bible or totally new Hebrew terms.

The changes in the pattern of naming children appear in the Zionist settlements in Palestine in the 1880s. We can observe then, together with the revival of Hebrew, the reappearance of ancient names that were never in use in the Diaspora, such as Gideon, Yoav (Biblical hero), Boaz (Biblical ancestor of David) and Bar-Kochva. The rejection of Diaspora names means a rejection of historical Jewish identity and a re-entry into another kind of history. The Zionist leap over 2,000 years of Diaspora history takes the form of children with names from the glorious, normal past.

For 2,000 years there was no Jewish Amos, no Yoram (the name of two Biblical kings who "did evil in the sight of the Lord"). Only names rejected by Jewish tradition now became acceptable, as the guiding principle became a rejection of that tradition. (A more dramatic form of the same process can be observed when Zionist immigrants with foreign-given names select Hebrew names for themselves,

thus consciously placing themselves in the renewal of Jewish history.)

If we look at typical Israeli names 100 years after this process started, we find such combinations as Ayelet Sella (Gazelle Rock), Orly Oren, Aviv Orani, Yoram Eshet, Yael Segev, Idan Agmon, Shahar Ram, Amnon Meydan, Netta Moran, Yael Sagi, Ran Ziv and Anat Admati. When first heard, these names sound Turkish, Indian or Arabic. If we look at them as text to be read and interpreted, one clear message in all of these names is "We are not Jewish." And, indeed, no one will suspect at first sight that these names have anything to do with Jewishness. They represent the new Israeli identity, developed over the past 100 years through a series of rejections and choices.

It is among the Orthodox today that historical Jewish first names can be found, together with historical Jewish identity. They never had any problem with naming their children Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Moshe because they never had any problem with just being Jewish. It is among secular Israelis, who do not want any part of Jewishness, that today we may find such names as Tom, Guy, Dean or Shirley. All these names have the advantage of sounding both American and Israeli, not Jewish.

THE CREATION OF A NEW HUMAN BEING

One declared aim of the Zionist revolution was to create a new human being, the opposite of the old Jew in the Diaspora. Jewish sovereignty, and even just the struggle for sovereignty, will create this new type: in touch with nature, working on the land, a productive, physical worker, renewed by the Hebrew language and the encounter with pre-Diaspora geography — in short, the anti-Jew.

Israeli identity is largely the result of a deliberate attempt to reject traits which were traditionally associated with Jewish identity. Jews were always seen as passive, noncombatant, bookish and physically weak. Israelis are aggressive, outstanding fighters and farmers, practical and physically strong. That is how they see themselves and how they want to be seen. The new Jew, the Israeli, had to be the exact opposite of the old Jew. Zionism was at one with European anti-Semitism in rejecting the traditional Jewish image. Jabotinsky, the right-wing Zionist leader, wrote about the new Hebrew as follows:

Because the Jid [the Russian derogatory term for Jew] is ugly, sickly, and lacks decorum, we shall endow the ideal image of the Hebrew with masculine beauty, tall stature, mighty shoulders, vigorous movement, radiance of colors and complexion. The Jid is trodden upon and easily fright-

ened and, therefore, the Hebrew ought to be proud and independent. The Jid is despised by all, and, therefore the Hebrew had to charm all. The Jid had accepted submission and, therefore, the Hebrew ought to learn how to command. The Jid likes to hide himself, with bated breath, from strangers and, therefore, the Hebrew has to step with valor and greatness toward the whole world, and to look the world straight in the eye . . . (Quoted in Gover, 1986).

The opposite of the Diaspora Jew will be a man of action, not of words and books, innocent of Diaspora dust and ghetto habits and tied to the land. He will develop a new kind of courage. Instead of the passive courage of Jewish martyrs, the active physical courage of fighting men and women. No longer victims of persecution, but fighters, they will resemble Saul and Jonathan, dying in battle. To die fighting became the ideal, as opposed to dying passively. Never again will Jews be slaughtered in pogroms and holocausts.

The change was supposed to come about as the result of objective conditions: living on the land, productive, physical work, closeness to nature. Manual labor will be a great therapeutic exercise. While the right wing fell in love with fascist uniforms and emphasized a manly physical appearance, the left-wing vision was that of a member of the working class, contemptuous of middlemen shopkeepers. The middleman occupations of Jews were one inspiration for the Zionist socialist call for a social revolution that would lead Jews to productive occupations. This call has not been heeded either in Israel or in the Diaspora. Both wings of the movements agreed that the new Jew should be strong and non-intellectual, not pale like the eternal Talmudic student. In reality, many of the settlers were intellectual, idealistic and totally unprepared for physical labor.

NATIVISM AND ISRAELI IDENTITY

In its opening position, having no territory in which a nation lives, and lacking a natural connection between people and land, Zionism had to deliberately develop it. The first generation of Zionist settlers confronted an anomaly. It had to create an attachment to the homeland and a new culture based on it, without any traditions or direct experience with the physical reality of it.

Jews had plenty of experience in creating and keeping a religious tradition, but the challenge now was to create an attachment to a homeland which Jews had not needed to have in Poland or Russia. The first effort of Zionist settlement was to put into practice not complete sovereignty, but a cultural and social revival, an attempted

return to the fantasized pre-exilic existence through a jump over 2,000 years of Diaspora.

The bond was first created by naming the whole country the land of Israel, not the Holy Land, not holy ground to be buried in, but a homeland and a home in which to be reborn. The next step was to give new names to places, to put the language on the land, to make the scenery a Hebrew one, signifying ownership.

There was ecstasy in coming back to the old homeland and falling in love with it, realizing for the first time that this beautiful scenery belongs to us alone. In the words of one poem, this land is not a stepmotherland, it is real home. Its natural beauty was combined with mythological and historical events. The settlers identified not only with mythological heroes in a mythological scenery, but also with historical heroes, who fought and marched on these rocky hills of Judea.

Beyond all the deliberate ideological commitments to rejecting the past and creating a new culture and a new identity, it was the new existence in Palestine which led to the new consciousness. The new, separate Israeli identity grew out of a new reality and a separate language. The conscious decision to create a new culture was not enough to create a new identity. What created the new identity was the reality of Palestine and of Zionism in action. It was clear very early on that the Zionist experience was different. The Jews of Palestine were really independent, since neither foreign rulers nor the native population ever oppressed them. Soon the new Hebrew natives could not understand Diaspora life and could not communicate with Diaspora Jews.

The Hebrew language has played a crucial role in creating an Israeli identity. The first generation of natives, in the 1880s, was educated in Hebrew as a matter of course. The new identity of Zionist Jews in Palestine was first proclaimed around 1900, and it was labeled Hebrew. Zionists in Palestine referred to themselves as Hebrew because they spoke Hebrew (or were supposed to) and lived in the homeland. The term "Hebrew," which appears in the Bible, was never used by Diaspora Jews for labeling themselves. It designated the separate identity for Palestine Jews and appeared in thousands of names and expressions. When Jews in Palestine demonstrated against the British, the cry was always for a "Hebrew state." The Jewish community in Palestine was referred to as the Hebrew community; when Arab workers were denied employment, it was under the slogan of "Hebrew labor."

The ideology of conscious nativism was an inevitable outcome of Zionism. Its most extreme form appeared in the 1940s, during the

Holocaust, when the difference between Jews in Palestine and in Europe was clearest. In Palestine, young Hebrews were enjoying Mediterranean sunshine and freedom, while in the snows and forests of Eastern Europe Jews were being hunted and slaughtered. It was a difference acclaimed by Zionism, and proof of its correctness as Zionists in Palestine enjoyed their separate destiny.

The "Young Hebrews," as the nativists called themselves, proclaimed their separation from Diaspora Jews. "What do we have in common with these Jews?" they asked. "Not religion, not culture, not language, not life experiences," they answered. The leader of extreme nativism, Yonatan Ratosh, wrote about himself as a young man growing up in Palestine in the 1920s:

It was clear to me that there was an essential difference between me and Trotsky, and his Jewish colleagues in the Bolshevik politbureau, and between me and Walter Rathenau, the Jewish foreign minister of Germany [foreign minister of Germany for six months in 1922, assassinated by right wingers], and the Jews Leon Blum and Georges Mendel, leaders of the right and left in France, and the British Lord Reading, and Bernard Baruch and Henry Morgenthau, American Jews . . . (Quoted in Laor, 1983, p. 18.)

Zionism claimed that all these individuals belonged to the same nation, while direct experience made clear that they had little in common. They may be your relatives, and you may have relatives in other countries, but you do not share their nationality because you do not share language, culture or historical situation.

MILITARY SUCCESS AND ISRAELI IDENTITY

Israel's great success in the military field was an unexpected vindication of the Zionist vision. Here Jews were doing something they had not done for 2,000 years, and doing it very well, to the world's great astonishment. Jews in the Diaspora were always non-physical and non-violent. Their distance from all things military, their non-physicality and non-violence were proverbial, the subject of a thousand jokes told by Jews themselves. These jokes described Jews as cowards, afraid of rifles and even frightened of dogs. While modern Jews achieved prominence in many fields, the military was not among them.

Zionism was ideologically tied to military action, because it proclaimed that Jews would no longer die as victims of pogroms and inquisition. They would die fighting, if necessary, and thus, in dying, would make a revolutionary statement.

The success of Israelis as soldiers grew out of necessity and the lack of earlier traditions. The necessity was to keep down the natives of Palestine and to defend themselves against the regular armies of Arab nations. The need to fight (or "defend against") the natives is the prime experience for all Israelis. Concern about sheer physical survival has always been paramount in their minds, and rightly so. The Zionist enterprise in Palestine, from its very beginnings, meant an armed confrontation with the natives. The lack of tradition and experience was obvious. These two conditions created the originality and resourcefulness which have been the hallmarks of the Israeli military.

(The same conditions have led to Israeli success in agriculture, another non-Jewish occupation for 2,000 years. No peasant traditions had to be unburdened, as Israeli agriculture started in the twentieth century with the help of modern science and technology.)

The Israeli approach to war is totally pragmatic. There is no mystique about the military and no militarism because fighting is a normal part of life in a society where all men are part of the military and there is no military class. Israel is not a country of impressive military parades or fancy uniforms. Guards of honor on state occasions are notoriously unimpressive, and the soldiers' appearance is usually disheveled. Israeli generals express contempt for armies who can produce impressive parades and guards of honor, but cannot perform on the battlefield.

The colonialist settler experience has created an ideal and a reality of the fighter. The fighter has become a model and a symbol, for without fighting men the enterprise had no chance. This reality has also created a machismo cult. You have got to be tough — and Israelis are indeed tough and cynical, viewing the rest of the world as a bunch of sissies.

THE CULT OF TOUGHNESS

In Israel's permanent war situation, fighting is essential for survival and there can be no romanticism about it. Expressions such as "siege mentality" and "garrison state" reflect a reality, the experience of permanent war. The Israeli ideal of toughness is expressed through a disdain for those who cannot match it. The Israeli slang term for "sissy" is "sabon." Sabon means soap, and the term appeared after World War II when stories of Jews being made into soap by the Nazis started circulating. An expert on Hebrew literature lists the following three connotations for sabon: "cleanser, burned victim, a person lacking in character" (Shaked, 1986, p. 20). The victims of the

Holocaust represent the weakness and the victimization that Israelis cannot abide.

But the term "sabon" has come to mean more than that. Today, in everyday slang among Israeli youngsters, it marks those who take morality and rule-keeping seriously. If you obey the speed limit, if you pay your taxes honestly and if you don't cheat in exams, you are a "sabon." The word has come to express a contempt for morality which is viewed as a sign of weakness. It expresses a genuine contempt for the victims of the Holocaust and for any other victim. Don't be a soap! says the Israeli. Don't obey the rules. Don't show sensitivity. Because then you are a victim, and that is the worse possible crime.

The contempt for the loser is truly the hallmark of Israeli culture. Discussions of the Holocaust by Israelis are complicated and ambivalent. The reason is that the six million were passive Diaspora victims, in the Jewish tradition of martyrdom, not heroic fighters. They were the climax, the apotheosis, of the Diaspora.

The personal history of one Israeli, Yossi Peled, represents this ambivalence to the victims. Peled is an Israeli who reached the rank of general in the Israel Defense Forces and has been known as their toughest disciplinarian. Behind the general hides a Holocaust child, who came to Israel at the age of seven. He was born in 1941 in Belgium and hidden by a non-Jewish family when his parents were sent away. His father died in Auschwitz. For many years, he told his own children that his father had died in the Warsaw ghetto uprising. He was ashamed to tell them that their grandfather was the victim of absolute evil and not a hero who died fighting. He was so ashamed that he did not want to know anything about his father. Only at the age of 45, still having nightmares about being chased by Germans, was he able to start talking about it.

Israelis who were brought up on the ideal of the new Jew, or the anti-Jew, brave and confident, cannot identify with Holocaust victims being led to the gas chambers. The contempt for Diaspora Jews, seen as the eternal victims, is generalized into a broader contempt for all the victims of oppression wherever they are — and this includes most people in the Third World.

The Israeli macho image may be a compensation for 2,000 years of humiliation. The anti-Jew follows the prescriptions by Jabotinsky and others. This is the essence of Israel's contribution to Jewish history: the new Jew, known as the Israeli, is totally different from the traditional stereotype of the weak, pale, scholarly Diaspora man. Israeli machismo has become a model, a source of inspiration.

Ruthless officers in Guatemala admire Israeli ruthlessness. Israeli toughness and military prowess have become the model for right-

wingers, machos and Rambos around the world. Israelis are admired because they are good fighters, and because, as such, they are very unlike Jews. The primacy of power and domination has become the hallmark of Israeli identity and experience. It rises out of a Hobbesian world in which an eternal war rages, the war between master and slave, tough ones and softies, victors and victims. The Israeli identity is the product and reflection of Zionist dreams and colonialist reality.

A unique and separate Israeli identity today is maintained by the uniqueness of the Israeli experience and the Israeli condition. This becomes clear when we compare Israelis with their cousins, Diaspora Jews. How much of an overlap is there between the two identities? Israelis are not Jews and Jews are not Israelis. This is one of the intended successes of Zionism, and proof can easily be provided in any encounter between native Israelis and Diaspora Jews.

Zionism and Judaism: The Religious Factor

Judging by media reports over the past ten years, it seems as though religious groups have come to dominate Israeli politics, and that the most important lobbies are made up of either the religious “zealots” who have settled on the occupied West Bank, or the long-bearded leaders of religious parties who manage to become more rich and powerful after every government crisis. Religious militants, or “fanatics” as they are often called, have become everybody’s favorite scapegoats in discussing the state of Zionism today, together with problems in Iran and in the Muslim world in general.

Beyond the media images, we see indications of a resurgence or revival in the importance of religion in Israeli public and private life. These indications range from the most public — the use of religious symbols in political discourse — to the most private — individual return to religiosity.

The relationship between religion and politics in Israel is quite complex. There are fewer religious expressions in Israeli political discourse than in the U.S., but more than in France, for example. There are no opening prayers at Knesset sessions, while we find them at the U.S. Congress, despite the separation of church and state. As everybody knows, there is no separation of religion and state in Israel, but it would be wrong to describe Israel as a theocracy. Israeli laws are not based on rabbinical traditions and sometimes run counter to them.

Like many countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Israel has a Ministry of Religious Affairs which recognizes certain religious communities and gives them government support and supervision. These include the Druze (who for the first time in history are separate from Islam and Arabs), Catholics, Bahais, Samaritans, various Christian groups and Jews. Most of the budget is devoted to Jewish religious services. Religious judges in all communities are paid by the state and

the jurisdiction of religious courts is limited to personal matters, marriage, divorce and sometimes inheritance. The Ministry of Religious Affairs is normally held by one of the religious parties and serves as a source of patronage and political influence.

Of the four religious movements among Jews in the U.S. — Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist — only the third really affects life in Israel. When we speak of religious groups in Israel, we mean Orthodoxy. The other movements are totally unknown to most Israelis and are regarded with as much empathy as the Reverend Moon's Unification Church or Confucianism. While reform Judaism in the U.S. claims more than a million adherents, in Israel it may claim 5,000 (see Sobel & Beit-Hallahmi, 1991).

The historical connections between political Zionism in its current forms and Judaism have to be examined to understand recent development in Israeli politics, especially since 1967 and 1973. Zionism has always been a secular movement, not only because its leaders were secular in their lifestyle and beliefs, but also because they based none of their thinking on religious traditions. The mere creation of Zionism, which defined Jews as a nation and developed a secular nationalism, was an active rejection of Jewish religious traditions. Zionism is "the transformation of the concept of Jewry from a divine pilot project into a human problem soluble through human devices" (Marmorstein, 1959, p. 57). The secular character of political Zionism, and its rebellion against Jewish tradition, caused the opposition shown by Orthodox Jewry in Eastern Europe and Palestine.

HISTORY: ORTHODOXY FACES MODERNIZATION AND ZIONISM

The process of leaving the ghetto and gaining formal equality between 1770 and 1870 in Europe is regarded today by some Orthodox Jews as a major disaster because it destroyed the traditional Jewish community. While secularization posed the question of defining individual and collective Jewish identity, those who avoided it found themselves in a defensive position against the whole modernizing world. Since the eighteenth century, Orthodox Judaism has been in retreat and on the defensive in the face of modernization.

Orthodox Jewish leadership reacted at first with a total rejection of modernity. It tried a complete separatism, not willing to risk any contacts. Quite soon it became clear that such a complete ghettoization was impossible in the modern world. The solution has been a selective, tactical involvement in modern culture. Separatism was

reinforced by strict ritualism and regimentation, continuing the historical Jewish customs of keeping barriers between the Jewish community and outsiders, who in the modern world include both non-Orthodox Jews and non-Jews. Contact with the outside world is allowed for economic survival and it is limited to occupations which would not entail a threatening commitment to modern values. The war on modernity is waged by keeping the tradition to the fullest, resisting change and acting confidently.

Thus, Orthodox Jews may be found in some kinds of retail trade, but only rarely in science and the professions. Secular work may be necessary for survival, but it is never comparable to the higher calling of Talmudic studies and the jealous keeping of the 613 prescriptions and proscriptions, which keep Jews a "Holy nation" unto itself.

ORTHODOX REACTIONS TO ZIONISM

For the Orthodox, Zionism as it first appeared on the scene was a challenge and a danger, worse than assimilation or secularization. It was a lot worse but it was one form of radical secularization. Zionism refused to leave Jewish identity and the Jewish community behind. It claimed them to itself, with the right to speak for them. It offered a radically new definition of what Jewishness meant and what the Jewish community had been about. It actually rejected religion as a representation of passivity and ignorance. Zionism was a vote of no confidence in God and his Messiah, an insult to 2,000 years of tradition.

Most Orthodox reactions to Zionism were identical to the general Orthodox reaction to modernity and secularization. Orthodox leaders did not accept the Zionist definition of the Jews as a nation in search of a homeland. They remained faithful to the ancient definition of Jews as a religious community waiting for a Messiah. All over the world, including in Palestine, there were pitched battles by the Orthodox against Zionism in the 1880s and 1890s. The old Orthodox community in Jerusalem denounced Zionist newcomers to the Ottoman authorities and was horrified by the revival of Hebrew as a secular language.

The success of Zionism among the Jewish intelligentsia and in negotiating with world powers made a deep impression on Orthodox leaders. There was a point when Zionism seemed to be invincible, gaining more support and collecting more successes. This was quite a shock to the Orthodox, who, on the other side, were losing members to assimilation.

ORTHODOXY: ANTI-ZIONIST, NON-ZIONIST AND ZIONIST

One characteristic of Orthodox Jewish life is the various grades and shadings of Orthodoxy, leading to competition and sectarianism. So we cannot speak of "Orthodoxy": we must specify unique groups. A general measure of Orthodoxy would be the extent to which a group uses Hebrew versus Yiddish in everyday life. All ultra-Orthodox groups always use Yiddish. Zionist Orthodox will use Hebrew. Some non-Zionist Orthodox leaders see the coming of Zionism and the founding of the state of Israel as an opportunity for Jews to improve their situation, but not as the beginning of redemption.

THE ULTRA ORTHODOX ANTI-ZIONIST

There is a small community in Jerusalem which continues the life of the Diaspora and preserves the historical tradition in the most authentic way, a living museum. Neturei Karta was created in response to the growing accommodation to Zionism on the part of the Orthodox group Agudat Israel since 1948. Members of the community do not use government identity cards, do not use Israeli money or postage stamps and do not accept any services from the state. Today Neturei Karta represent the classical Orthodox reaction to Zionism, viewing the latter as an abomination, a heresy and a blasphemy against historical Judaism.

The Zionist heresy is that of defining Jews as a nation. Jews cannot be a normal nation because they have been chosen by God to be a Holy People. The condition of exile will end when God wants it to end. Jews were sent into exile because of their sins, not because of any worldly weakness. Building up worldly strength is not real redemption. The state of Israel was conceived and born in sin because Zionism is not just a rebellion against human history, but against divine judgment. Such a rebellion will surely be punished and cannot be recognized in any way. Jewish nationalism was an imitation of gentile ways, and Jews should not rebel against gentile rule but wait for divine redemption. The Zionist state is a passing shadow and the problems of Zionism in recent years represent divine punishment.

The anti-Zionist groups will avoid any contact with the state, since they see it not only as illegitimate, but as an act of blasphemy. For them the state is still a place of exile, until the coming of the Messiah.

Some of the ultra-Orthodox groups are non-Zionist, but they are ready to cooperate with the state of Israel when it suits their purposes. Thus, they will accept financial support for their schools from the

state. Unlike the religious Zionists, they will never see the state as having religious significance or being the "beginning of redemption."

In Israel, differences among different Orthodox groups can be illustrated in their attitudes towards Israeli Independence Day, celebrated every spring. The most anti-Zionist and the most Orthodox, Neturei Karta (Guardians of the City — in Aramaic), fly back flags. For them it is a day of mourning. They spend it reciting psalms and following other mourning customs. Members of Agudat Israel, which is slightly less Orthodox and slightly less anti-Zionist, treat Independence Day as a regular working day. They ignore it. Their school system, which operates independently of the state but enjoys government financing, stays open. Religious Zionists celebrate Independence Day with other citizens, but some of them, the most patriotic, carry out special religious services with thanksgiving prayers, thus expressing the belief that the state has religious meaning. These recent traditions of reactions to the secular state reflect early historical reactions to Zionism.

There were a handful of Orthodox rabbis in Prussia in the nineteenth century who called for a Jewish national revival. One such was Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer of Posen. In 1862 he issued a call for the "redemption of Israel," following the example of the Italians, the Poles and the Hungarians. Such ideas and such rabbis were the rare exception rather than the rule. In May 1912, 200 Orthodox leaders from Germany and Eastern Europe met in Kattowitz (Katowice), to start Orthodoxy's first organized response to Zionism — Agudat Israel, which exists today as a political party in Israel and as a political lobbying group elsewhere.

Agudat Israel is an anti-Zionist Orthodox movement, the best-known political reaction of Orthodoxy to Zionism. The ideologue of this movement was Nathan Birnbaum, a brilliant intellectual who collaborated with Herzl in the early days of political Zionism and then became disillusioned. Birnbaum became convinced that the secular definition of the Jews as a nation was inadequate, and that secularization would lead to the disappearance of the Jewish people. Orthodoxy had to take a firm stand against Zionism in the form of a political organization. Agudat Israel was Diaspora-oriented. Its center between the two World Wars was in Poland, where about one-third of the Jews were its supporters. It had elected representatives in the Polish parliament in the 1930s. Agudat Israel representatives have also appeared before international bodies, including the League of Nations and the UN.

Historically, Agudat Israel has been opposed to the idea of a Jewish state, but it was deeply affected by the Holocaust and its opposition

was softened. The main effect of the Holocaust was the loss of most of its constituency in Eastern Europe. Agudat Israel became more of a minority, more pro-Zionist, ready to accept the reality of Zionist success.

In Israel after 1948, the party was pragmatically involved in state institutions. Today it accepts the state for all practical purposes. It supports governing coalitions and is rewarded with ample budgets for its Orthodox schooling system. The state of Israel is accepted *de facto*, but it is judged to be without the religious significance assigned to it by religious Zionists.

RELIGIOUS ZIONISM

The beginnings of religious Zionism can be found in Eastern Europe around the turn of the century. Several Orthodox rabbis accepted Zionism pragmatically as a movement which improves life for some Jews, but which is devoid of religious significance. At that point it was clear that Zionism and modernism were on the ascendant, and Orthodoxy needed to move in the direction of accommodation.

The Zioreligious camp was created in response to the successes and the vitality of secular Zionism, and has grown or failed to do so in response to its changing fortunes. It was Rabbi A.I.H. Kook (1865–1935), who moved to Palestine and served as chief rabbi there, who developed the conception of Zionism as part of the divine plan for redemption. This notion made possible a new alliance between Orthodoxy and Zionism, a minority of the Orthodox, to be sure, but a significant group nevertheless. This group gained from the vitality of Zionism, while Orthodoxy seemed in real decline.

Kook was ready to make sacred the secular actions of Zionism, giving the new settlements in Palestine a religious meaning. If Zionism is the beginning of our true redemption, even secular settlers were engaged in positive action. The hope was that eventually they would see the light, combine Zionism with Judaism and return to religion. This view of Zionism having religious significance led to an active involvement in all aspects of Zionist activities in Palestine. After 1948, it meant that the National-Religious Party has been a partner in most Israeli governing coalitions.

THE PRESENT: WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ISRAEL

The settler on the West Bank, his head covered with the knitted skullcap and an Uzi slung over his shoulder, has become an emblem of Israel. Much media attention has been directed towards incidents in

which bus-stop shelters were burned or defaced after they were used to display advertisements showing scantily clad women. Less conventional, but more interesting, reports and pictures revealed Shimon Peres, the former Labor Party leader, undergoing a process of Orthodoxy. First Peres went to the Wailing Wall after being sworn in as prime minister in 1984. Then he was observed taking Talmud lessons from a chief rabbi. That these displays of piety were subject to ridicule and derision is also part of the story.

Incidents such as the burning of bus-stop shelters seem to be the least significant: we realize that when we learn that some feminists in Israel joined with the ultra-Orthodox in condemning the advertisements and sometimes in defacing them. This is reminiscent of similar cases in other places, such as the U.S. Both parties to this surprising (and not so surprising) alliance, the ultra-Orthodox and the feminists, represent extremely marginal groups which essentially stand outside the Israeli political arena on most vital issues. The whole bus-shelter affair is totally unrelated to other, more important, issues of religion and ideology.

The now emblematic religious settler on the West Bank is a true reflection of events there, but does not represent the majority of Israelis or even the majority of Orthodox Jews in Israel. It is important to remember that there is still a clear negative correlation between Orthodoxy and Zionism among Jews. Those who are more Orthodox are less (or anti-) Zionist. The West Bank settlers rank high on the Zionism scale, but low on the Orthodoxy scale. Thus, for example, a woman has served as secretary general of Gush Emunim, the settlers' organization. This would be inconceivable among the more Orthodox. The nationalist Orthodoxy of Gush Emunim is new and messianic, totally foreign to most Orthodox Jews in the world.

One of the terms most commonly used in connection with the religion and politics issue in Israel (and in other places) is "fundamentalism." When this term is used, in the case of Judaism in Israel, to denote Orthodoxy-cum-nationalism, it is plainly wrong. "Fundamentalism" is a well-defined concept, denoting a specific Protestant movement, started in the early twentieth century in reaction to religious modernism in the U.S. The movement acquired its name from the 11 fundamentals it adhered to, including such tenets of Christian faith as the virgin birth and the literal truth of the Bible. Using this term for other times and other places is misleading and counter-productive because it may hinder correct perceptions of different realities.

One of the reasons for the attractiveness of this concept is that it leads immediately to associations with "fundamentalism" in other

places. Often, those using it would like to imply that "fundamentalisms" and "fundamentalists" all over the world are the same, be they American, Iranian or Israeli. While there may be an underlying common psychological component in various forms of "fundamentalism," it seems that this term, growing out of a specific historical context, does not have much meaning beyond its native soil. Orthodox Jews do not believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. They do not believe that every word in the Bible is a divine revelation. They consider only the Pentateuch, the first Five Books of Moses, to be divinely inspired. The rest of the Bible is considered to be the product of human minds and hands. And most Orthodox Jews are neither nationalists nor Zionists. Religious Zionists in Israel, the so-called "fundamentalists" or "fanatics," have little in common with conservative Baptists in the U.S. or with Iranian Shi'ites who promote an Islamic republic.

Moreover, no religious Jew can be emblematic of the majority of Israelis, since that majority, despite all developments and appearances, is still non-observant, if not consciously secular. Less than 20 per cent of Israelis are observant. They constitute a separate subculture, characterized by its own lifestyle and separated from the majority of Israelis by the same strictures that separated Jews from their non-Jewish neighbors 200 years ago: rules about diet, dress, sex and calendar. This minority subculture is clearly not becoming a majority.

SAYING NO TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT

If there is a resurgence of religion in Israel, it can be found in several areas. The first is that of personal "conversion," in which young and not-so-young Israelis, members of the non-observant majority, make the personal decision to become Orthodox. Such cases in Israel have numbered in the thousands since 1973 and they constitute a significant social movement. This is an historical victory for Orthodoxy over Zionism, as the sons and grandsons of those who rejected Orthodoxy and embraced Zionism move in the opposite direction. Moreover, it is a rejection of secular culture. It is "the Enlightenment in reverse" (Marmorstein, 1969, p. 107) going against the historical secularization of the Jews, of which Zionism has been an integral part. The grandson of Isaac Gruenbaum, a famous anti-religious Zionist leader in Poland before 1940 and in Israel afterwards, is a celebrated Talmudist today: he rejected his secular family and he is only one among many such cases. The newly Orthodox express their rejection of Israeli identity by using traditional Jewish names for their children and by speaking Hebrew in the Diaspora pronunciation or even Yiddish.

Psychological factors are important in the search that leads Israelis to become Jews. The religious camp points to the emptiness of secular life in Israel and is quite correct in its diagnosis. These individuals search for community and a moral order, looking away from the selfish, empty materialism of most secular Israelis.

Two observations need to be made in this context. First, the movement from secularism to religion, however significant, has not changed the minority status of the Orthodox in Israel. Second, most of the returnees to Judaism, in accordance with the (negative) correlation presented above between Orthodoxy and Zionism, turn non-Zionist or even anti-Zionist as a result of their change of heart. They seem to be saying "We have tried all modern answers, including Zionism, and they don't work." (See Beit-Hallahmi, 1992.)

POLITICAL DISCOURSE

The second realm in which we can observe a significant change is that of political discourse. What we see, and this has been going on since 1967, is the growing use of religious symbols by non-religious leaders, and, even more so, the growing confidence of religious politicians in making pronouncements about matters both religious and secular. Most members of recent Israeli cabinets have remained totally secular in their behavior and in political discourse. This includes the most visible Israeli leaders, such as Yitzhak Shamir, Shimon Peres, Ezer Weizman, Yitzhak Rabin, Ariel Sharon and Moshe Arens. It is also important to remember that among Israeli nationalists, secularism is still common.

The secular nationalists should not be discounted or ignored. There are atheist Zionists who are as militant about their atheism as about their Zionism. This phenomenon exists openly and emphatically in Israel. Meir Uziel, a popular right-wing columnist (and a grandson of a chief rabbi) writes about attempts by his religious allies in nationalism to make him a believer: "and none of them succeeded. Why? Because there is no God. The Holocaust is the scientific proof for that. The Holocaust is also the theological proof of that. The Holocaust is God's way of punishing man for believing in Him. That is His way, Blessed be He, to show us that there is no God" (Uziel, 1985, p. 35). It is hard to imagine such blasphemy being published in the U.S., but in Israel it has not aroused much response.

Well-known nationalist leaders such as Yuval Neeman or General Rafael Eitan have never darkened the doors of synagogues in their lives, just like members of the cabinet listed above. Nevertheless, all Israeli politicians recognize the new vitality of the Orthodox minority,

and, like politicians elsewhere, will use it to suit their own ends.

The severe crisis of Zionism since 1973 has created a relative, and only relative, "re-Judaization" of political discourse in Israel. After 1973, religion was needed to justify Zionism; after 1973 it was needed to provide hope for the future. On the one hand, religion is a source of energy for Zionism. On the other, the return to religion remains a symptom of the decline of Zionism. Religion is seen by some as the only answer to the crisis of justification and hope which Zionism has been undergoing. It may indeed be so. Only two generations ago, Judaism seemed doomed and Zionism was full of vitality. Now the tide has turned and religion offers hope and justification.

THE FAILURE OF SECULARISM

An important part of the Zionist revolution was the attempt at cultural secularization. Not only personal secularization, the experience of most Zionists (or their parents), but a cultural one, secularizing Jewish life and language. The problem was that Jewish culture had been totally religious for hundreds of years. The movement for cultural transformation from religion to secularity was deliberate and energetic.

Secularization has meant not only the negative process of rejecting religious traditions, but also the positive process of creating a secular identity and world view. Actually, the whole of humanity is still busy constructing a secular culture to replace religious traditions which are part of human history everywhere. Has the cause of secularization succeeded completely anywhere?

Because secular Jewishness is defined negatively, through an absence of something, while the historical Jewish identity was defined positively, the whole enterprise of Jewish secular culture suffers from a basic weakness. If there is a struggle and competition between secular and religious groups in Israel, the secular are at a disadvantage. They consistently claim that they represent an authentic brand of Jewishness or Judaism. They claim that Judaism was always "pluralistic." On the other side are the Orthodox. They have the advantage of not having to justify their position. No one will doubt their Judaism or their Jewishness. They are historically authentic; they do not have to prove any claims. No one could doubt the authenticity of the Orthodox tradition. The secularists cannot claim that Orthodoxy is false to Jewish tradition; they can only claim that their own version is just as legitimate. When the secular majority claims the mantle of Jewish continuity, it is on shaky grounds. If you want to claim an authentic Jewish identity, the Orthodox have the upper hand.

One version of secularism is based on admitting that Jewish culture has been totally religious, but it represents the humanist-universalist values of justice, peace, equality and charity. Jewish traditions are thus reinterpreted in a universalist way, but the basic structure, such as the calendar of Jewish holidays, remains in place. The need for rites of passage is met by the traditional religious ones.

The attempt to create a viable secular Jewish identity and mythology has been only a partial success. After 100 years of secular Zionism, the basic questions about secular culture in Israel remain. What is a secular Jewish identity, and if it is Jewish, how can it be secular? The callow secular identity cannot compete with the richness of Judaic heritage. There are almost no secular rites of passage: secular weddings or funerals are the exception. The majority of Israelis, who want to keep their claim to Jewish identity, support keeping the Jewish nature of the state, even though this term is interpreted in many different ways. A majority support some role for Judaism in the state, and tying public behavior to Jewish tradition (see Liebman & Don-Yehiya, 1983).

The defeat of secularism and the relative desecularization of Israeli daily life is tied to other ideological changes. Secularism is usually tied to universalistic values, but these values are missing in the Israeli context. At the same time, it is crucial to realize that the Israeli elite is still thoroughly secular. This includes government leaders, the military and the academic world.

GUSH EMUNIM: FROM MARGIN TO CENTER

Gush Emunim (the Bloc of the Faithful) was founded in 1974. It has become best known for its settlements on the West Bank, some of which, before 1977, were set up in nominal defiance of the Israeli government. No other religious group has attracted as much attention as Gush Emunim, which is indeed the best example of religious energy in the service of Zionism. The need for ideological renewal in Israel has found its most productive variant in Gush Emunim. In this particular case, we are dealing with the need for a legitimizing ideology, the need for meaning and hope.

There has been a radical change in the situation and status of religious Zionists in Israel since the 1950s and 1960s. The Gush, as it is known, represents the last stage in the rise and fall of traditional religious Zionism in Israel. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the young Zioreligious were marginal. They were, like their parents, on the margins of Zionist activities. They were not farmers or settlers. They were seen as following Diaspora traditions. While secular Zionism

seemed triumphant, everything having to do with religion was viewed as primitive, archaic and worse — weak. The nationalist euphoria following the 1967 War enabled religious Zionists to move closer to the mainstream, as religious interpretations of Zionist successes gained more acceptability. After the debacle of the 1973 War, religious Zionism became even more central as the only source of vision and energy for committed Zionists.

The Gush is a Zionist revitalization movement, and, like any such movement, represents a response to a severe crisis. It was formed in February 1974, during the winter of discontent which followed the trauma of the 1973 October War. It serves as a radical vanguard. Rightfully, the members of Gush claim to be the heirs to the Zionist “pioneering” tradition. It entered an ideological vacuum and has sought to fill it. Gush has always collaborated with secular Zionists who share its goals: it even boasts some secular members. When the traditional socialist-Zionist elite of kibbutz settlers had disappeared, the Gush filled the vacuum.

The Gush is a small minority within Israeli society, but it is a dedicated minority which takes its vision from a religious interpretation of Zionism and its style and practices from the secular Zionist tradition.

The dramatic rise of the Gush can only be explained against the background of wider processes in Israeli society. If Gush aims really ran counter to the basic goals of Israeli governments, it would have been crushed. The Gush is not a movement of dissidents, but a vanguard of Zionist renewal. This has been recognized by both Likud (“right”) and Labor (“left”) governments in Israel over the years. Secular Zionists, both inside and outside the government, have been impressed and fascinated by the faith, devotion and energy of Gush. Gush has stood out in Israeli political culture since 1973 because it offers a beacon of hope and energy in the midst of despair and demoralization. It has discovered possibly the only source of energy for the revitalization of Zionism. It presents a continuity with the settlers of the 1920s and 1930s, who were doing, in what is today Israel’s coastal plain and the Jezreel Valley, what the settlers of today are doing on the West Bank. From the point of view of Zionist ideology, both the secular Zionist settlers of earlier times and the religious Zionist settlers of today were asserting the basic claims of Zionism in Palestine: namely, the right to settle and to dispossess the natives.

The Gush has been the only source of enthusiastic Zionism since 1973, being ready to continue the active tradition of settler colonialism. That is why it has actually been supported by all Israeli governments and most Israeli leaders. It has been acting out the wishes of the

majority and has gained much admiration for it.

The Gush was never some kind of radical opposition to the state. It has been doing much of what most Israeli Zionists would have liked to do. It has been doing what the Israeli leadership has desired, but without implicating it directly.

Since other ideological justifications for Zionism cannot do the job, religion as a source of legitimation has become more popular. Zionism has been in the throes of a growing crisis of legitimacy, and religion became one source of aid in this crisis. In the alliance between Zionism and religion the benefits used to be mutual, but now Zionism is more in need of help.

The Gush interpretation of Jewish history shares the Zionist emphasis on the Bible, but leaves the divine agency very much in the story. In this version, history starts with Abraham, divine election and divine promise. Greater Israel was promised by God to Abraham and Jews have their right to it. Religious Zionists agree with most secular Zionists in denying any rights to non-Jews in the land of Israel, but disagree with secular Zionists on the justification for the Jewish monopoly on political rights. This also leads to differences in geography: the map proposed by religious Zionists reflects the divine promise, while secular Zionists are pragmatic and modest in their geography, relatively speaking.

The Gush is the minority of committed idealists who have been ready to go out there, to the barren hills, suffer the heat and cold and take possession of the land. They are continuing the Zionist revolution and using classical Zionist arguments. If Zionists do not have the right to settle on the West Bank at will, what right did they have to settle on the coastal plain before 1948, dispossessing Arabs there? The post-1967 settlers are indeed carrying on the Zionist pre-1948 tradition.

THE NEW ORTHODOX CONFIDENCE

The crisis of Zionism is accompanied by the rise of Judaism in its historical form, the resurgence of what has been despised as the ghetto culture. The failure of the Zionist secular revolution leads to growing Orthodox vitality. Orthodox groups feel confident enough to challenge the secular majority on a variety of issues. The new confidence and energy of religious groups, both Zionist and non-Zionist, is the third realm in which changes are evident. Orthodox groups in Israel are showing vitality and confidence, which are striking against the background of the demoralized, non-observant majority. They take more initiatives and are ready to demonstrate and take public stands on issues, both "religious" and general.

Non-Zionist Orthodox groups are more confident as they witness the crisis of Zionism and the demoralization of the non-observant majority. The failure of Zionism is the source of renewed energy and hope. The failure of the Zionist secular revolution leads to growing Orthodox militancy. Orthodox groups feel confident enough to challenge the secular majority around purely religious issues.

The Orthodox in Israel and in the Diaspora have been showing their new confidence in renewed political efforts and in recruiting new members among secular Israelis. The crisis of Zionism leads the non-Zionist Orthodox to more confidence and more demands vis-à-vis secular parties, and vis-à-vis religious Zionists.

The Gush offers rejuvenation to Zionism, and to the moderately Orthodox. This double-headed renewal represents a double-headed crisis. Zionism has been in trouble, and religious Zionists have suffered with it. Gush is the heir to the Orthodox Zionist tradition, now in sharp decline. The reason for the decline is the crisis of Zionism, leading to the resurgence of non-Zionist Orthodoxy. The choices for religious Zionists are to move towards the more Orthodox and leave Zionism behind, or to try and keep Zionist faith alive through an injection of messianic Judaism.

While the non-Zionist Orthodox gain their confidence from the failure of Zionism, the religious Zionists demonstrate their faith in the future of Zionism through reliance on messianic hopes, which is better than secular Zionists can do.

Only Gush and similar groups have solid answers, in the form of religious justifications. Its members can offer revitalization for Zionism through religious faith because all other methods of justifying Zionism have failed.

It is sufficient to believe in God and in Old Testament divine promises, and the justification for the praxis of political Zionism follows with flawless logic. The influence of those who could present religious justifications consistently and naturally has grown with time.

Today there is a retreat of religious Zionists in the face of the non-Zionist Orthodox, and a process of Orthodoxization among religious nationalists as they become less Zionist and more Orthodox. The moderately Orthodox nationalists have been moving towards stronger Orthodoxy. This means a growing distance from Zionism. Today, only a minority of the Orthodox in Israel are Zionists.

MESSIANIC IDEAS IN CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL

Messianic groups combine Judaism and nationalism in the most extreme and total way. The development of messianic ideas and mes-

sianic groups in Zionism, namely ideas and groups which interpret political events in terms of the coming of complete redemption, is a new and recent development. Messianic hopes are paradoxically aroused by both disasters and victories. Desperation and triumph stimulate wild hopes and frenzied dreams. The events of the past 40 years in Israel have included both triumphs and disasters, and have generated messianic ideas on two levels.

The first is that of religious-Zionist intellectuals, who for a long time have been ready to find cosmic significance in the state of Israel and its fortunes. Zionism itself has been considered a miracle by some: its victories certainly inspired the idea of an "age of miracles" heralding the coming of the Messiah. How else could we explain the unbroken chain of unlikely Zionist successes, in 1917, 1947, 1948, 1956 and 1967? Having Temple Mount and the Wailing Wall in Israeli hands seemed like the greatest miracle. The setback in 1973 could be interpreted as ushering in an age of trials and tribulations, which is also a sure sign of imminent redemption.

Such ideas have inspired political actions and new political formations since 1967, and especially since 1973. Another level of messianism has been reflected in the behavior of small, marginal, non-political groups, whose members are devoted to computing the exact date of the Messiah's arrival, or to preparations for the routine operations of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. Other groups have been studying the ancient practices and rules, and tailoring the proper clothing for temple priests. This lunatic messianism has been espoused by tiny groups of followers, but it is certainly a sign of the post-1973 times in Israel (see Beit-Hallahmi, 1992).

THE NEW SCAPEGOATS

The rise of the Gush and the new vitality of the non-Zionist Orthodox (which are really two opposite developments) have been sensationalized in the media and presented as the source of political problems in Israel. Liberal Zionists like to contrast their own supposedly enlightened views with those of the "fanatics." "If we could only get rid of these religious fanatics, things would get a lot better." And now "everybody knows" that religious militants are the source of troubles in Israel. It seems that in the international media this has become a new form of anti-Semitism, with traditional Jews, who look like traditional Jews, being blamed for things they do not even do. The media do not differentiate between the anti-Zionist rock-throwers in Jerusalem and the Zionist settlers on the West Bank. They are both "religious fanatics." But as we have seen, even if all "religious

fanatics" disappeared tomorrow, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would still be with us.

The future seems to point to the continued growth of Orthodox non-Zionist groups; but Orthodoxy as a whole remains very much a minority, claiming less than 10 per cent of Diaspora Jews and less than 20 per cent of Jews in Israel. We should remember that a great deal of Orthodox militancy is not new or recent; it grows out of the unchanging historical situation of the Orthodox as a struggling, threatened minority.

The Crisis: History Catches up with Zionism

Ever since 1973, Israel has been living out a permanent crisis of authority and faith, a collective sense of dissolution and disintegration, diminished control and generalized helplessness. It is not just a malaise, continuing and unavoidable, but an acute crisis, the lack of a sustaining dream and hope. Is Zionism worth the mounting costs and diminishing benefits? The future looks unpromising; expressions of despair and disillusionment are common and eloquent. The question is not only the survival of the state, but whether Israelis can survive the psychological and physical stress of endless struggle. Exhaustion and fatigue are taking over as the struggle gets harder. There is a real despair in Israel, a feeling of reaching a dead end, failure and disillusionment.

The 1967 War changed the face of the Middle East. It also changed the way Israelis felt about themselves and about Zionism. The 1967 victory was seen by many as the happy ending to Jewish history. The most important outcome of the war was that Israel now held vast, newly-occupied territories. The question was: what should be the fate of the territories, which were 20 times larger than Israel's own? In keeping with Zionist tradition, the question was phrased in terms of land. Israelis were to decide on the future of the territories. The Palestinians living there were to have no say in the matter. In a secret meeting in the summer of 1967, the Israeli government decided to hold on to the territories for as long as possible. The period mentioned at the time was 15 years. Nobody could think further than that.

It took six days for Israel to change from a tiny country to a mini-empire, animated by an overwhelming euphoria. Zionism was on the ascendant, as the Arab world was in disarray. The 1967 victory was even greater because of the visions of destruction which preceded it. In 1965-6 Israel underwent an economic recession and a period of

deep pessimism. In the summer of 1967, it seemed that Israel, for the first time, had reached a stage of true independence and security. The military victory was followed by economic prosperity and by a significant rise in immigration.

The War of Attrition on the Suez Canal between Israel and Egypt, which started on March 9, 1969 and ended on August 10, 1970, eliminated the Israeli euphoria for a while. But after it ended, Israel seemed more secure than ever. The extreme self-confidence of Israeli leaders in the years 1970–3 can be illustrated in the following statement by Yitzhak Rabin, the chief-of-staff in the 1967 War and later Israeli prime minister, made on July 13, 1973:

Our present defense lines give us a decisive advantage in the Arab–Israeli balance of power . . . We are still living within a widening gap of military power in Israel’s favor. The Arabs have a diminished capacity for coordinating their military and political actions . . . Renewal of hostilities is always a possibility, but Israel’s military strength is sufficient to prevent the other side from gaining any military objectives. (Quoted in Nakdimon, 1982, p. 36.)

General Ariel Sharon said in July 1973: “The European armed forces are weaker than ours. Israel can conquer in one week the territory from Khartoum in the Sudan to Baghdad and Algeria” (quoted in Nakdimon, 1982, p. 36). And on October 5, 1973, readers of *Haaretz*, the Tel-Aviv daily, could read an interview with Moshe Dayan, the defense minister, who promised no war within the next few years.

THE EARTHQUAKE

The 1973 War shook Israel from its foundations to the very summit. A deep lack of confidence suddenly replaced the exaggerated arrogance, and was most noticeable among leaders and senior officers. Questions that had been perpetually pushed off at a tangent, resurfaced. Will we always live by our swords? Can we withstand more wars . . . ? (Schiff, 1974, p. 299).

The surprise attack on October 6, 1973 by the armies of Egypt and Syria was Israel’s Pearl Harbor. But unlike the U.S., which recovered from the shock and went on within four years to become the unquestioned global power of 1945, the October 1973 failure was just the first in a series of reversals and retreats which included the diplomatic defeats of 1974–5, economic problems which led to growing dependence on the U.S. and a general malaise among Israelis.

The 1973 War was the worst trauma that political Zionism experi-

enced until the Palestinian uprising of 1987. While the 1967 War was regarded by many triumphant Israelis as the final victory, the last war in the Middle East, the 1973 War showed that the conflict was by no means over, and that more wars were to be expected, costlier and more discouraging as time wore on. On October 6, 1973, Israel experienced a sudden switch from an intoxication with power to a fear of annihilation.

The loss of confidence among the Israeli elite was devastating. Golda Meir, the prime minister during the war, was on the verge of suicide but rejected the idea out of a sense of responsibility, realizing the effect it would have on popular morale. But, she said, "my real life ended then already. We went on, and nobody noticed, because we had no choice" (quoted in Nakdimon, 1982, p. 144).

Among the people, I don't find depression. Much worse. I find fatalism, in the form of questions. Is this our life? Will this go on? We will have sons who will always be sacrificed to the state's survival . . . (MAPAM leader Yaacov Hazan at the end of the 1973 War, quoted in Nakdimon, 1983, p. 11).

The triumph of 1967 caused many Israelis to confuse military superiority, which they have continued to enjoy, with acceptance by the Arab world. The 1973 War was a clear proof of continuing Arab enmity, totally unaffected by Israeli victories on the battlefield. But the Arabs also proved that they could carry out previously unimaginable military actions. They were able to plan a large-scale offensive, one of the largest in history, involving the coordination of two armies on two fronts, while successfully deceiving Israeli intelligence. This was the most serious shock. "The Arabs broke the fear barrier. They weren't victorious but, for the first time, they didn't fail . . . After the earthquake of October 1973, Israel must be much more cautious" (Schiff, 1974, p. 314).

THE ISRAELI MALAISE AND ITS CAUSES

"The 1973 War, while won by us in the sense that we survived it, was a strategic defeat from which we have not recovered . . . The rising wave of Zionism is retreating" (Sharett, 1980, p. 59). The October War was followed by an internal political crisis, by a change in government in 1977, by an increasing economic crisis, by the disastrous Lebanon invasion of 1982-5, and by the intifada. "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him" (Amos 5:19). The words of an Old Testament prophet seemed to match the subjective feelings of many Israelis.

Israel has been losing its self-confidence as one crisis led to another and every attempt at a solution seemed to make things worse. The Israeli mood since 1973, more so since the Lebanon war of 1982-5, and even more so since the start of the Palestinian uprising in 1987, has been one of fatigue and frustration.

In Israel, part of the national ethos is the idea of being a unique historical experiment, still being carried out, with the final results too early to tell. Among Israelis, however, there has been more readiness to conclude that the experiment has failed, and a terrible, fatal error has been committed. The problems are serious and profound; they are basic and structural. Recognizing that leads to growing disillusionment, depression and disenchantment.

There are two reasons for the current crisis:

1. The continuing threat of war with Arab nations, which presents the prospect of death and destruction.
2. The Palestinians, who are transforming themselves from victims to enemies.

The realistic threat of an enemy and the cry of a victim-enemy are the main facts of Israeli political consciousness. The crisis is totally different from most other political crises in the world; it is one of survival. In 1973, the illusion of invulnerability had been shattered and Israeli leaders were speaking about "The End" of the Third Jewish Commonwealth.

This terminology of demise, not just decline or crisis, brought to the surface the question of collective mortality which has been on the minds of Israelis ever since. What we see today is the unavoidable crisis of Zionism as it faces the unending opposition of the natives. The chickens are coming home to roost.

The secret of Israel's survival so far has been its technological and military superiority over Arab West Asia. More recent developments, especially since the 1973 War and the Lebanon war of 1982-5, have raised doubts about this superiority. The growing Palestinian resistance to Zionism is never far from everyone's mind.

Israelis want to keep the world as they know and like it, the only world in which they can survive. With interminable fighting and "strategic" dead ends, such as the 1973 War and the Lebanon war, Israelis have become more cynical and more desperate about their fate. And who can blame them? If all they have to look forward to is more fighting and hollow victories, their behavior becomes more understandable.

THE PALESTINIAN AWAKENING

To understand the history of the Palestinians as the victims of Zionism, we may look at the history of Native Americans (Brown, 1970), where another history of a population deemed surplus by another group of settlers has been played out. The Palestinians were supposed to share the fate of Aborigines in Australia, Maoris in New Zealand, native Hawaiians and Native Americans, to join the list of victims. The natives represented a pre-industrial culture; the settlers were Europeans, representing the advantages of industrial society. Victimizing this peasant, indigenous population was another assault on the Third World.

The Palestinian tragedy becomes another example of European colonization, which turns out to be the greatest disaster in the history of the natives. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is part of a global war between the First and the Third World, or the North-South struggle.

Will the Palestinians be like the defeated natives in other historical cases of settler colonialism, like Native Americans, Maoris or Aborigines in Australia? Of course, Palestinians are different from and luckier than other indigenous groups because their dispossession has occurred so recently, and during the historical era of official decolonization.

Anti-colonialist struggles everywhere have become the inspiration for the Palestinians. They have been watching events in Algeria, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Following decolonization everywhere in the world, Palestinians can conduct their struggle in a completely changed international atmosphere. The rise of the Third World meant a changed attitude in the West, at least on a public level. The natives can no longer be considered inherently inferior, fit only to be governed by Europeans. This kind of discourse has disappeared, and, following decolonization, guilt feelings about the colonialist past have surfaced. The rights of oppressed natives of Australia, New Zealand and North America are increasingly recognized. The Palestinians have come to be seen as being among the victims of colonialism. The world has come to think of them, to consider them, to remember them constantly. The world has not yet given them their place in the sun. An Afrikaner supporter of apartheid says: "There's a lot of talk about these natives in the world today . . . I ask myself why. Is it something in this century? It wasn't always so" (Lelyveld, 1985, p. 52). Some Israelis are asking the same question. It wasn't like that 30 years ago. Nobody remembered the natives then.

LOOKING BACK

When we look back on it, it seems incredible. How could anybody imagine that history would not catch up? How did they think they could get away with it? Today it seems fantastic, but we have to recall that colonialism did succeed to a large extent. The weakness of easily divided and conquered natives, so helpless and disorganized, led to the feeling, in 1948 or even before, that they would disappear from reality and from memory, that the world's consciousness will be cleansed of them forever. Between 1948 and 1967, the natives almost disappeared.

The question for the Palestinians, for a long time, was whether they could ever recover and regain any influence over their collective destiny. Today they have returned from oblivion, to exercise the veto power of the oppressed. Through their mere existence they keep awareness and guilt alive. They have not disappeared and they have not been completely forgotten. In West Asia, the Palestinians are the local spoilers of the right and proper order. What can they do? They can spoil the joy of victory for those who left them homeless. They can remind us of the bitter taste of defeat in the midst of joyous victory. They can practice the revenge of the weak, the humiliated, the dispossessed.

As one Palestinian leader said to Israeli representatives in 1949:

They will be on the lookout for an opportunity to bounce back and destroy your security; they will remain forever, infiltrating your borders, chasing and getting chased, killing and getting killed, stealing and getting robbed . . . Forever is a long time for you to live without any feeling of security. (Quoted in Flapan, 1987, p. 228.)

THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE PALESTINIANS

Don't know why I now
Must turn into
A Mau Mau
And lift my hand
Against my fellow man
To live on my own land.

Langston Hughes (1959)

In terms of the history of Zionism the Palestinians have developed from a nuisance to an obstacle — and now to a real enemy. In 1939, the Palestinian revolt which started in 1936 was defeated and the leadership destroyed. That led to the disaster of 1948. After 1948, the Zionist dream called for the natives to leave the stage of history and

disappear. They were expected to vanish into oblivion. Instead they became the spoilers. Following a total defeat and disintegration in 1948, they have refused to disappear quietly. They have always been a party to the events in the Middle East, at least as spoilers or catalysts. They played a major role in the 1948–9 War and then a role in the events preceding the 1956 Suez invasion. They played a similar role before the 1967 War. The 1982 Lebanon invasion was an Israeli war against the Palestinians, designed to stem the rise of the Palestinian national movement. Before 1967, there was only “the refugee problem,” recognized by the UN and expected eventually to go away. Then, in 1968, the Palestinians were featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. This was a symbolic historical turning point.

From total unknowns they had become an entity about whom the whole world was concerned. The only similar phenomenon is the miraculous success of Zionism. The goal of Palestinian leadership since the 1960s has been to put their people back on the stage of history, and they have succeeded. The disenfranchised Palestinians started to fight in the diplomatic arena and they have done well.

IDEOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO THE CRISIS

A popular refrain in speeches defending Zionism is that of the Good Old Days of “early Zionism” in its pristine purity, before the present reality of Israel was clearly visible. We often hear the claim that the current or recent problems are distortions and corruptions of Zionism’s original ideas. Only a few suggest that today’s Zionism stems directly from its earlier ideas and actions.

The present crisis leads liberal Zionists to ask where and when things began to go wrong with the movement and what actually went wrong. The liberal answer is what should be called a two-stage theory of the history of Zionism. Stage one was a time of idealism, humanism and socialism. Stage two, which we are all living in now, is a time of decline, corruption and the disappearance of idealism. The present is a special chapter in Zionist history to be filed away as the new dark ages. The question is: when did stage one end and stage two begin? The liberal theory, known for short as the GOD (Good Old Days), offers us several answers. One school of thought, the most radical, claims that it all started in 1948 with the founding of the state. A second school, the most popular, argues that stage two, the loss of innocence, started in 1967. This argument has reached the level of accepted wisdom, which we encounter every day in the Western media.

The 1967 argument, which has become the yardstick for what is

known as liberal Zionism or left Zionism in Israel and abroad, states that Israel took a tragic turn for the worse in its history. This detour occurred in 1967, with the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, populated by more than one million Palestinians. Another version of the same claim specifies that things only started going wrong in Israel in 1977. What happened in 1977 was that Labor Zionism (no longer socialist Zionism, but just “labor,” which means the party supported by those who are better off), lost control in an election to the Likud, a right-wing bloc.

According to this variety of the Good Old Days theory, until then everything had been wonderful. There was a pre-1977 Israel, democratic and progressive, because Labor Zionism embodied a liberal, if not radical, ideology. The right-wing governments since 1977 have led Israel off-course. The latest school of thought claims that things started declining after the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, initiated by the Likud government (but cheered on by the patriotic Labor Party).

The continuity in the history of Zionism before and after 1967 lies in the essential idea of denying the basic political and human rights of the natives. This had been an integral part of the Zionist program from 1897, expressed many times in the Good Old Days of the 1920s and 1930s. It was clearly the basis for Israeli policies towards the Palestinians between 1948 and 1967. Policies after 1967 are a continuation of the same old tradition. From 1880 and until 1948 there was a conflict in Palestine between natives and Zionist settlers. In 1948 the natives disappeared from official consciousness, and Israel could claim that the issue was the enmity of neighboring states, a “normal” conflict between nations, like the historical conflict between France and Germany. There was also a minor problem with an “Arab minority” in Israel. Some Israelis are trying to make the same claim today, but to do so is getting harder. Today it is a problem with the Palestinians and with an Arab majority in West Asia.

Between 1948 and 1967, the natives were invisible. After 1967, the natives again became part of the picture and the conflict. Ever since 1967 the Palestinian presence has become less deniable with every passing day. This is what the Good Old Days were about — immunity from the Palestinian claim to political rights and human presence. The Good Old Days of Zionism were good because the positive side of the enterprise was more visible and the oppressive side less so. The suffering and oppression of Jews in Europe, and their victimization, were clear and obvious. The injustice done to the Palestinians was less obvious, at least to Jewish and Western eyes. Those who miss the Good Old Days of good Zionism before 1948, or 1967 or 1977, miss this feeling of absolute justice, as struggling, and then victorious

Zionism was proving its worth in creating a Jewish revival.

Things looked great between 1948 and 1967, when colonialism was quietly triumphant and its reality hidden. Since then the colonialist nature of the Zionist enterprise has resurfaced and cannot be denied. What has changed since 1967 is that the reality of colonialism has become harder to conceal. While the confrontation with the Palestinians could be repressed from Israeli and Western consciousness between 1948 and 1967, and the Palestinians could be relegated to the status of "refugees," the 1967 War changed all that. It re-opened the real issues. The confrontation with the natives again became the main problem, and the only one. What Israeli liberals miss about pre-1967 Israel is the presumed absence of the natives.

Israel in 1967 only had 300,000 Palestinian residents, a real minority, defeated and subdued. The natives had resurfaced in 1967 because the occupation of more Arab territory had brought most of the Palestinian people under Israeli rule. If the colonialist question was hidden from view between 1948 and 1967, it has come into full bloom since 1967 and its reality cannot be denied. The situation has become a replay of the one in Palestine before 1948. The natives were being dispossessed again, except that this time Zionism had even more power than before; but the historical process of decolonization has sensitized the world, even the West, to the possibility that the natives had some basic, inalienable rights. Hiding the facts of Zionism, the facts of dispossession and oppression became more difficult.

The post-1967 occupation involved more direct oppression, and more direct dispossession, of more Palestinians. After 1948, only 150,000 Palestinians remained in Israel. The rest became invisible "refugees" across its borders, so the fate and the humanity of the Palestinians could have been deliberately denied or innocently ignored. No such denial or ignorance was possible after 1967. The Palestinians have again become part of the living reality of Zionism, and the history of Zionism started repeating itself. The existence of Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza became a problem to be resolved through dispossession and control, carried out in blunt and brutal ways.

The contemporary Israeli malaise has been caused by the failure of the colonialist enterprise. The natives have returned. The Palestinians, counted as dead in 1949, are now alive, haunting every minute of Israeli existence. Frustration with the Palestinians, the spoilers of the dream, has been growing since 1967 and 1973. Why didn't they go away? Things looked great after 1967. The Zionist dream seemed to be safe and secure for a while. Then the Palestinians resumed playing the role of spoilers and with the passage of time did it more successfully.

There was a new candor in post-1967 Israeli political discourse:

There is no Zionist settlement, and there is no Jewish State without displacing Arabs and without confiscating lands and fencing them off . . . Overt and courageous talk, and clarification of the Zionist conception of the world upon which the State was founded may indeed expose the government to strong criticism at home and to vicious attacks abroad. In spite of that, openness, at home and abroad, will dissipate misunderstandings and tear apart the cover of hypocrisy which envelops many of our actions and failures (Ben-Porat, 1972).

The burden and shame of the occupation since 1967, so touted by liberals, are actually the reality of oppression and dispossession which they would rather not face. The yearning for the Good Old Days reflects the true anguish over something that went terribly wrong. Up to a certain point, Israeli history was a story of modest success and hope. Then it became a nightmare with no exit. The new nostalgia reflects the loss of a false innocence.

Given the initial aims of the movement, it could not have been otherwise. Once the premises were laid down, the inexorable logic of history determined the consequences. Wanting to create a purely Jewish, or predominantly Jewish, state in an Arab Palestine in the twentieth century could not but lead to a colonial type situation and to the development (completely normal, sociologically speaking) of a racist state of mind, and in the final analysis to a military confrontation between the two ethnic groups (Rodinson, 1973, p. 77).

The logic of West Bank settlement is the logic of classical Zionism. If Jews have the rights, and all the rights, to Palestine, why should they settle in the Galilee and not in Nablus? Kibbutzim in the Galilee have been built on Arab land, so what is the difference? The problem with raising this logical question is that while for some people it will reinforce faith, for others it will lead to more doubts and further questioning.

Ever since 1967 the conflict has begun to look like what it really is: not a dispute among neighboring nations, or between an established state and outside guerrillas, as Israel tried to present it to the world after 1948, but as a colonial struggle between two peoples living in the same territory. Today it is 3.5 million Israelis with special privileges versus 2.3 million Palestinians who are defined as foreigners. But both groups live within a fairly small piece of land and interact daily. The Israelis are the majority, the rulers, the economic exploiters. Before

1967, Palestinians in Israel were just "Arabs." Since 1967, they have become Palestinians, part of the Palestinian people.

It is often said that Israelis have become insensitive to injustices as a result of the growing brutalization of life in Israel since 1967, with the continuing occupation of Arab territories. This process of brutalization and learned insensitivity started long before that, with the growing success of political Zionism in dispossessing the Palestinians. The aftermath of the 1967 War, which included the continued occupation of Arab territories and continued Palestinian resistance, accelerated it.

One corollary of the Good Old Days theory is a prophetic call that always follows the analysis, a call for a return to the mythical past, either to the original formulations of Zionist thinkers or to the earlier stage of purity in practice. What the liberals miss and mourn is the enchanted world of their childhood, in which the presence of the natives and the reality of colonialism could be denied. The feeling of moral superiority disappeared when the natives came back after 1967. In the GOD, propaganda worked; now reality is catching up.

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

December 9, 1987, the starting date of the Palestinian uprising, universally known today as the intifada, was a dark day in Israel's history. It marked the coming of a great shock to Israel's body politic. The blow may be more severe than the earthquake of October 6, 1973 because it sent the whole Zionist movement, an amazing success story almost 100 years old, back to square one of its history.

Until late 1987, controlling the West Bank and Gaza in military terms was just as easy as dealing with native resistance has been throughout most of Zionist history. There was much discussion of the *de facto* annexation of the occupied territories, never to be reversed. If there ever was such an annexation, the intifada put a clear end to it. The euphemisms of "co-existence" have been replaced by the reality of division and oppression. The intifada means the end of Israeli illusions about the low cost of denying Palestinian rights and about avoiding contact with Israel's real enemies and partners in any settlement.

The intifada has been a major strategic defeat, much greater than any previous setback in the history of Zionism. The Palestinians were never considered a strategic threat, only a nuisance; now they have managed to deal Israel a major defeat, a complete surprise. Israeli strategic thinkers are still in a state of shock because the great arsenal of advanced and nuclear weapons is of no use in the Intifada War, neither is the conventional army. Another Third World liberation

movement proves to be an impossible challenge to the First World.

The Palestinian uprising has changed Israel's historical situation dramatically and completely. The intifada is a people's war in the best tradition of other anti-colonialist struggles. This struggle has changed both the reality and the image of Israelis and Palestinians. After 100 years of successful colonization, Zionism has been facing the most serious challenge in its history. In the 1950s and 1960s, Israel had reason to worry about Egypt and Nasserism, the latter being a movement that seemed to conquer the whole Arab world. Since then Israel has had to worry about Arab regular armies, those of Syria and Iraq. Today it has to worry about Palestinian children armed with stones. Israel's nuclear weapons, and its chemical and biological arsenal, are of no use in the Intifada War. Conventional military means and elite counter-insurgency units are of no use either.

THE ISRAELI CATCH 22

Most Israelis today, who are natives under the age of 35, are victims of the situation created by Zionism. "What do you want from me? I was born here. I didn't create this place. I was born into it. It's my home. What do you want me to do? I don't know any other place, any other world. Why should I be punished for things that happened before I was born, things beyond my control? What if you are just born into this, what can you do?"

We often hear that young Israelis are more "hawkish." Why? Young Israelis face a real crisis because they are aware of the annoying presence of the natives, who are supposed to be foreigners, who do not belong here and still demand rights. "Where did they come from?" they ask. They see the Palestinians as foreigners who should move away. Left-wing rhetoric, with its built-in hypocrisy, is alien to today's youth. Right-wing logic is honest and compelling. Young people in Israel react to the hypocrisy of their elders, who may talk about democracy but practice colonialism. They also understand that true democracy is the end of Zionism. The law of the jungle philosophy is attractive because it fits their reality. They want to keep the world as they know and like it, the only world they know.

The real problem, the only problem for Zionism, is that of the natives. The problem facing it, and the one which has been facing it for the past 100 years, is that of the native population of the Middle East. It is the natives, in their continued existence and resistance, who will determine the future of Israel. The shadow of the native falls everywhere and darkens the dawn of every new day.

More than a generation ago, Talmon (1965, p. 267) defined the

Israeli predicament as that of being “the last of the white settlers in Asia, after the European imperialists and colonisers had made their exit.” To define the problem facing the Israeli settlers, we can use the term that used to be so current in South Africa — “the native question.” Who would have believed in 1930 or 1940 or 1960 that this would be Israel’s greatest difficulty? The crisis started when history finally caught up with Zionism. This is a collision with reality that Israelis wanted to avoid. And remember that the Palestinians were invisible only 30 years ago. Today Israelis feel trapped. The natives are still here and the memory of the injustice done to them is still alive.

The existential problem, that of survival, overrides whatever other conflicts, difficulties or divisions may exist within Israeli society. Rich and poor, religious and secular face the same threat of annihilation. Internal conflicts are real and exist in Israel, as in other places, but they all pale in comparison with the external conflict. Growing out of the colonialist situation, the external conflict affects every other social conflict because it determines the whole structure of the state.

The moral question of the injustice being done to the natives was not raised as long as the natives were weak and did not present a realistic challenge. When Zionism seemed to be a success there were few murmurings about its morality. The discussion, in whispered tones, of the morality of Zionism started when the continuing resistance of the natives created a pragmatic crisis. Now the picture is one of no success and no moral justification. Not only can Israelis look forward to more troubles and more bloodshed, but they are guilty of a grave injustice. Their beloved home was built at the expense of others, and the cost of domination is their own bondage to the act of oppression. That is the Israeli condition. The threat of war or terrorism is a practical issue; the cry of the victims is a moral one. The problem has been that of finding justification for the past and hope for the future. As an Israeli, you feel the need to defend the system, to defend your life: so there are a few self-evident truths you will never want to articulate.

The Crisis: Justifying the Original Sin

An often-voiced Israeli demand is for the Arabs (or the Arab side in a particular case) to recognize Israel's right to exist. This demand is understandable and it points to the heart of the issue. Israelis want and need it desperately because of their precarious position in justifying the Zionist enterprise.

There is clearly no need to justify the Zionist dream, the desire for relief from Jewish suffering. Nobody can fault the idea of improving the lot of oppressed Jews in Europe of the nineteenth century. Zionism, at the level of an abstract idea of Jewish sovereignty and territorial concentration, cannot be faulted. We can ask whether it is practical but we cannot fault its morality. The trouble with Zionism starts when it lands, so to speak, in Palestine. What has to be justified is the injustice to the Palestinians caused by Zionism, the dispossession and victimization of a whole people. There is clearly a wrong here, a wrong which creates the need for justification.

THE QUESTION OF HINDSIGHT JUDGEMENT

We often state that the deeds and ideals of individuals living in the nineteenth century cannot be judged by our own standards because they were creatures of their own time and place. The same is being said of individuals living 50 or 60 years ago. How can we judge them, enjoying our hindsight and our current ideals? They had good intentions. They believed in a cause. This injustice, and its native victims, have been invisible throughout most of the twentieth century to most Westerners and some Israelis. Today we see things differently. Now the injustice is clear and visible. Are we imposing our own contemporary standards on the past? Of course: we always do that, and we always ask today's questions about past events.

A common argument against judging others in history is determinism. We are all victims of objective, stronger forces; there is no room for judgement. But this becomes a kind of a perpetual motion machine. We are also the creatures of our own time and place, so how can anybody be judged? This refusal to pass judgement, based on absolute determinism and no free will, leads to an infinite regress. We are all victims of our formative years and environment but we must judge, and be judged, if we do not want to abandon morality altogether. We cannot speak to the dead to tell them of our judgement — but we can try to influence the living.

Zionism's goal was lofty. For its adherents, the goal sanctified and justified the means. It was a case of a just cause, good intentions and evil means. What has to be justified is not only what has been done — past injustice — but the continuation today of the same system. What has to be justified in Zionist praxis is expressed by the story of Kibbutz Sasa, founded during the 1948–9 War in the Arab village of the same name. In the spring of 1949, as the members of the young kibbutz were preparing to celebrate Passover, one of them wrote:

Why are we celebrating our holiday in an Arab village? . . . Once there was an Arab village here. The clouds of Sasa floated high over other people one year ago. The fields of Sasa today were tended by others — one year ago. The men worked their plots and tended their flocks while women busied themselves at baking their bread. The cries and tears of children of others were heard in Sasa one year ago. And when we came the desolation of their lives cried to us through the ruins they left behind. Cried to us and reached our hearts, colored our everyday lives . . . So we search for justification for the right to be here . . . It isn't difficult to imagine how life must have been. Here a slipper, there a mirror, here a sack of grain, there a family portrait, a child's toy . . . What gives us the right to reap the fruits of trees we have not planted, to take shelter in houses we have not built . . . On what moral grounds shall we stand when we take ourselves to court? (Quoted in Hasson, 1985, p. 5.)

Justifications for the injustice involved in Zionism have been many and varied. Sometimes what we get are excuses, not justifications. The excuses, which are encountered often enough in our daily lives, usually take the following forms:

- a) Denial — “I didn't do it.”
- b) Reduction — “It wasn't so bad.”
- c) “Yes, but . . .”

These three kinds of excuses have become the three common defenses

of Zionism. We can easily observe that throughout the history of Zionism, there has been a movement from (a) to (c) on the part of defenders and justifiers of the faith. Two popular forms of reduction are the moral calculus (in which the lesser injustice, committed against the first party is weighed against the greater injustice committed against the second party), and the special pleading, in which the cause (in this case Zionism) becomes the only great exception to universal rules and general principles which should be applied in every other case. Since special pleading cannot be taken seriously, we have to examine the justifications by looking at them as universal rules, to see if they are acceptable as such.

THE REFUSAL TO JUSTIFY

Deep (or not so deep) down, every Zionist is aware of the basic immorality of the way Zionism has acted towards the natives. He or she may cover it up by completely avoiding moral questions because any discussion of moral principles will uncover and undermine the present structure of domination. Political debate in Israel is limited by the avoidance of the discussion of basic principles. Such discussion, even if it starts with a remote, seemingly abstract question, will end by dealing with the question of the morality of Zionism. Tactical debates are welcome, but not discussion of basic principles. Certain basic questions cannot be discussed openly in Israel. When they are raised, the answer is silence.

Exposing immorality may lead to outrage; it may also result in cynicism. In Israel one common outcome is complete cynicism, for which Israelis have become famous. Cynicism becomes the only defense that can shield them from the consequences of their own humanity: if they are less than completely cynical, they will have to examine their own situation in a devastating, radical way and change their lives in revolutionary directions. Cynicism can be regarded as the absence of any ideology, but it can also be a component of ideology. Listening to the voice of conscience is dangerous. It is easier and safer to silence it. In this case the injustice is so clear it cannot be countenanced.

What do Israeli and foreign supporters of Zionism say when they are asked (or forced) to explain and justify? They would rather not answer, and have to be confronted. We are going to survey some of the common arguments used to justify the original sin against the Palestinians. Israelis are reticent about using most of them, and reduced to relying on "the world is a jungle" argument and the "religious" argument (see below), when pushed against the wall.

THE INHERITANCE CLAIM

The inheritance claim proposes that contemporary Jews, as the descendants of ancient historical Jews, are the heirs to ancient Jewish territory, history and culture. This is a secular argument, relying on claims which are described as objective and historical. The aim of Zionism is the restoration of Jewish sovereignty to its status 2,000 years ago. Zionism does not advocate an overhauling of the total world situation in the same way. It does not advocate the restoration of the Roman empire. Since nobody can prove ties to people who lived 2,000 years ago, Zionism can be faced with other claimants to the same inheritance. Recently, some Palestinians have claimed descent from the ancient inhabitants of Palestine 3,000 years ago!

The contemporary Black Hebrews offer us the perfect parody on Zionism. These black Americans from Chicago are making something which Zionism has legitimized, a claim in the vein of Zionist "historical rights." The Black Hebrews accept the Zionist principle of inheritance and "historical rights." They simply state that they are the real descendants of the ancient owners of the piece of real estate known today as Israel. Now both Zionists and Palestinians face unexpected competition from a group which wishes to supplant them both. This new contender is a group of black Americans, who claim to be the real Jews. Since they see themselves as the rightful heirs to the ancient owners, the Black Hebrews have moved to Israel and now plan to replace both Israelis and Palestinians.

ANTI-SEMITISM AS A JUSTIFICATION

The best defense of Zionism is offense, and the best way to mount such an offensive is to remind the world of the way it has been treating Jews for 2,000 years. The strongest, most popular argument in support of Zionism in Western political discourse is that of historical anti-Semitism and the persecution of Jews across the ages.

Claims in support of Zionism have been based, above all else, on the status of Diaspora Jews as the world's historical victims, Western civilization's sacrificial lambs. Jews have become the best-known group of victims in the West — and the victim image is most valuable for Zionist public relations efforts. Bringing up the past in this case serves to inculcate contemporary non-Jews with guilt feelings. The descendants of Crusaders and Nazis have to bear a responsibility for the crimes committed by their ancestors. One way in which they can atone for the collective guilt of all non-Jews is by supporting Zionism with enthusiasm.

The basic attitude of Zionism towards anti-Semitism is ambivalent. On the one hand, it is the basis, and the best justification for, the whole Zionist enterprise. Zionists love to point to anti-Semitic incidents as proof of the basic Zionist assumption about the permanence and immutability of hatred for the Jews. Zionism needs anti-Semitism as a permanent condition to justify itself and to induce migration to Israel. Anti-Semitism justifies Zionism, so instances of anti-Semitism past and present are celebrated and embraced as proof of Jews' destiny in the Diaspora.

On the other hand, the Zionist revolution and the creation of the state of Israel were supposed to change the status of the Jews once and for all, and reduce or eliminate anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, this has not happened; moreover, the state of Israel and its activities have become excuses for violence directed at Diaspora Jews. "A strong Israel was supposed to be the answer to anti-Semitism in the world . . . Instead there are times when it has become the cause" (Frankel, 1988, p. A19). Thus says Howard Squadron, the honorary president of the American Jewish Congress. Today Jews are attacked and synagogues are bombed because of Israel. There is a new image abroad of the diabolical Israeli, found behind every reactionary junta in the Third World. This image has given rise to a new variety of Third World anti-Semitism (see Beit-Hallahmi, 1987).

ANTI-SEMITISM TODAY

Since the nineteenth century, we have known two kinds of anti-Semitism. The first is the traditional complex of attitudes and stereotypes, part of European cultural heritage and folklore. The second is a modern secular and political ideology, but it can easily rely on the legacy of the first.

Anti-Semitism today can draw on a vast historical arsenal of ideas, images and stories. Contemporary anti-Semitic theories see Jews as involved in an international capitalist conspiracy, as rich bankers with big cigars, or in international communist conspiracies as dangerous revolutionaries. The best anti-Semitic theories cover all possibilities: they describe a two-pronged attack, with both communism and capitalism as Jewish schemes to control the world. Anti-Semitism has remained the "socialism of fools," likely to rear its ugly head in hard times among the victims of political and economic upheaval.

Until World War II, open expression of anti-Semitic stereotypes in jokes, cartoons and political commentary was acceptable in the West, to an extent that seems unbelievable today. In the U.S., postcards and cartoons expressing graphic and verbal anti-Semitic stereotypes were

common. Even political anti-Semitism was sometimes embraced by public figures. An example would be Henry Ford, who in his newspaper *The Dearborn Independent* published numerous articles about the Jewish conspiracy to control the world, and was mentioned by Adolf Hitler as an inspiration (Lacey, 1986).

Historical changes, among them the decline of religion and the Holocaust, have made many Diaspora Jews today free from open anti-Semitic displays. After the Holocaust, and with the growing strength of Jewish and Zionist organizations, direct expressions of anti-Semitism have become unacceptable, at least in public. Blacks, Arabs and the whole of the Third World have replaced Jews as objects of open abuse and prejudice. It is not that anti-Semitism has become totally unknown. Today we can find physical anti-Semitic incidents, such as attacks on synagogues or verbal attacks, all over the world from Romania to the U.S. White supremacists in the U.S. refer to the U.S. government as ZOG, the Zionist Occupation Government (Peterson, 1986), in keeping with past ideas about Jews controlling world governments.

Traditional, popular anti-Semitism has declined over the past 100 years because of the general decline of religion, but where religious traditions are still strong the legend of Jewish ritual murder lives on. Christianity is still a source of prejudice, because it defines Jews and sees them in religious terms as the competition. Christians are naturally affected by Biblical mythology, which they take to be historical truth. They perceive Israel and the Jews today as the same as those referred to in the scriptures. We can still hear individuals using the Biblical term Israelites, instead of Israelis. The use of such terminology is tied to Biblical stereotypes: these may be positive or negative, but are always unreal and irrelevant.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE ARAB WORLD

Classical anti-Semitic expressions can easily be found today in Arab countries and in public statements by Arab leaders. Initially, anti-Semitism was imported from Europe to the Arab world in the nineteenth century. The Christian idea of ritual murder also came from Europe in the nineteenth century, but its impact was limited. Today, the Arab world has become a major source of anti-Semitic literature. Fanned by the Israeli-Arab conflict, and by the ignorance and fanaticism of some Muslim clergy, the pronouncements that come from Arab sources are hard to believe. Saudi Arabia, a medieval monarchy dominated by Islamic tradition, plays a major role, publishing *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in a variety of editions,

among other accomplishments. Saudi representatives at meeting of international organizations distinguish themselves by repeating the oldest and craziest anti-Semitic accusations about Jews having to drink the blood of non-Jews. Ma'aruf Al-Dawalibi, counselor to the royal court in Riyadh, declared at a UN meeting on human rights in 1984 that Talmudic teachings oblige Jews to drink non-Jewish blood at least once a year (Rabi, 1985).

Other familiar anti-Semitic stereotypes are found in public pronouncements by official Arab representatives. Jordan's representative at the UN spoke in December 1980 about:

[a] cabal, which controls and manipulates the rest of humanity by controlling the money and wealth of the world . . . People like Lord Rothschild every day, in ironclad secrecy, decide to flash around the world how high the price of gold should be. (Quoted in Bauer, 1984, p. 28.)

Libya's Ambassador to the UN, Ali A. Treiki, said on December 8, 1983 at the General Assembly:

It is high time for the United Nations and the United States, in particular, to realize that the Jewish Zionists here in the United States attempt to destroy Americans. Look around New York. Who are the owners of pornographic film operations and houses? Is it not the Jews who are exploiting the American people and trying to debase them? If we succeed in eliminating that entity, we shall by the same token save the American and European peoples.

Such statements prove that, indeed, no distinctions are made between Zionists and Jews.

Such ideas, which have gone out of fashion in Europe, have found a new home in the Arab world. As always, when conflicts are defined in religious terms, we can expect the worst — and we get it. All over the Islamic world, the involvement of the clergy in politics means the expression of ancient prejudices of the wildest kind. Syria, though the most secular of Arab countries, is also the home of new anti-Semitic literature, drawing on old Christian ideas. Mustafa Tlas, the Syrian defense minister, is the proud author of a book called *The Matza of Zion* in which he retells the story of the 1840 Damascus blood libel. Two men were murdered in Damascus in May 1840, and 16 Jews were accused of murdering them for ritual purposes. According to General Tlas, this was no libel. The men were murdered because their blood was needed for the Yom Kippur matza. One must admit a certain degree of originality here, because Yom Kippur is a day of fasting, and the classical blood libel story is about Passover

when the unleavened bread is indeed eaten. General Tlas refers to the matza as "Zionist bread" and ties Jewish religious practices to Zionist policies. Only by studying the history of Judaism, according to the soldier-scholar, can we understand present-day Israel.

Such nonsense is undoubtedly written and published all over the world, but there are a few countries today where a national leader is responsible for them. The origins of Arab anti-Semitism can be found in a real conflict, and are not a matter of cultural prejudice. Still, it draws on cultural arsenals of anti-Semitism and religious animosity, whether Christian or Muslim.

THE OTHER SIDE: PHILO-SEMITISM AND PHILO-ISRAELISM

Even philo-Semitism is a way of keeping Jews separate; they are different and need special treatment. In love and hate, Jews remain outsiders, and Israelis share this traditional fate. We can find philo-Semitism in the First World today in the same nations that were historically the centers of anti-Semitism. It is undoubtedly related to guilt feelings, often deeply felt and sincere, over anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, and often results in unconditional support for Israel and Zionism.

We find admiration and support for Israel on the part of traditionally anti-Semitic groups, such as the Afrikaners of South Africa. Some right-wing anti-Semites admire Israel so much because it is so different from the picture described by anti-Semitic stereotypes. Israelis are not Jews and Jews are not Israelis, in reality and in the eyes of the anti-Semite. That is because Jews have been regarded, with some justification, as gentle, intellectual and liberal. Israelis, according to the new stereotype and in reality, are settlers, fighters and right-wingers. Thus, we can hate Jews and love Israelis.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND ANTI-ZIONISM

Tying opposition to Israel or to Zionism to anti-Semitism has become a great excuse and a favorite rhetorical device for the defenders of Zionism. Everybody speaking out against Israel or Zionism is labeled anti-Semitic, and thus all criticism is effectively silenced and blocked. This claim serves to delegitimize any criticism of Israel, except that coming from Zionist and Israeli sources.

When the Israeli government was attacked for the massacre of Palestinians in Beirut in September 1982, committed by Lebanese under Israeli command, the official reaction was to describe it as

another "blood libel" against the Jewish people. This brings to mind images of medieval mobs storming ghetto synagogues. The aim of this defense is to surround Zionism with a wall of immunity so that no rational discussion of its aims and implications is possible. Such an immunity may indeed be needed because Zionism seems indefensible by normal political standards.

The success of this strategy has been impressive. The terms anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist have become designations of illegitimacy in Western media. For defenders of Zionism, it is easy and self-serving to claim that anti-Zionism today is merely an extension of historical anti-Semitism. According to this claim, with the development of the Zionist movement and the creation of Israel, the old ideological anti-Semitism has taken the form of anti-Zionism, coming from those who oppose Israel politically. Any opposition to Zionism is anti-Semitic, and the acceptance of Zionism is the real test for humanism and liberalism.

ANTI-SEMITISM BY DEFINITION

If you define an identity between Jews and the state of Israel, then any attack on one is an attack on the other. Zionist propagandists present a mathematical equation of Jewishness-Judaism-Zionism-Jews-Israel. If this is so, how can an anti-Zionist not be an anti-Semite? Any criticism of Israel is anti-Semitism, on the strength of this formula. If the official position of the Israeli government is that Israel is the state of the Jewish people, and not just of its citizens, then it is no surprise that Jews all over the world are viewed as tied to Israel politically, and can even be blamed for what Israel does without consulting them. In reality, Diaspora Jews have little or no influence in Israel, and do not determine Israeli policy. If Israel claims to represent all Jews and speak for them, this may create anti-Semitism and claims of double (or rather single) loyalty. The official Israeli claim about representing the Jewish people encourages the tendency of people outside Israel to identify Jews with Israel and to identify Israel with the Jews they know around them.

ARAB OPPOSITION AS ANTI-SEMITISM

In political speeches and scholarly writings, Arab hostility to Israel, and Palestinian enmity, have been described as a continuation of historical anti-Semitism and even Nazi genocide. This argument started early in the history of Zionism in Palestine, when Palestinian violence was interpreted as identical to traditional European anti-

Semitism. The Arabs were just like the Poles and the Cossacks, carrying out pogroms against Jews because they were Jews.

THE REALITY OF ANTI-SEMITISM

Zionism has been right in its diagnosis. Anti-Semitism is part of the Western heritage, nurtured by Christian mythology. The culture, the language and the traditions of many nations in the world today still encompass the legacy of historical anti-Semitism. The special position of Jews in Christian mythology is still an obstacle on the road to a rational discussion of Jews, Zionism and Israel today. Traditional views of Jews must have an effect on contemporary discussions of Zionism and Israel, since they are such an integral part of European culture.

Anti-Semitism is a living reality, not only because contemporary terrorists target synagogues in the Diaspora for their attacks, all in the name of anti-Zionism. The legacy of anti-Semitism does play a role in criticisms of Israel; if not in its motivation, then often in ideas and language. A 1982 publication in Sweden stated that: "To close your eyes to the fact that Judaism is a martial, tribal religion means that you do not understand why Zionism is so fanatic" (quoted in Bauer, 1984, p. 29). This statement was made in the context of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which had absolutely nothing to do with Judaism.

Zionism is right in claiming that anti-Semitism has not disappeared. Today it is much weakened by secularization, democratic ideals and philo-Semitism. Zionism is correct in recognizing that, but dishonest in using it to avoid serious debate. The existence of historical nineteenth century anti-Semitism can explain, and even justify, the genesis of Zionism in Europe. It cannot justify any of the wrongs committed by Zionism against the Palestinians.

THE HOLOCAUST AS EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATION

Auschwitz, Maidanek, Dachau, Buchenwald and Treblinka are names etched forever in the world's consciousness as horrifying examples of human inhumanity. In these locations, and many others, death came not as a part of war but as a calculated effort at extermination. They were death factories, meticulously and efficiently organized: the trains which carried the victims to the death camps always left on time. The horror remains incomprehensible to those who did not witness it, and even to many who were there. Such barbarism in the twentieth century seems beyond human imagination or understanding. But the

Nazis did not come from outer space: they were civilized Europeans. The last war on European soil, the end of 1,000 years of upheavals in Europe, included this final convulsion of unimaginable hatred, carried out in cold blood. Genocidal fascism, the final nightmare of European history, has been a shocking and baffling event. But it was still a part of history, to be examined like any other historical event.

In Nazi Germany, systematic extermination started even before the beginning of World War II in 1939, with the killing of Germans who were mentally ill or retarded, in order to preserve racial quality and purity. The first gas chambers were created for this program, but individuals were also exterminated by other means and the death toll was at least 100,000. The total number of civilian victims of Nazi genocidal plans was around 15 million, including several million Russians, 2 million Poles, 500,000 gypsies, and others judged to be of inferior racial stock. The extermination effort was based not on prejudice, but on the belief in biological races, with some inferior to others. To ensure the quality of human stock, the inferior races had to be eliminated.

While there were other victims, such as communists, Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals, Jews (as well as Gypsies, on a smaller scale) were singled out. A total extermination program existed for them alone. From Oslo to Athens and from Kiev to Bordeaux, just being Jewish meant a death warrant. As one ghetto fighter put it: "I have never met a non-Jew trying to be taken for a Jew in order to escape the burning ghetto" (Grossman, 1987, p. 12). Poles were killed, but no Pole ever tried to pass for a Jew to save his life. The Nazi extermination program was efficient: almost one-third of the world's Jews were murdered.

THE VINDICATION OF ZIONISM

Ben-Gurion said in December 1942, when he first realized what was happening in Europe:

We are the only people in the world left unprotected . . . Only our children, and our women, our sisters and our old people are singled out to be buried alive in graves they themselves dig, to burn in crematoria, to be stampeded and to be murdered by machine guns . . . for one failing only . . . because Jews do not have a state, there is no Jewish army, no Jewish independence and no homeland. (Quoted in Tevet, 1987, p. 87.)

Did not Zionism almost predict the coming of the Holocaust when it stated that anti-Semitism was ineradicable and any security in the

Diaspora only temporary? Herzl and other nineteenth century Zionist leaders diagnosed anti-Semitism as unchanging and constant, despite the appearance of liberalism among gentiles. The Holocaust proved they were right. The European Holocaust was indeed a tragic vindication of Zionism's claims about the unchanging nature of anti-Semitism, despite all the appearances of emancipation and openness. Herzl almost predicted the Holocaust of the 1940s by suggesting that even in the most enlightened and liberal countries of Europe, anti-Semitism was a dormant subterranean monster, ready to strike at any time. The horrors of Nazi genocide seemed to confirm all the Zionist claims about the implacability and irrationality of anti-Semitism in Europe. The Holocaust proved again that non-Jews cannot be trusted. After 1945 there was no need to prove that anti-Semitism was real. It was the culmination of all persecutions, the greatest pogrom. The most significant fact about the Holocaust is that it happened in the twentieth century, in civilized Europe, a century after the coming of emancipation and assimilation.

The consequences of the Holocaust for Zionism as a political movement were paradoxical. The most important pool of potential Zionists and immigrants to Palestine was lost, but so were the most significant communities of active non-Zionists. Their disappearance left Zionism as the only well-organized option for Jewish political action. Thus the Holocaust was not only an historical vindication of Zionism, but also a practical victory. The non-Zionist alternative movements were largely wiped out. After 1945, Zionism entered Western consciousness with renewed force and conviction, with the Holocaust not only a political victory but a most persuasive justification. Nothing can serve to induce guilt feelings in contemporary non-Jews as well as the memory of the Nazi massacre of European Jewry.

THE HOLOCAUST INDUSTRY

Around this terrible event, the greatest disaster in Jewish history, a whole propaganda industry has grown. Today, thousands are making a living off the memory of the Holocaust, using it as a source of gain and political advantage. The Holocaust has become a universally acclaimed cause, and very few scholars, writers or celebrities would say no when invited to join another new board for another institution commemorating its victims.

The centrality of the Holocaust in U.S. Jewish culture and public life is a recent development. The Holocaust did not play a major role in Jewish organizations and activities until the 1970s (see Saidel, 1984). Since then, we can speak of a focus on the Holocaust in terms

of Jewish identity and political activities. We can even speak, without too much cynicism, of a Holocaust industry. In 1980, the U.S. Congress voted to create the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council to remember the victims. The Council is mandated to sponsor annual national and local observances, Days of Remembrance, and to create the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, recently opened in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council succeeded the Holocaust Commission, appointed by President Jimmy Carter, to explore ways of commemorating the victims. In addition to the federal effort, there are hundreds of local and regional commissions, and hundreds of regional and local monuments and museums being built. The Holocaust is now a major academic subject taught at high schools and universities all over the U.S.

The Holocaust became a unifying theme for Jewish identity because it is such a clear-cut issue. Jews were victims: it is as simple as that. The reason the Holocaust has become so prominent in U.S. Jewish culture and in apologies for Zionism is that it enables the apologists to present Jews as pure victims, which is what they were. The Holocaust industry reaffirms the image of Jews as victims, subject to lethal anti-Semitism. The purity of victimhood, which is real, is not marred by any guilt or involvement, and so for some Jews it became identity, religion and immunity.

It becomes a source of total immunity for insecure Jews. "Let's remind them that we are the purest of victims so that we will never be attacked." The uniqueness of Jews as the eternal and total victims is the best defense from anti-Semitism. The memory of the Holocaust has been used by Diaspora Jews as a defense against potential anti-Semitism and against any criticism of Jews and Jewry. This aggressive defense reflects a basic, persistent insecurity.

Speaking about the Holocaust is the best way to silence any critical voice from speaking out against Israel or Zionism. Bringing up the Holocaust is not a justification, not a defense, but usually a successful attempt to end any rational discussion. Upon hearing the word, anybody with manners will mumble an apology for having the temerity to ask any questions about Zionism or Israeli policies. The Holocaust is thus an original sin against the Jews, which justifies Zionism and Israel totally and completely. The unlimited credit of the Holocaust can always be drawn on. It is useful for Diaspora Jews, giving them greater immunity from anti-Semitism or criticism, and for Zionism, giving it an ultimate justification. There are no two sides to the Holocaust story. There is only one. But there are two sides to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. So apologists for Zionism prefer to bring up the Holocaust, whether it is called for or not.

HOLOCAUST MYTHS

“ . . . The European Holocaust survivors who built . . . Israel” (Greenberger, 1987, p. 1); “ . . . a nation founded by Holocaust survivors” (CBS Television News, September 29, 1986). One of the most common falsehoods we are likely to encounter almost daily in the Western media (but not in Israel, where the truth is plain to see) is that Israel “was founded by Holocaust survivors” or “in response to the Holocaust.” Historical evidence indicates otherwise, as we have already seen in the discussion of Zionism’s history. Zionism was not invented in 1945.

The idea of a Jewish state in Palestine was already being discussed in Europe in the early nineteenth century. Zionist organizations among the Jews of Europe were in existence during the second half of the nineteenth century. All of this took place generations before anybody could imagine the nightmare of the Holocaust. The First Zionist Congress took place in 1897, and since that time political Zionism has been on its way to the fulfilment of the dream by power politics. Ben-Gurion came to Palestine in 1906, already a second-generation Zionist. The process of making the Zionist dream into a political reality took not three years, but more like three generations.

Zionism in Palestine was very much a living, vibrant reality by 1939, after decades of settlement and the creation of an independent community. The rise of Hitler had an important effect, as immigrants from Central Europe transformed the Jewish community in Palestine between 1933 and 1939 with their numbers, skills and capital. After 1945, the visible horror of the Holocaust was instrumental in obtaining political support for Zionism, but it is absurd to assume that Zionism gathered enough power between 1945 and 1948 to assure the creation of Israel. Promoting this absurd notion is quite effective in gaining much sympathy for Israel and drowning the voices of those who keep raising the issue of Palestinian rights. Only the mean and heartless would attack a state of Holocaust survivors. The uninformed develop this mental image of Holocaust survivors in Europe in 1945 creating a movement to leave behind the hated continent, to sail to the old homeland and then to build an independent state in record time. This version of history, ready for a great movie script, makes the story of Zionism even more attractive. (Most Holocaust survivors did not even try to move to Palestine between 1945 and 1948.)

ANOTHER MYTH: ISRAELI BEHAVIOR AS A RESULT OF THE HOLOCAUST

Israelis are often sympathetically portrayed as victims of their own "collective memory" of the Holocaust, prisoners of their past, their anxieties and sensitivities all resulting from their terrible experiences in Europe. If we look more closely, we discover that Israelis may be prisoners of their present. Even if the Holocaust had never happened, Israelis should worry about the present they have created. The current fear of annihilation, which is quite justified, has nothing to do with the Holocaust and everything to do with the reality which Israelis actually live out. Immediate experiences are considerably more important than any kind of presumed historical memory.

The way Israelis deal with the Holocaust is more complex and more significant than all the propaganda would indicate. On the propaganda front, Israel always speaks for the victims and the survivors: we can hardly blame Israeli diplomats for doing that. But the victims of the Holocaust never authorized the state of Israel to speak for them. Neither have the survivors, most of whom have not followed the Zionist dream to Israel. Most Holocaust victims were clearly non-Zionists. They were Orthodox or assimilated Bundists or just the "silent majority" of Eastern European Jewry, in which Zionists were a distinct minority. Presenting the state of Israel as the heir to the victims of the Holocaust has had some practical consequences. Israel could present itself to West Germany in the early 1950s as the heir to the victims and win reparations worth \$3 billion in payment for lost lives and property in Europe. The German reparations meant a drastic change in Israeli living standards. Even today, thousands of Israelis receive a total of \$500 million annually as personal reparation.

FANTASIES ABOUT FUTURE HOLOCAUSTS

As a result of Jewish history, Jews carry with them a large dose of insecurity, maybe even paranoia. Given their history, it is understandable. From time to time, we encounter fantasies about possible anti-Semitic waves and future holocausts as a justification for Zionism. There are people who refer to themselves as "Holocaust Zionists," mentioning past and future holocausts as the reason for their conversion to Zionism.

There are American Jews who project what happened in Germany in 1933 and fantasize a Hitler in the White House, who sets up concentration camps for Jews. Then, goes the fantasy, we can always book a flight to Tel-Aviv, which is why we need Israel. What remains

unexplained is how this Hitler does not destroy Israel simultaneously with opening the concentration camps (this will involve simply cutting off U.S. financial aid and political support), and how this Hitler leaves El-Al offices open so that American Jews can escape. That is why those who really believe that a Hitler in the U.S. is possible should get on the next flight to Tel-Aviv.

JEWISH SUFFERING AS JUSTIFICATION

Arthur Hertzberg, a leading Zionist liberal, says:

What is our real Zionist claim? . . . affirmative action. The Balfour Declaration is an international act of affirmative action. It says that the Jews who are a non-resident people have superior rights to the Arabs who are the resident majority. Why? In recompense to the Jews for the many centuries of deprivation and homelessness. We are the beneficiary of an act of affirmative action and affirmative action always hurts someone who is not guilty. Neither I nor my ancestors owned any slaves, yet when my daughter applied to Harvard Medical School, she wasn't even interviewed even though she achieved superior results because 10 per cent of the quota is for blacks (Hertzberg, 1988, pp. 54-5).

Zionism clamors for justice, and sometimes claims that injustice to the other side is the small price to pay for its own greater justice. Israel redresses the historical injustices visited upon the Jewish people by the West. The sufferings of the Jews through the ages, and especially the Holocaust, have been used to rationalize and justify the denial of Palestinian rights. This has been done so effectively that the Palestinians are regarded as the aggressors in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is seen as a simple continuation of Jewish persecution through the ages.

Zionism is predicated on Jewish suffering. Without Jewish suffering there is no need and no room for it. The history of Jewish suffering, and especially the Holocaust, lands the victims, "the Jewish people," outside the boundaries of conventional morality. Put another way, conventional morality is irrelevant in the case of such victimization, and puts the victim nation beyond (or above) the rest of humanity. They should not be held accountable by universal standards because universalism has shown itself to be false and illusory. This is the lesson of Jewish history, from the massacres of the Middle Ages to the Holocaust of the twentieth century. This lesson forces the Jews, or their representative elite — Israel and the Zionist movement — to act with complete disregard to the judgement of others. Where were those

others when the Jews were massacred? This is the question that is often asked.

What justified everything done in the name of Zionism was the belief that a whole people, the Jewish people, were being redeemed and salvaged from terrible oppression, or were at least being given the opportunity to be so. For most Zionists, this belief could survive in the face of the obvious injustice done to the natives. Here the end justifies and sanctifies the means.

Not historical rights, nor divine promises, nor fantasies of a mythological past, nor a Jewish mission, but only the reality of Jewish suffering can be the ultimate justification for secular Zionists. This is what inspired Zionists and forced them to ignore the rights of their victims. The salvation of the long-suffering Jewish people was much more important than any sins against the natives. Continuing Jewish suffering could blind leaders, who felt responsible for the Jewish people, to everything else. The cause was much greater than themselves. It involved the transformation of the Jewish people, the end of Jewish history and the coming of a new reality. The victims were much smaller than the great cause.

We can understand that Jewish suffering, so strongly felt and directly experienced by the early leaders of Zionism, blinded them to the basic rights and the eventual suffering of others. "Our sufferings take precedence over anything else. Nobody ever took care of us and we have to take care of ourselves." This is the selfishness of any nationalism, magnified by the terrible historical victimization of the Jews. "Let us not make the Jews into victims again. Not again!" The awareness of Jewish suffering leads to a wish to take revenge on the whole world, on no matter whom, on the first one to come along.

But the revenge was taken on those who had nothing to do with the grievances and the horrors that created the desire for it. The Palestinians had nothing to do with the creation of the Jewish condition, with anti-Semitism or with Jewish problems in Europe. They were history's innocent bystanders, who had to pay an enormous price for other people's remote sufferings. These sufferings are part of European history, and a European problem was thus solved in Asia. Palestinians could ask "why a more appropriate response would not have been to remove the population of Bavaria and turn it into a Jewish state . . . why the project could not have been carried out in Massachusetts or New York?" (Chomsky, 1983, p. 92).

The world's sins against the Jews were visited upon the Palestinians. Taking revenge on the Poles or the Germans has been too difficult. It was easy to make the Palestinians pay for 2,000 years of

persecution. The Palestinians, who have felt the enormous power of this vengeance, were not the historical oppressors of the Jews. They did not put Jews into ghettos and force them to wear yellow stars. They did not plan holocausts. But they had one fault. They were weak and defenseless in the face of real military might, so they were the ideal victims for an abstract revenge, seeking an object for the deeply-felt injuries of history. The Palestinians have become a representation of the whole non-Jewish world, offering the advantage of being weak non-Jews, the only weak non-Jews who could be oppressed and punished for 2,000 years of anti-Semitism.

The Jewish suffering argument does explain the past when suffering indeed blinded Zionism to the rights of others. It loses its relevance today, when the injustice is clear and the urgency gone. The problem remains that of justifying Zionism as it is practiced now, not 100 years ago. Today, because of Zionism's many clear failures and failings, justifying it has become much more difficult. One hundred years ago, justification was easier, because of Jewish suffering. That is why today's Zionism has to look desperately for suffering Jewish communities, which are its *raison d'être*. When such a cause is found, in Ethiopia, the USSR or Syria, it is likely to be celebrated and exploited to the full.

THE ONLY SAFE HAVEN ARGUMENT

"There are 22 Arab countries, and only one place for the Jews." Is that really the case? Let us consider the case of Muhammad Bakri, born in Palestine in 1945, and that of Yevgeny Onegin, a Jew born in 1945 in Moscow. Onegin has many choices before him and will end up in Brooklyn. He is regarded as an oppressed Jew, worthy of sympathy and support, with the memory of Jewish tragedies to buttress his case. Bakri is considered a dangerous terrorist. He is unwelcome in most countries, including the country of his birth.

"Jews have the right to a homeland." "Why everybody else and not the Jews?" The claim could be made that the Jews needed one safe haven, especially after the Holocaust. But Jews today seem to have many comfortable homelands: otherwise they would be eager to move to Israel, which is supposedly their only safe haven. When Jews face difficulties today, they pack up and move to Brooklyn.

The argument that Israel is the only safe refuge for Jews has been dispelled by the establishment of the U.S. as everybody's refuge. If Jews in the U.S. are not oppressed, and Jews in Russia are, then the solution for the second group is to join the first. Israel then becomes

superfluous. If the question is the liberation of Jews from oppression, then the answer becomes Queens or Brooklyn. New York City may be the real answer to the nineteenth century "Jewish Question" posed by Herzl, as both Diaspora Jews and young Israelis flock to its boroughs.

THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT ARGUMENT

The NLM argument has appeared quite recently and is fashionable among liberal and left-wing defenders of Zionism. It really uses classical nineteenth century claims for Zionism in modern language. We hear such phrases as "the Jewish right to self-determination" and, most often, "Zionism is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people." Let us examine this slogan, which raises a considerable number of questions. Who is to be liberated, from what exactly and how? If we accept the Zionist idea, it is the liberation of the Jewish nation from oppression in the Diaspora.

Usually, the defense of Zionism as a national liberation movement comes from Jewish academics in the U.S., who live very happily in New York City, or Princeton or Cambridge, Massachusetts. And after hearing from them about the Jewish people's need for liberation, we are shocked to discover that they go on living in New York, or Princeton, under the oppressive conditions that Zionism was created to liberate Jews from. They tell us about the Jewish need for a homeland — but they obviously do not need one, otherwise they would move to Israel.

If it is a national liberation movement, responding to conditions of oppression, why has such a small minority seemed to be in need of it? Most Jews in the world are totally indifferent to Zionism as a liberation movement. They do not want to be liberated. Ardent Zionists claim that most Diaspora Jews suffer from false consciousness, and do not realize their own oppression, but even those Zionist professors who tell us that are in no rush to move to Israel. There might have been a need 100 years ago, but even then most Jews were not interested in Zionism.

THE WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE NATIVES ARGUMENT

Some defenders of Zionism can justify it only by pointing to the faults of its victims. By accusing the Palestinians of a variety of sins, Zionism looks much better and the victims are blamed for their misfortune. There are several ways of blaming the natives for their own victimization.

DENYING PALESTINIAN EXISTENCE

“There was nobody here when we came. The place was empty.” This argument is rarely used, and may be used only in the U.S., because nowadays nobody in Israel denies that the natives were and are here. The denial is only of their political rights. There is an ironic contradiction between claims about the absence of inhabitants in Palestine when the Zionist settlers first came, and the claims about native “terrorism,” which started quite early. If there were no Arabs there to begin with, who were the Arabs who conducted the well-known massacres of 1921 and 1929? But in Zionist mythology it all makes sense in a strange way. The Arabs are there when they have to play the only role assigned to them, that of the spoilers of the Zionist dream. Some apologists (and the Zionist leaders Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi, as we have seen above) have claimed that the natives were there physically, but were not really there because they were not really natives. They were foreigners, invaders, so whatever Zionism has done cannot be called colonialism.

THE IDEOLOGICAL INFERIORITY OF THE NATIVES

If you cannot deny the physical existence of the natives then deny their political rights because they are underdeveloped and lack consciousness. “The Palestinians had no real national consciousness, national identity or a national movement.” (This has been the classical reasoning of European colonialists everywhere, from South America to India.)

But even if people do not have ideas of Western nationalism, and their loyalty is limited to family, village or tribe, they are still human beings with certain basic rights. Nobody has the automatic right to exploit or dispossess them. “The Palestinians never had a sovereign state.” Of course, the Palestinians never had national sovereignty. That is true of many European nations before the twentieth century, as it is of most Middle East and Third World nations.

“Zionism has brought progress to the Arabs.” “Arabs under Israeli control are living better than in Arab countries.” Zionism did not make the civilizing claim central, unlike classical colonialism, and just like other movements of settler colonialism, but the supposed benefits of Zionism for the natives have been raised often enough.

In addition to the normal claims of colonial benefits for the natives, which have always shown how ungrateful they were, Zionism in recent years has been credited with creating Palestinian consciousness

and identity. This magnifies Palestinian ungratefulness immensely. These ingrates even owe us their national consciousness! These are all classical colonialist claims that used to be heard throughout the European empires of the past.

RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTS AND THE JUSTIFICATION OF ZIONISM

The religious argument sees the history of the Jewish people as part of a divine plan. If Zionism is the realization of a divine right or a divine mandate, it is easy to justify, provided we are ready to take religious beliefs seriously. For those who believe that the Bible is endowed with authority and veracity, this argument gives Zionism a special immunity against any rational or moral examination.

Historical Palestine is often described as the birthplace of two great religions, and a place holy to three great religions. This means that in addition to its historical realities, it is also the subject of mythology and symbol. The mythology of the Bible is taken seriously by many well-educated people who are still prisoners of cultural relics. We can find references to Abraham and Isaac as if they were historical figures, or the exodus from Egypt as if it were an historical fact. There is a mythological geography of Palestine to which the whole world, it seems, wants to be attached. Mount Zion and Mount Carmel can be found all over the world, as churches, monasteries and hospitals. Everybody wants to reach Jerusalem, or Bethlehem, and live there forever, or at least for a while. If you cannot reach Jerusalem, you may want to build your own New Jerusalem in England, or the U.S., or wherever you are.

People all over the world, of all religious traditions, have felt a special bond to Palestine, a special sense of belonging and attachment. This special sense is often described as "spiritual." It is clear that the natives did not have such "spiritual" attachments or any lofty ideas about the special role of Palestine in divine and human histories. They were born there, through no fault of their own. And by being born, they gained the misfortune of having other people claim their home. The physical reality of Palestine, as a place where actual people live, has been superseded by mythology. The Bible has conferred this mythological existence on a real place, where real people have lived not as a part of any religious mythology but as mundane minor players in world history.

The Galilee is both a mythical holy place and a real place where people live. Today's Galileans would certainly be much happier without the mythical baggage. Jerusalem has become a symbol, a poem, a

dream and a vision, but it is also a real place. Many of those who were born there have a terrible misfortune to face — that of not being Jewish. Such a native of Jerusalem confronts a bitter fate in a city that is reality, not “spirituality.”

COMPETING RELIGIOUS CLAIMS

The same Biblical texts used by some to justify Zionism are used to criticize it by non-Zionist Jews or by Christians. A variety of Christian groups have claimed that Biblical references to “Israel” denote various non-Jewish groups, and have nothing to do with historical Jews or contemporary Jewishness. Some examples follow.

MORMONS (LATTER-DAY SAINTS) AS ZIONISTS

The book of Mormon, like the Bible, contains the chronicles of supposedly historical events. But it claims to reveal a new genealogy and a new chronology of events starting in Jerusalem with the destruction of the First Temple. Many of the Latter-Day Saints claim to be descendants of the “Tribe of Ephraim” and refer to non-Mormons as “gentiles.”

Mormons claim a sacred ground in Missouri, the valley of Adamondi-Ahman, from which the Mormons were driven in 1839. According to Mormon beliefs, the Biblical Adam moved to this valley, after being banished from the Garden of Eden, which itself was situated where Independence, Missouri is now located. The city of Independence is also the place in which the Second Coming will take place, according to the Mormons.

In recent years, Mormons have returned to the valley. Can they claim rights superior to those who live in it? Should the residents of Independence worry about their future? (see Robbins, 1985).

AFRIKANERS AS THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

Among some Afrikaners, the Bible is interpreted as supporting their right to nationhood and superiority over non-whites. They offer competition to religious Zionists. They see themselves as the “chosen people” referred to in the Old Testament, with a divinely inspired identity and mission and a claim to the legacy of the Israelites:

Many Afrikaners felt they were entitled to draw authority from the Bible for their beliefs, particularly from such sources as Psalm 105, which told them that “He brought forth his people with joy and his chosen with gladness: and

gave them the lands of the heathen, and they inherited the labour of the people." They further appreciated the advice given to the Corinthians in the New Testament: "Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you" (Fisher, 1969, p. 38).

WHITE SUPREMACISTS AS JEWS

Several white supremacy groups in the U.S., promoting the idea of an Aryan nation and racial purity, believe in Christian Identity theology, based on Biblical mythology. According to Christian Identity, white Anglo-Saxons are the "ten lost tribes of Israel," Jews are the Children of Satan and blacks are "pre-Adamic." Larry Humphries, a white supremacist who believes in an "international Jewish conspiracy," states:

I believe the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic people trace their ancestry to the Bible and have a responsibility to administer divine law . . . The idea that we are the Israeli people does not put us in a superior position . . . In fact, we have more responsibility . . . to show them the blessing . . . The [Bible's] principles apply to all nations. But its covenants apply to us. (Quoted in Ridgeway, 1986, p. 32.)

WHAT TO DO ABOUT RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTS?

Over the past 1,000 years, there have been two movements that have made an explicit claim for the appropriation of historical Palestine in the name of rights overriding those of its residents. The first of these movements was the Crusades; the second was Zionism. The Crusaders based their own claims to Palestine on the Bible, and on their faith and religious imperatives. Religious Zionism is reminiscent of the Crusades in some ways. If Jews want to rely on their holy scriptures to prove absolute temporal rights in Palestine, Christians can use their holy books to make the same claims; Muslims can do the same.

One advantage of religious texts is that they are given to many differing interpretations. Slavery in the U.S. was justified by religion, just as opposition to slavery was inspired by religion. Some Native Americans claim that they were put on earth by the creator for a special purpose.

Religious mythologies offer an inexhaustible supply of such ideas. They are used by thousands of groups in thousands of situations to claim superiority and privilege, justify equality and inequality, tyr-

anny and liberation. Most religious-political claims are rather sterile. They all proclaim the superiority of a group to which the divinely inspired prophet belongs. It would be refreshing to have a single Romanian prophet claiming that the Hungarians are the chosen people, but this never happens.

Should religious arguments have a special kind of immunity or superiority, or should they confer an immunity on those who make them? How about a man who commits murder and says "God told me to do it?" Should he have immunity or moral superiority? Should we accord religious arguments a special role in political discourse? This is certain to take us back to the religious wars of the Middle Ages — and some are indeed ready for that.

THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE JUSTIFICATION

This excuse, sometimes known as "social Darwinism" (thus causing a grave injustice to Darwin, who had nothing to do with it) has become increasingly popular in Israel. "That's the way the world operates. That's how it has been everywhere. Every country in the world has been founded on conquest and injustice." "Tell the U.S. to give the land back to the Indians." "Every nation in the world has been built on some conquest or injustice." (We will have to go back pretty far and search pretty hard to find that "normal conquest" in "every nation.")

This world view divides humanity into the conquering and the conquered, into winners and losers, the oppressor and the oppressed. Sometimes we hear about "the verdict of history," which sentenced the Palestinians in this case to be the losers. Presenting the world as naturally unjust, and oppression as nature's way, has always been the first refuge of those who want to preserve their privileges. As a general ideological position in the twentieth century, it has been an integral part of European fascism. This Hobbesian view is a product of despair, the realization that there are no more excuses, no further justifications. The Hobbesian way is that of giving up any moral claims — a world without morality in which the strong are just. The need to justify Zionism, and the lack of other defenses, has made it part of the Israeli world view.

This is a zero-sum view of life, in which somebody's gain must be somebody else's loss, and anybody's success must mean somebody's suffering. In this case, liberation for Jews must mean oppression for others because this is nature's way.

BEYOND JUSTIFICATION: DEFENDING ZIONISM

The need to justify Zionism has been growing over the years, because of the decline of colonialism and the rise of the Third World. Zionism today is more and more in the position of not being commendable or acceptable as a general principle: not justifiable, but maybe at best excusable or forgivable. With every passing day, Zionism looks more immoral and less justifiable, and increasingly desperate measures are needed to justify it. All the justifications for Zionist history and praxis sound like excuses, so many fig leaves designed to cover a shameful nakedness.

The Victory of the Diaspora

In the British elections of 1987, one of the most closely watched races was that in the Scottish Pentlands district between the Secretary of State for Scotland in the Thatcher government, Malcolm Rifkind, and his Labour Party opponent, Mark Lazarowicz. It does not take a great deal of expertise to realize that both are Jews engaged in a fight about who would best represent the true interests of the Scottish people. This case illustrates the persistence of the Diaspora and the success of assimilation, together with the decline of anti-Semitism. Britain has taken these descendants of immigrants lovingly to her bosom. The sight of Mr. Rifkind and Mr. Lazarowicz competing in British elections is as exasperating for anti-Semites who resent Jewish success and acceptance, as it is for Israeli Zionists who believe that Jews should take care of their own.

Zionism predicted that the suffering in the Diaspora would lead to a Zionist revolution, with masses of Jews joining the Zionist movement and leaving for Palestine. If this did not happen, it is possible that the suffering was not that great. Zionism has been wrong in its predictions about the future of the Diaspora and the fate of Diaspora Jews. Despite the Holocaust, the Diaspora, or exile in Zionist terminology, is stronger than ever.

JEWISH IDENTITY TODAY

Zionism redefined Jewish identity as part of a normal nationalism and invited all Jews to transform their own identities accordingly. It dreamed of a new identity which would be like the French or German ones. Since most Jews have refused to join the Zionist experiment in practice, the problem of defining Jewishness still confronts the Diaspora. The problem does not exist for the less than 10 per cent of Diaspora Jews who are Orthodox and hold on to historical Judaism. It may be experienced acutely by any member of the Jewish majority,

made up of sociological Jews. For most of them, Jewish identity is totally reactive and would disappear with acceptance by non-Jews. This becomes clear when real acceptance exists. When Jews are not accepted, they will react to other identities and to social exclusion. They will react to expressions of their otherness by defending and defining it. However, in most cases it will be defined negatively, by exclusion (e.g. "Jews are those who don't celebrate Christmas"). Jews are a cultural minority defined negatively by what they do not share: the majority culture. The main cultural difference between Jews and others is that they are mostly well-educated, cultured and secular.

Sociological Jews today are defined by kinship and by social and religious exclusion, initiated by Jews or others. Jews may share the tribal connection of the persecuted, feeling safe only with other Jews. This may grow into a more general sentiment of Jewish solidarity, leading to political action or charity. Looking at Jewish life following secularization, one observer said: "Awareness of a diabolical conspiracy against the whole of Jewry not only remained at least as keen and general as in the past but had even come to replace the sacramental life of the Torah as the main, and perhaps the only, bond of unity between Jews everywhere" (Marmorstein, 1969, p. 29).

Tribalism, for some people, may be an escape from the alienation and anonymity of modern society, the last chance for warmth with strangers who are defined as kin. Jewish tribalism takes the form of folklore: a few Yiddish words, traditional food and Jewish jokes. For secular, well-educated and materially successful Jews today, it means a recipe consisting of some allegiance to Israel, residual emotional attachment to Jewish folklore and political liberalism.

British Jews, despite their status and success and the relative absence of political anti-Semitism, feel like outsiders (Brook, 1989). The British writer Arnold Wesker only speaks English and has always lived in England, but he says he feels like an alien. Being Jewish for some still means not feeling at home anywhere, a handicap and an advantage, generating both flexibility and rootlessness. Today many Diaspora Jews are alienated from Jewish culture, being completely secular. They are also alienated from majority culture, which makes them perfect outsiders.

This is how one Jew defined his identity in 1987:

Well the Jewish thing is very strange, 'cause I don't fully understand what's going on but um, a lot of what I am now is by virtue of the fact of being Jewish whatever that means [sigh]. Ah — if someone said to me "er what religion are you?" I would have to say that I have no religion, and if they ask me "what nationality are you?" I would say, "well I am a

naturalized Australian." If they ask me "are you Jewish?" I'd say, "yes," and I don't know what I am talking about really, I haven't got a clue. It's having been constantly reminded that I'm Jewish, by my mother in the main, and that any moment I could suffer again through being Jewish . . . I know that whatever I think, that if someone decides to get the Jews, I'll be one of the ones they get.

If Diaspora Jews search for some positive content for Jewish identity, Israel and Zionism are most often the end points of such a search. The existence of Israel has created a new situation, as Jews everywhere are identified with Israel by non-Jews, whether they like it or not. Even for anti-Zionist Jews, (or especially for them) Israel is an important part of the world. Terrorist attacks on Jews as Jews and synagogue bombings created a natural Jewish identification with Zionism and Israel among Jews who used to be completely indifferent.

The search for positive identity content leads Jews around the world to look up to Israel with admiration and reverence. The image of the Israeli, as opposed to the Diaspora Jew, is the source of admiration and emulation. The Israeli, tough, physical and confident is naturally contrasted to the traditional image of Jews as pale, passive and oppressed. Identification with a powerful Israel compensates for slights and insults, real, imagined or remembered as real.

JEW AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Pre-modern Jews spoke mainly Yiddish and Eastern European languages. The Diaspora of the 1990s is strongly English speaking. Whereas the Jews of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries lived in Eastern Europe, over the past 100 years they have largely migrated west, mostly to the New World, to become assimilated into modern Western culture.

Today, the Jewish community in North America stands at six million and constitutes the largest Jewish center in the world. Any discussion of the Diaspora is by necessity a discussion of Jews in the U.S., the largest and most prosperous Diaspora community in Jewish history. Any discussion of U.S. Jewry is a discussion of the whole Diaspora. If we add to the U.S. other English-speaking countries, our discussion will cover 70 per cent of Diaspora Jewry. The English-speaking world has been uniquely hospitable to and tolerant of Jews for hundreds of years. It has created modern philo-Semitism, expressed by the acts and words of Palmerston, Balfour and Truman.

The dream of a new life in the New World has been in direct competition with the dream of a new life in West Asia, that of

Zionism, for more than 100 years. The leaders of early Zionism were well aware of the competition and the American advantage was quite clear from the beginning. One hundred years later, the Jewish community in the U.S. may be Israel's most important source of support, a real lifeline, and at the same time the most serious repudiation of active Zionism.

This Jewish community is a new and special experiment. The U.S. has held out a special promise for Jews ever since its founding days. Unlike the situation in Europe, Jews in the U.S. did not have to win emancipation from discriminatory laws. Anti-Semitism has never been a serious political force in the U.S. Unlike European nations, the U.S. did not have an official Christian Church to carry on the traditions of religious anti-Semitism. It was the first nation where equal rights for Jews were a matter of course. It had a government "which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance." (There were some limitations on Jews in the laws of some states in the early nineteenth century, but they were removed with less difficulty than in Europe.) At least in regard to Jews, the first modern nation was modern on this account as well, and the promise has been fulfilled.

Word of the new possibilities and the lack of constraints in the New World got back to the Old World very fast. Between 1881, when widespread pogroms shook up the Jews of the Russian empire, and 1924, when new immigration laws passed by the U.S. Congress ended the period of historic mass movement from Europe to the New World, more than 2.5 million European Jews came to find their home in the U.S. Unlike other immigrant groups, very few Jews went back to Europe (among Italian immigrants between 1880 and 1920, 73 per cent went back home).

In 1910, the Lower East Side of Manhattan was the center of Jewish life, housing about half a million Jews. About two million Jews passed through that neighborhood between 1880 and 1920. Peddling and small shopkeeping were the common ways of making a living. Jews were tailors and sweatshop workers. These traditional Jewish occupations were imported from Eastern Europe, like everything else, but the new conditions were soon to change that:

Without the Old Country link and a strangling church like the Italians, or the Irish, or the Poles, without generations of American forbears to bind you to American life, or blind you by your loyalty to its deformities . . . Alienated? Just another way to say "set free!" (Roth, 1986, p. 289).

The great assimilationist dream of integration, acceptance and success has been realized in the U.S. in the most successful immigrant

group in American history. When lists of successful, famous immigrants are prepared on various occasions, Jewish names are much more prevalent than their 2.5 per cent proportion in the U.S. population.

Within the U.S. melting pot, Jews are the most successful ethnic group (according to Zionism — national minority) in terms of income, education and politics. In terms of occupational structure and lifestyles, U.S. Jews keep the old traditions. You will not find them in professional sports, in the military or in coal mines. You will not find them among deer hunters and farmers. Jews used to be the class of small-time entrepreneurs, and now, when small businesses have been eliminated by large monopolies, Jewish overrepresentation in the law and medicine may be a form of entrepreneurship. They are also heavily overrepresented in the academic world and in the media (the founders of the three big television networks in the U.S. were Jewish).

A list of the “100 super-rich owners of American business” was published on July 21, 1986, by *U.S. News and World Report*. The list included individuals and families who owned 5 per cent or more of a public company, since in such companies 5 per cent is considered a controlling share. Fourteen of the business owners were Jewish individuals and families. According to Brenner (1986), Jews are only 2.5 per cent of the population, but they make up 23 per cent of the 400 richest individuals.

ZIONISM AMONG U.S. JEWS

In 1900, out of a U.S. Jewish population of about one million, there were 8,000 members of Zionist groups. In 1918, the Jewish population numbered over three million, and there were 145,000 members of Zionist groups (Goldscheider & Zuckerman, 1984). Until World War II, most U.S. Jewish organizations were non-Zionist. Following the Holocaust, the founding of the state of Israel and the 1967 War the identification of American Jews with Israel has grown tremendously. Still, only a small minority are active in any Zionist organizations (the majority of American Jews do not belong to any Jewish organization of any kind). In 1987, less than 200,000 voted in the elections for the Zionist Congress, suggesting that together the 16 Zionist organizations have not much more than this number of members.

Nevertheless, Zionism seems to be a major component of identity for American Jews, who have been vicariously enjoying Israeli power and triumphs. Jews define themselves by means of Israel, the source of their pride and self-esteem. “Israel has become *the* Jewish religion for American Jews” (Glazer, 1970, p. 233). Many U.S. Jews, confessing a

passionate Zionist faith while staying in the Diaspora, display a pattern of inferiority and guilt with regard to Israel and Israelis. The guilt stems from the obvious fact that they have accepted the diagnosis part of the Zionist outlook, but not the active cure. The inferiority feelings stem from the belief that Israelis have taken the cure, and are superior to them, free from Diaspora malaise and afflictions. The theme of the U.S. Jew visiting Israel to find a cure for his aching soul by getting closer to the superior Israelis has become a part of world literature (see *Portnoy's Complaint* by Philip Roth). This attempt usually fails, and the visitor leaves Israel more than ever convinced of his inferiority and the inevitability of the Jewish condition.

There seem to be enormous psychological rewards in the identification with Israel and Israelis. It is an identification with the opposite: strong, physical Israelis who act against all the values that American Jews hold so dear in their domestic politics. U.S. Jews admire Israelis, the new Jews, products of triumphant Zionism, physical and strong, very much like the WASP U.S. jet pilot.

We can find American Jewish super-liberals, who will complain about police brutality towards blacks and oppose nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants, but will not be disturbed by Israeli violence towards Palestinians, or Israeli nuclear weapons. Most Jews in the U.S. do not know much about either the plight of the Palestinians or Israeli nuclear weapons. Their notion of life in Israel is a mythical image, a reverie of a kibbutz in the desert, which has nothing to do with reality. There is no evidence that Jewish Americans rise above the general level of ignorance prevalent in the U.S. about Israel and the Arabs.

THE DEAL

We might say that a fair deal has been struck between Israel and American Jewry. In return for unlimited political support for Israel, American Jews receive what they most lack: ideological content to fill the vacuum of their identity. The decline of religious traditions has left little a Jew can rely on in defining Jewishness. Israel is the perfect substitute. Whereas religion is tied to a history of persecution and ignominy, Israel is a symbol of glory, success and power.

Despite a widely presumed "turn to the right" among U.S. Jews since the 1970s, surveys consistently show them to be the least likely to vote for Republicans among U.S. whites, and the most sympathetic towards affirmative action programs for blacks or women. They are the most liberal group on issues of basic human rights, compassionate and sympathetic to the weak and unfortunate. The reasons for this

liberalism can be found in the characteristics of this group: secular, educated, affluent and still very much a self-conscious minority. Jews remain the most liberal ethnic group in the U.S. on everything except Israel. The incredible attachment of some American Jews to Israel, the way they worship Israelis, or their fantasy of Israel, is proof of their insecurity in their own society, their alienation, their feeling of incompleteness. There is a terrible weakness in this psychological dependence on Israel.

The deal between Israel and U.S. Jewry calls for mutual support, but only one-sided admiration. Some American Jews demonstrate incredible docility as they worship Israelis, who in turn respond with contempt and exploitation. The Jonathan Jay Pollard case can be seen as emblematic. Pollard was the Jewish spy for Israel, whose 1985 case caused some friction in the relations between the two countries. He was recruited after meeting an Israeli fighter pilot and offering his services. The meeting between Pollard and this Israeli was a meeting between two opposites. Pollard, Zionist, alienated, filled with James Bond fantasies and Zionist dreams of glory, meets Colonel Aviem Sella, a handsome hero, cool as a cucumber. Sella never dreamed about military glory; in the air force since the age of 18, he lived it. Sella is the antithesis to Pollard, who looks as unmilitary and un-James-Bond like as possible. Pollard would give both arms to be a little more like Sella, or a little closer to him. The Pollard case represents the traditional view of relations between U.S. Jews and Israel: U.S. Jews are stagehands or extras in the dramas of Israel, where the real action is.

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE ZIONISM

The best and most articulate defenses of Zionism and the state of Israel are offered today in the U.S., where we keep running into the most ardent supporters and apologists for Zionism. Given the enthusiasm expressed so openly for Zionism, it is significant that very few American Jews have taken the plunge and moved to the "Promised Land." Most of them would never dream of practicing what they preach. They leave that to others, but they enjoy offering the most original and tortuous defenses for their Zionist faith.

Unlike Italian-Americans or Irish-Americans, Zionist Jewish Americans are, by Zionism's definition, traitors to the cause, by their mere choice of staying in the Diaspora. Between 1948 and 1976, less than 60,000 Americans went to Israel; 80 per cent of them have returned to the U.S., the highest rate for any immigrant group (Brenner, 1986). Israel's government statistics show that despite their apparent

enthusiasm for Israel, most U.S. Jews have never even visited Israel as tourists. According to the latest reports, for every live immigrant from the U.S., about six bodies are imported to be buried in the Holy Land. As the press tells us (*New York Times*, June 11, 1987), in 1986 63 Jews from the New York area emigrated to Israel, while 378 Jews were brought to Israel for burial.

So what we really have is a secondary, passive Zionist "religion," kept by the class of high priests in Jewish organizations, who represent a small minority of U.S. Jews. The Jewish leadership, sometimes referred to as "professional Jews," keeps a weak eternal flame burning — and nobody really wants to rock the boat. U.S. Zionism is passive: more of an abstract faith than a plan of action. Because American Jews suffer no persecution, why should they leave behind the fleshpots of Egypt, to borrow an old phrase, to wander into the Israeli desert?

THE FUTURE OF U.S. JEWRY

The number of Jews in the U.S. was estimated at 5.6 million in 1970 and at 5.7 million in 1980. In 1986, the estimate was 5.5 million. The number of Jews in the U.S. will grow for a while because of newcomers from the USSR, Israel, South Africa, Iran, South America and Europe. The Jewish population is aging and Jewish families are smaller than average. As a percentage of the U.S. population, Jews have been in decline, from 3.7 per cent in 1937 to 2.5 per cent in 1985. In the year 2000, it is expected to reach 1.5 per cent, with the absolute number reaching 4.1 million. Jewish education in the U.S. has been in decline. In 1962, there were 540,000 students in Jewish supplementary schools. In 1986, there were only 286,000 pupils in such schools. This is where young Jews get a smattering of Jewish tradition, and this decline is the shape of the future.

What a non-Zionist calls integration, and a Zionist assimilation, means the gradual decline and fall of Jewish identity, except among the Orthodox. These future trends also mean decline in support for Israel. If Israel and Zionism are the main components of identity, then assimilation now means a lesser commitment to them. Younger Jews already demonstrate this reduced commitment in the form of indifference towards Israel and other aspects of Jewishness.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND DIASPORA VICTORY

Most Holocaust survivors have remained in the Diaspora, despite their personal experiences and the fact that they are a living proof of the insecurity of Diaspora existence. Most Holocaust survivors did not

draw the right lesson from their experience, as far as Zionism is concerned, since they have not moved to Israel. A large group of Holocaust survivors lives in the U.S., where their numbers include members of the U.S. Congress, successful businesspeople and writers.

There is no better example of the victory of the Diaspora, as expressed in the behavior of Holocaust survivors, than the story of Elie Wiesel. Wiesel has come to embody the Holocaust experience as the prototypical victim, the emblematic survivor, Mr. Holocaust himself. He has become a spokesman for the Jewish people, a man the whole world watches and listens to, but he has chosen to remain a Diaspora superstar. He is not only Mr. Holocaust, he is also Mr. Jew whose motto is "You are a Jew and your mission is to remain a Jew." Wiesel moved to Israel in the early 1950s, but left to serve as a foreign correspondent for an Israeli newspaper. He reached Manhattan in the late 1950s and the rest is history.

Wiesel is often taken to be a spokesman for the "Jewish cause" of Zionism. Is he a Zionist? This is a well-kept secret, but Wiesel is not exactly a Zionist. He is a proud Diaspora Jew, who has accepted neither the Nazi verdict nor the Zionist verdict on Diaspora existence. He is ready to give the Diaspora another try, and he has settled in the U.S., after leaving Europe, the site of the Holocaust, behind him. In this he is like the majority of Holocaust survivors.

Wiesel speaks fluent Hebrew, sounding like a European-born Israeli — his delivery would put most Israeli politicians to shame — but he has openly declared that he is not an Israeli and does not wish to be one. So, to many Israelis, he is a traitor and an enemy. To Zionism, he is another embarrassment. In 1986, he wrote about his experiences as a homeless refugee and how much he appreciated the home he was given — in the U.S.:

I also remember the day — January 1963 — when I stopped being stateless. I became a citizen of this country. I felt vindicated, and proud. I could not forget all those men and women, all those children, who were less lucky than I, all those refugees who, in those tragic years, had not been admitted to our shores. But even that sadness could not replace my sense of gratitude to the American people and its noble traditions — a gratitude that has never left me (Wiesel, 1986, p. 13).

This is, by all Zionist standards, the testimony of a Diaspora Jew who wants to remain just that. When Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1986, he was praised all over the world. That is, except in Israel, where the occasion gave rise to a wave of vituperation. Wiesel was judged to be a bad writer, an opportunist and a cynical exploiter

of a great historical tragedy to make a name for himself. (Such criticisms had been heard in Israel for many years before.) To add insult to injury, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech Wiesel chose to mention the plight of the homeless Palestinians.

Not only did most Holocaust survivors choose to stay in the Diaspora, but some Holocaust survivors today live in the same countries where the actual extermination of Jews took place. They went back to the geographical center of Nazi horror. There are today more than 50,000 Jews in Germany, many of them Holocaust survivors but also former Israelis, German-born Jews who have come back to the country of their birth, and Jews from the former USSR. In 1990, there was one Israeli-born deputy in the Bundestag, representing the Greens. There are even Jewish community organizations, which often complain of anti-Semitism and the lack of zeal in extirpating the Nazi past but still choose to remain where they are. There are children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors growing up in Berlin and Vienna, feeling "at home" just like in the good old days (see Sichrovsky, 1986). Ardent Zionists look at them and say: "These Jews will never change."

THE ISRAELI MIGRATION BALANCE

For the state of Israel, immigration and emigration statistics are a matter of survival. In the 1990s, it has become clear that Zionism also has to struggle much harder on this front. The Israeli cabinet devoted its meeting of May 11, 1986 to the "demographic question," which is the current euphemism for the perceived danger of a possible Arab majority in Israel. Data presented to the cabinet showed that 56 per cent of the babies born over the previous decade in Israel and the occupied territories were Palestinian. Economic Planning Minister Gad Yaakobi stated that in the year 2000 the proportion of Palestinians under Israeli government control will reach 43 per cent. Then Prime Minister Shimon Peres called upon all Israeli parents to have at least four children. Emigration was mentioned as another crucial part of the demographic equation, as the rise in emigration was accompanied by a decline in immigration. From the mid-1980s until 1990, Israel suffered a net loss in migration, as more Israelis left and fewer Diaspora Jews entered.

Even in earlier times, only a tiny majority of Jews chose to come to Palestine (or Israel after 1948). Most of those who came had little choice. The truth is that Zionism in Palestine never attracted Jews in any significant number until the 1930s, when the rise of Nazism and the immigration laws in effect in the U.S. after 1925 made it into a last

refuge. Those who started coming did not have a choice. Between 1880 and 1920, four million Jews moved from Eastern Europe to Western Europe and the U.S. During the same period, only 100,000 went to Palestine. Many of the latter eventually left, but only a few of the former. Only a handful of European Jews ever came to Palestine for pure Zionism.

Since 1948 about 2.2 million Jews have come to Israel. This, rightly, has been considered an achievement and has marked every aspect of life. But the behavior of Diaspora Jews after 1948 continued the trends of the 1920s and 1930s. Only those who were under direct pressure with no other choice came, not always with much Zionist consciousness. With no prospects of mass immigration from the West, Jews from Arab countries were brought in, almost in a daze, not out of Zionism. Bringing in those Jews of the Third World created a unique characteristic of Israelis today. While Jews of non-European background (known as Sephardim — “Spanish” or Eastern) have always been a small minority of world Jewry, today they make up a majority in Israel.

*The Zionist Migration Project:
Jewish Population in Palestine, Israel and the World: 1882–1986*

Year	Population of Palestine and Israel (in 000)	Number of Jews in Palestine and Israel (in 000)	Percentage of Jews in Palestine and Israel	Percentage of Jews of the world in Israel
PALESTINE				
1882	600	24	4.0	0.3
1922	752	84	11.2	1.1
1931	1,033	175	16.9	2.0
1936	1,336	370	27.6	2.5
1939	1,545	464	30.0	2.8
1947	1,909	589	31.0	5.5
ISRAEL				
1948	806	650	80.6	5.7
1954	1,718	1,526	88.8	12.8
1967	2,777	2,384	85.8	17.5
1982	4,064	3,373	83.0	22.8
1986	4,333	3,562	82.2	23.8
ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (=PALESTINE ABOVE)				
1967	3,744	2,384	63.7	
1982	5,288	3,373	63.8	
1986	5,604	3,562	63.5	

(Sources: Abu-Lughod, 1971; Arian, 1986; Friedlander & Goldscheider, 1979)

The end of mass immigration from Arab countries in the 1950s brought about a period of decline in immigration. An economic recession in 1965-6 increased emigration, but the 1967 War was followed by a wave of immigration from Western countries as well as from the Soviet Union. This was the zenith of Zionism, as a wave of confidence spilled over to the Diaspora and Israel's triumph seemed without limits. In 1968 there were 20,000 immigrants and in 1969, 38,000. In January 1970, Israeli leaders spoke of 300,000 immigrants during the following five years, "a new immigrant every eight minutes." In 1970, there were no recorded cases of emigration. It was a time of vitality and confidence.

The dream of sustained mass immigration, like many others, ended with the 1973 War. Beginning in 1974, a new pattern emerges with less immigration and more emigration. Jews from the Soviet Union, who between 1968 and 1973 came to Israel in a steady stream, started to choose the U.S. as their new home in 1974. If after 1967 Israel was a place to move to, by the late 1970s Jews were not coming unless they were absolutely forced to.

Perhaps the greatest embarrassment about and the strongest refutation of Zionism come not from the Diaspora, but from Israel itself, in the form of young Israelis. They are the products of the Zionist homeland destined to end the Diaspora, and yet are eager to leave Israel and join the exiles. Some Israelis, at least, seem to feel less oppressed in the Diaspora than they are in Israel. As of 1987, 7 per cent of Israelis aged 25 to 45 were expatriates. A survey in 1986 reported in the Israeli press showed that 20 per cent of Israelis aged 18 to 29 were considering emigration.

ISRAELIS AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

The Manhattan telephone directory, like that of any major American city, reflects the U.S. melting pot in action. Looking at the names of a million individuals, we realize that some of them do not melt very readily. Comparing the directory 20 years ago and today indicates changes in the origins of immigrant groups and their meltability. The Manhattan telephone directory is filled with traditional Jewish names. There is nothing new about that, but Israeli names are not Jewish, which is why they stand out in Manhattan and elsewhere in the U.S. Orna Amire, Eyal Arad, Oren Aviv or Amir Peled are names that have nothing in common with Diaspora Jewish culture. They represent Israeli culture and Israeli identity, created in a deliberate attempt to erase any Diaspora connections. These names, expressing the admiration for power and nature, belong to Israeli-born individuals who are

now Americans. Oren Aviv (oren is pine tree and aviv is springtime), Amir Peled (amir is treetop and peled is steel), and Orna Amire (feminine form of pine and treetop) are authentic Israelis and authentic Israeli-hyphen-Americans.

Not all immigrants arriving in the U.S. from Israel are Israelis or Israeli-born. There are those who have spent a relatively short time there, after immigrating, and then move on to the U.S. They may be carrying Israeli passports, but they are classified in the U.S. by their place of birth as Romanian, Polish, French, etc.

There is a new ethnic group, and a new hyphenated identity: Israeli-Americans. This group deserves attention, not because of its size but because of its special historical significance and qualities. An Israeli Diaspora has been formed as Israeli emigrants have settled all over the world, from Frankfurt to Canberra. But the two main destinations have been South Africa and the U.S. Israel's loss of natives is America's gain of a new ethnic group.

There are no formal organizations representing Israeli-Americans: members of the community do not wear this label proudly and often express ambivalence about it. Modern Hebrew, the product of Zionism, refers to immigration to Israel as *Aliyah*: ascent. Leaving Israel for the Diaspora is known as *Yerida*, or descent. It is a descent, from the Zionist vantage point, into a less secure existence, into the alienation of exile. Contrary to the Zionist plan, some Israelis, at least, seem to feel less oppressed in the Diaspora than they do in Israel. *Yerida* means liberation from the feeling of mission characteristic of official Zionist ideology, a victory of private concerns and ambitions. Many emigrants describe their decision as a private matter, similar to emigration from any other country, but just as often claim to be in the U.S. temporarily. Losing the commitment to the national mission is difficult and involves guilt feelings. As more Israelis have emigrated to the U.S., the act has achieved a degree of legitimacy and normality. As the U.S. has become the "mother country," moving there, or at least spending time there, has become part of the Israeli experience. The American dream seems to be alive and well in Israel.

The evolution of a permanent Israeli-American community, and the institutionalization of moving to the U.S. as an option within the life space of every Israeli, means much in terms of the way Israelis view their situation. It means, among other things, that your back is not up against the wall (or the Mediterranean). You have a place to go when things get too rough in West Asia. This is a major change in your life situation. You now have a "mother country" to go to, and this "great mother" is always ready and hospitable. Now you have relatives in that country. Your relatives are not Jews of another culture, who may

be your cousins but do not speak your language, but your own brothers and sisters who share every nuance of your experiences and dreams. You can go home again to the old gang, this time to Queens and Los Angeles.

The appearance of a new group of immigrants in the U.S. is followed by its processing through the melting pot, and a variety of intentional attempts at adjustment and integration into the new society. Israelis coming to the U.S. may seem to enjoy a special way of integration into American society through the Jewish community, but this seemingly easy path is neither easy nor simple. The Israeli-American ethnic group, a living repudiation of Zionism, is likely to aggravate the crisis of American Jewry because Jewish identity in the U.S. since World War II has become synonymous with Zionism and support for the state of Israel. Many of the communal activities in which Jews are engaged have to do with this Israel-centered orientation. Having former Israelis join the community in these activities creates an obvious embarrassment, and thus is most often avoided. The permanent presence of Israelis in the U.S. indicates a major failure of Zionism and a problem for U.S. Jews committed to promoting it.

Another major problem for U.S. Jews is the direct encounter with Israeli-Americans and their authentic Israeli culture. The clear cultural gap between the two groups leads to a growing alienation, as time goes on and more Israelis settle in the U.S. The direct encounters lead to discovering and expressing the cultural differences. (Immigrants from Israel who are European-born and have spent only a short time in Israel are more likely to be integrated easily into the American Jewish community, since their identity and culture are those of Diaspora Jews.) The overlap between Jewish identity and Israeli identity turns out to be minimal. What do Israeli immigrants have in common with American Jews? Language? Not at all. Lifestyle? Hardly. Education? No similarity there. Religion? Not at all. While both groups are overwhelmingly secular, religious activities in Israel are very different, and Reform Judaism and Conservative Judaism (the two denominations to which most U.S. Jews belong) are almost totally unknown. One thing that the majority of both groups have in common is a vague Zionist credo, but even this is experienced and expressed differently. The Israelis are the true children of Zionism, while U.S. Jews are its second cousins once removed.

The new ethnic group proves, paradoxically, that there is indeed a new Israeli identity, totally separate from Diaspora Jewish identity. If Israelis had the same identity as Jews, they would easily become American Jews when they immigrate to the U.S. But they do not, and

they remind Jews and non-Jews alike that Israelis are not just Jews. The Israeli-American community is different from the American Jewish community in its language, lifestyle, religious life, occupations and ideals. American Jews, the U.S. ethnic group with the highest levels of income, education and liberalism, are very different from their Israeli-American cousins who are notoriously conservative. We might speculate that the Israeli-American ethnic group, in its ideals, values and economic situation, is closer to the various groups of "White ethnics," rather than to the Jewish community.

The creation of a new Israeli Diaspora points to the real failure of Zionism, which had been created precisely to avoid it. It is a failure of Zionism in its primary, essential task: that of creating a new Jewish experience and identity, explicitly tied to a territory in West Asia. When an Israeli Diaspora is growing, and Israel is exporting Jews to the Diaspora, it seems that the Zionist solution to the Jewish question cannot be working. It seems that young Israelis join the Diaspora in search of normality, after the Israeli experiment at normalization has failed.

The survival of the new Israeli identity, even for a short time, in Los Angeles or New York, is what reminds the world of this grand failure. The established Diaspora in the U.S. offers an attractive and viable alternative to living in Israel. It demonstrates again that Israel may not be the only haven for Jews under pressure.

ZIONISM — WHERE IS THY SUCCESS?

If Zionism is a success, why are the majority of Jews abroad, settled comfortably in North America, or wandering from one temporary haven to another? Jews today keep wandering. From South Africa to Australia, from Iran to California, from Argentina to Spain, they circle the globe in search of a new home in a new Diaspora. The wandering Jew and the wandering Israeli of recent years, who seek a safe haven everywhere except in Israel, refute Zionism's basic claim about the nature of the Jews as a territorial people seeking to return to their homeland. The new wanderers will go to their putative homeland only as a last resort. We have to remember that Zionism was always a minority movement within Diaspora Jewry, ever since its beginnings in the nineteenth century. Since 1880, North America has become the promised land, and today, more than ever, it is seen as such by both Israelis and Jews in other countries.

What has changed in the image and the reality of Diaspora Jewry over the past two generations is that the majority of active non-

Zionists were lost in the Holocaust, which also supplied Zionism with its most convincing argument. The Zionization of world Jewry is a recent development which appeared only after 1945.

The Holocaust, and the creation of Israel, silenced all alternatives to Zionism among Diaspora Jews. Within Jewish organizations it became the dominant ideology only after World War II. This dominance has been maintained, thanks to the impact of the Holocaust and the support of U.S. Jewry. The Zionist cause has become "the Jewish Cause," or so it seems. There has been a mass conversion to Zionism, now the official majority faith, but the majority reality has been assimilation. Jewish nationalism and internationalism as explicit Diaspora ideologies are dead. In practice, only assimilation exists for most Jews. And today, more and more Israelis are escaping the greater anomaly of life in Israel in favor of gaining the lesser anomaly of life in the Diaspora.

Indeed, as Israelis contemptuously say, Jews have not changed. The Jewish people, the object of the hopes of Zionism, have refused to become a normal nation. Worse than that, Israelis have become wandering Jews. In addition to the normal, alienated Diaspora Jews, there are also those whom Zionism considers lost souls or sheep. But these Jews are fully committed to living where they are, and to changing their own societies rather than the state of world Jewry.

What has been the most important development in Jewish history in the past 100 years? Over the past century, world Jewry has experienced two significant migrations. The first from Eastern and Central Europe to the English-speaking world. The second from Europe to Palestine. The first one was much larger — and still is: even Holocaust survivors preferred going to the U.S. to going to Israel.

As time goes on, some American Jewish leaders are challenging the Israeli position of superiority. They say that the U.S. is not really a land of exile; it is actually a better place than Israel to be Jewish:

It is time to say that America is a better place to be a Jew than Jerusalem. If ever there was a Promised Land, we Jewish Americans are living in it. Here Jews have flourished, not only in politics and the economy, but in matters of art, culture, and learning. Jews feel safe and secure here in ways that they do not and cannot in the State of Israel . . . America, the freest and most open society Jews have known, is not only good for the Jews but better, for the Jews, than the State of Israel . . . (Neusner, 1987, p. 81).

MIGRATION TO ISRAEL IN THE 1990s

The wave of migration by Soviet Jews to Israel, which began in 1989, may be regarded as a real miracle in terms of the balance between Israel and the Diaspora. The sudden change in Zionism's fortunes happened because of new emigration policies in the USSR and new immigration policies in the U.S. While the Soviets opened their borders to Jews who wanted to leave, the U.S. closed its own to the Jewish exodus. The turnaround came on October 1, 1989. From that date, Soviet Jews could no longer use Israeli visas as a way of migrating to the U.S. The number of Soviet Jews allowed to enter the U.S. as refugees was limited to 40,000 per year.

This new exodus continues the demographic revolution of the late nineteenth century, leading Jews out of Eastern Europe into the New World, which now includes Israel. In 1988 the U.S. and the Soviet Union had 77 per cent of Diaspora Jews as citizens. In ten years' time, 50 per cent of world Jews may be in Israel. This significant milestone in the history of Zionism will be reached because the total size of world Jewry (by whatever definition of "who is a Jew?") is declining, and may reach ten million by the year 2000. This may be an accidental victory for Zionism, as immigrants come to Israel only because they have no better choice, but a victory nevertheless.

THE END OF THE JEWS?

Given present indicators and future projections, we might conclude that Diaspora Jews, a minority which has survived so much oppression and persecution, may become an endangered species, like the snow leopard and the American eagle.

The number of people in the world, outside Israel, who are identified as Jews ("sociological Jews") has been declining dramatically. In 1939 there were 16.5 million Jews, in 1970 to 10.25 million, in 1990 only 9 million. The number is expected to drop to less than 8 million by 2000 and to less than 6 million by 2025. Assimilation is continuing, and Jewish identity is simply disappearing into the melting pot of humanity. Wherever they are, Jews are giving up any vestiges of Jewish tradition they still possess. This is happening in the U.S., in Britain, in France, Brazil, Scandinavia, Italy and everywhere else in the Diaspora.

In their new assimilation Jews are invited to give up their identity, as they have been since the beginnings of emancipation 200 years ago. They respond to acceptance by the non-Jewish society. The most

significant change in the status of Jews since 1945 has been the decline in anti-Semitism, which has made assimilation easier. Jews and non-Jews intermarry, as secularization and the decline in anti-Semitism increasingly come to mean the end of historical Jewry.

Despite Zionism and the Holocaust, the future for most Jews includes the final victory of integration, or, to use the Zionist term, assimilation. The assimilation trend continues for most Diaspora Jews. It will be the wave of the future for all Jews, except the Orthodox minority and the minority of active Zionists who emigrate to Israel. The only group which seems to have a chance to survive is the Orthodox, who maintain the strictures of Jewish tradition. The historical Jewish identity and culture will be kept by those who keep it today.

Changes in the World Jewish Population

Year	1825	1850	1880	1914	1939	1948	1970	1990
Total (million)	3.25	4.7	7.7	13.5	16.6	11.5	13.9	12.5
Percentage in East Europe	70	70	80	53	45	23	15	11
Percentage in Palestine/Israel	.2	.2	.3	2	2	5.5	18	28
Percentage in North America	1	1	4	25	30	35	45	49

World Jews now have three options for relating to Jewishness. They are the same options that were defined in the nineteenth century: Zionism, the least popular in action; Orthodoxy, just as unpopular; and assimilation, the choice of the majority. Herzl was realistic when he said that Zionism was designed only for those who cannot or will not assimilate. Today the majority can and will. Emancipation will have its final triumph in the Diaspora, and one day the past 200 years will be seen as a detour on the road to the complete integration of Jews into their host societies. It is this detour which has created Israel.

After the Triumph: Zionism at 100

To answer the question of whether Zionism has contributed to the solution of the Jewish question, more than 100 years after its appearance on the political scene, we have to ask two related questions. First, whether the Zionist diagnosis was correct, and then, whether the Zionist cure has worked.

Looking at the situation of Jews today in most countries, and at their situation 100 years ago, we must admit that there was some justice in the Zionist diagnosis. Herzl was right. Much of the world still does not accept Jews as brothers and equals. The old prejudices have not died out or disappeared. They are still with us because the world has not been completely democratized and secularized. The disappointment with emancipation felt by many Jews today still leads in some cases to Herzl's response: namely, Jewish separatism. We can see people who have been hurt by the world's attitude turning away from it into a renewed and passionate Jewish identity.

Zionism loves the cautionary tales of disappointment with assimilation, Diaspora existence and universalist socialism. In Israel we hear many stories about old, disappointed communists who have given up their universalist ideals in favor of uncompromising nationalism and have returned home to the bosom of Zionism or even Orthodox Judaism. Knowing what they have been through, it is hard to blame them and easy to understand. Other exemplary tales are about the descendants of such individuals.

In 1987, the Israeli media celebrated the birth of a great-grandson to Leon Trotsky, People's Commissar for War in the Bolshevik leadership between 1917 and 1922, one of the great leaders of world communism. The infant is the son of David Axelrod, who was born in the USSR, but emigrated to the U.S. as a young man. Axelrod, Trotsky's grandson, is a newcomer to Orthodox Judaism, and a hawkish

nationalist who now lives in Hebron, on the West Bank. The moral of the story, as far as Zionist Israelis are concerned, is that the only real home for Jews is Zion and Zionism, and those grazing in foreign pastures, as the Israeli expression goes, are destined to be disappointed. Herzl's cry is that of almost giving up on the rest of humanity. With some of the present day Zionists, it is a complete turning against the rest of the world. Zionism is tired out of universal causes and universalistic humanism, and seeks to do something for the Jews alone.

What has Zionism done for the Jews of this world? What are its accomplishments? They can be observed directly in Israel and indirectly all over the world. In Israel, the aim of Jewish sovereignty has been achieved. Outside Israel, Jewish identity has been injected with a new spirit. This is especially true in the U.S., where the largest Jewish community in the world has been Israel's main support and, at the same time, has become dependent on Israel for psychological defense and nourishment.

Modern Israel is an incredible antithesis of the dry bones of Jewish existence 200 years ago. In creating it, Zionism has performed a miracle. The miracle in the desert is a wonder (even though the desert has remained where it always was). The living dead, the dry bones, have come back to life. Out of the reality of European Jewry in its crisis and decline has grown the new reality of Israel, so different, so dynamic.

We cannot deny that some Jews have found a true homeland and a true home in Israel, something they never had. This means that individuals have gained happiness, confidence and self-esteem in their new environment. The proverbial Jewish tailor from Poland has become a new man in Israel: proud, no longer afraid of his own shadow. Some might claim that the same Jewish tailor could have undergone that metamorphosis in the U.S., but Israel is the only place in which a true discontinuity with Jewish history has been achieved: this indeed was the Zionist dream. There is today a new Israeli identity and a culture, based on the revived Hebrew language. The Israeli occupational structure, though far from being normal, is still different from that of the Diaspora: it includes policemen, bus drivers, farmers, military pilots and violent criminals. But the main achievement is that Jews are the shareholders and proprietors of their state.

Although most Diaspora Jews have remained only spectators of Zionism, it has given them much psychological support and a much needed content for the vacuum of their identity. It has served as a source of a new identity for some, a real alternative for a few and an escape fantasy for many. The state of Israel is one of the things that

has made Diaspora existence more bearable. For a significant number of Diaspora Jews, Israel has resembled a favorite sports team, whose victories compensate its fans for their own less than glorious reality.

Zionism wanted to solve the Jewish question by creating a normal nation among nations. The aim was to develop a normal Jewish existence, but Israel is anything but normal. Israeli anomalies are manifested in many ways, both material and symbolic. The anomalous nature of life in Israel starts with the economy. You do not have to be a Marxist to say that Israel does not have a normal economic base, and all other anomalies follow. Israel cannot be a normal nation-state as long as it is a colonialist garrison state.

With all the unfairness of hindsight, the painful failure of normalization can now be traced to the very beginnings of Zionism. From the start, Zionism was not just another national liberation movement because the condition of oppression was different, and the condition of the oppressed to be liberated was different. Israel was not like Hungary, Greece, Poland or Zimbabwe. A community with a most anomalous history was put in the anomalous situation of settler colonialism. It is no wonder that the end result is what we observe today in Israel. The abnormal history of the Jews led to an attempt to change it, but, thrown into an impossible situation, the results were only likely to be problematic.

The attempt at normalizing the Jews has failed. Zionism has created the Israelis, which is a major achievement, but it does not exactly follow the original vision. Current Israeli reality is still filled with the anomalies of colonialism and the economy, with the questions of Israeli identity and nationality. Is it because of "Jewish fate"? Or because of colonial realities? Zionism was created against the background of nineteenth century Europe and Jewish existence. At the end of the twentieth century the Jewish condition has changed drastically; the circumstances that created the movement in the first place no longer exist. The realities of the end of the second millennium undermine the logic and the justification of Zionism.

What the Zionist movement attempted was to impose its new, normal definition of Jews as nationality on reality, and to make Jews into a nation. The Diaspora has responded with a resounding "No!" as Jews have refused to become normal and have not joined Zionist praxis. Those to whom it was addressed, and for whom it was intended, refused to hear the message of liberation. They turned away from it, which is why Zionism has not been the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. The biggest failure, and most painful wound, of Zionism has been with the people it aimed to save out of love and concern, the Jews of the world. It is evident that the "Jewish

question," namely the existence of millions of Jews in the Diaspora as a minority within non-Jewish society, has not disappeared. Most Jews in the world today, just like most Jews 100 years ago, share the same abnormal existence that Zionism was determined to eliminate.

Zionist analysis has failed to forecast developments in the history of Diaspora Jews. Most Diaspora Jews at the end of the twentieth century are accepted by non-Jewish society and assimilated into it. Most Diaspora Jews live in the English-speaking world, where they are materially successful and socially accepted. They are totally unmotivated to leave their homelands for the Promised Land. The mass refusal to be saved by Zionism is now final, as the U.S. becomes the true refuge for oppressed or dissatisfied Jews (and Israelis). The Jewish people does not need Israel as a sanctuary. The main goal of Zionism was to abolish the Jewish condition and create a new Jewish existence.

Many Diaspora Jews may feel the Jewish malaise, and, according to Zionist ideology, may be oppressed and not truly emancipated. But apparently they are not sufficiently oppressed to take the plunge and become active Zionists. Shoshana Cardin, an American Jewish leader who is the wife of a real-estate millionaire in Baltimore, talked to an Israeli journalist in 1988 about U.S. Jews: "We are not afraid of a Holocaust, but you shouldn't forget that we are a tiny minority, only 2.5 per cent. We are guests in a host country." When the journalist could not believe his ears, she repeated: "I know that people are going to be angry because of this sentence, but I don't take it back. Guests in a host country." Then she suggested: "Guests in a very good and democratic host country" (Segev, 1988, p. B7).

Even for Jews whose experience of the Diaspora malaise may motivate them to move on, emigration to Israel does not appear to be an attractive option. Living in exile, according to Zionist terminology, may be rough, but the alternative, life in Israel, seems just as unattractive, or even more so.

Contrary to Zionist dreams, Jews are still wandering the globe in search of a home. So, when Diaspora Jews feel the urge to emigrate, most of them will never think about going to Israel, unless deprived of alternatives. They will try to move to another comfortable Diaspora community such as Australia or North America. They will continue to wander and assimilate, as they were doing 100 years ago, except that now they will be doing it in more comfortable and secure circumstances. The Jews of the Diaspora have refused to accept the Zionist definition of their identity. If Jews are in need of a homeland, why do Jews from the USSR wish to emigrate to the U.S.? Why are U.S. Jews

so happy where they are? Why are Israelis emigrating to New York and Los Angeles?

Israel looks like a place that more often than not replicates the Diaspora malaise through a pervasive feeling of existential insecurity. If Diaspora Jews were insecure, tense and nervous, being in their own homeland was supposed to cure all that. Today, Israelis are recognized as being an extremely tense people, leading a nervous existence. Tourists in Israel note the nervousness of Israelis and the serenity of the Arabs, as do Israelis themselves. Most Jews in the world today are still subject to the Jewish condition, and their existence is still abnormal. The Israeli condition, offered as an alternative, is still abnormal, and likely to remain that way.

In reaching for its main goal of creating a normal nation-state for the Jewish people, Zionism faced two major political problems. The first was that of redefining and recreating the Jews. The second was that of removing the natives of Palestine, so that a new nation-state could be created there. The problem of the natives has led to colonialism and to a permanent war. Recent debates between defenders and opponents of Zionism seem to hinge on the question of the basic nature of the movement. Is Zionism a national liberation movement for the Jews and thus no different from other national liberation movements? Or is it a colonialist enterprise, depriving the natives of Palestine of their basic rights, and thus bereft of any moral justification? The answer to this double question is that Zionism is both. Zionism is a liberation movement for some and an oppressive movement for others. (See Cohen, 1970, 1976; Rodinson, 1973, 1982; and Waines, 1971.) This is a complex answer, but such is the situation. The dual nature of Zionism has been very much in evidence throughout this book. It stems from the historical roots of Zionism in nineteenth century European nationalism and in European colonialism.

From the perspective of some Jews, and most Israelis, it is a liberation movement which has given them dignity in the form of their own sovereignty in their own land. If Zionism has done nothing else, at least it has created a new state with its own national culture, good, bad or indifferent. At the same time, Zionism has been a specific case of colonialism in which a native population has lost its basic political rights and its homeland.

While Zionist colonialism seems less and less justified and justifiable, the solution to the Jewish question in the form of an end to the Diaspora seems further away than ever. The question of the appropriateness of the nation-state to the Third World is often raised by defenders of the established order. Specifically, defenders of Zionism

often claim that the idea of the nation-state is irrelevant to the Arab world or to the Palestinians. What we have discovered so far in this book is that the idea of the nation-state does not seem to be too easily applicable to the Jewish condition.

We might claim that Zionism has not met two of its three challenges. It has not succeeded in creating an alliance with either the Jewish people, those it was trying to save, or in reaching an accommodation with Arab West Asia, into which it was projecting itself. The only complete success of political Zionism was in creating an alliance with Western world powers. The greatest Zionist success has been in its political program, which has worked magnificently since World War I. It seems that British, French and American leaders are much easier to deal with than either Diaspora Jews or Palestinians.

So the balance sheet of Zionism appears to be more than just mixed. Most of Zionism's successes are also its failures, creating new problems by their mere achievement. Being born a Jew in the Diaspora has always been a rather tragic fate, which has meant being heir to suffering and victimization. Today, being born an Israeli does not seem much more promising: that is the real tragedy of Zionism.

Zionism has attempted to depart from the tragic course of Jewish history by separating Jewishness from humanity. This effort at separatism has failed so far. The tragedy of Jewish history seems to be repeated in Israel, in a new version. This time, following the Zionist plan, Jews are not just victims: they are masters of their own fate, victimizing others.

There is one sense in which Israel is often said to embody a continuity with Jewish history, and that is in its perilous survival. Israel's major problem is how to survive in a hostile world: many Israelis would see in that an extension of the Jewish condition. "As always, the whole world is against us." Israel's crisis of survival has led to interpretations which would have us believe that it is a continuation of the "Jewish fate" of insecurity. "You cannot run away from Jewish history and Jewish fate. The world has always been against us." Can Israeli reality be explained on the basis of Jewish history? From a Zionist point of view, there are intended and unintended continuities with the Diaspora, and most continuities are unintended and uninvited. "Diaspora mentality" is a common Israeli form of condemning those who do not display the correct amount of national "uprightness."

Can Israel's problems be tied to "Jewish fate"? No. They are not merely a continuation of past experience. Existence in West Asia as settler colonialists is unlike anything else in Jewish history. It is radically different from "Jewish fate" in Eastern Europe or the U.S.

Claims about "Jewish fate" ignore the real difference between Jewish and Israeli history. Unlike the situation of Jews persecuted for being Jews, Israelis are at war with the Arab world because they have committed the sin of colonialism, not because of their Jewish identity. This time, hostility directed against this Jewish group has a special reason which never before existed in Jewish history. "Jewish fate" explanations are mystifications. It is not Jewish fate, but the objective conditions of confrontation with the natives. Zionism wanted a parting of the ways with past traditions and past experiences; Israel represents exactly that. The main goal of Zionism was to create the conditions which would make avoiding the "Jewish fate" possible. Those who blame everything on fate and "history" unwittingly admit that Zionism has failed.

The Israeli Question

Looking at Zionism without taboos means seeing the hard reality of the domination and oppression it has created. Out of the original sins of the world against the Jews grew the original sins of Zionism against the Palestinians. The issues are often raised through a counting and recounting of massacres and victims on both sides. The problem is one of principles, not atrocities. Even if nobody died, there is something wrong with Zionist policies. The problem is a moral one. Raising the moral question is not a mark of idealism but of realism.

Israelis seem to be haunted by a curse. It is the curse of the original sin against the native Arabs. How can Israel be discussed without recalling the dispossession and exclusion of non-Jews? This is the most basic fact about Israel, and no understanding of Israeli reality is possible without it. The original sin haunts and torments Israelis; it marks everything and taints everybody. Its memory poisons the blood and marks every moment of existence.

Can we speak of an Israeli "collective responsibility" for the colonialist enterprise of Zionism? Are all Israelis responsible for this sin? People cannot be held responsible for a situation created long before they were born, and this is the case for most Israelis. They have been born into a colonialist structure which favors them over the class of non-Jews. They cannot be blamed for it. At the same time, a person may be held responsible for the continuation of a colonialist situation, once he or she is in a position to change things. Most Israelis today, born after 1950, cannot be held responsible for early Zionist injustices. They can, and should, be held responsible for the present reality of injustice, which is a direct sequel of early Zionist principles.

All Israelis have come to recognize Zionism's original sin against the Palestinians. The terrible secret of the injustice is known to everybody, but cannot be openly faced. The awareness of the terrible injustice committed to create the state, and the pressure against discussing it openly, disfigure and warp any kind of moral discourse in

Israel. Publicly, some Zionist liberals are ready to admit that the treatment of the Palestinians was a mistake from a pragmatic viewpoint, but not an injustice. "The Arab Problem' has not been handled correctly." This is the sticking point.

Other Israeli liberals recognize the original sin and feel guilty, but they are not ready to reject Zionism. De-Zionization of Israel is too frightening. Their guilt is similar to post-colonial guilt over the Third World, as some non-liberals assert. And the guilt is warranted and appropriate.

The point of departure for any serious thinking about the future must be pessimism. So far, Zionism has been a success, but it may be short-lived because of the rising forces of opposition to it. Discussing the lengthy celebrations of Israel's fortieth anniversary in 1988, a Knesset member stated: "Only in a place where there is no confidence in a tomorrow, people stick to any yesterday with a desperate passion . . . When it is uncertain whether we will celebrate seventy, or sixty, or, to be safe, fifty . . . we have to use any opportunity to celebrate, and any excuse for a party" (Sarid, 1987, p. 9). And in a public opinion poll in 1987, 18 per cent of Israelis believed there was a real possibility that the Arabs would destroy Israel within 20 years. (Salpeter, 1987).

The assumption for many years was that Israelis could live with a permanent war situation, and that its costs would be manageable. There is also a common assumption that war may bring out the best in people. There is often a special kind of moral exhilaration attached to national wars. Death in war has become an integral part of life in Israel. The consequences cannot be positive by any stretch of the imagination.

Death is part of every Israeli child's world and of every Israeli's world. Studies have shown that Israeli children have a realistic conception of death earlier than children anywhere else in the world. This is the most horrifying part of Israeli existence and of the Israeli condition. There are families in Israel where bereavement over their war dead has been a part of life for several generations. Every Israeli has known someone who has died in uniform. Since 1948, almost 18,000 Israelis have died this way. This means 18,000 bereaved families of young men and women, with 100,000 more wounded and 40,000 permanently handicapped. This figure represents a proportionate world record. And those are only the ones whose scars are visible. The effects of war include not only losses but also the killing. Those who have killed in war are deeply scarred; they will never be the same. They walk among us marked with the mark of Cain.

It seems that the only way Israel can have both a human and viable

future is through reconciliation with the Palestinians. Peace may come only with a drastic change in Israeli self-image and a readiness to atone for the sins of colonialism. Only then will the war between Israel and Palestine end. Without such a radical change of heart, the war between Israel and the Arabs will extend indefinitely into the future. Continuing the present course, as is plainly evident from recent events, can only ensure perpetual bloodshed and untold suffering.

The basic issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that of political equality for both sides. The broad Zionist consensus can be defined by three negative answers: no to a Palestinian state, no to Palestinian self-determination and no to a return to the 1967 borders. The limit of the consensus is granting equal political rights to the Palestinians and to the Palestinian people. This is where the line is drawn. On this there are no differences between the major parties in Israel. The traditional labels of "left" and "right," "doves" and "hawks," have little meaning. Denying the legitimacy of Palestinian existence was the solution Zionist leaders opted for three and four generations ago, when they faced the reality of the inhabitants of Palestine. Most Israelis today still follow this solution. It then leads to traditional Israeli policies, with differences among parties being only in tactics or style.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN RECONCILIATION: A UTOPIAN FANTASY

This book presents mainly analysis; action and prescription are another matter. But let us present some utopian ideas, a fantasy, because it may be the only way out. Both sides feel a justified helplessness, as they are trapped and chained to each other. This is not a normal conflict that requires a peace settlement, but a feud that requires reconciliation. Is such a transformation possible? Are these wounds that cannot heal? Is there hatred that cannot be extinguished? If reconciliation between Jews and Germans is possible, reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians should present no problem. But the problem is the close proximity, the total embrace, one might say, of the two sides.

The main obstacles to a solution have to do with exorcising the past, admitting past and present injustice for one side; forgiving the past, the present and the presence for the other. The Israelis' problem is asking for forgiveness; the Palestinians' the readiness to forgive.

Admitting the injustice done to the Palestinians is so terrifying that Israelis will try to avoid it at all costs. Their feeling is that if they admit any guilt, they will be punished severely and mortally, as the magni-

tude of their crime warrants. They are afraid of the natives' wish for revenge. But there will be no reconciliation without an open admission of the basic injustice involved in Zionism.

Why do many Israelis think that peace is impossible? Because they believe that the original sin could not be forgiven or atoned. Israelis want to be forgiven, but they do not believe that the Palestinians will ever forgive. The most difficult thing for an Israeli is to admit that Zionism, beyond doing much to improve the lot of some Jews, may also be a colonialist movement. Such an admission is unacceptable since it seems to destroy the moral justification of Zionism. They fear that any admission of guilt for the past deprives them of all rights. Israelis are afraid of the word colonialism because they think it implies losing all their rights to live in Israel. But the children of colonialism do have rights, especially if they are settlers who have nowhere else to go.

Reconciliation between victors and victims is possible, because the secret of basic injustice is out. Every thinking Israeli knows that; so do those who do not want to think. The injustice cannot be completely redressed. Some of the practical consequences of past injustice cannot be reversed, except by creating new injustices. While colonialism can never be justified or defended, the rights of Israelis for physical survival and human rights cannot be denied. Settlers and children of settlers have now become indigenous to the Middle East in their own way, and have earned the right to stay there, as long as they do not infringe identical rights for others.

Both groups have defined each other as foreigners who do not belong in the territory, but only the Israelis have the power to enforce this determination. The disparity in power between the two sides prevents an easy settlement. The power of the Palestinians is their mere existence, and their existence so close to Israelis. They carry the veto power over Israel's future, and the power to forgive.

You cannot ask forgiveness for things you did not do, sins you did not commit. The settlers of the 1920s are dead. We can understand them and forgive them. They are not here to ask for forgiveness. But Israelis today can express their changed awareness of rights by admitting the injustice. Admission of injustice does not abolish rights, but forces us to accept responsibility for the present and the future. Admission of guilt also recognizes Israelis today as victims of the situation. Admission of injustice does mean changing the present arrangement of domination, and nobody wants to lose their privileges.

While not being able to solve the Jewish question, Zionism has created a new problem, that of the state of Israel. From what we have seen of it, the cure has been as problematic as the disease. Zionism wanted to end one kind of suffering and created two new kinds of pain, that of the Palestinians and that of the Israelis. The world may not be concerned now about the Jewish question, but it has to be concerned about Israelis and their imperiled future. The Zionist enterprise has made both Israelis and Palestinians victims. Israelis may be willing victims in this case, victims of their own making, but victims nevertheless. The Palestinians have been the unwilling victims of a great storm that overtook them.

As a result of Zionism, there is now a new Israeli culture and a new Israeli identity. Israelis, like white South Africans, are part of their region. Most of them are natives. The typical Israeli today is a native of Israel, with parents who are either natives themselves or came from an Arab country. Most of them have known no other homeland and are not ready to seek another. What has to be solved now is not just the problem of Palestinian rights, but also of Israeli rights. Since there are at least three million Israelis who have nowhere else to go, the problem becomes their survival, nothing less.

Israelis seem to be trapped in a peculiar and impossible situation. Any concession to the Palestinians may lead to the unraveling of the whole Zionist enterprise. While Israelis seem militarily superior, they feel deeply insecure. Israelis worry about repeating the history of the Crusaders, and this fear is a worm eating into their souls. The Crusader state was created by European military might. It survived for 200 years in the face of Arab opposition, but native resistance proved stronger than European strategy and skill. Israelis can ponder history's verdict as they visit Crusader castles dotting the Mediterranean coast.

Facing Zionism now, what it has been facing for the past 100 years with some success, is the defiance of the indigenous population, sharing sunshine, blue skies and historical destiny with the Israelis. It is the natives, now in unending rebellion, who will determine the future of Israel. The prognosis for Israel is good as long as the Arabs are divided and weak, together with the rest of the Third World. There is the fear that things cannot go on like this — history is catching up with Israel. History did just that in 1973 and again in 1987. The threatening future may lead to further rigidity. Israelis, anxious about their future, with good reason, will stick to the barely tolerable present. Israel is now a problem and a trap as the Israeli question is heir to the Jewish question.

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