FROM ANCIENT ISRAEL TO MODERN JUDAISM

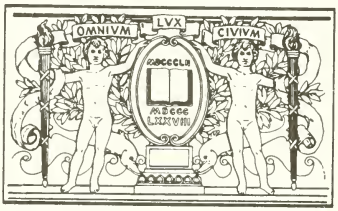
Intellect in Quest of Understanding

Essays in Honor of
Marvin Fox

Volume Four

Edited by
Jacob Neusner
Ernest S. Frerichs
Nahum M. Sarna

Brown Judaic Studies 175



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Theology
Literature
History

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Preface

In these essays, collected in four volumes, we honor as principal and leader of Judaic Studies in our generation Professor Marvin Fox, Philip W. Lown Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Director of the Lown School of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University, because in our generation, Professor Fox has occupied the position of *doyen* of Judaic Studies in the academy. This position has come to him through force of character and conscience and is one that expresses the man's moral authority, as much as his acknowledged excellence as scholar and teacher. His scholarship is attested by the bibliography that follows, his teaching by the excellent contributions to this volume of many of his doctoral students. But while in learning and teaching he competes on equal terms with many, in stature and universal respect there is none anywhere in the world of Judaic Studies, at home or in the State of Israel, who compares. It is a simple fact that the scholars who contributed to these volumes, have nothing whatsoever in common save that they concur in expressing esteem for this remarkable colleague. This is a scholars' tribute to a great man; in paying this honor to Marvin Fox, we identify the kind of person we want as our representative and academic avatar. In our generation, this is the sort of scholar we have cherished.

The facts of his career do not account for the honor in which he is held, even though he has pursued, and now pursues, a splendid career in higher education. But the facts do explain something about the man. Professor Marvin Fox received his B.A. in philosophy in 1942 from Northwestern University, the M.A. in the same field in 1946, and the Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1950 in that field as well. His education in Judaic texts was certified by rabbinical ordination as Rabbi by the Hebrew Theological College of Chicago in 1942. He taught at Ohio State University from 1948 through 1974, rising from Instructor to Professor of Philosophy. During those years he served also as Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the Hebrew Theological College of Chicago (1955) and also at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Bar Ilan

University (1970-1971). In 1974 he came to Brandeis University as Appleman Professor of Jewish Thought, and from 1976 onward he has held the Lown Professorship. From 1975 through 1982 and from 1984 through 1987 he was Chairman of the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis. From 1976 he has also served as Director of the Lown School of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies. In 1980-1981 he was Visiting Scholar in Jewish Philosophy at the Center for Jewish Studies of nearby Harvard University.

He has received numerous academic awards, a selected list of which includes the following: 1956-1957: Elizabeth Clay Howald Post-Doctoral Scholarship; 1962-1963, Fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies; 1975-1978, Director of the Association for Jewish Studies regional conferences, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities; 1977-1980, Director of the project, "For the Strengthening of Judaic Studies at Brandeis and their Links to the General Humanities," also funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. From 1979 he has been Fellow of the Academy of Jewish Philosophy; 1980-1981, Senior Faculty Fellow, National Endowment for the Humanities. He has served on the editorial boards of the *AJS Review, Daat, Judaism, Tradition, Journal for the History of Philosophy,* and other journals. He has lectured widely at universities and at national and international academic conferences and served as Member of the National Endowment for the Humanities National Board of Consultants for new programs at colleges and universities. Over the years he has counseled various universities and academic publishers as well.

His ties to institutions of Jewish learning under Jewish sponsorship are strong. He has served on the Advisory Committee of the Jewish Studies Adaptation Program of the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization (Israel), since 1982; International Planning Committee of the Institute for Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University since that same year; member of the governing council of the World Union of Jewish Studies since 1975; secretary, 1971-1972, vice president, from 1973-1975, and then president, from 1975-1978, of the Association for Jewish Studies; and he has been on the board of directors of that organization since 1970. From 1964 through 1968 he served on the Executive Committee of the Conference on Jewish Philosophy; from 1970 to the present on the Executive Committee of the Institute of Judaism and Contemporary Thought of Bar Ilan University; from 1972 as member of the Academic Board of the Melton Research Center of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; member of the board of directors of the Institute for Jewish Life from 1972 through 1975; member of the board of directors of the Library of Living

Philosophers, from 1948; Associate of the Columbia University Seminar on Israel and Jewish Studies from 1968 through 1974; and many other organizations.

His committee service at Brandeis University has covered these committees: Graduate School Council; Philosophy Department Advisory Committee and Reappointment and Promotions Committee; University Tenure Panels; Academic Planning Committee (Chairman, 1982-1984); Faculty Committee for the Hiatt Institute; Tauber Institute Faculty Advisory Committee and its academic policy subcommittee; Committee on University Studies in the Humanities; Faculty representative on the Brandeis University Board of Trustees (1978-1980). His professional memberships include the American Philosophical Association, the Metaphysical Society of America, the Medieval Academy of America, as well as the Association for Jewish Studies, Conference on Jewish Philosophy, and American Academy for Jewish Research.

The editors of this volume bear special ties of collegiality and friendship with Professor Fox. In this project Professor Sarna represents Brandeis University and also has been a close and intimate colleague and friend for many years. Professors Frerichs and Neusner have called upon Professor Fox for counsel in the fifteen years since Professor Fox came to Brandeis University. And Professor Fox has responded, always giving his best judgment and his wisest counsel. Professor Fox has been a good neighbor, a constant counsellor, and valued friend. In the sequence of eight academic conferences, run annually at Brown University in the 1970s, Professor Fox played a leading role in the planning of the programs and in scholarly interchange. Through him and the editors of this volume Brown and Brandeis Universities held a conference at which graduate students in the respective graduate programs met and engaged in shared discussion of common interests. Professor Fox moreover has taken a position on numerous dissertation committees in Brown's graduate program in the History of Judaism. His conscientious and careful reading of these dissertations give to the students the benefit not only of his learning but also of his distinct and rich perspective on the problem of the dissertation. Consequently, among the many other universities besides Ohio State and Brandeis at which Professor Fox has made his contribution, Brown University stands out as particularly indebted to him for wisdom and learning.

The editors express their thanks to President Evelyn Handler of Brandeis University for sponsoring the public event at which the contributors to these volumes presented the books to Professor Fox and enjoyed the opportunity of expressing in person their esteem and affection for him; and to the Max Richter Foundation of Rhode Island

and the Program in Judaic Studies at Brown University for financial and other support in organizing and carrying out this project. Mr. Joshua Bell, Verbatim, of Providence, Rhode Island, produced the camera ready copy with the usual attention to aesthetic excellence and also accuracy of detail that have characterized all of his work for Brown Judaic Studies, Brown Studies in Jews and their Societies, Brown Studies in Religion (Scholars Press), and also Studies in Judaism (University Press of America). The staff of Scholars Press, particularly Dr. Dennis Ford, gave to this project their conscientious attention. Professors Frerichs and Neusner therefore express thanks to Verbatim, Scholars Press, and University Press of America, which in the past ten years have made Brown University's Judaic Studies Program the world's largest publisher of scholarly books and monographs in the field of Judaic Studies. All three editors thank the contributors to these volumes for their willingness to collaborate in what we believe is an important tribute to greatness in our field and in our time.

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Part Fifteen
THE MODERN AGE: THEOLOGY

43

Samson Raphael Hirsch's Doctrine of Inner Revelation

Walter S. Wurzburger
Yeshiva University

It is widely taken for granted that Samson Raphael Hirsch's insistence upon the eternal validity of the Sinaitic Revelation clashes head-on with any doctrine which acknowledges the legitimacy of progress in the realm of religious truth. Hirsch categorically rejected the thesis of Reform theologians who adapted to their needs the Hegelian conception that the "spirit of the time" represents the Revelation of the Absolute in the historic process. He, therefore, vigorously protested against the then so fashionable doctrine of "progressive revelation" which stipulated that the norms of the Torah be evaluated in terms of their compatibility with the ethos of a given age, which, according to Hegel, functions as the medium of divine Revelation. As a champion of Orthodoxy, he ridiculed the suggestion that Judaism accommodate itself to the value-system of a specific historic era. For Hirsch there was no doubt that the binding authority of the Torah derived from an eternally valid act of divine Revelation. Hence, its norms were impervious to the vicissitudes besetting the world of time and change.

Polemics against those who regard "the spirit of the time" as a factor to be reckoned with in the the determination of religious norms recur throughout his voluminous writings. He bitterly objects to the relativization of religious truth which results from the Reform thesis that the content and meaning of divine Revelation is not static but is modified by historic developments. For Hirsch such an extreme historicism represents the height of absurdity, because it fails to take account of basic postulate of Judaism – the acceptance of the Sinaitic

Revelation as a Supernatural event *sui generis* that must be conceived as an incursion of eternity into the realm of time and space rather than a link in the causal nexus between historic phenomena.

It therefore is hardly surprising that the repeated emphasis upon the immutable nature of the Torah as the very essence of Judaism gave rise to the impression that the historic process was divested by him of all intrinsic religious significance and meaning. As Professor Rotenstreich put it, the Hirschian approach "reflects a tendency to withdraw the essence of Judaism from the historic process, posing it as incontrovertibly as divinely revealed, eternal statute."[1] Rotenstreich equated the emphasis upon the centrality of an immutable and eternally valid divine law with the adoption of a radical a-historical stance. He therefore alleges that, according to Hirsch, "the inner life of the Jew remains untouched by the historic process. An Orthodox Jew prays, as it were, outside the world in which he lives and returns to the world to which his prayers do not pertain."[2] Similarly, Yitzchak Breuer, Hirsch's grandson, constantly harped upon the a-historical character of the Jewish people, whose arena is in meta-history rather than history. He never tired of pointing out that Judaism relates to eternity rather than time, because the Sinaitic Revelation constitutes an incursion of eternity into the spatio-temporal world.[3] That a great-grandson of Hirsch chose *Timeless Torah*[4] as the title of an anthology of Hirsch's writings is further evidence of the extent to which a-historism was perceived to be the hall-mark of his ideology.

The wide acceptance[5] of this view both among devotees and critics of Hirsch appears, however, to be based upon a total misunderstanding of the Hirschian ideology, which in large measure can be attributed to

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[1]Nathan Rotenstreich, *Ha-machshavah Ha-yehudit Ba-et Ha-chadashah*, Tel Aviv, 1966, p. 115.

[2]*Tradition and Reality*, New York, 1972, p. 113.

[3]Isaac Breuer, *The Concepts of Judaism*, edited and selected by Jacob S. Levinger, Jerusalem, 1974, pp. 27-107. Cf. Arthur Cohen's characterization of Hirsch's attitude to history in his *The Natural and Supernatural Jew*, New York, 1962, pp. 50-54.

[4]*Timeless Torah, An Anthology of the Writings of Samson Raphael Hirsch*, edited by Jacob Breuer, New York, 1957.

[5]I wish, however, to point to a notable exception to his tendency. In his invaluable study, *Juedische Orthodoxie im Deutschen Reich 1871-1918*, pp. 81-83, Mordechai Breuer calls attention to this misinterpretation. But he does not support his thesis, as I have attempted in this paper, by analyzing the doctrine of "inner Revelation." I have also greatly benefited from I. Grunfeld's discussion of "innner Revelation" in his Translator's Introduction, to *Horeb*, London, 1962, pp. 81-118.

the utter disregard of the doctrine of an "inner Revelation," which is interspersed in many of Hirsch's writings. To be sure, references to this doctrine occur only sporadically. But it must be remembered that Hirsch was essentially a man of affairs whose preoccupation with communal and educational activities made it impossible for him to find the time needed for a systematic and comprehensive formulation of his religious ideology. His literary activities, however extensive, essentially responded to pressing, practical concerns. They frequently were exercises in polemics designed to vindicate his controversial positions. His other writings consisted largely of sermons or addresses, which, while attesting to the rhetorical prowess of an brilliant orator, hardly were suited for the thorough examination of theoretical issues. It must also be borne in mind that even his Bible Commentaries, which are widely read even in our time, were intended for the edification of the general public and were, therefore, more of a homiletical than scholarly nature. Since this type of writing does not lend itself to the balanced and systematic presentation of the various ingredients that went into the makings of his ideology, it is hardly surprising that he suffered the fate of so many other prominent religious leaders who have been far more adulated than understood, especially by their most ardent devotees.

It is quite possible that Hirsch's doctrine of an "inner Revelation" was widely ignored because of its popularity and lack of originality. As a matter of fact, the terminology "innere (internal)" and "auessere (external)" revelation was already employed by Hirsch's teacher, Isaac Bernays.[6] Moreover, in the age of Enlightenment statements such as "Truth and justice are the first revelation of God in your mind"[7] or "a general conception of Right, of what man owes to his fellow man is planted in the conscience of every uncorrupted human being, and this general consciousness of Right, is also the voice of God"[8] were so commonplace that they hardly would attract attention. He merely echoed the widely accepted ethos of his time when he declared in his inaugural sermon: "God teaches us: His voice is heard like a trumpet in conscience, in nature, in history...."[9] He similarly described justice as "an expression of what man recognizes from his inner revelation to be

[6]Isaac Heinemann, *Taamei Hamitzvot Be'safrut Yisrael*, Jerusalem, 1956, vol. 2, p. 95.

[7]Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Horeb*, paragraph 325.

[8]*Commentary on the Torah*, Leviticus, 18:4.

[9]Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Jeshurun*, 1, 1914, pp. 73ff. Quoted by Isaac Heinemann in "Samson Raphael Hirsch," *Historia Judaica*, 13, 1951, pp. 33-34.

the just claim of his fellow-man."[10] One can easily recognize in such statements the impact of Butler, Kant and, especially, Hegel, who, as Noah Rosenbloom[11] has shown, exerted such a powerful influence upon the formation of Hirsch's thought.

It must also be remembered that the doctrine of an "inner Revelation" was bound to be perceived by readers familiar with Jewish medieval philosophy as a restatement of views expressed by numerous scholastics, who acknowledged reason as an independent source of religious truth that supplemented the teachings obtained through Supernatural communication. It was in this spirit that Saadya had argued that, although the "rational commandments" theoretically could have been discovered by human reason unaided by Revelation, it was necessary for them to be included in the Sinaitic Revelation in order to make them available to the Jewish people even before they had reached the intellectual level required to apprehend these truths rationally. In other words, in so far as the rational commandments were concerned, Revelation merely served as a shortcut to what in due time could been ascertained by properly qualified individuals solely by recourse to their own intellectual resources.[12] Bahja Ibn Pakuda went even further and insisted that the "duties of the heart," which are indispensable to the proper fulfillment of our religious responsibilities, are not reducible to explicit norms of the Torah and, therefore, can be apprehended only by the human conscience.[13] In a similar vein, Meiri treated the promptings of the human conscience as an authoritative source for ascertaining the will of God. To employ his own striking formulation, "the commandments apprehended by the human heart are like the letters of the Torah scroll."[14] Especially telling is the widely quoted statement of the legist Vidal Yom Tov of Tolossa, who maintained that Jewish law must take account of the inevitable evolution of conceptions of moral propriety caused by transformation of socio-economic and cultural realities.[15]

There is no justification for the belief that, according to the above mentioned classical Jewish thinkers, historic developments left no impact upon the capacity of the human intelligence to intuit ethical insights. Seen against this background, it is highly implausible to impute to Hirsch the view that the historic process exerts no influence

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[10]Hirsch, *loc. cit.*

[11]Noah H. Rosenblooom, *Tradition in an Age of Reform*, Philadelphia, 1976.

[12]Saadya, *Emunot Ve'deot*, Chapter 3.

[13]Bahja Ibn Pakuda, *Chovot Halevovot*, Introduction.

[14]Meiri ad B.T., *Shabbat* 105b.

[15]Vida Yom Tov of Tolosa, *Maggid Mishneh, Hilchot Shechenim*, 14:4.

whatsoever upon the apprehension of religiously significant truth. Nothing in Hirsch's writings justifies the thesis that the "timelessness" which characterizes the Sinaitic revelation applies to the "inner revelation" as well. In this connection it is important to point out that Hirsch, rejecting Mendelssohn's rationalism with its accent upon "eternal verities," enthusiastically embraced Lessings' philosophy of history, which revolved around the belief in the intellectual and moral progress of mankind.[16]

The religious significance of the historic process is also a implicit in the Hirschian thesis that the Commandments represent not merely statutory laws but function as divinely ordained instrumentalities for *Bildung* (the formation of a harmonious personality). Since the purpose of the Torah is not merely to provide an immutable normative system that is to be obeyed for its own sake but also to direct man towards ever higher levels of moral consciousness, the very meaning of Torah involves the historic arena. Moreover, in the Hirschian scheme, it is only the content of the purely supernatural Revelation (the "external revelation" in his terminology) as contained in the Torah which is perceived as being totally independent of all cultural factors and as being hermetically insulated from the historic process. But the situation is entirely different with respect to other facets of divine revelation, e.g., nature, history and culture, which, according to Hirsch, represent religious truth as long as they are compatible with the teachings of the external revelation contained in the Torah.

In this connection it should be mentioned that Hirsch vehemently opposed all mystic tendencies, which denigrated the participation in various socio-economic and cultural activities. Denouncing asceticism, and for that matter, all forms of withdrawal from worldly concerns, he appealed to his follower to plunge into "an active life that is always intended to progress and flourish."[17] Time and again he proclaimed with all the impressive rhetorical skills at his command that the ultimate goal of Judaism was not to provide an escape mechanism from this-worldly realities, but to apply the norms and teachings of the Torah to the *Derech Eretz* of the world, so that human progress in science, technology, the arts, etc., would lead truly to the enhancement of mankind's spiritual and moral welfare.

It must be realized that Hirsch's advocated *Torah im Derech Eretz* not merely as a counsel of expediency to find a modus operandi for Judaism in an era of Enlightenment and Emancipation, but as the very essence of Judaism. In his opinion, *Torah im Derech Eretz* was not an

[16]Mordechai Breuer, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
[17]Quoted by Isaac Heinemann in *Historia Judaica, ibid.*, p. 36.

amalgam of two distinct elements but a corollary of the traditional notion that the Torah was a "Torah of life," which he interpreted as the demand that Torah address all facets of human culture and harness them towards the advancement of God's Kingdom. In the words of Yitzchak Breuer, "*Torah im Derech Eretz* is merely a slogan. Actually...a Judaism which does not separate itself from nature and history...but understands itself from its relationship to life. This is a Judaism which affirms culture and every creation of the human spirit. It looks upon them as values if they can stand the scrutiny of the Torah which is the divine instrument for our self-understanding in nature and history."[18]

To be sure, with the resurgence of fundamentalism in the Orthodox community there have come into vogue revisionist, rather far-fetched re-interpretations of Hirsch which argue that *Torah im Derech Eretz* was offered by Hirsch merely as a temporary expedient (*Hora'at Sha'ah*) in the attempt to salvage as much as possible from the tidal waves of assimilation that had inundated German Jewry. It is important, however, to realize that Hirsch looked upon *Torah im Derech Eretz* not merely as a legitimate option but as a form of piety which was superior to what was advocated by the "unenlightened" traditionalists who espoused the cause of isolation from the mainstream of modern culture. This is evidenced by the fact that in his polemics against Rabbi Seligmann Baer Bamberger on the issue of secession from the non-Orthodox community, he complains about his antagonist's failure to appreciate the religious merits of Hirsch's more enlightened approach.[19]

Within this context it is important to refer to Hirsch's attitude towards the Emancipation, which many leading exponents of Orthodoxy had viewed as a threat to the survival of Judaism. They were afraid that the removal of the ghetto walls and the ensuing dissolution of an autonomous Jewish community would ultimately lead to the erosion of Jewish observance and assimilation into the surrounding culture.

In contradistinction to this negative assessment of the historic developments of his time, Hirsch went all out in hailing the Emancipation as a boon not merely for Jews as individuals but for the cause of Judaism. He welcomed the opening of the gates to full participation in cultural, and socio-economic activities, because they

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[18]Yitzchak Breuer, in *Jakob Rosenheim Festschrift*, Frankfort, 1930, pp. 206-211.

[19]See Mordechai Breuer's discussion in *Torah Im Derech Eretz – Hatenuah Ishehah Vera'ayonotehah*, Ramat Gan, 1987, pp. 85ff. See also Jacob Katz's, "*Sh. R. Hirsch, Miyemin U'mismol, ibid.*, p. 16.

afforded Jews the opportunity to demonstrate the relevance of Torah to life in areas which previously were closed to them.

With the acceptance of *Torah im Derech Eretz* as an authentic religious ideal, the historic process, which is responsible for the development of various cultural phenomena to which Torah must be applied, emerges as an important factor in the determination of the meaning of Torah for a given era. Significantly, Hirsch compares the data contained in the Sinaitic Revelation of Torah to those comprising the Divine Revelation in the laws of nature. Just as a scientific theory must seek an explanation of the data obtained by observation of nature, so must any explanation of the meaning of Judaism be based upon the data, namely, the content of the supernatural Revelation. But it must be borne in mind that, while the natural law remains constant, scientific conceptions undergo constant revision as additional data become available. By the same token, the interaction between Torah and the particular *Derech Eretz* of a given era is bound to affect our understanding of the meaning of the data of the Torah insofar as it relates to their application to the culture of the time.

Hirsch's passionate endorsement of the religious import and significance of cultural advancements is eloquently expressed in the ringing declaration that "Judaism welcomes every advance in enlightenment and virtue wherever and through whatever medium it may be produced."[20] Similarly, Judaism is extolled as "the only religion the adherents of which are taught to see a revelation of the Divine in the presence of a man who is distinguished for knowledge and wisdom, no matter to what religion or nation he belongs."[21]

The religious significance of human history and progress is also implicit in the Hirschian ideal of *"Mensch-Jissroel"* (sic), which, in turn, rests upon the premise that the proper observance and understanding of the divine Commandments results in the cultivation of the attitudes and insights leading to higher levels of human development.[22] It is only through submission to the discipline and guidance of the theonomous commandments that we can truly do justice to the requirements of human nature and make progress on the road to genuine self-realization. While history could be dismissed as religiously irrelevant by a Mendelssohn, who maintained that observance of the divinely given law had no impact at all upon the

[20] *Collected Writings*, ed. by N. Hirsch, vol. 2, p. 454.

[21] *Judaism Eternal*, translated by I. Grunfeld, London, 1956, vol. 1, p. 207.

[22] See Isaac Heinemann, *Ta'amei Hamitzvot*, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107. I also learned much from his discussion of Hirsch's conception of theonomy.

metaphysical and ethical beliefs of Jews, because by virtue of the total absence of all dogmatic elements in Judaism, they were identical with the postulates of natural religion which were embraced by all rational human beings, for Hirsch, the situation was completely different. The degree to which the Commandments can succeed in infusing individuals with the value system needed to properly discharging their worldly responsibilities in keeping with the ideal of "Jissroel-Mensch" hinges upon a variety of factors involving historic contingencies. It is precisely because he places the center of gravity of Judaism within the flux of temporal events that he so strenuously objects to Mendelssohn's rationalism with its reliance on "eternal verities."

It thus becomes clear that for all his opposition to the "spirit of the time" as the sole determinant of religious truth, Hirsch, nonetheless, reckons with it as an important factor. It is one thing to assert the primacy of the Sinaitic Revelation not only as a guide to normative practice but also as a source of religious truth, and another to delegitimize completely the "inner Revelation." For Hirsch, the latter, to the extent that it supplements the former, is a vital ingredient of a wholesome religious approach. In the words of I. Grunfeld, one of the outstanding expositors of the Hirschian ideology, "while we can and should rely on our moral conscience as an 'inner revelation,' we must, however, never undertake to deny our obligations to the Divine will as manifested in the 'outer revelation' – that is the Revelation at Sinai."[23]

We must, however, part company with I. Grunfeld when he attributes to Hirsch the Kantian notion of autonomy and declares that for Hirsch, "the human will is autonomous only in so far as it does not contravene the Divine will."[24] The very term 'inner revelation,'which is contrasted with 'external Revelation,' possesses a theonomous rather than an autonomous connotation. The human conscience is seen not as an independent source of authority but as the instrument through which the Divine Will is disclosed. As Hirsch put it in his chapter on "justice" in his *Horeb*, "Justice simply means allowing each creature all that it may expect as the portion allotted to it by God."[25] The theonomous nature of morality is also eloquently formulated in the statement: "God's will has been revealed to you....He has implanted in your mind the general principles of truth and right...and you...carry within yourself a voice demanding...to discharge the task of justice."[26]

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[23]I. Grunfeld, "Introduction to Horeb," *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 91.
[24]*Ibid.*
[25]*Horeb*, vol. 1, p. 217.
[26]*Ibid.* p. 219.

It must also be taken into consideration that, unlike Kant, Hirsch did not believe that it was possible to build a moral system on purely rational foundations of *a priori* propositions. While rationality may provide man with the general conception of right and justice, it cannot yield adequate moral rules. "To some extent one can carry out the Torah-conception of social Right even before one has studies the Laws which God has revealed to us....But the laws of social Right, on which alone the whole human social happiness can truly flourish and blossom...require study from the revealed word of God."[27] Even more pronounced is the emphasis upon the inadequacy of a morality which is grounded upon purely rational foundations when commenting on Psalm 19:2 he declares: "By merely looking at the heavens and earth, man will never discover the Divine Law which governs his task in the world. Whatever answer he would derive from this kind of study would enmesh him in hopeless confusion."[28] There can be little doubt that this rejection of a purely rational foundation of morality points to the influence of Hegel, who, criticizing the a-historical stance of the Kantian formalistic ethic, replaced it with the conception of "Sittlichkeit" to underscore the role of the historic dimension in the moral domain.

[27]Commentary ad Psalm, 19:1.
[28]Commentary ad Leviticus 18:5.

44

Non-Jews in a Jewish Polity: Subject or Sovereign?

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I. Scholarship and Normativeness

It is only during the past forty years, since the establishment of the State of Israel, that the question of the status of non-Jews in a Jewish polity could be one that is more than merely theoretical. Before this time, such a question could only be one for historical research or theological reflection. From the time of the final Roman takeover of the Hasmonean kingdom in 37 B.C.E. until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, no group of non-Jews lived until the control of a Jewish polity. (The status of *individual* non-Jewish slaves living under the rule of *individual* Jewish slaveowners, in earlier periods of Jewish history, is an altogether different issue and need not concern us here.[1]) The normative question, in a Jewish sense, has always been one concerning the status of Jews in a non-Jewish polity – at least until 1948. Indeed, for the majority of world Jewry, who do not live in the State of Israel, that is still the religious question, namely, the justification and application of the principle "the law of the non-Jewish state (*dina de-malkhuta*) is binding on Jews (*dina*)."[2] (The question of Jewish rights in a non-Jewish polity, one which has concerned Jews since the Emancipation, is an altogether different question, one decided by non-

All translations, unless otherwise noted, are by the author.

[1]See D. Novak, "The Transformation of Slavery in Jewish Law," *Law and Theology in Judaism* (New York, 1976), 87ff.

[2]See B. Baba Batra 54b and parallels.

Jewish criteria.) However, for the growing number of Jews who now live in the State of Israel, the presence there of a population of non-Jews (mostly Arab, either Muslim or Christian) requires a careful examination of the sources of Jewish tradition concerning the status of non-Jews in a Jewish polity for purposes that are now more practical (*halakhah le-ma'aseh*) than just theoretical (*talmud*). And, the question is now more practical too – although less directly to be sure – for the majority of Jews who live outside the State of Israel since, for most of them, the State of Israel is the *Jewish* state not just the *Israeli* state. (Whether or not most Israelis share that view is debatable.)

For the more familiar religious question of the status of Jews in a non-Jewish polity, legal precedent is extremely important. If one consults S. Shilo's comprehensive study of this complex subject,[3] it will become evident that the responsa literature here is vast and detailed. As such, even new specific questions can and must be placed at the cutting edge of an uninterrupted normative sequence.

For our question of non-Jews in a Jewish polity, however, legal precedent – and by "legal precedent" I mean case law (*ma'aseh shehayah*) as opposed to codified law – is irrelevant because it does not exist. Indeed, there are no such precedents even in the rabbinic sources, much less in the responsa literature, simply because there has been no Jewish experience in this area for 2,000 years.[4] Whatever has been written in this area in the last century – such as the brief discussions by R. Yehiel Michal Epstein (the author of the popular halakhic work, *'Arokh Ha-Shulḥan*), or by the religious Zionist theoretician, Dr. Simon Federbush, or by the late Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel, R. Isaac Halevi Herzog[5] – all of these discussions have had to leap over 2,000 years of specifically normative silence back into the more general classical Scriptural and rabbinic sources on this overall topic.

As I indicated above, discussions of this question of non-Jews in a Jewish polity have been heretofore theoretical: either historical research or theological reflection. Therefore, if they are all we have for the new task at hand, which one is primary and which one is secondary for our methodological purposes?

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[3]*Dina De-Malkhuta Dina* (Jerusalem, 1974), *passim*.

[4]See D. Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism: An Historical and Constructive Study of the Noahide Laws* (New York and Toronto, 1983), 11ff.

[5]See R. Yehiel Michal Epstein, *'Arokh Ha-Shulḥan He'Atid* (Jerusalem, 1973), 89ff; R. Simon Federbush, *Mishpat Ha-Melukhah Be-Yisrael*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1973), 56ff; R. Isaac Ha-Levi Herzog, "The Rights of Minorities According to Jewish Law" (Heb.), *Techumin* (Summer, 1981), 2:169ff. See also, B. Wein, *Ḥiqray Halakhah* (Jersualem, 1976), 9ff.

Clearly, beginning with historical research and making it the determining factor in our method of inquiry will lead us to a normative dead-end. For historical research qua objective science can only tell us, somewhat convincingly, what *has happened* and, much less convincingly, what *might happen*. It cannot, however, by its own "value-free" criteria, tell us what *is-to-be*, which is the normative form any moral answer must take.[6] Modern philosophers, since Hume, have for the most part taken as axiomatic that one can never derive an "ought" from an "is," a prescription from a description. And, although I would dispute that axiom on the metaphysical level,[7] it is difficult to dispute when one looks at the more empirical "is" with which modern historians deal, as Prof. Yosef Yerushalmi has recently reminded us in his seminal book, *Zakhor*.[8] I mention this obvious point simply because modern Jewish scholarship has such a heavy investment in the whole historical enterprise that it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the study of history is itself not Torah. Even in the type of historical research we find in the process of determining halakhic precedent, the enterprise is not essentially "historical" in the modern sense; for the normative sources and the normative content of these precedents are always considered by those who accept their authority to be superhistorical. Historical research, then, can only be a "handmaid" to the Torah itself.[9] And, for our question at hand, only Torah will suffice.

What we are left with, then, in our normative quest, is theological reflection, that is, reflection on the various Scriptural and rabbinic discussions of the status of non-Jews in a Jewish polity. Unlike historical research, this theological reflection is not that of an uncommitted spectator, but rather that of a committed participant in a normative reality. As such, one can suggest "oughts" because of its vision of the overall "to-be" of Torah. Nevertheless, it is not Halakhah in the narrow sense (*pesaq din*) because it does not deal with specific cases.[10] It is, rather, an exegesis of primary sources and a philosophical concern with their fundamental truth. And, what is especially exciting about such reflection here and now is that it can

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[6]See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, q. 94, a. 2; also, Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, 1953), 9ff.

[7]See D. Novak, "Theonomous Ethics: A Defense and A Critique of Tillich," *Soundings*, 69.4 (Winter, 1986), 441ff.

[8]*Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, 1982), esp., 87ff; also, D. Novak, "The Role of Dogma in Judaism," *Theology Today*, 45.1 (April, 1988), 52ff.

[9]For the notion of any secular discipline functioning as *ancilla theologiae*, see H. A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge, MA, 1947), 1:144ff.

[10]See B. Baba Batra 130b and Rashbam thereon.

lead to practical norms.[11] Indeed, the move from theory to practice is imminent. Thus, our reflection is more than academic.

I consider the clearest and most suggestive paradigm for such theological reflection in this area to be the dispute between Maimonides and Nahmanides on whether non-Jews in a Jewish polity are subject or sovereign.

II. Maimonides' Theory of Non-Jews in a Jewish Polity

Maimonides' theory of the status of non-Jews in a Jewish polity is largely presented in a theological-political treatise, "the laws of kings and their wars" (*Hilkhot Melakhim u-Milḥamotayhem*), which is the last section of *The Book of Judges* (*Sefer Shoftim*), the last division of his encyclopedia of Jewish law and theology, *Mishneh Torah*. This treatise is theological-political rather than strictly halakhic (and, thus, by including it and other such treatises in *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides surely meant *Mishneh Torah* not to be a "legal code" in the same sense that *Tur* and *Shulḥan 'Arukh* are legal codes[12]).

This treatise is theological-political for two reasons: (1) it did not involve any possible contemporary cases and was, thus, inapplicable in his time; (2) it has not been the subject of subsequent legal review in the way other areas of the Law, whose operation has been uninterrupted, have been subject to such review. Therefore, it is, in essence, an exercise in philosophical exegesis for the sake of a political theology. As such, one cannot cite Maimonides' rulings here as being immediately normative in the same way many rulings of the *Shulḥan 'Arukh* are immediately normative.[13] This is quite important to bear in mind because Nahmanides takes issue with Maimonides in the context of an exegetical work, his *Commentary on the Torah*, rather than in a strictly halakhic work.

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[11]See B. Kiddushin 40b and parallels; also, R. Isaiah Ha-Levi Horowitz, *Shenay Luhot Ha-Berit*, Torah She-bi-Khtav: R'eh (Jerusalem, 1963), 2:82b-83a.

[12]See I. Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides* (New Haven, CT, 1980), 188ff; also, I. Klein, *The Code of Maimonides VII: The Book of Agriculture* (New Haven, CT, 1979), intro., xxiii- xxv.

[13]Therefore, R. Joseph Karo, e.g., who certainly considered himself to be a follower of Maimonides on most halakhic issues, states about Maimonides' view of the beatitude reserved for Noahides who observed Noahide law as divine law (*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 8.11), that it seems to him to be Maimonides' "own opinion" (*me-sebara de-nafshayh*), i.e., his taking sides in an earlier rabbinic dispute (*Kesef Mishneh* thereon re T. Sanhedrin 13.2 and B. Sanhedrin 105a) – even though Karo himself agrees with this opinion of Maimonides. In more practically relevant decisions of Maimonides, however, Karo argued for Maimonides' conclusions in much more legally compelling language. See, e.g., *Hilkhot Tefillah*, 11.1 and *Kesef Mishneh* thereon.

The classical term for a non-Jewish participant in a Jewish polity is a *ger toshab*, which is a rabbinic term combining two Scriptural terms, *ger* and *toshab*, to designate what we would call a "resident-alien."[14] For Maimonides, one becomes a *ger toshab* in one of two ways: either at one's own individual initiative, or as the result of being part of a non-Jewish society conquered by a Jewish polity in war.

The first way, that is, by individual initiative, is essentially Maimonides' restatement of two Talmudic sources.

> Who is a *ger toshab*? He is a gentile who accepts upon himself not to engage in idolatrous worship, along with acceptance of the rest of the commandments commanded to the Noahides, and who has not been either circumcised or immersed. Such a person is to be accepted and he is one of the pious of the nations of the world (*me-ḥasiday 'ummot ha'olam*). Why is he called *ger toshab* [literally, "alien-dweller"]? It is because it is permitted for us to have him dwell among us in the Land of Israel....We only accept a *ger toshab* at a time when the Jubilee is in effect, but at this time, even if he accepted upon himself all the Torah in its entirety except for one detail, we not not accept him.[15]

As he points out in a closely related text, voluntary membership in a Jewish polity (or any Jewish community now) must be full conversion to Judaism or nothing at all.[16] For the institution of the *ger toshab* to be operative, we are not only required to have a Jewish polity in the Land of Israel, we are required to have a Jewish polity in the Land of Israel with all twelve tribes in residence, which is the prerequisite for the Jubilee system to be operative. That is why Maimonides would eliminate the possibility of a *ger toshab* even in a Jewish polity such as we now have in the State of Israel, and even if that Jewish polity were governed by the Torah.

However, when it comes to the institution of the *ger toshab* as the result of being part of a non-Jewish society conquered by a Jewish polity in war, Maimonides seems to construct a more probable political scenario. And, here he goes far beyond the Scriptural and rabbinic sources.

> And so it is with a non-Jewish city that has made peace with us, a covenant (*berit*) is not to be made with them until they renounce idolatry and destroy all its shrines and accept the rest of the commandments commanded to the Noahides. For any nation that

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[14]For the still separate designations of *ger* and *toshab* in a Tannaitic source, see *Sifra:* Behar, ed. Weiss, 110a re Lev. 25:47. For *ger toshab* as one designation, see *Encyclopedia Talmudit*, 6:289ff.

[15]*Hilkhot Isuray Bi'ah*, 14.7-8 re B. 'Abodah Zarah 64b and 'Arakhin 29a. (This latter text stipulates the Jubilee requirement.)

[16]*Hilkhot 'Abodah Zarah*, 10.6.

> has not accepted the commandments commanded to the Noahides is to be killed if under our power....And so did Moses our Master command by word from God (*mi-pi ha-Geburah*) to force (*la-kof*) all the inhabitants of the world to accept the commandments commanded to the Noahides. And whoever does not accept them is to be killed. The one who accepts them is called a *ger toshab* wherever (*be-khol maqom*), and he must accept them upon himself in the presence of three rabbinic judges (*ḥaberim*).[17]

This scenario is more probable because Maimonides does not make the prior applicability of the Jubilee-system a *conditio sine qua non* for this type of *ger toshab*. And, as is well known, Maimonides regarded the reestablishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel to be without religious impediment.[18] Thus, we have before us the assumption of an universal moral law, one to be enforced by Jews wherever they have political power over non-Jews.

Furthermore, the enforcement of this universal moral law is to be in tandem with the Jewish subjugation of a captured people.

> War is not to be conducted with anyone in the world until peace has been offered to them, whether in a permitted offensive war (*milḥemet reshut*) or in a mandated war (*milḥemet mitzvah*). If they made peace and accepted the seven commandments commanded to the Noahides, not even one life is to be killed....If they accepted the payment of tribute (*mas*) but not servitude (*he'abdut*) or vice-versa, they are not to be heard until they accept both. The servitude that they are to accept is that they will be despised (*nibzim*) and be at the lowest level of society and will not be able to lift their heads in Israel but will be subgated (*kebushim*) under them. They are not to be appointed to any offices where they have authority (*ve-lo yitmanu*) over Jews for any reason whatsoever. The tribute to be received from them is that they are to be ready for the service of the king with their bodies and with their property, such as the building of walls and the strengthening of fortifications.[19]

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[17]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 8.9-10.

[18]See *ibid.*, 11.1. Also, Maimonides (*ibid.*, 6.1) does not require the presence of the *Urim ve-Tumim* oracle for the king to declare a permitted war (*milḥemet reshut*) as was mentioned in the Talmud re King David (B. Berakhot 3b-4a and B. Sanhedrin 16a-b). He only requires king and Sanhedrin (*Commentary on the Mishnah:* Sanhedrin 2.4), both institutions having no present religious impediment to prevent their being reinstituted whenever it became politically feasible. Cf. *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot*, shoresh 14 (end), where he also mentions the requirement of the high priest. However, even here he does not mention the specific requirement of the *Urim ve-Tumim*. Indeed, it was not necessarily the high priest who used it (see B. Yoma 73a). For Nahmanides, on the other hand, the *Urim ve-Tumim* is essential. See *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot:* "Negative Commandments According to Nahmanides," no. 17 re B. Shebu'ot 16a.

[19]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 6.1. Cf. *Sifre:* Debarim, no. 199, ed. Finkelstein, 237 re Deut. 20:10 (see Rashi thereon). See R. Abraham de Boten, *Leḥem Mishneh* on

Non-Jewish subjects of Jewish rulers seem to have the same status as Jewish and Christian subjects have under Muslim rulers, that is, they have the status of *dhimmis*.[20] They are a tolerated group of second-class aliens subject to a constitutionally structured authority over them. Indeed, Maimonides emphasizes how that authority is to be lawful and equitable, not capricious and deceitful. "It is forbidden to be deceitful in the covenant with them and to lie to them because (*'ahar*) they have made peace and accepted the Noahide laws."[21]

Maimonides has here achieved a major *tour de force* in reworking the Scriptural and rabbinic sources on this issue. The question that remains, however, is whether the acceptance of the Noahide laws is for the sake of subjugation, or whether subjugation is for the sake of acceptance of the Noahide laws. In other words, the question is the perennial question facing all political theory, that is, the question of whether might makes right, or right makes might – the question of whether political power needs to be rationalized or justified.[22]

In the Scriptural sources, there seem to be two kinds of war against gentiles: one with the seven Canaanite nations and the Amalekites; the other with all other enemies of the people of Israel. Both kinds of war are presented as offensive enterprises.[23]

In the first case, absolute annihilation seems to be the only mandated course of action, with no compromise of any kind possible. In this case, that is, with the Canaanites and the Amalekites, the reason for this uncompromising imperative seems to be the inherent moral wickedness of these peoples, not just their animosity to the people of Israel. Thus, the Amalekites are considered those who "do not fear God" (Deuteronomy 25:18) in the sense of not fearing divine retribution for their immorality towards and with other human beings.[24] The Canaanites are to be totally dispossessed from the Land of Israel because of "all these abominations (*to'ebot*) they have done" (Leviticus 18:27), such as incest and child sacrifice. Nevertheless, what exact body of law they violated, and whether they knew in advance that what they were doing was evil and subject to divine punishment, are not spelled out in these early sources. Also, the option of their

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Maim., *loc. cit.* re Nahmanides' comment on Deut. 20:10, who interpets the verse as does Maimonides.

[20]See S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, 2nd rev. ed (New York, 1957), 3:120ff.

[21]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 6.3.

[22]See Plato, *Republic*, 336Bff.

[23]See Deut. 20:1; 25:19.

[24]See Gen. 20:11.

rectifying their past sins does not seem to be presented as a possibility leading to their being treated by less harsh means than annihilation.

In the second case, that is, non-Canaanite/Amalekite societies conquered by a Jewish polity, compromise is possible, but that compromise seems to be based on the purely external political consideration of subjugation, not on the internal morality of the subjugated people itself. It seems to be an issue of *might* not *right*. Thus, in the text from Talmud Yerushalmi, which Maimonides cites, the two cases are essentially conflated, but that conflation is based on political not moral criteria.

> Before entering the Land, Joshua sent three letters. In the first one he sent to them, he offered the option of flight to whomever wanted to flee. The second option he then offered was that whoever wanted to make peace could make peace. The last option he then offered them was that whoever wanted to wage war, war would be waged with them.[25]

This seems to be based on the earlier qualification of the *Sifre* concerning the mandate to annihilate the Canaanite nations based on the Scriptural reason, namely, "in order (*lema'an*) that they not teach you to practice all their abominations which they practised for their gods and, thus, you will sin against the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 20:18). The *Sifre* sees this as a condition antecedent so that "if they repented(*'asu teshubah*), they are not to be killed."[26] Whether that "repentance" is for the general *moral* violation of the Noahide laws, or particular resistance to Israel's *political* power, is still unclear.[27]

Maimonides' great innovation is to make Jewish subjugation of non-Jewish captive peoples a matter of morality: a morality as binding on the conqueror as it is on the conquered. Both the power of the conqueror and the powerlessness of the conquered are now subject to the rule of law: the former being restrained; the latter being protected. For any Jewish subjugation of non-Jews as the result of military victory is only justified by joint adherence to the seven Noahide laws. These laws, for

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[25]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 6.5 re Y. Shebiit 6.1/36c; also, *Debarim Rabbah* 5.13.

[26]*Sifre:* Debarim, no. 204, ed. Finkelstein, 238. Rashi (B. Sotah 35b, s.v. "ve-katbah"), however, takes this condition to only apply to Canaanites (and all gentiles) *outside* the Land of Israel, but not to those inside the Land of Israel since their repentence would always be suspect (see Est. 8:17 and B. Yebamot 24b). This interpretation is rejected by Nahmanides in his *Commentary on the Torah:* Deut. 20:10.

[27]For the modern distinction employed here between "morality" and "politics," see Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, 177-180 re Machiavelli. What moderns call "politics" in the amoral sense, the ancients called "tyranny." See Strauss, *On Tyranny*, rev. ed.(Ithaca, NY, 1968), 22-24.

Maimonides, are the maximal moral standard for all non-Jews (*benay Noaḥ*), and they are the minimal moral standard for Jews, the Mosaic Torah being their full actualization.[28]

This insistence upon a moral justification for Jewish subjugation of a non-Jewish society highlights a seeming contradiction between two related passages in *Hilkhot Melakhim u-Milḥamotayhem* concerning the initial justification of a war with a gentile society – what in Western political theory is called *ius ad bellum*.[29] This is important for us to analyze here because, it will be recalled, for Maimonides, the only way one can become a *ger toshab* in a non-Jubilee observing Jewish polity is when that person or group of persons came under Jewish rule as the result of a Jewish victory in war.

In the rabbinic sources, there are three kinds of war: (1) *milḥemet ḥobah*, that is, a mandated offensive war against the Canaanites and the Amalekites;[30] (2) *milḥemet mitzvah*, that is, a defensive war, minimally conditioned by a threat to the security of the Jewish state (an example would be the Israeli preemptive strike against the Egyptian forces in the Sinai poised for attack in June, 1967);[31] (3) *milḥemet reshut*, that is, a permitted war, seemingly authorized by pure self-interest, namely, the expansion of military power for political or even economic ends.[32]

Maimonides reduces the kinds of war from three to two: *milḥemet mitzvah* (mandated war) and *milḥemet reshut* (permitted war). This can be understood if one recalls that, for Maimonides, the type of mandate designated by the rabbinic term *ḥobah* is a totally unconditional imperative.[33] However, if the repentance of even the Canaanite/Amalekites is always possible, acceptable, and even encouraged, then there can be no *milḥemet ḥobah* in this unconditional sense.

Now in the case of a mandated war, there is moral justification: either self-defense or the refusal of the Canaanites/Amalekites to abide by the Noahide laws. However, in the case of permitted war,

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[28]See *Hilkhot Melakhim*, 9.1.

[29]See John Langan, S. J., "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory," *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 12.1 (Spring, 1984), 25ff.

[30]M. Sotah 8.7; B. Sotah 44b. See Maim., *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot*, pos. no. 187 for why this commandment is perpetual (*noheg le-dorot*) even though there are no more "Canaanites" left in the world (re M. Yadayim 4.4). However, he seems to imply that the Amalekites are still extant (see *ibid.*, no. 188).

[31]See Y. Sotah 8.10/23a.

[32]See *ibid.*; also, B. Berakhot 3b-4a and B. Sanhedrin 16a-b.

[33]*Hilkhot Berakhot*, 11.2. This seems to answer the surprise expressed by R. Joseph Karo in *Kesef Mishneh* on *Hilkhot Melakhim*, 5.1.

Maimonides here simply repeats the Talmudic justification, which seems to be based on pure self interest.

> The king's first duty is to fight a mandated war (*milḥemet mitzvah*). What is a "mandated war?" It is the war against the seven Canaanite nations and the war against the Amalekites and the aid of the Jewish people from the hand of an enemy who has come upon them. Thereafter, he may fight a permitted war (*milḥemet reshut*) with the rest of the nations, in order (*kedey*) to enlarge the border of Israel and to increase his power (*gedulato*) and fame (*ve-shom'o*).[34]

However, it would seem, as we saw earlier when examining a related passage from this very treatise, that the *only* justification for a Jewish war of subjugation of a non-Jewish society is "to force all the inhabitants of the world to accept the commandments that were commanded to the Noahides."[35]

Nevertheless, there is a possible solution to this seeming contradiction within this treatise on kingship and war. For, Maimonides, also following the Talmud, indicates that the head of a Jewish state[36] must have the parliamentary approval of the Sanhedrin before he can legally declare a permitted, offensive war.

> In a mandated war (*milḥemet mitzvah*) he need not receive the permission (*reshut*) of the court, but he may go out on his own initiative at any time and force the people to go out. But, in the case of a permitted war, he cannot bring the people out except with the consent of the court of seventy-one.[37]

Now the question is: What sort of objections could a Sanhedrin (that is, the Great Court of seventy-one)[38] raise against the proposal by the head of state to declare a permitted war? Obviously, pragmatic political objections could be raised, such as the nonfeasibility of victory, too great a cost in lives and materials, negative diplomatic results, etc., etc. However, Maimonides himself, just before setting down this principle, states that the only acceptable reason for the head of state to engage in any offensive military enterprise is a moral one.

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[34]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 5.1. Nevertheless, that the king not act for personal aggrandizement, see *ibid.*, 3.6. Re "breaking the power of the wicked," see *ibid.*, 3.10. For a thorough presentation and analysis of these sources, see G. Blidstein, *'Eqronot Mediniyyim Be-Mishnat Ha-Rambam* (B'er Sheva, 1983), 98ff.

[35]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 8.10.

[36]Re whether or not a president of the State of Israel has the status of a king, see R. Obadiah Yosef, *Responsa Yeḥaveh Da'at* (Jerusalem, 1978), 2:106-109 (no. 28).

[37]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 5.2.

[38]See *Hilkhot Sanhedrin*, 1.3; also, *Hilkhot Mamrim*, 1.1.

> And in all these things the king's law (*dino*) is law. In all of them his deeds should be for the sake of God, and his purpose (*magamato*) and thought are to be to elevate the status (*le-harim*) of the true faith (*dat ha'emet*)and to fill the world with what is right (*tzedeq*), and to break the power of the wicked, and to fight the wars of the Lord. For a king is not made king initially except to implement justice (*la'asot mishpat*) and conduct wars.[39]

Therefore, it would seem a Sanhedrin member could raise moral objections to a royal proposal of war, such objections as: Is the proposed war's moral justification a true reason or a rationalization? What will be the proposed war's moral effect on the Jews engaging in it? Will it provide too great a diversion from such prior Jewish needs as Torah study or the rectification of injustices within Jewish society? Will it needlessly brutalize the recruits called up to fight this war?[40] – The burden of proof is clearly on the head of state for he is making a claim on the lives, property and integrity of his own people.[41]

This being so, a careful reading of all of Maimonides' statements on the subject of war and the subjugation of the non-Jews defeated therein seems to indicate that the *only* justification for *any* war and, therefore, the *only* justification for *any* act of subjugation of non-Jews is a moral one. The ramifications of this conclusion from Maimonides' political theology are considerable.

Despite the fact that the law applies both to the Jewish conquerors and the non-Jews conquered in a Jewish polity, the administration of that law always lies in the hands of the Jewish authorities or those non-Jews they designate as subordinate authorities.

> The Jewish court is obligated (*hayyabim*) to appoint judges for these resident-aliens (*ha-gerim ha-toshabim*) to judge them according to these laws so that civilized society (*ha'olam*) not be destroyed. If the court sees fit (*ra'u*) to appoint non-Jewish judges from the non-Jews, they may do so. But, if they see fit to appoint for the non-Jews Jewish judges, they may do so.[42]

This is a point that Maimonides emphasizes a bit earlier in this treatise, namely, the obligation of the Jewish authorities to interfere in the quasi-judicial independence of their non-Jewish subjects, if need be.

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[39]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 4.10. See *ibid.*, 7.15. Re *da'at 'emet*, see *Hilkhot Hagigah*, 3.1, 6. Re *da'at 'emet*, as universal monotheism, see *ibid.*, 7.15 and *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot*, pos. no. 191; also, Blidstein, *op. cit.*, 217ff.

[40]See, esp., Nahmanides, *Commentary on the Torah:* Deut. 23:10.

[41]See B. Baba Kama 46a.

[42]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 10.11.

> How are the non-Jews commanded concerning adjudication (*ha-dinin*)? They are obligated to place various kinds of judges (*dayyanin ve-shoftim*) in every district to adjudicate according to these six commandments and to admonish the people concerning them. And a Noahide who violated any one of these seven commandments is to be executed by decapitation (*yehareg be-sayyaf*). Because of this, all of the citizens (*ba'alay*) of Shechem deserved (*nithayyabu*) to be executed for Shechem [their prince] robbed [Dinah] and they saw it, they knew about it, but they did not judge him.[43]

This obligation, then, is morally justified, not just politically rationalized. For the justification of the execution of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi, the brothers of Dinah, is not because of the Shechemites' tacit approval of what Shechem did to *their* sister, but because of the tacit approval of his rape of *any* woman.

It is because of the assumption of this type of moral culpability on the part of non-Jews, a moral culpability that itself requires Jewishly administered punishment whenever possible, that non-Jewish subjects have legal status in a Jewish polity. They have such status because it is assumed that they have moral personality. This moral personality comprises freedom of choice and responsibility for adherence to an objective body of law fairly applied. Nevertheless, this legal status entails neither political equality nor political independence. Furthermore, Maimonides constitutes neither a right nor a duty of the Jewish authorities to allow their non-Jewish subjects to be their political equals in the same polity, or even to be their politically independent neighbors in a separate state of their own. Ordered subjugation seems to be the only acceptable course of action when Jews have political power over non-Jews, in the view of Maimonides.[44] That subjugation, however, may never be arbitrary. It may never dispense with the due process of law.

III. Nahmanides' Critique of Maimonides' Political Theology

It can be said, with considerable justice I believe, that Nahmanides was Maimonides' most profound critic. For not only was his critique of Maimonides the most extensive of all, but that critique was the result of a carefully thought out theological system. Thus, he countered many of Maimonides' theories from an unified theological perspective of his own.

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[43]*Ibid.*, 9.14.

[44]Therefore, the Jewish philosopher, Hermann Cohen (d. 1918) was incorrect when he claimed that the *ben Noah/ger toshab* implies citizenship in the modern sense, viz., equality based on secular criteria. See his "Naechstenliebe im Talmud," *Juedische Schriften* (Berlin, 1924), 1:159ff.

Since Nahmanides' most comprehensive work was his *Commentary on the Torah*, he usually began his critique of Maimonides' theology at the exegetical point of difference between them. In our case at hand, he begins his critique of Maimonides' view of the obligation of Jewish interference in the political life of subject peoples as follows, questioning his interpretation of the execution of the citizens of Shechem by Simeon and Levi. After indicating that many have questioned the moral propriety of what Simeon and Levi did, Nahmanides accurately states Maimonides' view and then begins his critique of it.

> And these points are not correct, as far as I am concerned. For if the matter were so, Jacob our Father would have himself been obligated to have the merit of being the first (*qodem ve-zokheh*) to kill them. And, if he was afraid of them, then why was he angry with his sons and cursed their wrath such a long time later, and he punished them by separating and dispersing them? Did they not [according to Maimonides' theory] meritoriously fulfill a commandment, and did they not trust their God, who saved them?[45]

Nahmanides then continues with his own view of what role Jews should play or not play in the political morality of a non-Jewish society subject to their power.

> In my opinion, the obligation of adjudication (*ha-dinin*) that was assigned to the Noahides in their seven commandments not only required that they place judges in every district, but He commanded them concerning such matters as stealing and cheating,...etc., just like the obligation of adjudication for which Jews were commanded.[46]

Moreover, even if the citizens of Shechem were indeed guilty of violations of the seven Noahide laws, including tacit approval or passive indifference to a crime committed in their midst, Nahmanides concludes his thought on this subject by most emphatically stating that "the matter is not assigned (*masur*) to Jacob and his sons to exercise legal judgment against them (*la'asot bahem ha-din*)."[47] In other words, Jewish political powers will inevitably invite political disaster when they attempt to exercise moral authority over a society of non-Jews. Thus, he makes a far sharper distinction between moral law and political authority than Maimonides does. Non-Jews, even non-Jews

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[45]*Commentary on the Torah:* Gen. 34:13, ed. Chavel (Jersualem, 1959), 1:191. For rabbinic embarassment with the act of Simeon and Levi, see B. Megillah 9a re Gen. 49:6 (in the name of LXX; cf. LXX, ed. Rahlfs thereon) and Y. Megillah 1.9/71d; also, *Mekhilta:* Bo, ed. Horovitz-Rabin, 50-51; *Bere'sheet Rabbah* 98.6, ed. Theodor-Albeck, 1256 and note 6 thereon.

[46]*Op. cit.*, 1:192.

[47]*Ibid.*

over whom Jews have power (as was the case with the Shechemites) are definitely bound by a moral law, but the task of its political enforcement belongs to them not to the Jews. For Nahmanides seems to be implying, at least, that when Jews do enforce that law, political considerations of self-interest, imperialism if you will, inevitably outweigh the moral zeal which originally was invoked in the justification of the subjugating policy. The assumption of the moral personality of non-Jews seems to imply that their political sovereignty is preferable to their subjugation by even Jewish rulers.

IV. The Basic Theological Issue in the Dispute

The difference we have seen between Maimonides and Nahmanides on this point is more than an exegetical dispute about the propriety or impropriety of the killing of the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi. It is, rather, a theological dispute about the relation of Jewish normativeness and non-Jewish normativeness, or the relation between the more general universal law and the more singular law of the Torah. The question at issue is: Does the true normativeness of non-Jews require their being subject to Torah constituted Jewish rule whenever possible, or does their true normativeness only entail their political sovereignty?

This theological dispute can be seen as rooted in the differing views of views of Maimonides and Nahmanides on the Jewish criterion of non-Jewish normativeness: the seven Noahide laws. The precedent for their difference seems to be found in the *locus classicus* of the Noahide laws in the Babylonian Talmud.

> What is the Scriptural basis of these commandments? R. Yoḥanan said that Scripture states, 'And the Lord God commanded the human being (*ha'adam*) saying that from every tree in the garden you may surely eat' (Genesis 2:16). 'He commanded' (*va-yitzav*): this refers to the commandment of adjudication (*ha-dinin*); and so Scripture also states, 'For I know him that he will command (*yitzaveh*) his children,' etc....'God' ('*Elohim*): this refers to the prohibition of idolatry; and so Scripture also states, 'You shall have no other gods' (Exodus 20:3)....But some taught it differently. 'He commanded': this refers to the prohibition of idolatry; 'God': this refers to the commandment of adjudication...as it is written, 'and the householder shall approach the judges (*'elohim*)' (Exodus 22:7). But, if 'He commanded' refers to the prohibition of idolatry, how does Scripture let us know this (*m'ay mashma*)? R. Hisda and R. Isaac bar Abdimi [spoke on this point], one of them saying that it comes from this verse, 'they quickly turned away from the path I commanded them (*tzivitim*), they made for themselves [a molten calf], etc.' (Exodus 32:8); the other one saying

> that it comes from this verse, 'Ephraim is persecuted, deprived of just redress, because he has followed after nought (*tzav*).' (Hosea 5:11).[48]

That the dispute between these Talmudic authorities is more than a strictly exegetical difference about the meaning of two words in a Scriptural verse is brought out by the sixteenth century scholar, R. Moses Isserles.

> It is clear as the noonday sun that R. Yohanan...thinks that a Noahide is only commanded to observe the judicial procedure of society (*ha-minhag ha-medini*) and to adjudicate between persons equitably (*mishpat ha-yosher*), but not in the way of the Jewish laws that Moses gave us from Sinai, but only by the rule of law (*ḥoq nimusi*)....Jewish law is one thing and Noahide law is something else.[49]

The view of R. Isaac, on the other hand, assumes something else.

> Noahide laws are the same as the laws the Jews were commanded at Sinai and, therefore, he derives them from a verse (Exodus 22:7) said at Sinai...except where there is direct evidence of a difference.[50]

For R. Yohanan, non-Jewish normativeness is essentially independent; for R. Isaac, it is essentially dependent on Jewish interpretation and, ideally, on Jewish enforcement.

Now it is clear that Maimonides builds his view of Noahide law upon the view of R. Isaac.

> The first human being was commanded concerning six things: (1) concerning idolatry....(6) and concerning adjudication. Even though all of them are ours because of a tradition (*qabbalah*) from Moses our master and reason inclines (*ve-ha-da'at noteh*) towards them, it can be generally inferred from the words of Scripture that he was commanded concerning these things.[51]

Although, as is his frequent procedure, Maimonides eliminates the actual exegesis of Genesis 2:16 found in the Talmud, he nevertheless agrees with R. Isaac that the foundation of the Noahide law is the prohibition of idolatry. And, that prohibition, along with its corresponding positive commandment to affirm God's existence, is something of which Judaism has the clearest monotheistic vision – even though these two commandments per se are considered by Maimonides

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[48]B. Sanhedrin 56b.
[49]*Responsa Rema*, ed. Ziv (Jersualem, 1970), 45-46 (no. 10).
[50]*Ibid.*
[51]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 9.1.

to be rationally evident to human reason and, thus, not dependent on revelation to Israel.[52]

This can be seen in Maimonides' famous statement in this treatise about the metaphysical status of the Noahide laws.

> Whoever accepts the seven commandments and is careful to practice them, such a person is one of the saints of the nations of the world, and he has a portion in the world-to-come. But, he is one who accepts them because the Holy-One-blessed-be-He commanded them in the Torah and made them known through Moses our master that Noahides are commanded regarding them. If, on the other hand, he practised them because of rational inclination (*hekhre ha-da'at*), he is not a *ger toshab*, and he is not one of the saints of the nations of the world, but he is only one of their sages (*'ela me-ḥakhmayhem*).[53]

A number of commentators, both medieval and modern, have misunderstood this passage and have concluded that, for Maimonides, all morality can only be derived from specific revelation. However, if this were the case, Maimonides would not have spoken of the possibility of discerning the Noahide laws by what might be termed *ordinary human reason*. Clearly, such discernment is possible, although it is not wholly sufficient to fulfill the ultimate end of human existence, which is the direct knowledge of God in a realm transcending ordinary human existence on earth.[54] Furthermore, as I have argued in my extensive treatment of the Noahide laws, for Maimonides, revelation is not essentially distinct from human reason, but it is its final realization.[55] Therefore, when Jews, who have the truest revelation (even if most of them do not properly understand its metaphysical truths), also have political power over non-Jews, these non-Jews should not be left to their own moral devices. For their own moral devices are based on either insufficient human reasoning in the strictly moral sense, or incomplete revelation in the metaphysical sense. (This can be seen in Maimonides' interest in Jewish proselytizing of both Muslims and Christians.[56]). In the case of both Jews and non-Jews, the improvement of the body (*tiqqun ha-guf*) – including the body politic – is always for the sake of the improvement of the soul (*tiqqun*

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[52]See *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot*, pos. no. 1 and neg. no. 1; *Moreh Nebukhim*, 2.33 re B. Makkot 23b.

[53]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 8.11. For a full discussion of this text, see Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism*, 276ff.

[54]See *Hilkhot Teshubah*, 8.3ff.

[55]Novak, *op. cit.*, 280ff.

[56]See *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot*, pos. nos. 3, 9; *Teshubot Ha-Rambam*, ed. Blau (Jerusalem, 1960), 1:282-285 (nos. 148-149), 2:726 (no. 148).

ha-nefesh).[57] As such, we can see that being the great systematic theologian he was, Maimonides' view of the political, moral and metaphysical status of non-Jews is consistently correlated.

Conversely, for Nahmanides, the realms of morality and revelation are much more separate. In terms of revelation, this separation is for the sake of laying greater emphasis on the essential difference between the natural and the supernatural. Nahmanides' emphasis of a greater independent role for nature (*teba*) – which is the whole realm of ordinary human experience (*minhago shel 'olam*), including political-moral experience – is for the sake of his emphasis of the realm of the supernatural (*nissim*) by contrast.[58] Nevertheless, what emerges from this emphasis is a very different view of the moral relationship between Jews and non-Jews.

This view of a more independent natural/rational morality comes out in Nahmanides' treatment of the paradigmatic non-Jewish sin, the violence (*ḥamas*) which brought about the punishment of the Flood.

> Violence is robbery and oppression. And He gave the reason (*ha-ta'am*) to Noah as being violence, but he did not mention sexual perversion (*hash'ḥatat ha-derekh*), because violence is the sin that is known and evident (*ha-yadua ve-hameforsam*). And our rabbis said that because of it their doom was sealed. The reason for this is that its prohibition is a rational commandment (*mitzvah muskelet*), one for which they had no need of a prophet to admonish them. Furthermore, it is evil against God and humanity.[59]

Now Maimonides, too, emphasized in the section of *Mishneh Torah* concerning murder that the prohibition of violence and bloodshed is something immediately evident to any rational person.[60] One need not be skilled in metaphysics to appreciate the evident reason for its prohibition. Nevertheless, Maimonides rejects the notion of rational commandments (*mitzvot sikhliyot*) as defined by Saadyah Gaon and those who follow him (and Nahmanides by anticipation) precisely because it assumes that nonmetaphysically grounded morality is sufficient as well as evident.[61] For Nahmanides, it is sufficient, at least within its own context, even though revelation is needed to constitute the human relationship with God. But, for Nahmanides,

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[57]*Moreh Nebukhim*, 3.27. See *ibid.*, 2.40.

[58]See, e.g., *Commentary on the Torah:* Lev. 26:11; also, D. Berger, "Miracles and the Natural Order" in *Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Religious and Literary Virtuosity*, ed. I. Twersky (Cambridge, MA, 1983), 107ff.

[59]*Commentary on the Torah:* Gen. 6:13, ed. Chavel, 2:52. See, also, *ibid.*: Gen. 6:2.

[60]*Hilkhot Rotzeaḥ U-Shemirat Ha-Nefesh*, 4.9.

[61]See *Commentary on the Mishnah:* Shemonah Peraqim, chap. 6.

revelation is not the culmination of a rational continuum as it is for Maimonides.[62] Hence, in the ordinary realm of human political experience, basic norms do not need revelation in the same way non-Jews do not need Jews for their moral well-being. Ultimately, the differing views of Maimonides and Nahmanides about the moral independence of non-Jews stem from their differing views of the essence of revelation. For both, however, theology and politics are most definitely correlated.

V. Subjugation or Sovereignty?

It would be less than candid of me if I did not state that my own preference is for the approach of Nahmanides on this whole question, and this is for theological, philosophical and political reasons. It seems to provide a basis for rethinking the whole enterprise of Zionism as a truly religious program for the Jewish people at this point in our history. Moreover, its credibility is enhanced by the fact that in Nahmanides' system, the settlement of the Land of Israel (*yishub 'Eretz Yisrael*) is one of the 613 commandments of the Written Torah, one binding on all Jews at all times.[63] It is not so in Maimonides' system. And this is consistent with the far greater role that the sanctity of the Land of Israel plays in Nahmanides' theology than it does in Maimonides' theology.[64] Hence, we have a model of how greater Zionist commitment can indeed be developed in tandem with a rejection of the subjugation of any other people, even on moral grounds.

Leaving the matter at this point would seem to offer two divergent opinions, neither having any greater *prima facie* claim than the other. However, in traditional rabbinic style, I am going to conclude by attempting to demonstrate that Maimonides' whole approach might not be supportive after all of the position of those who would attempt to religiously justify a policy of Jews subjugating a non-Jewish people.

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[62]This can be seen in Nahmanides' refusal to count belief in God as one of the 613 commandments of the Written Torah, even the first in the series, as did Maimonides. See note on Maim., *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot,* pos. no. 1 and *Commentary on the Torah:* Exod. 20:2; also, D. Novak, *Law and Theology in Judaism* (New York, 1974), 1:136ff. For Nahmanides, revelation itself is the only "proof" of God's existence. For Maimonides, on the other hand, God's existence can be inferred from the existence and/or order of the universe. See *Moreh Nebukhim,* 2, intro. ff.

[63]See Maim., *Sefer Ha-Mitzvot:* "Positive Commandments According to Nahmanides," no. 4; *Commnetary on the Torah:* Num. 33:53 (cf. Rashi thereon).

[64]E.g., see *Commentary on the Torah:* Deut. 6:10 re Ḥullin 17a. Cf. Maim., *Hilkhot Melakhim,* 8.1 and note of Radbaz thereon.

It will be recalled that for Maimonides any subjugation is only justified on moral grounds, not political ones. Thus, might can only be exercised when it is right. The rightness of any such exercise is dependent on the proper intention of the head of state proposing it. "And in all wars, his deeds should be for the sake of God, and his purpose and thought are to be to elevate the status of the true faith and to fill the world with what is right."[65] In another passage, from his "Laws Concerning the Sanhedrin," where Maimonides presents the legal power of a court to suspend individual privileges in case of a grave emergency, he similarly warns,

> All of these things are to be done according to what the judge will see as proper (*ra'uy*) under the circumstances and what the hour requires. And in all of them, let his deeds be for the sake of God; let not the dignity of human beings be light in his eyes...but let him only act to add to the honor of God.[66]

Therefore, if the intention of the head of state is doubtful, then it is also doubtful whether any subjugation is morally justifiable.

For this type of suspension of authorized right, there is specific rabbinic foundation. Thus, in the case of the right of a brother to take his deceased brother's wife if they had been childless together (*yibum*), the Talmud notes,

> In earlier times, when their intention (*mitkavvnin*) was for the sake of the commandment, the commandment of the levirate took precedence over the commandment of release (*ḥalitzah*). But now that their intention is not for the sake of the commandment, the rabbis said that the commandment of release takes precedence over the commandment of the levirate....As it was taught: Abba Saul said that one who marries (*ha-kones*) his dead brother's childless widow (*yebimto*) for the sake of her beauty, or for the sake of marriage per se, or for the sake of anything else, it is as if he had relations with someone prohibited to him (*k'ilu pogea b'ervah*).[67]

Even though Maimonides does not accept this reasoning here, other important medieval halakhic authorities do accept it.[68] He obviously did not regard proper intention as determinate in this specific matter. Nevertheless, he himself seemed to be using the same type of qualifying reasoning presented here in this Talmudic text in his treatment of the limits of political, judicial and military power. That

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[65]*Hilkhot Melakhim*, 4.10.

[66]*Hilkhot Sanhedrin*, 24.10. For the similar functions of Sanhedrin and king, see *Hilkhot Mamrim*, 1.2.

[67]B. Yebamot 39b re T. Yebamot 6.9; see Y. Yebamot 1.1/2d.

[68]See Maim., *Hilkhot Yibum Ve-Ḥalitzah*, 1.2. Cf. B. Yebamot 39b, Tos., s.v. "'Amar Rab"; *Rosh:* Yebamot, chap. 4, no. 17.

is why I have quoted it in this context. Indeed, there are other examples in the Talmud where our moral inadequacy disqualifies us from exercising certain powers initially granted to us by the Torah.[69]

The problem of the exercise of political power over non-Jews is a relatively new problem for Jews. We are much more experienced in suffering Jewish powerlessness. In the mere fifty year span from 1938 to 1988 we have run the full gamut of power. Yet we, more than any other people on earth, know in our very flesh how easily the most vicious abuse of power in all of human history was so easily rationalized by religious rhetoric. Although we do not derive norms from history directly, as I argued at the beginning of this paper, surely historical experience can vividly illustrate what we already know from the Torah to be true. Moreover, even by Maimonidean standards, are we so sure of our own moral purity that we can now embark on a program of subjugation of any other people without fear for our souls? Are we not afraid of seeming to resemble ever so much the moral refuse of our age, they who have shed and are shedding so much human blood? Has not our tradition added restrictions to our lives when the old leniencies might make us morally odious in the eyes of the world?[70] We are a people only because of the Torah, as Saadyah Gaon succinctly put it,[71] and the Torah's highest value is *shalom*.[72] The Torah requires neither our suicide nor our brutalization. For at a time in our history, one far more dangerous for our survival than this time, when the Roman legions were preparing to destroy the Temple and disperse our people, Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, in direct defiance of the zealots and militarists of that day, made his *Realpolitik* the proposition, "let us go forth and make peace with them" (*nayfoq ve-na'abayd shelama be-hadyyhu*).[73]

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[69]See, e.g., M. Sotah 9.9, T. Sotah 14.1 and B. Sotah 47b re Num. 5:31 and Hos. 4:14; B. Kiddushin 12b re Deut. 24:1 (see Tos. s.v. "mishum"; *Sifre:* Debarim, no. 268; Y. Yebamot 5.2/6d; B. Ketubot 8b); B. Baba Kama 8a re Deut. 24:11; B. Baba Metzia 47b and parallels, B. 'Erubin 81b (and Rashi, s.v. "debar Torah") re Lev. 27:19 (see B. Shabbat 128a, Tos., s.v. "ve-natan"); also, M. Berakhot 2.5 and *Tur:* 'Orah Ḥayyim, 70.

[70]See, e.g., B. Baba Kama 38a and Novak, *The Image of the Non-Jew in Judaism*, 60ff.; B. Baba Kama 113a-b; Y. Baba Metzia 2.5/8c; Maim., *Hilkhot Gezelah V'Abedah*, 11.3 and Karo, *Kesef Mishneh* thereon; R. Moses Isserles, *Rema* on *Shulhan 'Arukh:* 'Orah Hayyim, 334.26 and I. Jakobovits, "A Modern Blood-Libel – L'Affaire Shahak," *Tradition*, 8.2 (Summer, 1966), 58-65.

[71]*'Emunot Ve-De'ot*, 3.7.

[72]See *Sifre:* Debarim, no. 199, ed. Finkelstein, 237 (and note thereon) in the very context of the obligation of "and you shall offer peace terms to her" (Deut. 20:10).

[73]B. Gittin 56a. This text is invoked by Dr. Mordecai Breuer in his "Notes on the Issue of Returning the Territories of the Land of Israel and the Saving of

By that policy he was able to secure "Yabneh and her sages," an achievement that saved both the Jewish body and the Jewish soul. His policy bespoke the true tendency of the Torah (*da'at Torah*) then. I believe that it still bespeaks the true tendency of the Torah now.

Human Life" (Heb.) published in a pamphlet, *'Af She-'Al: Mitzvah min Ha-Torah?* by the religious peace movement in Israel, 'Oz Ve-Shalom (Jerusalem, 1978), 15-16. In other words, one can see the action of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai as being normative. For historical analysis of this crucial episode in the life and career of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, see Jacob Neusner, *A Life of Yoḥanan ben Zakkai*, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden, 1970), 145ff. Along the lines of rabbinic personal precedent being normative, see, e.g., B. Mo'ed Qatan 27b.

45

Tikkun: A Lurianic Motif in Contemporary Jewish Thought

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Isaac Luria (1534-1572) was the preeminent kabbalist of the sixteenth century, and the most prominent figure of the great renaissance of mystical life which took place in Safed from about 1530 forward. As is well known, the influence of Luria's teachings – both his mythological conceptions and his ritual innovations – extended well beyond the geographical confines of the land of Israel, and well beyond his own lifetime. Assessing Lurianism, Gershom Scholem wrote that its influence "on Jewish history has certainly been no less considerable than that of Maimonides' 'Guide of the Perplexed'...."[1] Elsewhere, Scholem asserted that Luria's "personal and historical influence went far deeper [than that of Moses Cordovero], and in the whole history of Kabbalah only the influence of the Zohar can measure up to his."[2]

Indeed, in diverse ways and on various levels, from the realm of popular piety to the arena of theological speculation, Lurianic Kabbalah exerted a tremendous impact upon Judaism in the 17th century in practically all parts of the Jewish world, and well into the 18th amongst Eastern European Jewry. While important progress has been made in exploring this rich and complex subject, much remains to be learned about the repercussions of Lurianic Kabbalah in the variety of pre-modern contexts in which it took root.[3] My purpose in the present

[1]G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1941), p. 251.
[2]Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 74.
[3]The best known work in this regard is Scholem's monumental study of Sabbatianism in his *Sabbatai Sevi* (Princeton, 1973). Scholem believed that

study is to ask about an altogether different chapter in the history of Lurianic Kabbalah, namely, the emergence of one of its major motifs, the notion of *Tikkun*, in contemporary Jewish thinking. What are some of the ways in which this Lurianic conception has been appropriated? And how can we make sense of the broad appeal which this language has for contemporary Jewish thinking?

The outlines of the Lurianic myth have been recounted often enough, for the English reader, primarily through the scholarly expositions of Gershom Scholem.[4] Nevertheless, it will be worth our while to rehearse – even if briefly – the essential features of these exceedingly complex and elaborate teachings. This will permit comparisons between the original meaning of Luria's ideas and their contemporary transformations.

Isaac Luria taught what amounts to a 16th century version of a gnostic myth, organized around three main themes, *zimzum*, *shevirat ha-kelim*, and *tikkun*. In contrast to the mythological conceptions of early Kabbalah, which conceived of the initial theogonic activity as an outward act of emanation, Luria describes the first action of divinity as an *inward* one. *Zimzum* refers to the process by which the Godhead contracts its essence, so to speak, by retreating "from Himself into Himself," abandoning a space in order to create an "empty" region. This step inward sought to solve the question of how the existence of the world is possible if divinity, which is Infinite, fills all space. The answer which Lurianic Kabbalah provides is that by an act of withdrawal, a space – infinitesimally small in comparison to God's infinity – is created in which all dimensions of existence can unfold.

Sabbatianism must be understood primarily as a repercussion of Lurianism. Thus, the first hundred pages of this book are devoted to a discussion of Lurianic teachings in their original context, as well as to consideration of the spread of Lurianism in the first half of the 17th century, all for the purpose of establishing the background for Sabbatianism. While Scholem's views on this subject have come under challenge (see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah – New Perspectives* (Yale, 1988), pp. 264-66), there can be no doubt that Sabbatian *theology*, if not the movement as a whole, owed a fundamental debt to Lurianic teachings. Important studies treating the influence of Lurianism upon a range of Italian thinkers in the 17th century include Tishby's work on the writing of Aaron Berechiah Modena and Abraham Azulai. See I. Tishby, *Hiqrei Kabbalah ve-Sheluhoteha* (Jerusalem, 1982).

[4]G. Scholem, *Major Trends*, lecture 7. A more elaborate description of the Lurianic myth is I. Tishby, *Torat ha-Ra we-ha-qelipah be-qabbalat ha-Ari* (Jerusalem, 1971).

Prior to this event, the different powers of divinity were harmoniously balanced without any apparent individuation or differentiation. In particular, the opposing forces of Mercy (*Hesed*) and Stern Judgment (*Din*) existed in a state of complete unity. But in the course of *zimzum, Ein-Sof* gathered in one place all the "roots" of Stern Judgment, leaving them behind in the region now abandoned. In addition, a positive residue of divine light, known as *reshimu* ("traces"), remained in the empty space. This resulted in a separation between *Din* and *Hesed* and the establishment of a measure of independence for the forces of *Din*. Thus, from one point of view, the *zimzum* can be regarded as an act of purification in which the "dross" within God was purged from His innermost being.

Following this, a third element, a ray from God's hidden essence (*Ein Sof*), entered the empty space and acted upon the existing mixture of *reshimu* and *Din*. This illuminating ray serves as a permanent link between *Ein Sof* and the empty space. The form of the divine produced by this first ray of light is termed the "Primordial Man" (*Adam Qadmon*). The latter is described with vivid anthropomorphic detail. The lights shining from *Adam Qadmon's* "ears," "nose," and "mouth" constituted a collective or perfectly unified structure. But the light issuing from the "eyes" emanated in a different manner. They were atomized or separated into different sefirot so as to require their containment in special vessels or *qelim*. These vessels, composed of a "thicker" light, were to serve as "shells" for the purer light. In the process of emanation, however, some of these vessels were unable to contain the light within them, and consequently shattered under the pressure, scattering themselves into the empty space. This event is known in the Lurianic texts as "*shevirat ha-qelim*," or the "breaking of the vessels."

In the wake of this event most of the light that had been contained in the vessels returned to their divine source, while the remainder fell below into the empty space and attached themselves to the now broken shards of vessels. From these shards of broken vessels the powers of the *qelipot*, that is, "husks" or "shells" were produced. These are the evil forces of the "other side," the *sitra ahra*. In addition to constituting the source of evil, the broken shards are also the basis for the material world. The sparks of light that failed to return to their source above remained trapped, as it were, among the *qelipot*. The *qelipot*, in turn, are constantly nourished and strengthened by the holy sparks attached to them. Indeed, were it not for these sparks the *qelipot* would lose their life and power altogether.

The challenge which Lurianic teaching now faced was to determine how to mend the injury suffered by the Godhead. *Tikkun* refers to the

processes by which restoration and repair were to be accomplished. They constitute the greatest part of Lurianic theory and are complex in the extreme. According to Lurianic teaching, the soul of the first man, Adam, was composed of all the various "worlds" or levels of divine reality, and was intended to extricate and reintegrate the divine sparks that remained within the *qelipot*. When Adam was created the cosmic process of *tikkun* had virtually been completed. It was his project to finalize the restorative process through contemplative exercises. He was capable of doing so as he was a perfect microcosm of *Adam Qadmon*. Through his mystical activities Adam could have separated the sparks from their demonic shells, thus reestablishing the primordial unity of all things. Having purged the realm of holiness of the final vestiges of dross, the *qelipot* would have sunk beneath the lowest spiritual worlds and lost all their power. The cosmos would have achieved the original state of perpetual communion with the divine light, and the historical process as we know it would have ended.

None of this came about, however, due to Adam's sin. His transgression interrupted his own communion with the upper spheres and brought about his attachment to the lower worlds. Moreover, the processes of *tikkun* which had already taken place were reversed; the "worlds" which had begun to rise and to return to their proper position once again fell below. Good and evil were again thoroughly mixed in with each other. Humanity and all reality in the lower world of *Asiyah* became materialized. And the sin of Adam caused the sparks of all human souls that had been contained within his own to fall and become imprisoned as well within the *qelipot*.

Tikkun, therefore, entails two separate but related processes. First, it means the gathering of the divine lights that had fallen into the realm of the *qelipot* as a result of the "breaking of the vessels." Second, it means the gathering of all the holy souls likewise imprisoned in the *qelipot*. *Tikkun* is to be achieved by human beings through their contemplative action. Every religious act requires contemplative concentration on the various dimensions of divinity and the various combinations of the divine name in order to "raise up the fallen sparks." The focus of concentration is the inner dynamics of reorganization and restructuring that takes place in the course of acts of devotional piety. The kinds of activities by which the kabbalist seeks to accomplish these goals include a) liturgical prayer; b) the performance of all other *mitsvot;* and c) the practice of certain special exercises, such as those known as *yihudim*. The same general contemplative idea characterizes each of these types of activity, and

Hayyim Vital's versions of Luria's teachings spell out the proper mystical intentions (*kavvanot*) in great detail.[5]

On the basis of the above account, several general observations pertinent to the present study may be made.

1) The condition of disarray in which the cosmos finds itself, according to Lurianic Kabbalah, is a result of two different catastrophic falls, one of an intra-divine nature, prior to and independent of human behavior, the other a consequence of human sin.
2) The material world as we know it, as was the case with the gnostic myths of late antiquity, is deemed repugnant, evil, inhospitable, opposed in every way to that which is immaterial, divine light and the soul.
3) The project of human life is to separate the holy from the material world, and thus divest that world of all existence. *All existence will return to its original spiritual condition*, a state synonymous with the messianic age. Lurianism is thus, again, like the gnostic myths of an earlier time, a *complete rejection* of the world as we know it, and of the historical process. The vision of redemption is a fundamentally spiritual one in which all things return to *olam ha-tikkun*. Thus, the *tikkun* of which Lurianic Kabbalah speaks is not that of *this* world, but of "worlds" beyond it.
4) The responsibility for bringing all this about is a human one, not a divine one. Divinity is, in effect, a passive beneficiary of the actions of human beings.

[5]Studies by the present author concerning Lurianic techniques of contemplation include "The Contemplative Practice of Yihudim in Lurianic Kabbalah," in *Jewish Spirituality*, vol. II, ed. A. Green (Crossroad, 1987), pp. 64-98, and "The Study of Torah as a Rite of Theurgical Contemplation in Lurianic Kabbalah," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, vol. III, ed. D. Blumenthal (Scholars Press, 1988), pp. 29-40. On closely related matters, see my articles "The Art of Metoposcopy: A Study in Isaac Luria's Charismatic Knowledge," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* II (1986), 79-101; "Maggidic Revelation in the Teachings of Isaac Luria," in *Mystics, Philosophers, and Politicians: Essays in Honor of Alexander Altmann*, eds. J. Reinharz and D. Swetschinski (Duke, 1982), pp. 141-57, and "Recitation of Mishnah as a Vehicle for Mystical Inspiration: A Contemplative Technique Taught by Hayyim Vital," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 141 (1982), 183-99.

II

Tikkun and Theological Discourse

One of the arenas in which the language of Lurianic Kabbalah has come to play a part in recent years is that of theological discourse. I want to illustrate this phenomenon by reference to its use as a resource for theological reflection on the Holocaust. In a major work published in 1982, *To Mend The World – Foundations of Future Jewish Thought*, Emil Fackenheim produced his most ambitious statement to date. This work continues Fackenheim's project of several decades in which he seeks to come to grips religiously with the Holocaust. The philosophical complexity of this work hardly lends itself to an easy presentation of its point of view in the present context. What interests us, however, is the central place which Lurianic notions have in this book, particularly the conception of *tikkun*. Indeed, Fackenheim's fascination with, and commitment to the category of *tikkun*, is evident in the very title of the book, nothing less than an adaptation of the words *tikkun olam*.

In part four of his book, entitled "Historicity, Rupture, and *Tikkun Olam* ("Mending the World"): From Rosenzweig Beyond Heidegger," Fackenheim organizes his ideas around the themes of rupture and mending. The key which unlocks the door for Fackenheim in this crucial part of his book is his assertion that "the pivotal fact for us will be this, that a *novum* too is to be found in the resistance offered by the most radically singled-out victims [of the Nazis]."[6] According to Fackenheim, the victims resisted – in various ways, on various levels – what Jean Amery called the Germans' "logic of destruction." The fact of this resistance, when grasped, leaves us with "no choice but to be radically, permanently astonished."[7] Even more, it leads beyond the impasse which the Holocaust otherwise creates with respect to both "thought" and "life."

> Authentic thought was actual during the Holocaust among resisting victims; therefore such thought must be possible for us after the event: and, being possible, it is mandatory. Moreover, their resisting thought pointed to and helped make possible a resisting life; our post-Holocaust thought, however authentic in other respects, would still lapse into unauthenticity if it remained in an academically self enclosed circle – if it failed to point to, and help make possible, a post-Holocaust life.[8]

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[6]Emil Fackenheim, *To Mend the World* (Schocken, 1982), p. 201.
[7]*Ibid*.
[8]*Ibid*, p. 249.

The Holocaust represents "a total rupture" insofar as "the idea of man" died at Auschwitz, and because "'our estrangement from God' has become so 'cruel' that, even if He were to speak to us, we have no way of understanding how to 'recognize' Him." It is this conviction that a complete rupture has occurred which leads to Fackenheim's fascination with the Lurianic notions of the "breaking of the vessels" and *tikkun*. He is impressed by the fact that Kabbalah goes beyond a view found in rabbinic Midrash according to which God weeps at midnight on account of the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Israel. For the Kabbalah, of course, Divinity itself suffers by virtue of the exile of the *Shekhinah*. Fackenheim correctly understands this kabbalistic notion as referring to a rupture of cosmic dimensions "that involves no less than the 'life and action' of Divinity itself."[9]

The kabbalists, says Fackenheim, "practiced their *Tikkun*," their "impulse below" – "Torah, prayer and mitsvot" – calling forth an "impulse from above"....[10] Since Fackenheim insists on the radical uniqueness of the Holocaust, he argues that *no Tikkun* is possible of *that* rupture. But in the wake of this assertion he makes a paradoxical claim, and writes that the impossible *Tikkun* is also necessary. Writing of the victims, he asserts:

> Then and there, many doubtless thought of their "Torah, prayer and *mitsvot*" quite consciously in terms of a *Tikkun*. Others, when engaged in the act of *kiddush ha-hayyim*, doubtless did not. Yet we on our part must think of *all* such acts of *kiddush ha-hayyim* as a *Tikkun*....A *Tikkun*, here and now, is mandatory for a *Tikkun*, then and there, was actual. It is true that because a *Tikkun* of *that* rupture is impossible we cannot live, after the Holocaust, as men and women have lived before. However, if the impossible *Tikkun* were not also necessary, and hence possible, we could not live at all.[11]

This, then, is the crucial fact for Fackenheim. A mending is both possible and necessary *now* only because acts of mending, deliberate and otherwise, took place *then*. For Fackenheim, the *Tikkun* which is mandatory transcends all boundaries. The Holocaust "calls into question not this or that way of being human, but *all* ways."[12] "Hence a *Tikkun* of the Holocaust (if a *Tikkun* there is) transcends its limited context in significance. It is Good News to the world. The thought we are in search of – philosophical, Christian, and Jewish itself – will therefore have one universality: that of a witness. Its *Tikkun* will be

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[9]*Ibid.*, p. 253.
[10]*Ibid.*, p. 254.
[11]*Ibid.*, p. 254.
[12]*Ibid.*, p. 262.

what in Jewish tradition *Tikkun* is always meant to be – *Tikkun Olam*."[13] Fackenheim goes on to discuss at length these several types of *Tiqqun*, Jewish, Philosophical, and Christian.

It is clear that Fackenheim's views did not *arise* out of a study of Kabbalah; the essential ideas presented here can be traced to his earlier work which makes no reference to Kabbalah. What he has done, though, is to appropriate Lurianic themes in order to express some of those ideas. At the same time there is no reason to rule out the possibility that the vivid and radical character of the relevant Lurianic motifs may have helped shape his thinking to some degree, at least as it expresses itself in this particular work. We do not have to guess what the source of Fackenheim's encounter with Lurianic mysticism was. Citing *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* he writes that "like every other writer on the Kabbalah, I am greatly indebted to Scholem's work, all the more so because, in my case, a concern with the Kabbalah assumed real seriousness only with the present work."[14]

In *To Mend the World* the conception of *Tikkun* undergoes a fundamental transformation in meaning. While Fackenheim accurately recognizes that in its original context Lurianic myth speaks of rupture within Divinity itself, he is unconcerned with the fact that the mending which Lurianism envisions is different in kind from that which he has in mind. For Fackenheim the world to be mended is *this* world. For Philosophy it means the restoration of "the Idea of Man." For Christianity, it means a rebuilding of a "broken Church" through acts of moral responsibility *vis-à-vis* the Jewish People, and unconditional dedication to the latter's autonomy, integrity, and well being. And for Judaism it means, among other things, a recovery of Jewish tradition, even if understood differently by religious and secular Jews. On the other hand, for Lurianism, the mending towards which all devotion is directed, as seen earlier, entails the restoration of the world of Divinity. With the divestment of all holiness *from* this world, the *tikkun* of that "world" from which all reality originated will be realized. What Lurianism and Fackenheim's theology have in common, however, is the conviction that *human beings* are responsible for *tikkun*.

In a brief essay, published in 1981, entitled "The Holocaust and Jewish Survival," Ismar Schorsch also explores the meaning of the Holocaust for contemporary Judaism. Schorsch includes among his concerns the theological challenges raised by the Holocaust, and turns

[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 253.

to the question of whether Lurianic Kabbalah might serve contemporary theological ends:

> The catastrophic expulsion of Spanish Jewry in 1492 has often been pointed to as an instructive model for post-Holocaust Jewry. The relative size of the communities, the traumatic psychic effects, and the length of time required to formulate a viable theological response all seem comparable. Conspicuously, however, students of the Holocaust have failed to explore the utility of Lurianic Kabbalah for neutralizing the theological waste in the debris of Hitler's Europe, despite the universal celebration of its primary expositor, Gershom Scholem.[15]

After a short exposition of Lurianic myth, Schorsch writes of the Safed kabbalists:

> A devout cluster of gifted spirits dared to craft a theological superstructure which accorded with the anguish of their reality. In so doing, they have provided us with a seminal theological model for our own dilemma.[16]

He goes on to identify four features of Lurianic teaching which strike him as being important for contemporary theological purposes. He asserts that "the Safed Kabbalists brilliantly translated the Jewish fate of *Galut* into resoundingly universal terms," by recognizing that "the rootlessness of Jewish existence mirrored the basic flaw of the cosmos."[17] Thus, according to Schorsch, the meaning of Jewish suffering was held to lay in its typicality, not its uniqueness. Here, it seems to me Schorsch is over interpreting a bit. While it is true that by its nature Lurianic myth spoke in cosmic, and thus in some sense "universal" terms, the Lurianists were not compelled by any sense of "shared fate" with humanity at large, as Schorsch appears to imply. The "human condition" was not a category which played any role in the sensibilities of these particular sixteenth century Jews. One can certainly see the appeal, however, from a contemporary point of view, of building on what might be called the potential universal *implications* of Lurianic teaching.

Second, Schorsch points to the fact "the Lurianic system is marked by a profound sense of the reality of evil," and "did not allow for ignoring or minimizing the power of evil." Moreover, he correctly notes that the ultimate source of evil is God Himself. While he doesn't spell it out, the obvious point for Schorsch is that Lurianism teaches contemporary Jews of the need to confront the reality of evil, and that

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[15] *Midstream*, January, 1981, vol. xxvii, no. 1, p. 41.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*

coping with that evil appears to be a necessary part of perfecting Divinity. Thus, he says that "Paradoxically, the completeness of divine perfection must also entail the presence of evil, which in turn gives rise to the need for purification."[18]

Third, Schorsch points to the fact that "the figure of God in Lurianic Kabbalah is surprisingly passive. He is either unwilling or unable to prevent the vessels from being shattered. Whatever the reason, there is a manifest limitedness to His exercise of power...."[19] Finally, he recognizes that for Lurianic Kabbalah human beings, most specifically Jews, are responsible for "the ultimate defeat of the forces of chaos."[20] While he is surely correct in this assertion, as I have already indicated with reference to Fackenheim, Schorsch again goes beyond Lurianic conceptions when he asserts that "the exilic existence of the Jew is not a punishment but a mission to raise the sparks of divine light helplessly trapped in the world of darkness."[21] On the contrary, Luria did teach that the situation in which human beings find themselves is a direct consequence of sin. Were it not for Adam's transgression, humanity would never have taken on material form in the first place. And were it not for perpetual human transgression, the task of *tikkun* would have been accomplished long ago. Thus, it is true that human beings have a great mission, but it is also true that this mission is, in significant part, necessitated by sin.

The appeal of Lurianic theology, then, for Schorsch, lies in its acknowledgement of the reality of evil, the limitations of God's own power, as well as the centrality and efficacy of human action. On a broader level, Schorsch implies that the very fact that the individuals who espoused these teachings were able to confront their situation in religiously creative terms, is itself exemplary for contemporary Judaism:

> This Lurianic conception of the cosmos was born of religious despair and not of shallow rationalism. Yet rarely has a spiritual response to crisis been more creative. Driven by the dismay of an age in which history had leveled inherited theological structures, Lurianic Kabbalah incorporated and transcended that calamitous reality by means of an inspired, new validating myth, which soon revitalized Judaism. It is self evident that we cannot transpose the graphic and intricate metaphoric rhetoric of that myth to our own intractable predicament, though ultimately myth may be the only way to approximate the tragedy of a chaotic world.

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[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
[21] *Ibid.*

Even though Schorsch does not explicitly employ the expression *tikkun olam*, it is clear that the notions of evil and exile on the one hand, and world-healing through the activity of human beings on the other, derive from his understanding of the Lurianic notions of *shevirat ha-qelim* and *tikkun* as characterized in his essay. It is worth pointing out that, as with Emil Fackenheim, Schorsch's acquaintance with Lurianism comes not from a confrontation with the original sources themselves, but from scholarly expositions of Lurianic teaching. In Schorsch's case, reference is made to Scholem's *Sabbatai Sevi*, as well as to Isaiah Tishby's Hebrew monograph on Lurianic myth.[22] In calling attention to this fact, my interest is not to belittle the practice of relying on secondary presentations. Rather, it is in raising the question about the relationship between critical scholarship and constructive religious thinking, a matter to which I will return.

III

Tikkun and Moral Discourse

Another context in which Lurianic language has demonstrated considerable appeal is the arena of moral discourse. In his analysis of American Jewry entitled *Where Are We? The Inner Life of America's Jews*, Leonard Fein takes up, among many other things, the question of ethical commitment.[23] Fein begins chapter ten, "Intersections: A Formulated Meaning" in the following way:

> A formulated meaning for American Jews: *tikkun olam* – the repair of the world. This is (we say, and mean) God's world, but it does not work as it was meant to. The story begins with Eden, and goes on through the trials and errors of all the generations since. This exquisitely organic whole, this ecological masterpiece, has been fractured a thousand times, has been scarred and marred and blighted and polluted and bloodied, its beauty transformed, become hideous; it does not work, not as it was meant to, *not as it might*.
>
> We are called to see the beauty through the blemishes, to believe it can be restored, and to feel ourselves implicated in its restoration. We are called to be fixers. We are so called whether Eden is fable or fact, whether Sinai is law or lore. And all the rest, as it is said, is commentary.[24]

What is fascinating about this passage is that even though its author – unlike Fackenheim and Schorsch – does not refer to Luria and

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[22] *Ibid.*

[23] L. Fein, *Where Are We? The Inner life of America's Jews* (New York, 1988).

[24] *Ibid*, p. 198.

his teachings (other than by the use of the phrase *tikkun olam*) in any overt way, he is still telling the Lurianic story, after a fashion. Let us look at his language. The world has been "fractured," "marred," "blemished," but it can be "restored," and we can be its "fixers." Here there are no references to sixteenth-century mysticism, no citations of Scholem or Tishby, but somewhere along the line, the Lurianic myth has been appropriated in a such a way that only the barest bones are apparent.

Indeed, if I am right that the Lurianic story is lurking in the shadows of Fein's text, it is a story which has been projected onto Judaism as a whole, no longer the property of a very particular time and place. "*Tikkun Olam* is a meaning that carried us through much of Jewish history," says Fein.[25] Moreover, for Fein *tikkun olam* refers to the values of ethical responsibility and social justice. Thus, he writes that "many American Jews have come to view ethics as the very essence of Judaism. It is the thread in Judaism's tapestry that weaves most neatly into America's own moral claims....American Jewry is distinguished...by the opportunity it is offered, as an empowered community, to move from ethics to justice, to define itself as a partnership in *tikkun olam*. In America, in our time, such a partnership can serve as our preeminent motive, the path through which our past is vindicated, our present warranted, and our future affirmed."[26]

In a critical vein, Fein argues that the *idea* of *tikkun olam* is not the same as the *practice* of it:

> Ethics as explanation of what Judaism is and as consolation for what Jews have been through are not yet ethics as informing purpose, as culture, as description of what the Jewish community is about. *Tikkun Olam* as a slogan is not yet *tikkun olam* as a passion. An empowered people must soon rather than later make the transition from promise to fulfillment, lest its claims be rendered incredible.[27]

A similar understanding of *tikkun olam* in a very different context is found in Lawrence Kushner's *The Book of Miracles – A Young Person's Guide to Jewish Spirituality*, published in 1987.[28] The goal of this book, writes Kushner, is "to introduce a way of religious thinking that need not be outgrown because it is simplistic or juvenile."[29] It constitutes "an attempt to introduce or reintroduce some elements of Jewish

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[25] *Ibid.*
[26] *Ibid*, p. 199.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] L. Kushner, *The Book of Miracles – A Young Person's Guide to Jewish Spirituality* (New York, 1987).
[29] *Ibid*, p. xi.

spiritual thinking that lately have been ignored or condemned as heretical."[30] Kushner also indicates that the primary sources which serve as the basis for his stories and teachings have been cited, because Jewish spirituality depends on the "conversation between student and sacred text." The volume is divided into four parts, "Seeing," "Hearing," "Doing," and "Person." The second of four chapters in the part called "Doing," is entitled "Repairing the World."[31] I want to quote this at some length before discussing it:

> In sixteenth-century Tsefat, Rabbi Isaac Luria observed that in his world, like ours, many things seemed to be wrong. People suffered from hunger, disease, hatred, and war. "How could God allow such terrible things to happen?" wondered Luria. "Perhaps," he suggested, "it is because God needs our help." He explained his answer with a mystical story.
>
> When first setting out to make the world, God planned to pour a Holy Light into everything in order to make it real. God prepared vessels to contain the Holy Light. But something went wrong. The light was so bright that the vessels burst, shattering into millions of broken pieces like dishes dropped on the floor. The Hebrew phrase which Luria used for this "breaking of the vessels" is *sh'virat ha-kaylim.*
>
> Our world is a mess because it is filled with broken fragments. When people fight and hurt one another, they allow the world to remain shattered. The same can be said of people who have pantries filled with food and let others starve. According to Luria, we live in a cosmic heap of broken pieces, and God cannot repair it alone.
>
> That is why God created us and gave us freedom of choice. We are free to do whatever we please with our world. We can allow things to remain broken or, as Luria urged, we can try to repair the mess. Luria's phrase for "repairing the world" is *tikkun olam.*
>
> As Jews our most important task in life is to find what is broken in our world and repair it. The commandments in the Torah instruct us, not only on how to live as Jews, but on how to mend creation....
>
> When you see something that is broken, fix it. When you find something that is lost, return it. When you see something that needs to be done, do it. In that way, you will take care of your world and repair creation. If all the people in the world were to do so, our world would truly be a Garden of Eden, the way God meant it to be. If everything broken could be repaired, then everyone and everything would fit together like the pieces of one gigantic jigsaw puzzle. But, for people to begin the great task of repairing creation, they must first take responsibility.

In this simple, beautiful retelling of the Lurianic story for children, Kushner begins by attributing to Isaac Luria motives which are not, of

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[30] *Ibid.*, pp. xi-xii.
[31] *Ibid*, pp. 47-50.

course, part of Lurianic teachings themselves. On the other hand, he takes the Lurianic myth very seriously by placing at the center of his story the "breaking of the vessels" as an intra-divine process, without reference to human transgression. Only afterwards does he address the question of human responsibility by asserting that human failure allows the world to remain shattered. Despite the utter simplicity of the story in Kushner's presentation, this retelling thus preserves in some measure crucial features of the Lurianic myth. The remainder of his story stresses the role of human choice and responsibility in mending what has become broken. There is also a tinge of the messianic character of Lurianism in Kushner's suggestion that if all people do *tikkun* then "our world would truly be a Garden of Eden."[32]

IV

Tikkun as Political Discourse

In 1986 a new journal of Jewish affairs burst onto the scene. Named *TIKKUN*, it is subtitled "A Quarterly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture and Society." At the top of the cover the following words are found: (te kun) To mend, repair and transform the world. The premier issue included a lengthy editorial statement by the journal's editor, Michael Lerner. In it we find the range of issues and agendas which constitute the rationale for *TIKKUN*. Lerner's statement is an unabashed celebration of the liberal tradition in modern Judaism, an explicit repudiation of the neo-conservatism of *Commentary* Magazine, and a call for the revitalization of Jewish social and political activism on a variety of levels:

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[32]Another interesting and creative educational volume which takes up the Lurianic myth is by Joel Lurie Grishaver and Beth Huppin, entitled *Tsedakah, Gemilut Chasadim, and Ahavah – A Manual for World Repair* (Denver, 1983), published by Alternatives in Religious Education. This book is devoted in its entirety to the notion of mending the world, and begins with a fairly elaborate account of the Lurianic myth. Unfortunately, it mistakenly and repeatedly attributes these teachings to *Sefer Yetzirah*(!), a work probably produced somewhere between the 3rd and 6th centuries, and makes no reference whatsoever to Luria or 16th century Safed. In addition, unlike Kushner's simple and lucid account, the one here goes into detail in a way which renders it rather incomprehensible for a young person. Nevertheless, it makes its point clearly enough at the end of the narration when we read that "The Jew is supposed to be a fixer – God's partner in completing creation." (p. 5) The rest of the book is devoted to an extended series of stories and practical applications of the idea of *tiqqun olam*.

> The notion that the world could and should be different than it is has deep roots within Judaism. But in the late 1980's it is an idea that seems strangely out of fashion – and those who still dare to hope often view themselves as isolated, if not irrelevant. In the context of Western societies too often intoxicated with their own material and technological success, in which the ethos of personal fulfillment has the status of "common sense," those who talk of fundamental transformation seem to be dreaming....*TIKKUN* MAGAZINE hopes to provide a voice for those who still dare to hope, for those who are not embarrassed to dream, for those Jews and non-Jews alike who are still moved by the radical spirit of the Prophets and who insist on keeping their message alive.[33]

The editorial goes on to identify a range of issues with which its author is concerned. They constitute an amalgam of political, social, theological, and religious problems, all united under the umbrella of a liberal/leftish/"prophetic" commitment. This multi-limbed agenda is reflected in the responses to a symposium found in the first issue. A number of individuals were invited to respond to questions concerning what kind of *tikkun* the world needs, what resources are available to bring to that *tikkun*, and what role *TIKKUN* can play in this process. Their answers are like a Rorschach test; the *tikkun* which each symposiast calls for depends upon the particular preoccupation of the person involved.

Several respondents express overt political concerns as the object of their desire for "mending." For Gar Alperovitz, for example, *tikkun* involves a sort of socialist-oriented political, economic, and social reorganization in which "there must be a reconstruction of institutions accountable to the public at large – and of structures which give priority to values other than those of profit."[34] For others the question of *tikkun* has to do with the nature of contemporary Zionism. For Laura Gellman and Drorah Setel *tikkun* is not a matter of geo-political concerns, but the "politics" of Jewish feminism. Thus Setel: "Because my identity as a Jew and as a feminist is inseparable, my vision of *tikkun olam* is one of Jewish feminist transformation."[35] Setel rejects "patriarchal" Judaism since it is, in her view, characterized by "dualistic, or separational, ways of thinking," in which dichotomies are always being drawn, such as between Israel and the nations, men and women, Sabbath and the weekdays, for example. By contrast, according to her, there is a compatability between feminist values and values found in Jewish mystical tradition.

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[33]*TIKKUN*, vol 1, no. 1, p. 3.
[34]*Ibid*, p. 15.
[35]*Ibid*, p. 114.

> In a Jewish framework the concepts of unity (*ichud*) and *tikkun olam* correspond to feminist understandings of the significance of relationship....Both world views find meaning in the nature and experience of connection and interrelationship. Both reject the notion that individual transformation can take place in the absence of social justice or that institutional change is sufficient without a change of consciousness. In addressing these processes, both systems provide important models and challenges to the other.[36]

Setel invests the notion of *tikkun* with an array of meanings which one would be hard pressed to discover in the mystical tradition itself. Nevertheless, what is interesting is that she seeks a connection at all between her conception of *tikkun* and that tradition, something which most of the other participants in this symposium do not do.[37] Even though this symposium generated a variety of concerns, the general tendency here is political in the broad sense. These are individuals who are interested in changing behaviors and attitudes in the public arena, a point of view which is compatible with the spirit of *TIKKUN* as a whole.

Conclusions

The materials surveyed here provide a fascinating example, in my view, of the relationship between contemporary critical scholarship and constructive thought. Whatever the ultimate results of the revisionism to which his work is currently being subjected, there is no dispute that the scholarly research of Gershom Scholem has had an immense impact on our understanding of the history of Judaism and Jewish history. But Scholem's contribution has gone far beyond the confines of scholarly discourse. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, *Sabbatai Sevi*, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, and his other works in English, have been read by a very diverse general audience. Thus, a philosophical thinker far removed from mystical interests such as Emil Fackenheim, an historian of modern Judaism such as Ismar Schorsch, a rabbi/story teller such as Lawrence Kushner, find themselves drawing upon Scholem's expositions and formulations of esoteric materials in order to present their own creative views on a variety of questions.

While these authors – scholars and teachers of Judaica in their own right – have adopted and adapted Lurianic ideas directly from Scholem (and from other scholarly expositions of the kabbalistic

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[36]*Ibid*, p. 114.

[37]Two others who do refer, in rather different ways, to the kabbalistic tradition, are Daniel Landes and Zalman Schacter, pp. 116-119.

tradition), others have clearly appropriated the notion of *tikkun* without recourse to Lurianism or Scholem. Thus, for example, Michael Lerner's original editorial statement in *TIKKUN* makes absolutely no mention of and betrays no interest in the kabbalistic tradition which is the source of his journal's name. Leonard Fein can write of *tikkun* as if it were a central conception of Judaism as a whole, one which *any* Jew should be able to recognize automatically. A middle-aged Jewish male searching for female companionship can place a personal ad in an Indianapolis magazine and identify himself as searching for a woman "committed to *tikkun olam*."

It seems clear that many who use this expression have derived it from sources other than the mystical tradition. As far as I am aware, the first use of the expression *tikkun olam* in this country was by Shlomo Bardin, the founder of the Brandeis Camp Institute in California.[38] Bardin focused on the notion of *tikkun olam* at least as early as the 1950's. Bardin believed that the *Alenu* prayer was the most important expression of Jewish values, particularly the expression *le-taken olam be-malchut shaddai*, typically translated as "when the world shall be perfected under the reign of the Almighty." While the Alenu clearly has in mind the eradication of idolatry, and universal faith in the God of Israel, Bardin understood these words to refer to the obligation of Jews' to work for a more perfect world. By 1970 the expression *tikkun olam* was adopted by United Synagogue Youth, the national youth organization of the Conservative Movement.[39] In that year it changed the title of its social action programs from "Building Spiritual Bridges" to *Tikkun Olam*. To this day United Synagogue Youth channels all of its social action activities and *zedakah* programs through the *Tikkun Olam* project. In the late 1970's the *New Jewish Agenda*, an organization devoted to progressive religious and social values, employed the slogan *Tikkun Olam* to capture the spirit of its ideology. None of these institutions, however, appear to have been influenced by kabbalistic conceptions. However, by the late 1970's and early 1980's, as we have seen through many of the writers presented here, *tikkun olam* became identified with Kabbalah. It may be that this expression had become commonplace by the 1970's, in part through the influence of the language of *Alenu*, and that authors familiar with Lurianic mysticism now began to identify it with that tradition.

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[38]My gratitude to Bruce Powell and Hannah Kuhn of the Brandeis Institute for information about Shlomo Bardin's thinking.

[39]I am indebted to Jules Gutin, director of the *Tikkun Olam Project* of United Synagogue Youth, as well as Danny Siegel, a former president of USY, for this information.

No matter how *tikkun olam* came to be identified with Lurianism, it represents an amazing journey of ideas! The technical language of Lurianic Kabbalah, originating in a circle of contemplative mystics in the second half of the sixteenth century in Palestine, and representing what is arguably the most complex and esoteric literature in all of Judaism, is brought to contemporary attention through critical scholarship, only to resurface in a personal ad in the American Midwest in the second half of the twentieth century.

What is most fascinating about this journey of ideas is the change of meaning which has taken place, and to which I pointed in discussing Fackenheim's use of *tikkun*. As indicated earlier, in its original context *tikkun* had to do with the repair of divinity, and was part of an eschatalogical vision of things which anticipated the end of history and nature as we know it. The *tikkun* to be achieved involved the dissolution of the material world in favor of a purely spiritual existence, similar to that which existed before intra-divine catastrophe and before human sin. This conception thus bears little similarity to the kind of "mending" which most contemporary exponents of *tikkun* have in mind. For the latter, *tikkun* is a byword for social, moral, or political activism of one sort or another. For some, as we have seen, it has deeper theological or spiritual meaning. But for all of the individuals whose ideas were discussed here, *tikkun* clearly involves "repairing" the condition of this world, rather than the Lurianic mending *of olam ha-tikkun*, spiritual worlds beyond our normal experience. Moreover, if there is still mythical thinking taking place here, it is operating at a rather weak level. The highly charged mystical symbolism of Lurianic literature, with its endless anthropomorphic description of God's inner life, its multiple levels of reality, its impressive convictions about the power of the contemplative imagination, has given way to the bare bones of "rupture" and "mending."

Despite these essential distinctions, there *are* important resemblances between Lurianic theology and contemporary thought, some of which have already been alluded to in the course of this discussion. These resemblances, in my view, help explain the attraction which Lurianic language has for contemporary Jewish thinking.

The notion of an ontological rupture and shattering – which stands at the heart of Lurianic mysticism – has the capacity to strike a deeply sympathetic chord in a generation which experienced the destruction of European Jewry, or for a generation confronted by the unprecedented danger of global nuclear calamity. Similarly, the focus on human power and human responsibility, in place of divine power and responsibility, which characterizes Lurianism, is a potent theological tool in

confronting the dilemma of theodicy in our own time.[40] Some, like Ismar Schorsch, appear to recognize this in rather deliberate ways. But even for others, who do not draw such connections, the language of "mending," by its nature, implies the centrality of human responsibility for improving the condition of things. For a community which has serious questions – to put it gently – about the quality of Divine Providence and Omnipotence, a preoccupation with the resources of the human spirit may be more a theological necessity than most are likely to admit.

Tikkun is also useful because of its malleability; as the materials surveyed here demonstrate, it is a conception which can be used to justify the widest range of activities and views. We have also seen that it can easily be lifted out of its original context and transformed into a "normative" Jewish value. A contemporary idea is thus legitimated and rendered all the more significant by clothing it in the garb of tradition, a process as old as "tradition" itself.

[40]For another interesting use of Lurianic myth for theological purposes, see R. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz* (Indianapolis, 1966), pp. 230-231.

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From Tanakh to Modern Times: Aspects of Jewish Religion

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One of the amazing aspects of the history of modern developments in the overall field of Judaic studies is the extent to which the original concepts of the founding fathers of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* have remained unchanged and the manner in which later historic developments did change them. The small band of founders believed that the hidden treasures of Jewish literature could be revealed if three main fields of study would be opened up to both Jews and non-Jews: philology, history – especially literary and cultural, and philosophy and the study of religion. Of course, these are actually terms used by us and do not necessarily reflect exactly the words used by scholars such as Wolf, Zunz or Geiger. But it should be stressed that Geiger's summary published posthumously by his son in 1872 almost reflects verbatim the program as phrased by Wolf and Zunz half a century earlier.

The reason for this Renaissance-type of movement in Judaism are manifold: the new spirit of freedom in Europe after the days of the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the newly achieved possibility of leaving the confines of a spiritual ghetto and pursuing secular learning, and the beginning of the integration of Jews into the world of *academe*. On top of that those young Jewish enthusiasts felt that if the treasures of Jewish achievements could be made available to the non-Jewish learned world much good could be achieved. In the present context it is useless to discuss why A. Wolf who composed the program that served as the basis in founding the original *Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden* did not occupy a prominent place in

the following developments but for all practical purposes later opted out. But it ought to be noted that none of the first or second generation founders ever bothered to commence the literary history of Judaism from its very base – the Hebrew Bible. It was almost as if they had accepted the Christian ideology that the Bible represented a "pre-Jewish" state of affairs and that Jews had nothing more to teach in this respect.

To be sure one can find various reasons for the omission. The founders intended to deal with those writings which could be conceived as specifically Jewish: The Hebrew Bible could not be regarded any more as specifically Jewish since by that time it served as part of the basic texts of European Christian civilization.

Every Christian theologian had his fill of the Hebrew Bible and some had even gained a respectable knowledge of medieval Jewish biblical exegesis and thought. But non-Jews had only some limited acquaintance with the literature produced by rabbinic "Sages."

Thus it would have been counter-productive for those Jewish scholars to start their work in the sanctum of Christian theologians. Had they done so that could have led to renewed polemics between Christian and Jewish scholars. Another consideration was that Jewish scholars at that time had little to offer beyond their traditional commentaries or their midrashic compilation. The only area of knowledge in which Jews could compete successfully was that of the Aramaic Targum. Perhaps Jews were more accustomed to use the Aramaic Targum, but that could have only awarded them an edge over non-Jews. For Jews, Targum was a major reservoir for Bible exegesis; for non-Jews it was only one of the several Bible versions.

As for other ancient witnesses of the Bible-text non-Jewish scholars would rely on a long tradition of judging the Greek text as superior to the Hebrew. In brief, Bible could not serve as a bait to attract non-Jewish scholars to the nascent area of Judaic studies.

On the other hand this was the very time when Protestant orthodoxy and the nascent critical movement were locked in a decisive battle. That battle was regarded as an inner-Christian issue in which orthodox theologians stood against the onslaught of those who at the time were thought to be radical critics. Of course, Jewish scholars who had just entered the academic scene had no standing in such fights. Once Jews did enter the field of Bible studies they identified the modern academic approach with the results of critical inquiry.

Altogether, then, Jews in the 19th century never thought of Bible study as part of the "science" of Judaism. Looking back, one may say that the beginnings of Judaic studies are reflected in the later developments.

In a way, one may observe that the nonchalance of Jewish scholars played right into the hands of Christian theologians. For them Jewish history had come to an end once the Hebrew scriptures were regarded as completed. Living Jewish history had reached its final point with the end of a Jewish state – and the only problem remained how to account for the period of the Second Temple. The very use of terminology is rather instructive: up to what point goes the history of ancient Israel and at what point does the "degenerate" Judaism start. To be sure, somewhere along the line degeneration was identified with the influence of pharisees and rabbis. Christian theologians had led a long fight to delegitimize everything "Jewish" which did not fit their idea of ancient biblical Israel.

Since Christian Bible studies were the prerogative of theologians and Jews had no business in that field they excluded themselves from joining the guild of academic students of the Bible for the entire period until the beginning of Jewish academic institutions, i.e. the turn of the present century. For our purpose it is of no importance whether the first Jewish academic Bible specialists developed on the soil of the "Reform" or "Traditional" wing of modern Judaism; certainly not in "orthodox" surroundings. For practical purposes we may say that academic Jewish Bible Study is an invention of our century – starting almost a century after the beginning of academic Judaic studies.

In this respect Judaic studies were rather late in entering a claim on behalf of the Bible as an integral part of Judaism. While this lack has been remedied in the present century, the early lines drawn were never redrawn. It certainly is no coincidence that Jewish thought remained until the last decades subdivided into "rabbinic" thought and medieval Jewish philosophy. So much so that the issues dealt with by medieval thinkers – be they "philosophers" or not – remained the centerpiece of the academic field of Jewish thought. It would be absurd to say that Jewish thought stopped with the last of the medieval philosophers. If one wishes one may claim that it started roughly about the same time as rabbinic thought unless one claims that Philo was not a Jewish thinker but a Hellenistic philosopher who happened to be a Jew. But if the start of Jewish thought as an academic field is clear, its end is not. Does *modern* Jewish thought start with Moses Mendelsohn or with Franz Rosenzweig? Should we reckon all thinkers who dealt with Jewish issues as practitioners of Jewish thought – even if their problem was personal or their style polemical.

Up to now we have excluded biblical thought as a proper part of Jewish thought but allowed for rabbinic or Hellenistic thought which paved the way for medieval thought. But one major subdivision is missing in this picture: Kabbalah and its heir, Hassidic thought. If

nineteenth century Jewish thinkers did not plan for the inclusion of biblical Judaism, they had even less interest in the Jewish esoteric writings known as Kabbalah. Kabbalah did not seem worthy of their academic attention, since academic thinking had to conform to rationalist ideals. The fathers of Judaic studies could approach their object as philologists, or students of literature or religion. But no self-respecting scholar would make the abstruse speculations of Kabbalah the centerpoint of his studies.

This goes a long way to explain how Judaic studies remained deficient in two major fields in two extreme areas – Bible and Kabbalah – and how the study of medieval thought became the centerpoint for the study of Jewish thought. To be sure, that could serve as a suitable counterpoint to the traditional concentration in the area of halakha: the medieval halakhic and responsa literature.

If we wish we might draw a three-tier picture for both areas of Jewish religion: systematic reflection and halakha. For the earliest period we can put the parallel between rabbinics on the one hand – consisting of mishna, tosefta and midrash halakha – and Jewish thought as expressed by Philo on the other, leaving aside for the moment religious thought as expressed by the Qumran sect.

For the middle ages the parallel consists of halakhic writings in their various forms and "religious philosophy" which until recently served as a substitute for "Jewish thought." It seems superfluous to dwell on this occasion on how these two aspects found one common representative in the towering figure of Maimonides.

Again we find it hard to discover the place into which the various developments of Jewish mysticism could be fitted. Does mysticism represent a third parallel area apart from both halakha and Jewish thought? Can we draw a line of development leading from the mystics among the Tannaim and the early hekhalot literature to the author of Sefer Yetzira to the early Ashkenazi Hassidism till the high point of the middle ages reached by the Zohar culminating in Lurianic Kabbalah and leading finally up to its latest manifestation in Hassidism.

Let me finish this rather inadequate overview at the point I began. I started with the program of the founders of Judaic studies and their omission of Bible studies from that program. For non-Jews Bible studies were a major component of theology. But the very term "theology" represented to Jews an area in which only Christians would work. It was not only biblical theology which Jews could not become familiar with. Every aspect of religion that for non-Jews had the taste of theology did not attract their Jewish counterparts.

I need not recount in this context how theology fulfilled for non-Jews the functions of theoretic foundation in the ways of religious thinking as well as that of the theoretical basis of halakha. Just as Jewish thinking split up into various sub-areas so did Christian theology. The different parts of Christian theology were dogmatics, practical theology, and since the past century biblical theology. To be sure, for practical theology and dogmatics Jews had as parallel areas practical halakha and both rabbinic and medieval thought. But precisely because for Jews the bible always served as the basis for exegesis and midrash – even though in the present century Jews started to engage in academic Bible study – the way Bible study was approached basically took the form of Bible criticism. Until very recently, Jews would not touch the strange area of biblical theology just as other theological areas remained foreign territory for them, and their epistemology remained unfamiliar.

At this point a remark regarding internal divisions is in order. Up to now we spoke of Jews and non-Jews in a general fashion – without differentiating among Christian denominations and groups of believers such as fundamentalists. But of course we must realize that such a picture is a gross over-simplification. Just as Christian believers, let alone violent non-believers, should not all be tarred with the same brush, so we should not remain oblivious of different attitudes inside Jewry. Much as I would like to refrain from using clichés or labels, reaching in this survey to our own times we must recognize that Jewish believers should be divided into various groups. Perhaps terms specific to the American scene may be misleading and do not fit exactly the scene in Israel or Europe. In spite of differences in practical observance divisions characterized by terms such as Reform, Reconstructionist, Traditional-conservative and Orthodox carry some meaning for our discussion. Judaic scholars may feel identified with any of these divisions inside modern Jewry and their attitude as scholars can hardly remain totally untouched by their institutionalized practices and convictions. This becomes especially important once we deal with the grey area subsumed under the term "theology." Even though representatives of the clergy of all shades of practicing the precepts of Judaism may be referred to by the general public as "theologians" as far as I know there exists at this moment no attempt at composing any type of "Jewish theology" by representatives of the "orthodox" wing. This may be one of the indicators of the degree to what extent modernity has entered the area of Jewish religion in its entirety, that some conservative or "Reform" Jews may try to express their Jewishness in a way modelled on positions of non-Jewish theologians, whereas adherents of orthodox practice will never refer to themselves as

theologians. Traditionally, Jewish scholars are Hakhamim, Ramim, Talmudists or Rabbis but not theologians.

It could very well be that the ancient prejudice by Jews against theology and their reliance on the practice of halakha has caused this difference of attitudes inside modern Jewry. Altogether it is our terminology as children of European civilization that makes us look at such issues as belonging to the overall field of religion whereas traditional terminology prefers to view matters from the angle of practice. It might well be that this terminological preference too is one of the aspects of the history of Jewish religion.

47

Universal Mission and Jewish Survivalism in American Zionist Ideology

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Early American Zionist thinking was characterized by the prevalence of a rationale which conceived of Zionism as a mission of service to society at large. This mission ideology took root among American Zionists because "negative factors," such as anti-Semitism, were historically weak in the United States. Consequently, in the American context, Zionism was in many instances sanctioned as a contribution to the achievement of "broader" or "higher" social and ethical goals. Sketching the persistence of the mission motif is the purpose of the first section of this article.[1]

It is common knowledge that since the 1920s historical processes and events, working in very different ways, brought the very existence of the Jewish people to the fore: Nativism and anti-Semitism in America from World War I to the end of World War II; the murderous Arab attacks on the Yishuv in 1929 and 1936-1939, and the fanatic nature of Palestinian Arab nationalism in general; Britain's retreat from the Mandate; and, on top of all – Nazism, the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. What was the effect of all this on traditional American Zionist ideology? More precisely, what happened, in the new circumstances, to mission-oriented Zionism in the

[1]For a detailed elaboration on this theme see, Allon Gal, "The Mission Motif in American Zionism, 1898-1948," *American Jewish History*, vol. LXXV, no. 4 (June 1986), pp. 363-385.

United States? – We shall deal with this question in sections II and III, while the concluding part of this paper elaborates further on the mission and survivalist motifs in some of the new pro-Zionist (or "philo-Israelite") trends.

The chronological framework of the article is roughly from the founding of the Federation of American Zionists (FAZ) in 1898 to the first years of the State of Israel.

I

Until about the mid-1930s, leading American Zionists were intensively engaged in refuting the anti-Zionist mission ideology of the Reform movement, according to which the Jews were dispersed among the nations in accordance with a divine master plan to disseminate lofty religious and ethical values. Two aspects are instructive in this regard. First, the very fact that Zionists in the United States challenged this theory throughout several decades suggests that they considered it to be deeply rooted among American Jews. Secondly, American Zionist ideologists responded quite apologetically to the idea of Israel's mission, and rarely totally rejected it.

Zionists in the early Conservative movement uttered some of the most striking mission-attuned statements. It seems that they opposed Reform Judaism while retaining some ideological links, allusive as they were, with that movement. Furthermore, anti-Semitism was quite marginal in the United States before World War I. For these reasons, *fin-de-siècle* Conservative Zionists tended to highly concentrate on the mission rationale of Zionism. Sabato Morais, prime mover in the establishment of the Jewish Theological Seminary and its president until his death (1887-1897), believed that the Jews would return to their ancestral homeland in Palestine, and become an inspiration of peace and truth to the whole world, as foretold by the prophets and taught by tradition. Similarly, Solomon Solis-Cohen, one of the founders of the Seminary, co-founder of the (third) Jewish Publication Society, and one of the first Zionists in America, conceived Zionism as being meaningful for world redemption. "If in God's providence there shall come about the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine," he wrote, "It must be a model state" in terms of social justice, love for the neighbor and the stranger, freedom and peace.[2]

Henry P. Mendes, prominent leader of early Conservatism and acting president of the Seminary from the death of Morais to the

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[2]Moshe Davis, *The Emergence of Conservative Judaism: The Historical School in 19th Century America* (Philadelphia: 1965), pp. 268-273.

appointment of Solomon Schechter in 1902, developed the case for mission-oriented Zionism. By the "Restoration of Palestine to the Hebrews" he also meant the establishment of a central spiritual influence for the world at large; a house of prayer for all nations; a central world-university for knowledge and inspiration; and a world court of international arbitration to secure universal peace.[3]

Later Conservative leaders of East European background such as Solomon Schechter and Israel Friedlaender were much less mission-oriented when compared with the afore-mentioned Sephardic personalities. Schechter and Friedlaender formulated their Zionist philosophies during the peak of the East European mass immigration. Cultural self-assertion was the hallmark of this immigration. Naturally, the cultural-religious revival of the Jewish people was the dominant theme of Schechter's and Friedlaender's Zionist thought. To be sure, they occasionally expressed the desire to see the Jewish endeavor in Palestine as being universally meaningful and contributing toward the reign of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth; but this was not at the core of their Zionist ideology.[4]

Solomon Goldman, the Conservative rabbi from Chicago and president of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) in 1938-40 is an interesting case. Approximately until 1938, his addresses contained a heavy element of Zionist mission. Thus, he ended his ideological book, *Crisis and Decision*, in a poetic vein, depicting how the pioneers and educators of *halutzic* (pioneering) Palestine were devotedly bringing about the realization of the vision of social justice, world-wide racial fraternity and universal harmony.[5]

Reform Zionist leaders, naturally were very expressive of their mission orientation. Thus, Richard Gottheil, of a Reform background and the first president of the FAZ (1898-1904), time and again referred to the "higher mission" of Zionism. In addition to the first objective of Zionism, to create the conditions for a Jewish national existence, Zionism had another, nobler mission – to contribute to the welfare of mankind.[6]

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[3]*Ibid.*, pp. 272-274, 458-459.

[4]Solomon Schechter, *Seminary Addresses and Other Papers* (New York: 1959), pp. 93, 103-104, 248-249; Norman Bentwich, *Solomon Schechter: A Biography* (Philadelphia: 1948), pp. 307-308, 346-347; Israel Friedlaender, *Past and Present: Selected Essays* (New York; 1961), pp. 5, 33-34, 333-336.

[5]Solomon Goldman, *Crisis and Decision* (New York: 1938), p. 206.

[6]Richard Gottheil, *The Aims of Zionism* (New York: 1899), pp. 14, 18, 20, 21; *idem*, *Zionism* (Philadelphia: 1914), pp. 200-208, 216.

Judah L. Magnes, the restive Reform Rabbi and perhaps the most prominent intellectual among American Zionists until World War I, stated after his immigration to Palestine: "Zionism, Palestine, in my opinion is not an end in itself....Palestine is one of the means, perhaps a chief means, but not the only means of making the....Jews everywhere fitter to perform their historic task in the great world." He passionately hoped that "out of this Return from Exile there might be produced men of spirit, ideas of truth and beauty, eternal forces that might help mankind along its painful way to salvation."[7]

Reform Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, one of the founders of the American Zionist movement and president of the ZOA in 1936-1938, stressed the noble role of Jews: bringing comfort and light to the tortured world. Wise towered above many other Zionists during the interwar period in his rich and all-encompassing Zionist thought. His attitude may be considered typical of a great many religious Zionists of those years.[8]

Mission orientation was also paramount until the late 1930s among secular Zionists. Social-philosopher Horace M. Kallen thus concluded his thoughtful and well-knitted article "The Ethics of Zionism" (published in 1906): "If it is the Jew's right to survive, and Zionism asserts it is, it is his right by the vigor of his achievement and the effectiveness of his ideal, by his gifts to the world and his power for good in the world." Kallen's later Zionist publications were also written in a compassionate "missionist" vein.[9]

Louis D. Brandeis, who assumed American Zionist leadership upon the outbreak of World War I, and continued to exert tremendous influence on the movement until his death in 1941, was outstandingly mission-oriented. He found that Jews eminently possessed those qualities which American Progressives struggled for – justice and democracy, and concluded that Zionism was the best way to assure the Jews' contribution toward a better world. His mission bent was greatly imbued with puritanic images. Typically he once solemnly declared: "Our aim is the Kingdom of Heaven, paraphrasing Cromwell. We take Palestine by the way." Beyond his peculiar puritanic strain, however,

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[7]Arthur A. Goren, ed., *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1982), pp. 208-212.

[8]Melvin I. Urofsky puts Wise's Zionist activities under a broader heading, *A Voice That Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen S. Wise.* (Albany, New York: 1982); see e.g., Wise quoted in Carl H. Voss, *Rabbi and Minister: The Friendship of Stephen S. Wise and John H. Holmes* (Cleveland: 1964), p. 45.

[9]Allon Gal, *Brandeis of Boston* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1980), pp. 152-153; Horace Kallen, *Constitutional Foundations of the New Zion* (New York: 1919).

Brandeis' Zionist mission rationale struck a chord with American Jews and undoubtedly helped to enhance his leadership.[10]

A younger secular ZOA activist, Bernard Rosenblatt, also articulated progressive Zionist ideology much in the missionist vein. He was one of the main architects of the Pittsburgh Program adopted by the ZOA, following the Balfour Declaration, at the organization's 1918 convention. The program detailed, in great enthusiasm and care, the future Jewish state as a highly enlightened model society.[11]

Comparing with the ZOA, Hadassah was much less of an ideological organization. The Women's Zionist Organization, founded in 1912, devoted itself mainly to the support of medical work in Palestine. Still, Hadassah leaders and educators conceived the Yishuv and future Israel in a certain frame of mind, and this *mentalité* was much mission-attuned. Henrietta Szold, Hadassah's founder, came from a cultural-Zionist milieu and herself admired Ahad Ha'am. But a mission rationale was quite central to her thought, and she continuously stressed the challenging role Zionism should play in imparting to the world the lessons of social justice, in reconciling Eastern and Western civilizations and in the advancement of peace. Once in Palestine, Szold's mission-oriented stance brought her to the tiny Ihud group, which believed that a bi-national state would lead to a peaceful fulfillment of Zionist aspirations (another American Zionist in the leadership of Ihud was Magnes).[12]

Szold, the first national president of Hadassah (1912-21, 1923-26), was succeeded by Irma Lindheim (1926-28) whose life and work were perhaps even more mission oriented. She also made *aliyah*, joining a Hashomer Hatzair movement kibbutz. One of the major features of this particular radical kibbutz movement, one which much appealed to her, was the passion for social accomplishments meaningful beyond nationalist boundaries. Its members believed that Zionist collectivist life in Palestine would help bring about a new harmonious world order.[13]

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[10]Quoted in Allon Gal, "Brandeis's View on the Upbuilding of Palestine, 1914-1923," *Studies in Zionism*, no. 6 (Autumn 1982), p. 238.

[11]Bernard Rosenblatt, *Social Zionism (Selected Essays)* (New York: 1919); Melvin I. Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Garden City, New York: 1975), pp. 250-257.

[12]Henrietta Szold, "The Internal Jewish Question," *The Maccabaean*, vol. I, no. 2 (November 1901), p. 61; Irving Fineman, *Woman of Valor: The Life of Henrietta Szold 1860-1945* (New York: 1961), pp. 132-134 and *passim*.

[13]Irma L. Lindheim, *Parallel Quest: A Search of a Person and People* (New York: 1962), pp. 50-51, 129-130, 351, 457.

II

The dramatic processes and traumatic events that since the 1920s threatened the very existence of the Jewish people have already been enumerated in the introduction to this article. In *America*, Jewry's right to exist had never been questioned; yet, the anti-Semitic trend in the United States, quite obvious since the end of World War I, persistently gained power up to the victory over Nazi Germany.

It is difficult to determine at what particular conjuncture did all these factors – European and American alike – accumulate to influence American Zionist ideology. Perhaps the *Kristallnacht* of November 1938 can serve as a milestone. These brutal and satanically planned pogroms in Germany and Austria made American Jewry keenly aware of the imminent danger to the existence of the Jews in Europe. The United Jewish Appeal – uniting Zionists and non-Zionists alike – was then created as a reaction expressive of solidarity and a national will to survive. It seems then, that survivalist impulses were first significantly reflected in various Zionist trends during the late 1930s and World War II.

Assuring Jewish survival in America had for long been a feature of American Zionist ideology. But in relation to Eretz Israel as we have seen, American Zionists traditionally tended to develop an ideology of which "missionism" was a major component. Now, due to the grave new circumstances, American Zionists gradually became prepared to consider *survivalism* as the objective of the Zionist enterprise in Palestine too.

The transformation of American Zionist ideology was gradual, varified, and quite elusive at the time. One of its earliest and most interesting expressions was the mutation which the Zionist attitude of Louis Brandeis underwent. Though one may find him commenting from time to time on anti-Semitism during the 1920s, it was in 1930 that Brandeis summed up the threatening processes in a clear-cut manner. In a programatic letter he wrote: "The condition of the Jews in the Diaspora in 1930 – as compared with 1920 and 1914 – has worsened to such a degree, that the belief of thinking Jews that the Jewish problem would be solved by growing enlightenment in the Diaspora must have been seriously shaken – if not shattered." And he sharply concluded: "The anti-Semitic outbreaks in Europe, the closing of the doors to immigrants by practically all the new countries, the rise of anti-Semitism even in the new countries, remove the old alternatives from consideration. The question now presented largely is Palestine – or Despair?" Palestine as a refuge for those in despair, rather than as a

basis for the realization of a social mission, thus came to characterize Brandeis' new approach.[14]

The barbaric Arab attack on Jewish Palestine in the summer of 1929 also worked to reshape Brandeis' attitude regarding the Yishuv. He detested the terrorist acts, became sensitive to the Yishuv's security needs and made it a rule to contribute large sums for self-defense, relying on the judgment of the Yishuv's leaders. This kind of identification with Jewish Palestine reflected his new Zionist stance – grave and clearly nationalist – attuned first and foremost to safeguarding the physical survival of his people.

Whereas the mission-oriented Brandeis had conceived the Yishuv as a model "City upon a Hill," the Brandeis of the 1930s was thrilled by a new image: The Yishuv as a fortress strategically located on the top of a hill, defending itself against the assault of the Middle East's savages (paralleling to the Indians of North America). Heroic Jewish Palestine and the embattled pioneers caught his imagination and instilled in him a mixture of pride and concern. Though Brandeis never relinquished his support and hope for progressive Palestine, obviously, survivalism (associated with values such as courage, stamina and physical fitness), became a major motif in his thinking.

British policy in Palestine also worked to reorient Brandeis' original Zionist outlook. In March 1930 the Report of the Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929 was published expressing hostility toward the emerging Jewish national home. In October 1930 the Passfield White Paper was issued, clearly sanctioning anti-Zionist policies. During his efforts to repeal this policy, Brandeis turned "inward," adopting a positive and firm view of Jewish political self-reliance and emphasizing Jewish survivalism.

Solomon Goldman, the religious and Zionist personality, who, as we have seen, had concluded his 1938 book in a triumphant missionist vein, published a somber work entitled *Undefeated* in 1940. The survivalist tenor of this book, composed chiefly of Goldman's addresses as president of the ZOA during the two preceding years, ran deep indeed. This is not surprising, for Solomon Goldman then chiefly strove to mobilize American public opinion against the *Kristallnacht* policy on the one hand, and the anti-Zionist British White Paper of May 1939 on the other hand. As the title of his 1940 book deliberately implied, the new challenge for the Jewish people was mainly to survive, to remain "undefeated." In contrast to the utopian concluding section of his previous book – where he equated the *halutzim* in Eretz Israel as the

[14]Allon Gal, "Brandeis' Social-Zionism," *Studies in Zionism*, vol. VIII, no. 2 (Autumn 1987), pp. 191-209; this is the source for the ensuing discussion.

embodiment of a just society in an emerging just world – his later volume ended on a different note:

> The memory of ancient disasters, stubbornly foiled by our ancestors, will bring the past generations to our aid. We, the Jews, have never believed that Utopia waits at the next turning of the road. Our prophets did not envisage the perfection of society as the achievement of one day. They saw perfection at the end of days, after many cycles of progress and retrogression. It will come, but only from an accumulation of effort, from the sustained labor of the will. It will come not as a result of accident or miracle, but through the travail of mankind. It is this profound conviction that society can become humane; it is this grand determination to make it humane that have made the Jews indestructible. They never spoke of "Untergang" but left that to the triumphant peoples. The Jew said, "I shall not die but I shall live."[15]

During the late 1930s and the early 1940s a pair of eminent Zionists were preparing to assume the leadership of the American Zionist movement – Emanuel Neumann and Abba Hillel Silver. Both were deeply steeped in Hebrew and Zionist tradition from their youth; at the same time their political outlook was very American, tending to grassroot activity and taking American pluralism for granted. Thus, in the new circumstances of the Jewish people, they did not deem it necessary to justify their Zionism by "external reasons" and were not inclined to encompass the mission rationale in their Zionist ideology.

The case of Silver, however, was the more complex of the two. During his activity on behalf of Zionism, the Reform rabbi in him led him time and again to portray Jewish nationalism in a universalistic context. And when he helped lead Reform Judaism toward Zionism he generally did not recommend nationalism *in lieu* of the commitment to a world mission.[16]

Two traumatic experiences worked to attenuate the mission element in Silver's ideology. First, when he was on sabbatical leave in Europe and Palestine during 1932-1933, he happened to be in Germany precisely when Hitler came to power. This was a traumatic experience indeed. The other and even more decisive factor effecting Silver's change of position was State Department behavior *vis-à-vis* the Holocaust. In the early autumn of 1940 the State Department managed to defeat all efforts to help Jewish refugees through the agency of the American Red Cross. Zionist self-reliance, both in American domestic politics and in the international arena, consequently came to

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[15]Solomon Goldman, *Undefeated* (Washington, D.C.: 1940), pp. 134-135.

[16]Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judasim* (New York: 1988), pp. 326-330.

characterize Silver's stance from that period to the end of his public career. True, Silver did on occasion employ the mission argument for Zionism even up to the 1947-1949 years, but the main appeal of his Zionist utterances during the 1940s came from his emphasis on Jewish pride and Jewish militancy. When he eventually emerged in 1943 as *the* leader of the ZOA replacing Stephen Wise, he spoke in a strongly assertive Zionist style that considered the European Jewish disaster and the historical right to the ancient homeland as proper justification for a renewed Jewish Commonwealth.[17]

Compared to Silver, the record of Emanuel Neumann, the adamant Zionist leader, was relatively straightforward and simple. His Zionist outlook was always somewhat more nationalistic and blatant than that of his distinguished Reform friend. In his autobiography Neumann candidly writes that he "was drawn toward Jabotinsky and the Revisionists and sympathized with many of their views." He did not join the Revisionist movement, he clarified, chiefly because he "was repelled by some of [its] tactics." Indeed, the "Integral Zionism" of Neumann had a common denominator with Jabotinsky's "Monist Zionism," that is, the ruling-out of the mission rationale. According to both, the Zionist goal is defined and justified by solely on the basis of internal Jewish needs.[18]

The 50th convention of the ZOA, in July 1947, elected Emanuel Neumann as president. This followed two years of the presidency of Abba Hillel Silver, the person that Neumann, more than anybody else, was responsible for bringing to power in Zionist politics. Neumann's term,however, began a new era in American Zionism. The impact of the Holocaust began to sink in, and in any case his Zionist ideology focussed on survivalism more than that of any other ZOA president before him.

The 50th ZOA convention also brought about the replacement of Ludwig Lewisohn as editor of the *New Palestine* (the major ZOA periodical) by Ernest E. Barbarash. Lewisohn, the noted novelist and essayist who edited the journal since 1943, was inclined to the mission rationale. Indeed, missionist yearnings were much of the flavor Lewisohn imparted to the *New Palestine* during his editorship. With Barbarash in power that spirit began to gradually wane. Barbarash

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[17]Noach Orian (Herzog), "The Leadership of Rabbi Hillel Silver on the American-Jewish Scene 1938-1949," Ph.D. Dissertation (Tel-Aviv University, 1982) [in Hebrew], chap. 1, sections I, V; Allon Gal, *David Ben-Gurion and the American Alignment for a Jewish State 1938-1942* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, forthcoming), chap. 5.

[18]Emanuel Neumann, *In the Arena: An Autobiographical Memoir* (New York: 1976), p. 107 and passim.

was born in Russia in 1906 and emigrated to the United States in 1925. Coming from a Revisionist background, he tended to impress upon his readers the unadorned nationalist objective of Zionism, namely, the goal of political independence, arguing persistently that only through Jewish efforts would that goal be achieved. His semi-autobiographical book was aptly entitled *If I am Not for Myself...*, thus omitting the non-egoistic element from the famous saying of Hillel the Elder. (The original – quite balanced – maxim is: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, of what good am I?") In "Bitter Lessons," a distinctively ideological essay in this book, Barbarash elaborates on that classic saying (which he consistently does not quote in full) in his own way:

> There are, unfortunately, so many among us Jews who have failed to learn the bitter lesson of history, which has taught us that only if we fight with courage and fortitude our own battle for our rights, and against discrimination and injustice, we will gain the respect, and yes, even the support of all other segments of the community....
>
> History has taught us that wherever Jews manifested timidity, a defensive stance toward aggressive attacks from whatever sources of bias and bigotry they are launched, that whenever Jews spend their major efforts and energies in the vineyards of others neglecting the welfare of their own people – they wound up being discarded on the scrap heap, thrown there by the very forces which they helped....
>
> Don't labor under any illusions. No one else will fight your battle. As our sages said: "Im Ein Ani Li Mi Li" (If I am not for myself and for my people, who will be?). Timidity and passivity breeds contempt among those who seek to undermine and usurp your rights and your dignity....[19]

Until the early 1940s Revisionism was a very marginal phenomenon in the U.S. Gradually, under the impact of the Holocaust, the movement gained influence. Historically a product of continental European circumstances, especially of Poland ridden by anti-Semitism, Revisionism, as afore-mentioned, was sheerly survival-oriented. This version of Zionism could now find some basis in America while just slightly qualifying its original ideology.[20]

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[19]For Ludwig Lewisohn, see e.g. his *Israel* (New York: 1936), which typically ends with "...to be a Jew is to be a friend of mankind, to be a proclaimer of liberty and peace," p. 280; Ernest E. Barbarash, *If I am Not for Myself...Hillel: Reminiscences, Personalities, Historical Anecdotes, Selected Writings* (New York: 1981), p. 240.

[20]Melvin I. Urofsky, *We Are One! American Jewry and Israel* (Garden City, New York: 1978), pp. 73-81, 150-152.

A leading sponsor of this trend was Ben Hecht (1893-1964, novelist and playwright). It is most instructive to perceive how this advocate of Revisionism in America framed his ideology along survivalist lines. The development and nature of his Jewish nationalism were dramatically opposed to Brandeis' path to Zionism and throw light upon the new trends in American Zionism. Ben Hecht relates in his interesting autobiography:

> The German mass murder of the Jews, recently begun, had brought [in 1939] my Jewishness to the surface. I felt no grief or vicarious pain. I felt only a violence toward the German killers, I saw the Germans as murderers with red hands. Their descent from humanity was as vivid in my eyes as if they had grown four legs and a snout....
>
> The anger led me to join an organization for the first time in my life. It was called "Fight for Freedom" and was dedicated to bringing the U.S.A. into the war against the Germans....
>
> I was aware that I was doing all these things as a Jew. My eloquence in behalf of democracy was inspired chiefly by my Jewish anger. I had been no partisan of democracy in my earlier years. Its sins had seemed to me more prominent than its virtues. But now that it was the potential enemy of the new German Police State I was its uncaring disciple. Thus, oddly, in addition to becoming a Jew in 1939 I became also an American – and remained one.[21]

The mass murder of Jews by the German police state during the 1930s and the 1940s deeply affected non-Zionist groups in the United States. The previously non-Zionist B'nai B'rith order gradually accepted Zionism during the 1940s, under the leadership of Henry Monsky (president from 1938 to 1947). In this process the survivalist strain was paramount. Indeed, the mission motif was almost non-existent in the thought of the order's leadership. Moreover, even the moderate version of mission ideology – the concept of the Jewish state as an exemplary society – is only rarely expounded by B'nai B'rith. The Jewish state, in the survivalist ideology of B'nai B'rith, was conceived chiefly as an element in the broader Jewish effort to perpetuate the Jewish people in the face of anti-Semitic brutality. Consequently, to the members of B'nai B'rith, Eretz Israel was hardly more than a haven and a fortress.[22]

At the 16th General Convention of the Supreme Lodge of B'nai B'rith (spring 1941), Monsky typically stated: "The greatest catastrophe that has ever befallen our people has engulfed our fellow Jews in the lands of darkness and despair. Millions have become

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[21]Ben Hecht, *A Child of the Century* (New York: 1954), pp. 517-518.

[22]For background see, Deborah D. Moore, *B'nai B'rith and the Challenge of Ethnic Leadership* (Albany: 1981), chap. 7.

financially devastated, rendered homeless and helpless. In the light of long-term planning, Palestine presents the most realistic, single opportunity for the resettlement of large numbers of the unfortunate and victimized of our people." He finished the pro-Zionist section of his address with a clear-cut survivalist message: "...the present chaotic conditions which prevail in the European scene impose upon us the solemn and sacred responsibility of giving unreserved support to the program of the upbuilding of Palestine."[23]

No less telling as to the survivalist orientation of B'nai B'rith's kind of Zionism were the addresses of Frank Goldman, president of the order in 1947-1953. Thus, in his message to the convention in March 1950 he stated:

> These victims of the war were charges upon our conscience before Israel existed. We have sought to be faithful to them. Together with others, we have devoted ourselves to the cause of the establishment of the land – their land – where they could live and develop as a free people. For B'nai B'rith, their cause was all-compelling. It is one matter to be a self-conscious Jew because your security is endangered and Jewish unity provides you with convenient weapon to fight bigotry. It is far greater...to be a self-conscious Jew because your people need your help, and you render service to them *for this and for no other reason. Such service, selfless and unconditional, is the essence of B'nai B'rith.* [italics in original] [24]

Indeed, considering the circumstances of the 1940s, there is little wonder that the survivalist impulse was decisive. Against the background of the horrors inflicted upon the Jews and of the attempt to annihilate the Jewish people, the emerging positive tenets were an affirmation of Jewish existence and the well-being of its sovereign state. The Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith concluded within a month after the establishment of the state that the strength and success of Israel would give the League leverage in its struggle against anti-Semitism in America. And in November 1948 the Executive Committee resolved that "Israel as a Fighting Force" would be the first of the ADL's seven themes in its pro-Israel educational work in the United States.[25]

Compared to B'nai B'rith the "Zionization" of non-Zionist elite organizations occurred at a slower pace. In this process, the attitudes of

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[23] *Proceedings of the Sixteenth General Convention of the Supreme Lodge B'nai B'rith* (Chicago, Illinois, March 29-April 2, 1941), p. 40.

[24] *Summary of the Nineteenth General Convention of the Supreme Lodge B'nai B'rith* (Washington, D.C., March 18-22, 1950), pp. 2-3.

[25] Proceedings of Meetings of the Executive Committee of ADL National Commission, June 11 and November 12, 1948, ADL Archives, NYC.

the American government and of general public opinion were often factors sensitively considered. Jewish plight and the survivalist urge only very gradually brought about the change in the attitude, for example, of the American Jewish Committee. Developments were slightly different within those Jewish agencies that were less ideological in nature and more directly concerned with the lot of European Jewry. Here the Jewish disaster hastened "Zionization" and shaped it largely along survivalist lines. An important role in the transformation undergone by the UJA and the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds was played by Joseph J. Schwartz.[26]

During 1940-1949, when Schwartz was the chairman of the European executive council of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), he supervised relief and welfare programs in 30 countries, involving over one million people. During the war he had negotiated through neutral emissaries the rescue of tens of thousands of Jews from Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe. When the great flight of Jews from East to West Europe began (about 1944) he again rendered help in many ways, often cooperating with Zionist agencies. He personally witnessed the terrible plight of the Jewish refugees in post-war Europe and knew enough to unequivocally conclude that there was no future for them in Europe. It is worth quoting him regarding his "Zionization" during those years:

> When I came to the JDC, I did not call myself a Zionist. When I went overseas and when I began to deal with the problem, I always said that it was not a matter of ideology, as far as I was concerned, it was a matter of the survival of the Jewish people to the extent that you could affect it, to the extent that you could bring it about and that you could rescue and that without Palestine, there was no future for the Jews. Every gate to a shore, every avenue was closed, and it wasn't a good ideology, it was a question of just here are the people, here are the Jews, with their background, with their culture, with their rich heritage and everything else – no place to go, and in danger of complete extermination. And this was the only possibility. There was no other way as far as I was concerned. I came, if I came to Zionism in any kind of way, I came to it through very practical events and practical considerations....[27]

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[26]For political background see, Menahem Kaufman, *Non-Zionists in America and the Struggle for Jewish Statehood, 1939-1948* (Jerusalem: 1984) [in Hebrew].

[27]Yehuda Bauer, *American Jewry and the Holocaust: The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 1939-1945* (Detroit: 1981), *passim*; quot., *idem*, Interview with Joseph J. Schwartz, June 1968, Instit. of Contemporary Jewry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Oral History Div., # (47) 19.

In this vein Schwartz later became firmly convinced that Palestine must to be the home of the "displaced persons." Conveying this message, he actively participated in the epoch-making national conference of the United Jewish Appeal in Atlantic City on December 15-17, 1945. People from the European camps who had gone through the hell of Nazi Europe also appeared before this conference. As Menahem Kaufman has concluded, the survivors' call for Jewish solidarity and for support for their yearnings to build a home in Palestine profoundly moved the conference's delegates, Zionists and non-Zionists alike. Then began the UJA's ever increasing pro-Zionist shift, conceiving of Israel as a haven for survival of the remnants of the tortured people. It would seem that the JDC, the UJA, and the Federations – all moved along a path similar to that followed by Joseph Schwartz.[28]

Actually, the overwhelming majority of the Jewish community was in a similar mood, and it responded with unprecedented feats of fundraising ($100,000,000 in 1946, $150,000,000 in 1947, over $200,000,000 in 1948). As Jonathan Woocher has observed, the UJA billed these as years of "survival" and of "destiny," and they were unlike any which Jews had known in modern memory. A combination of anxiety and exhilaration attended the rebirth of the Jewish state. Israel became the community's focus for the survivalist impulse, interwoven as it was with deep Jewish pride.[29]

In conclusion, during the 1930s and the 1940s survivalism emerged as a potent component of American Jewish ideology. In Zionism this process was evident in the change in the thinking of veteran Zionist leaders as well as in the advance of leaders and personalities who disregarded or down played the mission rationale. Non-Zionist organizations which, under the impact of the Nazi attempt to destroy the Jewish people, gradually adopted Zionism, conceived of Jewish Palestine chiefly as a haven and a means for Jewish survival. Undoubtedly, the general trend in Zionism was that of the decline of "missionism" and the strengthening of survival-oriented concepts.

III

The historic transformation discussed in the previous section raises the question whether the mission motif entirely vanished from American Zionist ideology. After all, the circumstances in America – those factors which originally gave birth to mission-oriented Zionism – did not undergo any fundamental change during the years.

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[28]Kaufman, *Non-Zionists*, pp. 145-146; Jonathan S. Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (Bloomington: 1986), chap. 2.
[29]*Ibid.*, pp. 51, 76-80.

We should indicate at the outset that some of the veteran expounders of "missionism" adhered to their original attitude throughout and after World War II. A prominent example is Horace Kallen who lived long enough to visit the young State of Israel. Subsequently he wrote a lengthy book of analyses and reflections. Its concluding chapter is aptly entitled "The End-Time and Tomorrow," as it is permeated with the author's passion to see the incarnation of Zionism, namely the State of Israel, committed to pursue higher goals than that of mere survival. Israel, Kallen deeply felt, is committed by its prophetic past as well as by its vision – both embodied in the Declaration of Independence – to the highest values of freedom, justice and peace. "Be the outcome of their [the Israelis'] struggle [toward End-Time] what it may," he concluded, Israel "presently discloses an ethos of valor and devotion which seems to me a moving testimony to what is most hopefully human in mankind's struggle for its own humanity."[30]

In 1959, a year after Kallen had published his book on Israel, appeared Bernard A. Rosenblatt's *The American Bridge to the Israel Commonwealth* "Dedicated to the memory of the great American jurist, Louis D. Brandeis, who personified the social ideals of American Zionism." Rosenblatt, the avowed mission Zionist, typically opened his book with the following statement: "Throughout history, justice has been the keynote of the Hebraic character – and the striving for social justice is the major theme in the message of the Hebrew prophets. It is, therefore, only reasonable to assume that the new state of Israel will continue the golden thread of Jewish history in the great struggle for justice among men." The social theorist stressed his hope that Israel would become a "light unto the nations"; and toward the end of the book he expressed his trust that "Once the Hebraic spirit of social justice – so evident both in the biblical period of Jewish history and in the days of the Maccabean Revival – is permitted the expression of its genius in social legislation, we may expect a new message from Zion of worldwide significance." Rosenblatt summed up that "Israel, restored once more to its Homeland, will pick up again the thread of its history and continue its allotted task in striving for social justice among men and nations."[31]

Conspicuous mission-attuned Zionism still survived in certain circles of religious Zionism as well. We have seen how intensive was the mission motif among Conservative Zionist leaders of the pre-First World War period; that universalist idealism of Morais, Solis-Cohen

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[30]Horace M. Kallen, *Utopians at Bay* (New York: 1958), pp. 289-290.

[31]Bernard A. Rosenblatt, *The American Bridge to the Israel Commonwealth* (New York: 1959), pp. xi, xviii, 128.

and Mendes did not vanish into thin air. Their heritage was eminently continued by Conservative rabbi and educator Louis Finkelstein. A longtime president and chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (1940-1972), Finkelstein contributed some significant articles to *New Palestine*. In one article in the summer of 1943, he assigned to Zionism (among other things) the task of teaching the world to accept diversity and to tolerate minorities. The fulfillment of Zionism was an essential service in the achievement of peace, he claimed, elevating that argument to a lofty sphere: "The role of Palestine as the instrument of both the unification of man and eradication of neo-paganism makes the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Holy Land a moral imperative, requiring of all men, but especially of Jews, sacrifices and understanding...." Judaism in New Palestine, vehemently suggested Finkelstein, is "an effective means for human unification." The Zionist enterprise was thus interpreted and justified in cosmic terms, "as a means of communion with God and of service to mankind."[32]

When this article was published, news of the Holocaust had already reached America for about a year. Another long dark year of continuing Nazi destruction of the Jewish people did not change the thrust of Finkelstein's Zionism: he still conceived the Jews' building a home for themselves in terms of a universal mission. In an article he published in the autumn of 1944 in the same Zionist journal, rabbi Finkelstein pointedly italicized one sentence: *"We have failed to make the world understand that we Zionists consider the establishment of a Jewish Palestine indispensible to a reformation of world culture as well as one of the major expressions of the reformation itself."* Through this basic tenet, he tried to make Zionism conform to "the basic conception of Judaism as a ministry and a service...[the belief] that the Jews are *segulah*," a people appointed for special service to God and mankind.[33]

Since the early 1940s, Hadassah espoused a more militant Zionism than in the years of Henrietta Szold's and Irma Lindheim's leadership. Under the presidencies of Judith Epstein (1943-47) and Rose Halprin (1947-52), the organization shifted away from the bi-national political solution to Palestine in which it had evinced considerable interest. Still, Hadassah members and leaders persistently hoped that the Jewish state would not provide a solution solely for problems of Jewish nationalism but would convey some universal message. Early in

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[32]Louis Finkelstein, *Reflections on Judaism, Zionism, and Enduring Peace* (pamphlet reprinted from *New Palestine*, May 21, 1943).

[33]*Idem*, "Zionism and World Culture," *New Palestine*, XXXIV, no. 23 (September 15, 1944), p. 506.

1948, in expectation of the establishment of Israel, *Hadassah Newsletter's* editorial stated: "[We] believe that the Jewish State will have a significant and worthy contribution to make to the progress of civilization, West and East. We consider that the Jewish State is dedicated to the ideals of justice, equality, security, and peace. We believe that the Yishuv does and will continue to embody the best ideals of the Jewish and human traditions."[34]

A year after the State of Israel had been proclaimed Rose Halprin wrote from Jerusalem: "To be in Jerusalem for the celebration of the first anniversary of the independence of Israel is to share in a sense of the jubilation and glory of all men liberated from bondage, since the beginning of the world." And a solemn editorial, entitled "We Herewith Pledge," declared that the Israelis were bearers of a holy civilization and to the members of Hadassah "has given the divine experience to helping to create an instrument of human salvation." The editorial went on to praise Israel for granting equal rights and equal opportunities to all of its citizens, and hence "provides to its Jewish citizens the opportunity to contribute to the progress of human civilization as Jews, as members of the majority people in their country, eager to integrate the morality of their heritage into the making of the future." The Hadassah publication then concluded:

> This is our relationship to the Jews of Israel, a partnership in a common enterprise for the furtherance of human brotherhood. With them and through them we shall try to extend the frontier of the human spirit beyond rigid geographical boundaries. We, Jews of America, fortunate possessors of two civilizations, that of our ancient people and that of our modern progressive democracy, dedicate ourselves to the extension of the democratic way of life, to every corner where exploitation and injustice still exist.[35]

What was the attitude of the ZOA, the conspicuously ideological organization in American Zionism? Upon the proclamation of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, the *New Palestine* published a comprehensive and festive editorial essay. Entitled "Long Live the Republic of Israel," the editorial sensitively reflected the ideological strains in the leading organ of the American Zionist movement.

The article's *leit motif* undoubtedly was survivalist – Israel had come into existence in order to fulfill Amos' prophecy: "On that day I will re-establish the fallen Tabernacle of David and they shall not any more be uprooted from their land." Indeed, offering a home for the

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[34]*Hadassah Newsletter*, vol. 28, no. 4 (January 1948), p. 2.
[35]*Ibid.*, vol. 29, no. 9 (May 1949), p. 2.

persecuted people was, according to the *New Palestine*, the essence of the historic event:

> Eighty generations and multiplied millions of Jewish martyrs have prayed for eighteen hundred long years for this miracle to become a reality. Now their spirit comes to life to hail the new Yishuv. A few short years ago six million of Europe's finest men and women were brutally slain because they were Jews. They were slain merely because they were the descendants of the glorious prophets of Israel. They died because in an hour of need, there was no Jewish State to give them sanctuary. Today the spirit of these martyrs blesses the builders of the new Yishuv. And they warn us that never again shall Israel be without homeland.[36]

However, this survivalist justification was not an exclusive one; a strong mission strain ran all through the proclamation. Support for the new state could be rendered by all Americans – gentiles and Jews alike – who shared a common heritage:

> We American Zionists greet the undaunted defenders of the Yishuv. America was founded by men who loved the Hebrew Bible and whose love of liberty was nurtured by the words of Jewish prophets. A Jew stood by the side of Columbus when he first saw the New World. Throughout its history, Jews have helped build America.
>
> We American Zionists know that Zionism is good Americanism. We know that the new Jewish State will promote the American ideals of freedom, peace and prosperity, because these concepts stem from the ancient Jewish concepts.

The authors (it seems that this historic editorial was written by several hands) loftily declared that "In an age beset with turmoil and destruction, a Jewish State once again rises to afford a suffering humanity the old ever-needed Jewish message of hope, justice, freedom and peace for all men." And the continuation (where the authors underlined the *American* component of their "American Zionism") similarly stated: "We Americans have labored for Zionism. Today we are grateful to our government and the other nations of the world for their recognition of the new Jewish State. We know that the new Jewish State will be a benediction to all mankind."

On the whole, the ideological essay somehow *synthesized* survivalism and missionism. Israel epitomized the right of the Jewish people to exist; the State's existence thus became a goal unto itself. At the same time, though, the Jewish state had by nature a humanistic message to convey to the rest of the nations. The tortured people now saved, loyal to its historic calling, now goes out to redeem the world.

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[36]An Editorial, "Long Live the Republic of Israel," *New Palestine*, XXXVIII, no. 18 (May 18, 1948), p. 4; this is the source for the following quotes.

Change and continuity in American Zionist ideology were again demonstrated two months later in the 51st ZOA convention. This gathering, which referred back to the 21st convention, eventually took on an instructive historical dimension. As afore-mentioned, in June 1918, in the wake of the Balfour Declaration, the ZOA had adopted with missionist zeal the very progressive Pittsburgh Program. Now in July 1948, some delegates accused the leadership of dragging the ZOA away from that grand commitment. The leadership – that is, Emanuel Neumann, Abba Hillel Silver and Daniel Frisch (ZOA vice president and president after Neumann) – then avowed loyalty to the Pittsburgh Program and brought it to the floor for confirmation. In a "roaring approval," the delegates reaffirmed the Program. It seems, however, that both the missionist zeal of the young movement and the earnest manner in which it had formerly deliberated upon the details of the ideal society were missing. Undoubtedly, the delegates of 1948 expressed pride and trust that young Israel would continue to be a democratic and exemplary society; undoubtedly, also, they hoped that the Jewish state would bear some ennobling message to devastated post-war humanity. But the thrust of the 51st convention, and understandably so, was that the very existence of the Jewish state was the paramount element; and that in virtue of the State of Israel's survival by itself – benefit and progress were stored for all.[37]

For the ZOA of 1948, then, social and humanistic tenets were no more the ultimate values attesting to the merit of the whole enterprise. Rather, the social-ethical values had now been integrated into the nationalist endeavor.

In the Conservative and Reconstructionist trends a similar kind of synthesis became predominant, prominently expressed by Mordecai M. Kaplan. Known for his stubborn rejection of the chosen people concept, by the same token he did not tend to see the Jewish state as the bearer of a message to the world. Kaplan's "vocation idea" meant that the Jewish people was expected to mold a society intimately linked with Jewish heritage and responsive to inner Jewish needs. Mordecai Kaplan first and foremost conceived Zionism as aspiring to the two classic goals – security for the Jews and revival of Judaism. These twin goals, especially the all-embracing renaissance of Jewish civilization, were at the core of his philosophy. Kaplan hoped for the achievement of these goals by a Zionist movement highly committed to world Jewry's unity. To be sure, Kaplan did refer to Zionism as a "social instrument" influential beyond Jewry and Judaism; and he called the Zionist movement to embrace "a purpose or meaning to Jewish life that is of

[37]*New Palestine*, XXXVIII, no. 22 (July 23, 1948), esp. pp. 1-5.

universal import because of its idealistic, cosmic, spiritual or religious character." But when he was instrumental in drafting a definitive formulation of "Zionism's Aims" he relegated the mission element to the last place, only rather elusively implying its role. It is worthwhile to bring in full the relevant section of the report of the Commission on Zionist Ideology he headed at the 1958 ZOA convention:

Zionism should pursue the following aims:

1. It should promulgate and translate into action the supreme importance of the centrality of the State of Israel to the survival and spiritual enhancement of the Jewish People throughout the world.
2. It should help to bring about the reaffirmation and reconstitution of world Jewry as a religio-ethnic, transnational People, united by a common history and a common spiritual destiny.
3. It should develop in the Diaspora, to the maximum degree, the creative potentialities of Jewish life, culture and religion.
4. It should foster in the Jewish community in Israel and in all Jewish communities in the Diaspora a sense of partnership and mutual responsibility in the common endeavor to have the Jewish people throughout the world figure as an indispensable factor in the civilization of mankind.[38]

Undoubtedly, Mordecai Kaplan's attitude was more typical of mainstream American Zionism than, say, that of Louis Finkelstein. To the vast majority of American Zionists, the survival of a Jewish state, Jewish civilization, and Jewish solidarity were objectives of the highest priority, especially when the full extent of the Holocaust began to sink in.

IV

We have already discussed the survivalist orientation of new pro-Zionist organizations such as B'nai B'rith and the Federations. In this final section we will briefly re-examine the "Zionization process" in order to have, by a way of conclusion, a richer and more historically balanced picture.

Significantly, the Zionization of Reform Judaism occurred without that movement's relinquishing the mission ideal. The Columbus Platform adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis

[38]Arnold M. Eisen, *The Chosen People in America: A Study of Jewish Religious Ideology* (Bloomington: 1983), chap. 4; Mordecai M. Kaplan, *A New Zionism* (New York: 1959), pp. 178, 187.

(CCAR) in 1937, largely signifying the beginning of the pro-Zionist turn of Reform, included an explicit plank which reaffirmed the movement's commitment to a universal mission. The shift away from anti-Zionism was due in part to the influence of Felix A. Levy (president of the CCAR during 1935-7) who recommended Zionism as associated with and even serviceable to the grand mission idea. An enlightened Jewish Palestine, argued Levy, would best help to spread the universal message all around the world.[39]

Felix Levy's argumentation to win Reform Jews for Zionism was demonstrated in 1943 in the historic debate on the question of "Are Zionism and Reform Judaism Incompatible?" Levy forcefully led the group that replied in the negative, that Zionism and Reform were not incompatible. "Why must we Jews contrast people and religion, land and universalistic idea?" he asked and himself supplied the answer: "They are supplementary and not antithetic. The Jew is a universalist because of the history of Palestine as he is a man because he is a son of Israel...." As Americans, he argued, "we ought to be glad that we can give less fortunately situated brethren an opportunity to go to Palestine and through it serve a democratic ideal." And to this he added a key statement: "I personally have more confidence that we Jews can be a pattern people to the nations as a commonwealth in Palestine, than we can as a religious denomination here and elsewhere outside the ancient borders of our people."[40]

The actual social-democratic accomplishments of the Yishuv served to sustain Levy's thesis that "Palestine too can help Israel in the performance of its mission to come nearer to God and brotherhood":

> If a state in Palestine or belief in it impedes the realization of these ideals, brotherhood, collective mankind and high ethical personality, we have a right to oppose it. I fail, however, to see any obstacles to the consummation of these hopes in a commonwealth of our own; rather do I see added support, increased opportunity for spreading brotherhood in a Jewish land living under Jewish ideals and inspired as it is and must growingly continue to be by the principles of our faith in God and in man....
>
> Palestine is a hopeful token of the very things all of us seek...[in Palestine] the old spirit of prophet and sages lives again in pristine vigor and their words and teaching are far better understood than we

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[39]"Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism," in Isaac E. Marcuson, ed., *CCAR 48th Annual Convention, May 25-30, 1937, Columbus, Ohio*, vol. XLVII (Philadelphia: 1937), pp. 97-100, see esp. pp. 99-100; Sefton D. Temkin, ed., *His Own Torah: Felix A. Levy Memorial Volume* (New York: 1969), esp. pp. 19-43.

[40]*Are Zionism and Reform Judaism Incompatible? Papers Read at Convention of the CCAR, June 24, 1943, New York, N.Y.*, [Philadelphia: 1943], pp. 16-17, 22.

> away from the background of our culture can ever hope to grasp them. The people of Israel lives and is ordering its life as Israel should...in Palestine, *Halutzim* have not only made the desert to flower like a garden, but have made a way for the Lord in the erstwhile wilderness....[41]

Levy's attitude prevailed, and not in that debate alone. The whole course of Reform's acceptance of Zionism was associated with social undertones. To be sure, the intensification of nationalist Jewish affirmation and solidarity, against the background of Nazism's efforts to annihilate the Jewish people and conquer the world, was the pivot of Reform's Zionization; but, evidently, the process did not take place along strictly survivalist lines. Even the much belated platform adopted by the Reform movement in 1962 in San Francisco, which replaced the Columbus Platform, still retained an obvious mission element.[42]

True, in the case of B'nai B'rith's Zionization, the mission rationale was virtually absent. As I suggested the order's pro-Zionism, shaped under the harsh impact of Nazism and the Holocaust, was basically survival-oriented. It is important to note though that some factors keenly worked to contribute an enlightened socio-political dimension to B'nai B'rith's conception of the State of Israel. First, the order was very sensitive to the problem of dual loyalty and tended to solve it by claiming that the Jewish state would fulfill the loftiest American ideals. This idea, persistently forwarded, played a key role in the development of B'nai B'rith. The other factor that worked toward the same result was its service function which was synonymous with humanitarian concern. The two combined to produce a state of mind that inclined to interweave the survivalist urge with deep social responsibility. Consequently, using both democratic and social criteria, B'nai B'rith conceived the Zionist undertaking in Palestine to be a huge sheltering enterprise that had to respond to a multitude of refugees' needs and to help restore those masses to dignified and useful citizenship in a democratic society.[43]

The Federations' evolving kind of pro-Zionism was significantly attuned beyond mere survivalism. Leaders of the Federations envisaged

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[41]*Ibid.*, pp. 23-28.

[42]For background see, Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, pp. 326-334, 348-352; Eliot L. Stevens, ed., *CCAR 87th Annual Convention, June 21-24, San Francisco, Cal.*, vol. LXXXVI (New York: 1977), pp. 177-178.

[43]See discussion and conclusions of Allon Gal's, "Israel in the Mind of B'nai B'rith (1938-1948)," *American Jewish History*, vol. LXXVII, no. 4 (June 1988), pp. 554-571.

an Israel cherishing the core values of Judaism such as *tzedakah*. And they saw the Jewish state as representing a consummation of America's own values of democracy and equal opportunity. Actually, the Federations' ideology was so steeped in American values ("Americaness" *a la* Woocher) that it adopted the ideal of an American mission as a Jewish virtue to be pursued by the Jewish people. Thus, survivalism in the prevalent civil religion of the Federations often implied that both American Jewry and Israel were committed to the advancement of a model society.[44]

Hence, for the Federations, whose philanthropical endeavor became more and more intertwined with pro-Zionism (or philo-Israelism), Jewish survival carried some message to the world. They aspired to make Jewish solidarity and continuity meaningful for society at large too. Judaism and Americanism, survivalism and a moderate missionist inclination – all were mingled in the Federations' rationale.

Thus, generally speaking, though the nationalist ideology of the new pro-Zionists in the United States was shaped under the impact of the Holocaust, it was not synonymous with sheer survivalism. Many former non-Zionists were very highly sensitive to the problem of dual loyalty; and they now eagerly looked forward to a sovereign state whose social developments would attest the best values of the American people. Moreover, having an obvious vested interest in a democratic and tolerant America, they desired Israel to be ardently loyal to these very tenets. Significant circles of the new pro-Zionists, then, possessed the potential (at least at the leadership level) even to revive and sustain the attenuated universal mission legacy of the traditional American Zionist movement.

[44]Woocher, *Sacred Survival*, chap. 3.

Part Sixteen
THE MODERN AGE: LITERATURE

48

Paradise Lost as a Midrash on the Biblical Bride of God

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The biblical Song of Solomon, whose love songs have been interpreted as an allegory for the relationship between God and his people by Jewish and Christian exegetes alike, has been a particular favorite of English poets in every century.[1] Of all the English poets who have used the imagery of the Song, however, none brought to the poetic endeavor the extensive knowledge and love of the Hebrew Bible and the uniquely synthesizing poetic consciousness of John Milton. Milton's use of biblical imagery was not episodic: on the contrary, he drew on the exegetical tradition which linked the Song to allegorical female figures in the Hebrew prophets and wisdom literature to create his own *midrash* on a network of Biblical passages. This essay follows two major patterns of biblical allusion – the cosmic marital metaphor and the moral pastoral – through the poetry of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, focusing on the Song of Solomon and related biblical imagery.

[1]For general discussion of the Song of Solomon in English poetry, see: Lily B. Campbell, *Divine Poetry and Drama in 16th Century England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959); Harold Fisch, *Jerusalem and Albion: The Hebraic Factor in Seventeenth Century Poetry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964); Stanley Stewart, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in Seventeenth Century Poetry* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1966); Murray Roston, *Prophet and Poet: The Bible and the Growth of Romanticism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965); Elinor S. Shaffer, *"Kubla Kaan" and the Fall of Jerusalem: The Mythological School in Biblical Criticism and Secular Literature, 1770-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

Milton uses these biblical allusions to introduce important motifs into the poem long before their centrality becomes evident. They emphasize and/or play counterpoint to the action as it proceeds, and blend in the poem's climaxes and crescendos in stunning polyphony. The themes begun early in the poem still sound, dissonant but recognizable, in the harsh images of the last two books. They echo sadly in the hushed music of the poem's end. Certainly the reader is not required to recognize every biblical allusion in order to respond to *Paradise Lost*, which is accessible on many levels and in many ways. However, the ethos and the imagery of the Hebrew Bible were a profound influence on Milton's poem, and our awareness of them enriches our understanding of the poem immeasurably.

Milton's Use of Biblical Motifs

Milton called the Song a "divine pastoral."[2] Indeed, the pastoral vision of Paradise Lost is biblical rather than classical[3] or, as Knott claims, radically original,[4] and the Song of Solomon is a key to its significance. The Song's lush landscapes tied it to the symbolism of the biblical pastoral, which made graphic earthly blessing and fruition a symbol of God's immediacy and love, his intimate workings in the history of the individual and the world. According to biblical behavioral prescriptions – and according to *Paradise Lost* – the man who lived in the shadow of God's love, like the Shulamite, would flourish like a watered garden. If the bridegroom symbolized God, then the Shulamite was the symbolic bride of God. She was thematically linked to the figure of Wisdom in Proverbs, who lives with and delights God as he creates the world, and to the daughter of Jerusalem, who followed God lovingly through the wilderness when he brought

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[2]John Milton, *Reason of Church Government Urged, Student's Milton*, ed. Frank Allen Patterson (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957), p. 525. All quotations from Milton's poetry and prose will be taken from this edition.

[3]The moral seriousness of Milton's pastoral vision is in fact at odds with the *locus amoenus* of the classical pastoral. Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, *The Green Cabinet: Theocritus and the European Pastoral Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), explains that the aristocratic idleness and freedom which are major facets of Theocritus' pastoral practically require that love be trivialized. The kind of love which preoccupies and elevates heart, mind, and soul is antithetical to "the Epicurean notion of *hedone katastematike* (tranquil joy)." Thus, the "great preoccupation with pure love and chastity, which comes to be so important in the pastoral drama of the Renaissance, does not exist in Theocritus, or for that matter, Virgil" (pp. 69-85).

[4]John R. Knott, Jr., *Milton's Pastoral Vision: An Approach to Paradise Lost* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

her out of Egypt, but betrayed God by seeking other lovers in the promised land, as the Hebrew prophets reported.

Milton – like many rabbinical and ecclesiastical commentators – treated the Hebrew Bible as an interlocking body of works.[5] Within *Paradise Lost*, "Espoused Eve," Adam's "Fair Consort" is linked to several symbolic biblical women: to the Shulamite; to the prophetic Jerusalem or "daughter of Zion," God's faithful fiance but idolatrous wife, and to the forlorn and desolate Jerusalem, the exiled princess; to Proverbial Wisdom, both in her transcendent form as the female emanation of Godhead and her earthly incarnation as the energetic and virtuous wife; and to Wisdom's nemesis, Lady Folly, the adulteress whose "subtle" tongue lures the unwary to deadly "solace."[6]

Eve slips in and out of the roles of the mystic Shulamite, the ravishing Wisdom-wife, the deadly seductress Folly, the grieving and penitent Jerusalem. Her actions are weighted with allusions to the allegorical women of the Old Testament – and through them to the Old Testament pastoral vision which unites man and wife, man and God,

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[5]For related insights on Milton's debt to the Hebrew Bible and to rabbinic tradition, see J. B. Broadbent, *Poetic Love* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1964); Harold Fisch, "Hebraic Style and Motifs in *Paradise Lost*," *Language and Style in Milton*, eds. Ronald D. Emma and John T. Shawcross (New York: F. Ungar, 1967); Stanley Eugene Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (London: Macmillan, 1967); Harris Francis Fletcher, *Milton's Rabbinical Readings* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1967); Northrop Frye, "Notes for a Commentary on Milton," *The Divine Vision*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1957) and *The Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton's Epics* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1965); John Halkett, *Milton and the Idea of Matrimony* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970); Burton O. Kurth, *Milton and Christian Heroism: Biblical Epic Themes and Forms in Seventeenth-Century England* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966); Michael Lieb, *The Dialectics of Creation: Patterns of Birth and Regeneration in Paradise Lost* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Mass. Press, 1970); Peter Lindenbaum, "Lovemaking in Milton's Paradise," *Milton Studies 7* (1975); William G. Madsen, "The Idea of Nature in Milton's Poetry," *Three Studies in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958) and *From Shadowy Types to Truth: Studies in Milton's Symbolism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958); Jason P. Rosenblatt, "The Mosaic Voice in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies 7* (1975); James H. Sims, *The Bible in Milton's Epics* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1962); Arnold Stein, *Answerable Style: Essays on Paradise Lost* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1953); and Stanley Stewart, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and the Image in Seventeenth Century Poetry* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin, 1966).

[6]Unless otherwise specified, biblical references use the language of the King James Version of the Hebrew Bible.

people and land in emphatically earthly (but not earth-bound) joy, fruition, and peace.[7]

The reader's first view of Eden – seen through Satan's eyes – is a rich mosaic of allusions to the Song of Solomon and its exegesis and to the deflowering of the garden-woman which will follow. Satan enters Eden and pursues Eve in the night, a false and obscene parody of the bridegroom who comes to woo the Shulamite in the Song of Solomon. Adam wakes Eve in the morning with the song of the true bridegroom, directly culled from the biblical prototype. Eve, unfallen, in loving Adam loves the "God in him" (IV:329) as well. However, when Satan seduces her into eating the forbidden fruit, she immediately falls into the sins of idolatry and lasciviousness, just as the unfaithful wives described by the Hebrew prophets symbolized the Jewish people's idolatrous unfaithfulness to their God. After worshipping the forbidden tree, Eve goes off to seduce Adam into a similar sin, and approaches him with words closely recalling the proverbial adulteress whose honied words lead directly to hell.

It is no accident that when Milton calls "wedded love" the "Perpetual Fountain of Domestic Sweets,/ Whose bed is undefil'd and chast," he calls on the "Patriarchs" for evidence that "God declares" true married love "pure" (IV:750-762). Despite Milton's evident hostility toward certain aspects of Old Testament law, it is in Old Testament poetry that he finds the truest expression of his attitudes toward sexuality. The land-as-woman image, flowering and fruitful when faithful, desolate when deflowered by idolatry, is as ubiquitous in the Hebrew Bible as it is in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton's Eden blossoms around a spring which is both "shut up" and a "flowing" nourisher of "gardens" (IV:223-231). The fountain is a frequent motif in the Hebrew poetry which Milton drew on for his poem. The Shulamite, for example, is called "a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (4:12) and also, somewhat contradictorally, "a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon" (4:15). Jeremiah, denouncing the idolatry which has made the "land desolate" and has turned the Jews into a "degenerate plant...a strange

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[7]Milton frequently alludes in *Paradise Lost* not only to the biblical texts themselves, but also to Jewish and especially Christian interpretations of the texts. It is not within the scope of this essay to explore the way in which Milton interweaves biblical texts and their exegesis within his poetry, but a much fuller exploration of this topic can be found in Sylvia Barack Fishman, *The Watered Garden and the Bride of God: Patterns of Biblical Imagery in Poems of Spenser, Milton, and Blake*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation English Literature, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, May, 1980.

vine," calls God "the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah:2). Both sources are relevant to the garden-as-woman imagery of Paradise Lost. Before she falls, Eve too is both a garden and a fountain of gardens, like the Shulamite. Her status as such depends on her remaining both "shut up" and "flowing" like the Shulamite, that is, both chaste and loving, the beneficiary and the symbol of the "Perpetual Fountain of Domestic Sweets."

The Garden-Woman and the Topography of Eden

As biblical allegorical female and as garden-woman, Eve in her person and in her adventures is an intrinsic part of Milton's intensely biblical pastoral vision. Like the Shulamite, Eve resembles a fragrant enclosed garden – and the fragrant enclosed garden of Eden resembles Eve. The description of the approach to paradise, for example, contains a series of images recalling the garden and woman safely enclosed by walls of trees:

> ...overhead up grew
> Insuperable higth of loftiest shade,
> Cedar, and Pine, and Firr, and branching Palm
>
> ...Yet higher then that Wall a circling row
> Of goodliest trees.... (IV:137-147)

Similarly, the Shulamite's lover and brothers speak of her as an untouched garden, fenced in with wall upon wall (Song of Solomon 7:8; 1:17; 8:9). The Shulamite complacently tells her brother that she needs no external safeguards, that love is her protection (8:10). But not all the "Insuperable higth" of wooded walls will save Eve when she betrays Adam's – and God's – trust and love.

Milton prepares the reader for Eve's beauty and sweetness – while warning of her ultimate frailty – in a continuing group of allusions to the garden imagery of the Song. We smell the fragrances of Eden, and momentarily forget that our perceptions are provided by Milton's Satan, as he breaches the garden's defenses:

> ...now gentle gales
> Fanning thir odoriferous wings dispense
> Native perfumes....
>
> North-East windes blow
> Sabean Odours from the spicie shoare.... (IV:137-162)

This striking emphasis on fragrance owes much to the Song, which is punctuated by the repeated motif of spicy, fruity, and enticing odors

blown by winds or emanating from the beloved, as when the Shulamite pleads, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices therof may flow out" (4:16).[8]

Together with Milton's description of the "mantling Vine" which "Layes forth her purple Grape, and gently creeps,/ Luxuriant" (IV:258-260), the fruit which "Hung amiable" (250) recalls the lover's praise of the Shulamite:

> How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights.
> This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
> and thy breasts to clustures of grapes.
> I said, 'I will climb up into the palm-tree,
> I will take hold of the boughs thereof;
> and let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine,
> and the smell of thy nose like apples.' (7:7-9)

The imagery of woman as fruited tree – and fruited tree as symbol of the woman – also foreshadows the repeated insinuation that Eve's sexuality, symbolized by her "fruit of fairest colours...Ruddie and Gold" (IX:577-578), turns Satan into a false bridegroom and increases his motivation to destroy the human couple. It presages the "bough of fairest fruit" (IX:851) which an intoxicated Eve will bring to her yet unfallen spouse. Milton's use of such physical imagery, often in conjunction with the presence of a stranger in the garden, divides the reader between pleasure in the poetry and anxiety for Eve's safety. The tension of dual vision is important to Milton's poetic technique, and the dramatic irony becomes more pronounced as Satan nears his goal.

Milton's Eden, planted and carefully watched by the "Sovran Planter," embodies a biblical conviction that man's moral choices effect real changes in history, and that history, not just the immutable mutability of the natural world, is an expression of divine will. Even as we approach Eden along with Satan, Milton enriches our introductions to the garden with the emblematic images of crown and wilderness. Paradise, which "Crowns" Eden, prefigures the protected love which Adam calls the "Crown of all our bliss" (IV:728). The symbolic resonance of the word crown is diametrically opposed to that of the word wilderness: Satan ascends into Eden to bring the wilderness of

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[8]Pretty ladies, of course, are often described as sweet-smelling, but such preeminence of fragrance is unusual in classical and English pastoral poetry, and the constant use of the adjective "spicie" is especially so. The Song, in contrast, owes much of its sensuality to the repeated motif of garden (bodily) odors. See 1:3; 1:12-14; 2:13; 2:17; 3:6; 4:6; 4:10; 4:11; 4:13-14; 4:16; 5:1; 5:5; 5:13; 6:2; 7:9; 7:14; 8:14.

himself into the years – the "enclosure green" – of Adam and Eve. As Satan climbs into Eden, Milton has already alluded to his victory and to his ultimate defeat.

Bridegrooms True and False

Satan begins his career as a usurping "bridegroom" by illegally entering another man's garden. Despite all precautions, Satan, disdaining the "cross-barr'd" door of paradise, "In at the window climbes" (IV:1090-91). He is the obverse figure of Solomon, who "standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice" (2:9). Eve, who lives in "simplicitie and spotless innocence" and is the "fairest of her Daughters" (IV:318, 323) is like the Shulamite who is praised for being "all fair...there is no spot in thee" (4:7) and is the "fairest among women" (6:1).

Satan in Milton's poem is plunged into the fires of sexual jealousy: he witnesses the innocent sexuality of Adam and Eve in the vernal bower enjoying the "rites, Mysterious of connubial Love" (IV:742-743) and "inbraceing" sleep, while "on thir naked limbs the flourie roof/ Showrd Roses." Eve herself is the shady "Bower," "sacred and sequestered." The nuptial bower and the bride are beautiful, fragrant, fertile, and "fenc'd up" by faithful but earthly love. Adam and Eve's love is physical and spiritual, like that of the lovers in the Song of Solomon. When Adam enters the bower and Eve, their union is both a celebration of virtuous earthly love and a symbol of the love of God for man.

Satan goes searching through the night in hopes of seducing Eve, who is both Adam's sister – since they have the same father – his daughter, and his bride. She corresponds to the Shulamite, whom Solomon symbolically calls, "My sister, my spouse." Satan, of course, has a daughter-bride back home, Lady Sin, but she lives in the garden's sterile parody. Satan is thus, appropriately, an adulterer as well as a false, usurping bridegroom.

As Satan, the demonic bridegroom, searches for Eve, the guardian angels, in turn, "Search through this Garden, leav unsearcht no nook" (IV:789-90) for Satan. We think of the bride of the Song, awoken from her bed at midnight, searching down each street, approaching the watchmen and asking after her beloved. The angels are told to "seise fast, and hither bring" whomever they will "find" (IV:796), just as the Shulamite says, "I found him...I held him, and would not let him go" (3:4).

Milton reminds the reader of Adam's and Eve's bliss, soon to be destroyed, by having Adam rouse Eve with a rendition of the bridegroom's call to awakening in the Song. Adam whispers to Eve:

> Awake
> My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
> Heav'ns last best gift, my ever new delight,
> Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field
> Calls us, we lose the prime, to mark how spring
> Our tended Plants, how blows the Citron Grove,
> What drops the Myrrhe, & what the balmie Reed,
> How nature paints her colours, how the Bee
> Sits on the Bloom extracting liquid sweet. (V:16-25)

Just as the "beloved" calls to the Shulamite:

> Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
> For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
> The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing
> of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle
> is heard in our land;
> The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
> and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.
> Arise, my love, my fair one and come away. (2:10-13)

Milton is echoing not only Solomon's famous song of awakening, but his invitation to horticultural activity as well:

> Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field....
> Let us get up early to the vineyards;
> Let us see if the vine flourish,
> whether the tender grape appear,
> and the pomegranates bud forth.... (7:11-12)

The "Myrrhe" which "drops" in Adam's "fresh field" alludes to the myrrh-dropping hands of the biblical bride (5:5) and the myrrh-dropping, beflowered lips of the bridegroom (5:13).

When Adam calls to Eve, he awakens her to the task of tending to the garden, and to the garden of themselves as well. Horticulture has sexual, sacramental, and moral meanings in both rabbinical and Christian exegetical interpretations of the Song of Solomon. When Solomon, like Adam, awakens his bride and tells her that "the time of singing is come," his words, *ait hazamir hegeah*, says the *Midrash*, can

be translated as "the time of pruning is come."[9] Pruning is an important activity in Milton's Eden, and it is tied into the relationship of the lovers to each other, as well as to the garden. Adam has already made the necessity for pruning clear to Eve (IV:623-630). Lieb points out that Adam and Eve imitate the "Sovran Planter" when they "teach the vine how to wind her "tendrils" into fruitful, rather than "Fruitless imbraces," and thus cause a "wedding to occur between plant and plant," promoting "a fruitful growth through sexual union and a creative ordering of what is disordered as God creates life from Chaos."[10] Pruning, as an aspect of lovemaking as well as form of service to and imitation of God, is a sacred activity in the garden and meant to be shared only by the true bridegroom with his fair bride.

Eve, however, is called to rise in her dream-vision by the false bridegroom Satan as well. Satan fools the sleeping Eve by mimicking Adam's voice in a Petrarchan parody of Adam's biblical morning song:

> ...one call'd me forth to walk
> With gentle voice, I thought it thine: it said
> Why sleepst thou Eve? now is the pleasant time,
> The cool, the silent, save where silence yields
> To the night-warbling Bird, that now awake
> Tunes his love-labored song....

The moon's light, says Satan, is "pleasing" and "Shadowie." Eve herself, he flatters, is "Nature's desire,/ In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment/ attracted by thy beauty" (V:36-47). Eve cannot resist such universal admiration. Like the Shulamite who is woken at night and goes searching for her beloved:

> I sleep, but my heart waketh:
> it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,
> Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled;
> for my head is filled with dew,
> and my locks with the drops of the night. (5:2)

> I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets,
> and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
> I sought him, but I found him not. (3:2)

Eve also

> rose as at thy call, but found thee not;

[9]Yitzhak I. Broch, *The Song of Songs as echoed in its Midrash* (New York: Philipp Feldheim, Inc., 1968), pp. 46-47.
[10]Lieb, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

To find thee I directed then my walk;
And on, methought, alone I pass'd through ways.... (V:48-50)

Who should she find at the Tree but a creature who, like the dewy-locked beloved of the Song, seems to have "dewie locks: which "distill'd ambrosia" (V:55-56). Satan takes the "wondring" Eve into a flying dream, and then, like the bridegroom of the Song, disappears.

Despite Eve's ominous dream, she and Adam are given intellectual tools with which to withstand the temptation. There is, first of all, the ritual of pruning:

Then when fair Morning first smiles on the World,
...let us to our fresh imployment rise
Among the Groves, the Fountains, and the Flours
That open now their choicest bosom'd smells
Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store. (V:124-128)

Adam's invitation to horticultural therapy is like Solomon's:

Let us get up early to the vineyards...
The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates
all manner of pleasant fruits, now and old,
which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved. (7:13-14)

As Adam and Eve teach nature about disciplined creativity, they can learn much about their own roles: Eve, who "led the Vine/ To wed her Elm; she spous'd about him twines" (V:215- 216), could have learned to cling tightly to her own best support as well.

Moreover, God sends Raphael down into the garden to warn the human couple of the impending danger. Raphael's entrance to the garden, like Satan's, has sexual overtones. Raphael doesn't just fly – he "Winnows the buxom Air" (V:270). Finally he comes "Into the Blissful field, through Groves of Myrrhe,/ And flouring Odours, Cassia, Nard, and Balme;/ A wilderness of sweets...." (V: 291-291). This fragrant landscape, so consciously evocative of the garden-woman of the Song (4:12-14), is in fact the very "place of bliss" which Satan has promised to his "Dear Daughter," Sin, and their "Fair Son," Death:

the place where Thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom aire, imbalm'd
With odours; there ye shal be fed and fill'd
Immeasurably.... (II: 817-818; 832; 840-44)

But neither garden nor woman have yet become death's prey; they seem if anything, more exquisite in their ineffable combination of innocence

and sensuality, "Virgin Fancies, pouring forth more sweet,/ Wilde above rule or Art; enormis bliss" (V:296-97).

Raphael, like the bridegroom who calls his bride a forest with "trees of frankincense" and "all the chief spices" (4:14), now "through the spicie Forrest onward" comes (V:298). Adam, like Abraham, one of the happily-married Patriarchs Milton invokes in his praise of "Domestic Sweets," sits at the "dore" of his "Bower"; as soon as he discerns his angelic guest approaching, he sends Eve to her domestic chores as Abraham sends Sarah to prepare food for their angelic visitors. Adam repeats the story of his nuptial night to Raphael, as Eve modestly "Rose, and went forth among her Frutis and Flours/ To visit how they prosper'd bud and bloom" (VIII:44-45), like the Shulamite who goes to see "whether the vine hath budded, whether the vine blossom be opened, and the pomegranates be in flower" (7:13).

Despite Raphael's warnings, on the last morning in Eden, Eve works perversely into Satan's plan. She speaks again of horticultural duties, but in the interests of efficiency she wants Adam and herself to separate and work alone. Adam disagrees with her, warning that in order not to disturb their "Conjugal Love" Eve ought not to "leave the faithful side/ That gave thee being, stil shades thee and protects" (IX:263-266). Adam, like the bridegroom in the Song, shades his bride. Moreover, he was a partner with God in Eve's creation: Eve's correct submission to Adam's protection is based on the presence of "God in him," and loyalty to her husband becomes a form of loyalty to God, as it is in the prophetic metaphor.

But Eve rejects her place in the garden enclosed; it now seems to her, she says, like a prison instead. And so Eve, with innocent foolishness, goes out to meet her Foe, who has been seeking her like a demonic bridegroom in "ambush hid among sweet Flours and Shades":

> And on his Quest, where likeliest he might find...
>
> In Bowre and Field he sought, where any tuft
> In Grove or Garden-Plot more pleasant lay...
>
> Eve...he spies
> Veild in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood,
> Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
> About her glowd...
>
> Neerer he drew, and many a walk travers'd
> Of stateliest Covert, Cedar, Pine, or Palme...
>
> This Flourie Plat, the sweet recess of Eve.... (IX:407-456)

The allusions to the searching lovers of the Song are unmistakable:

Whither is thy beloved gone...
that we may seek him with thee?
My beloved is gone down to his garden,
to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens,
and to gather lilies.

Behold thou are fair, my beloved, yea pleasant;
also our bed is green.
The beams of our house are cedars, and our rafters of firs. (6:1-2; 1:16-17)

Satan, finding Eve in a spot deliberately reminiscent of the nuptial bower, is ravished with delight and momentarily paralyzed by Eve's "step," her "look," her "every Aire," (IX:452-462), just as the biblical bridegroom declares that his spouse has ravished his heart with one of her eyes (7:2). Being Satan, however, he overcomes this sweet compulsion and advances toward's Eve's "sweet recess." Milton describes the approaching serpent with a jeweled splendor:

...his Head
Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes;
With burnisht Neck of verdant Gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires...
...pleasing was his shape,
And lovely.... (IX:499-504)

not unlike that of the biblical bridegroom:

His hands are as gold rings set with beryle;
His belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.
His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold;

Yea he is altogether lovely. (5:14-16)

Similarly, when Satan speaks to Eve, he speaks not only with the extravagant praise of a cynical courtly lover, determined to have his way with a gullible young woman, but also in the voice of Solomon, albeit somewhat skewed. After thus softening her resistance, Satan tells Eve that she too has a "need of this fair fruit," the "Ruddie and Gold" apples on the forbidden tree, and urges her to "reach then, and freely taste," (IX:571-597), echoing the bridegroom's determination to "go up into the palm-tree" who is his beloved and "take hold of the boughs thereof" (7:8-9). The evil forebodings first raised when Satan, the interloper, smelled the savory, wind-born fragrance of another man's garden has come at last. Believing that the fruit will impart to her a "wisdom" equal to God's, Eve, forgetting the shade of her true

bridegroom, reaches to the forbidden tree and eats. Satan's successful imposture of the bridegroom is completed: he has seduced the bride away from obedience to her husband and patient trust in God.

Eve eats the fruit compulsively and is soon intoxicated:

her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck't, she eat:
Eve

Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else regarded....

Greedily she ingorg'd without restraint,
And knew not eating Death: Satiate at length,
And hight'nd as with Wine, jocond and boon.... (IX:780-793)

Now, and until her repentance, Eve is modeled on the proverbial "riotous woman," the "adventuress," "adulteress," and idolatress, lady "Folly":

Therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way,
and be filled with their own devices.

Such is the way of an adulterous woman;
she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith,
I have done no wickedness.

(she) forsaketh the guide of her youth,
and forgeteth the covenant of her God.
For her house inclineth unto death.... (1:31; 30:20; 2:16-18)

The adulteress goes forth into the streets to seduce her prey with the promise that "Stolen waters are sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasant"; the young man she seduces "knoweth not that the dead are there, and her guests are in the depths of hell" (2:16-17). Eve, who is "Defac't, deflourd, and now to Death devote" goes to seek Adam with "bland words" and "Cóuntenance blithe" and flushed and tipsy "Femal charm." Eve prevails upon Adam to eat the fruit, and the two of them sink into a flowery bed, burning with lust (IX:855-1042).

Milton combines the Proverbial description of the faithless wife with the Shulamite once again as Eve tells Adam that they have a "Union" of "One Heart, One Soul" which will endure, "Rather then Death or ought then Death more dread/ Shall separate us," and when the two fallen lovers

thir fill of Love and Loves disport
Took largely, of thir mutual guilt the Seale
The solace of their sin. (IX:1042-44)

We remember the Shulamite's passionate declaration:

> Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm;
> For love is as strong as Death.... (8:6-7)

The "love" which Adam and Eve enjoy now is not the divinely blessed fountain of demostic bliss in Proverbs and in Milton's Book IV; neither is it the seal of holy love in the hearts of the Shulamite and her bridegroom. The "solace" which Eve gives Adam is not the "individual solace dear" (IV:487) which Adam cried for when she was first created, nor the "help/ Or solace" (VII:418-19) which Adam asks from God, nor the "new/ Solace in her return": (IX:843-44) which Adam has longed for. It is the "solace" of the proverbial lady Folly's destructive sensuality:

> Let us take our fill of love,
> let us solace ourselves with loves. (7:18)

Eve worships the tree from which she has just eaten as her "Sovran" (IX:795). Her original sin is disobedience, eating from the prohibited tree, but the sin of disobedience leads directly to the sin of *avodah zarah*, the worship of strange gods, most heinous crime of prophetic injunctions. And the seal of this idolatry in *Paradise Lost*, as it is throughout the Hebrew scriptures, is orgiastic sexuality accompanied or followed by callousness, bloodlust, and death, as Milton summarizes the history of idolatry, "lust hard by hate" (I:400-435).

The unmaking of creation is symbolized in both prophetic literature and in *Paradise Lost* by the accouchement which delivers death. When Milton describes Earth's reactions to the dual sin:

> Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again
> In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan.... (IX:999-1000)

he is echoing not only his own description of the unnatural birth of Death to Sin, but the images of Jeremiah:

> For I have heard a voice as of a woman in travail,
> and the anguish as of her
> that bringeth forth her first child,
> the voice of the daughter of Zion, that bewaileth herself,
> that spreadeth her hands, saying, Woe is me now.... (4:31)

The daughter of Zion, like Eve, discovers too late that the fruit of her strange union is death. The destruction of Jerusalem, land and people, like the destruction of Eden, follows swiftly, and is complete.

Jeremiah's descriptions of the horrors of war, famine, and pestilence, like Milton's, are vivid and grim.

Adam and Eve are devastated by the enormity of what they have wrought. But while Adam is still flailing around in despair and recrimination, Eve regains her capacity for heroic love and self-sacrifice. "Humble" at last, and aching for "peace," not prestige, she embraces Adam's feet and weeps until he forgives her. She convinces Adam that they must plead for forgiveness from God. In conquering their own pride – and the despair which is itself a form of pride – Adam and Eve take the first step toward biblical heroism, the repentant prayers of "a broken and contrite heart."

At last, the fallen, contrite, and divinely forgiven Eve calls to Adam in a sad and fallen echo of the Shulamite's invitation, "Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields" (7:12):

> But the Field
> To labor calls us now with sweat impos'd,
> Though after sleepless Night; for see the Morn,
> All unconcerned with our unrest, begins
> Her rosie progress smiling; let us forth.... (XI:171-175)

Her words have more pathos than she realizes, for she will never see those vines and flowers again. The garden clouds with a sudden and ominous darkness and the world's first bloody animal predatory hunt begins.

However, the pastoral protection of God's love, Milton shows, does not end with Eden. Michael assures Adam that God's love will follow him out of the garden, "still compassing thee round/ with goodness and paternal Love (IX:349-353), as God's love encircled Israel in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 32:10). Even fallen man will have access to the inspiration of God's written word in the Scriptures, open to all men; in addition, the poet will have access to the private fountain of inspiration as well which enables him to sing,

> ...as the wakeful Bird
> Sings darkling, and in shadiest Covert hid
> Tunes her noctural Note. (III:38-40)

like the "dark but beautiful" bride of the Song:

> O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,
> in the covert of the cliff,
> Let me see thy countenace, let me hear they voice;
> For sweet is thy voice.... (2:14)

These blessings, however, will be blessings of the inner life. Mild shade, spicy breezes, fragrant fruit, untainted waters will exist as an inner pastoral of "Faith...Vertue, Patience, Temperance," and "Love," a "Paradise within thee, happier farr," (XII:582-587) until the end of human time. Then Satan, the false bridegroom of the human soul, will be destroyed forever, and the marriage of man and God will become not metaphor, but reality:

New Heav'ns, New Earth, Ages of endless date
Founded in righteousness and peace and love,
To bring forth fruits Joy and eternal Bliss. (XII:549-551)

The vision of eternal love which Adam and Eve take with them out of the garden is drawn from Hosea's promise for the reunion of man and wife, and God the people, and the land of Israel. The allusion is particularly apt as Adam and Eve descend into the "torrid heat" of the "Lybian air adust" (XII:634-635), for the renewed love between God and his people will be initiated not in the luxury of the garden but in the isolation of the wilderness:

I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her.

And she will respond there, as in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up out the land of Egypt.

And I will betroth thee unto Me forever;
Yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness,
and in justice, and in loving kindness, and in compassion.
And I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness;
and thou shalt know the Lord. (Hosea 2:16-22).

Conclusion

As we have seen, many details of landscape and personal appearance, activity, and dialogue which Milton applies to Eden are a deliberate pattern of allusions to the biblical pastoral and the metaphoric bride of God, to the garden and persona of the Song of Solomon and related biblical poetry in the Hebrew prophets and wisdom literature, and to their symbolism as spiritual history. Milton's manifold allusions illustrate the unity of past, present, and future in what the poet saw as the truest and most encompassing of all stories.

Although this essay has focused on specific Old Testament patterns, it is important to remember that Milton places them in a much larger framework of biblical allusions; in addition, woven throughout

this comprehensive network of biblical allusions are references to Judaic and Christian religious and philosophical works, including commentaries on the Bible. Insofar as the Song of Solomon contributes to the pastoral vision of *Paradise Lost*, however, it stands at the center of the poem. Set off by epic war and ethereal beauty in Milton's depiction of the heavenly courts, and hideous ugliness from below in his depiction of hell, the biblical pastoral of life in the garden is the emotional center of the poem as well as the physical center of Milton's universe.

By using the Song of Solomon and related biblical imagery to enrich the terse drama in Genesis, Milton heightens and transforms its moral power. Viewed as naked text, without commentary or exegesis, the Eden story in Genesis is undoubtedly compelling and evocative, but its relationship to the moral universe expressed in the remainder of the Hebrew Bible is problematic. In fashioning a revised Eden story which incorporates pivotal biblical moral, thematic, and imagistic motifs, Milton works in a fashion quite similar to that evidenced in the rabbinic *midrash*. Milton transforms the Genesis narrative, and brings it into line with the exegetical tradition linking disparate biblical episodes. In his hands, the story of Adam, Eve and the serpent becomes not a mysterious myth at the beginning of time, but part and parcel of human history, the first link in a long, connecting drama acted out by man but planned and supervised by the Creator himself.

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"Sacred Scriptures or Bibles of Mankind" in *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

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Einem gelang es - er hab den Schleyer der Göttin zu Sais.
Aber was sah er? Er sah - Wunder des Wunders - Sich Selbst
Novalis[1]

In *Walden* the chapter "Reading" stands out, placed as it is immediately after the two long preceding chapters "Economy" and "Where I lived and what I lived for" (which are indispensable for defining the motives and the procedures of Thoreau's choice) and as the first of a long series of brief chapters dedicated to various aspects of his "life in the woods." There is a philological factor which highlights the importance of this chapter: "Reading," unlike the other chapters, was already in its almost final form in the first version of "Walden," which was printed in 1854, after at least six revisions.[2] To these pages H. D. Thoreau entrusts, rather than a plan of specific reading, a series of general theses on reading: what a real book is, how to be a real reader, and what real reading is.[3] Thus, we are dealing with genuine

[1]"A man managed to lift the veil of the Goddess of Sais. But what did he see? He saw – miracle of miracles – Himself," *Distich* 1798.

[2]Cf. L. Lindon Shanley, *The Making of Walden, with the Text of the First Version*, University of Chicago Press, p. 95: "It is fairly safe to assume that it is practically in its final form here."

[3]In *The Senses of Walden* New York, The Viking Press, 1972, p. 5, S. Cavell points out that we should use this chapter to understand, first of all, *Walden*

hermeneutic theses, which I would like to consider by placing them in a wide context. For this reason, my recent research on ancient hermeneutics and its modern revivals will be useful.[4]

1. The solemn beginning of "Reading" transports us immediately out of time, into a special, sacred, mysterious atmosphere. "In acquiring property, for ourselves or our posterity, in founding a family or a state, or acquiring fame even, we are mortal; but in dealing with truth we are immortal, and need fear no change nor accident. The oldest Egyptian or Hindu philosopher raised a corner of the veil from the statue of the divinity; and still the trembling robe remains raised, and I gaze upon as fresh a glory as he did, since it was I in him that was then so bold, and it is he in me that now reviews the vision. No dust has settled on that robe; no time has elapsed, since that divinity was revealed. That time which we really improve, or which is improvable, is neither past, present, nor future" (p. 144).[5]

The text is rich with autobiographical references and suggests a series of intellectual precursors which should be explored more carefully. There is an obvious debt to transcendentalism ("there is One Man, present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty," as Emerson states at the beginning of *The American Scholar*). There is a reference to the veil of Maya, in Buddhism, united in the image and the theme of unveiling-revealing; there is a reference to the mysteries of Osirides, through a possible reading of Novalis. There is platonism, and Swedenborg, and there is, more hidden, a probable evocation of a complex passage from Paul (II Cor. 3): Moses had to veil his face, when speaking to the Hebrews, while the believer can, with boldness (*parrhesìa*) contemplate the glory of God, moved by the Spirit which transforms him into the actual image which is contemplated.

All these allusions are intended to establish a certain idea of the relationship between the text and its reader, inviting him to assume, when approaching it, an attitude analogous to that presumed by the ancient way of reading, as "lectio divina," as a spiritual exercise, as a

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itself: "its task, for us who are reading, is epitomized in discovering what reading is and, in particular, if *Walden* is a heroic book, what reading *Walden* is...." My point, as it will appear later on, is different (cf. n. 19).

[4]*L'interpretazione infinita. L'ermeneutica cristiana antica e le sue trasformazioni*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1987. I would like to take a definition from this work: "If interpretation is an art, hermeneutics is the reflective moment which provides it with a theory of the text, which is often only implicit, and above all with rules of interpretations."

[5]Quotations from H. D. Thoreau, *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, Penguin Books, 1983.

sacred action which transports the reader into the spiritual world. "Being seated to run through the region of the spiritual world: I have had this advantage in books. To be intoxicated by a single glass of wine; I have experienced this pleasure when I have drunk the liquor of the esoteric doctrine": this quotation from Mir Camar Uddin Mast comes shortly after the passage quoted above (p. 145). And a passage which follows immediately evokes even more consciously the ancient practice of meditation, with its insistence on ascetic separations from the world in order to dedicate oneself to meditation on the Book, paying attention to every single word, seeking a "sensus plenior" which is exemplary for the reader, in such a way that the apparently dead language in which it is written becomes alive, and the only one which is alive. "The heroic books, even if printed in the character of our mother tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times; and we must laboriously seek the meaning of each word and line, conjecturing a larger sense than common use permits out of that wisdom and valor and generosity we have" (p. 145).[6]

It is therefore opportune to review rapidly the essential features of ancient religious hermeneutics, paying special attention to the tradition in which Thoreau can be placed, in spite of his historical and cultural distance.

Ancient Christian hermeneutics, with all their differences between authors, epochs and traditions, and with many features in common with others religious traditions, especially the Jewish tradition, converge above all in their conception of the sacred text. The Bible evidently transcends any other writing. In it, text and history coincide: "narrat textum, prodit mysterium," says Gregory the Great, who synthesizes preceding hermeneutical tradition at the end of the sixth century; animated by the spirit, it constitutes a living, unified and coherent body, which moves with a force, "virtus," and "dynamis" of its own, like the chariot in the vision of Ezekiel, according to the same Gregory, in his commentary to the Prophet.

Secondly, ancient hermeneutics agree on the definition of the reader of the sacred text. It requires a reader who is also animated by the Spirit, a reader who by reading and interpreting, seeks, through letter and history, knowledge of the "mystery" (as it was then called).

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[6]On this "larger sense," see *Walden's Conclusion:* "They pretend – as I hear – that the verses of Kabir have four different senses; illusion, spirit, intellect, and the exoteric doctrine of the Vedas;" but in this part of the world it is a ground of complaint if a man's writings admit of more than one interpretation" (p. 373). This text is obviously very important for S. Cavell, *op.cit.*, p. 15, cf. n. 19.

Such is the spiritual power, the "virtus" of authentic scriptural contemplation, that it "not only recognizes Sacred Scripture, once it has been created, but would be capable of creating it, if it did not already exist."[7]

From this, thirdly, there is the idea of reading as an act which generates infinite meanings, which spring from connections among the texts, and between the texts and the reader. The biblical universe is thus at the same time infinite and closed (symbolic links to the natural world are possible, but only until the twelfth century, and in subordination to the Bible and with a biblical basis) and in this universe there is the reader himself. The final result of reading will thus be the prolongation of the text until it involves the reader in his present time: the text becomes true, it becomes exemplary and normative for the reader and for his community. Its application is not external to its interpretation, but constitutes the necessary final moment of that interpretation: it is *gnosis*, knowledge as the link between contemplation and action, in which contemplation ends.

2. We now come to the examination of the hermeneutic theory underlying "Reading." Even in the hermit's solitude of Walden there is a "lectio divina," but with what analogies and what differences from the ancient model?

Above all, there is the notion of the sacred text. This is not denied; however, "Scripture" at this point becomes plural, "Scriptures": "the recorded wisdom of mankind, the ancient classics and Bibles," (p. 151) "the sacred Scriptures, or Bibles of mankind" (p. 152). There is not just one sacred text: every people and every tradition has them, and all are admitted into a sort of canon. It is time for anyone who is seeking knowledge to abandon the "silent gravity and exclusiveness" of a person who thinks that his own religious experience is unique and can be referred to a single text. It is necessary "to learn liberality together with wisdom....Zoroaster, thousands of years ago, travelled the same road, and had the same experience and established worship among men; but he, being wise, knew it to be universal." Thus it is necessary for the solitary person, who thinks he is alone in his faith, to "humbly commune with Zoroaster...and, through the liberalizing influence of all the worthies, with Jesus Christ himself, and let our church go by the board" (p. 153).

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[7]Gregory the Great, "Contemplatio enim virtus est, non solum per quam Scriptura condita recognoscitur, sed per quam nondum condita conderetur et per quam condita ad Dei voluntatem cotidie disponatur" (*In I.I Reg.* III, 171). Cf. *L'interpretazione infinita*, p. 67, where there is a commentary on the text.

In a complex passage, preceding that which I have just quoted, Thoreau establishes a distinction between classics and Scriptures, but both types of text are then joined together: one should begin, and then continue to add to a great sacred library, for the sake of humanity: "That age will be rich indeed when those relics which we call classic, but even less known Scriptures of the nations, shall have further accumulated, when the Vaticans shall be filled with Vedas and Zendavestas and Bibles, with Homers and Dantes and Shakespeares, and all centuries to come shall have successively deposited their trophies in the forum of the world. By such a pile we may hope to scale heaven at last" (p. 149). With this last comment, the image of a new Vatican is transformed into a biblical reference: the new universal library will be the real Jacob's ladder, and will succeed where the tower of Babel failed, in reaching heaven.

The sacredness of the text is also the sacredness of language; Thoreau distinguishes between common language and the language used in the Classics and in Scriptures; the ancient masses were able to speak Greek or Latin, but they could not read or understand the great works; they spoke their "mother tongue," but for great texts it was necessary to know a "father tongue, a reserved and select expression, too significant to be heard by the ear, which we must be born again in order to speak" (p. 146). It is necessary to be born again, through a sort of mystic initiation, to be able to understand a language of the classics or the Scriptures.

Here one is struck by the clear affirmation of the primacy of written language over spoken language. Of the dialogues of Plato, who expressed in *Phaedrus* and in the *Seventh Letter* his distrust of the written word, Thoreau specifically says that these "contain what is immortal in him" (p. 152). One is also struck by the argument against the occasional nature of rhetorics, against which is opposed the universality, stability and purity of writing: "The noblest written words are commonly as far behind or above the fleeting spoken language as the firmament with its stars is behind the clouds."[8] I would say that the emphasis here tends to be different from that of the Emerson that I know: the Emerson who, in the *Divinity School Address*

[8]Incidentally, Thoreau rediscovers an ancient image here. As *Isaiah* 34:4 says that in the end "heavens will be rolled up like a book," Augustine develops in several places the connection between Scripture and the heavenly firmament (*En. in ps.* 103:7-9; cf. *Conf.* XIII, 15, 16s.) and above all affirms: "However much one may progress in science, he will always find himself underneath that Scripture which God has placed, like a firmament, above all human hearts." (*Ad Orosium* . XI, 14; PL 42, c. 678)

of 1838 protested against "the assumption that the age of inspiration is past, that the Bible is closed" (like, earlier, German romanticism)[9] who in *Self-reliance* affirmed that "the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what they thought," and in *The American Scholar* declared of books that "they are for nothing but inspire."[10]

Secondly, similarly to the ancient conception, the reader should be congenial to the text, should be animated by the same spirit: "To read well, that is, to read true books in a true spirit, is a noble exercise and one that will task the reader more than any exercise which the customs of the day esteem. It requires a training such as the athletes underwent, the steady intention almost of the whole life to this object. Books must be read as deliberately[11] and reservedly as they were written" (p. 146). Here too is a spontaneous restoration of the situation, the "Sitz im leben" of the ancient "lectio" and "spiritual exercises": the study of scriptures requires conformity to the spirit of the text, a decision, an "intention" which also an act of isolation from others and a continual exercise. One notes the stoic and monastic terminology, the "askesis" (we have already seen how reading requires "wisdom, generosity and valour,") (p. 145).[12]

But we see, further on, the introduction of a modern, humanistic and universalistic element: one should (and can) learn ancient languages, at least what is necessary to understand the language in which the text is written: this learning is necessarily artificial, because in each case it concerns a "father tongue" which we would not possess spontaneously even if we had the same "mother tongue."

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[9]Texts by Novalis ("Who said that the Bible is still closed? Shouldn't we think of the Bible as still growing?"), F. Schlegel, by the young Schleiermacher, in *L'interpretazione infinita*, p. 133.

[10]Cf. H. Bloom: "...the characteristic Thoreauvian swerve towards the authority of books, rather than away from them in the Emersonian manner," *Modern Critical Views, H. D. Thoreau*, ed. H. Bloom, New York-New Haven-Philadelphia, Chelsea House Publishers, 1987, *Introduction*, p. 9. For Emerson, a prose-writer was "un orateur manqué," cf. the pages on Emerson's "Eloquence" in F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1941 (I, I, §2).

[11]"Deliberately": see Matthiessen, *American Renaissance*, I, II, §3 (on the use of this term in the famous passage of the II chapter, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately...,"p. 135).

[12]Cf. P. Hadot, *Exercises spirituels et philosophie antique*, Paris, Etudes Augustiniennes, 1987.

And here, in third place, is the result: reading. With the text thus perceived, and the reader thus prepared, now comes the meeting between the author of the text and his reader. The reader discovers that he is not alone. In the classics, modern man finds the answers to the questions that he asks: "They are the only oracles which are not decayed, and there are such answers to the most modern inquiry in them as Delphi and Dodona never gave" (p. 146).[13] "These same questions that disturb and puzzle and confound us have in their turn occurred to all wise men" (p. 153). More fully: "There are probably words addressed to our condition exactly, which, if we could read and understand, would be more salutary than the morning or the spring to our lives, and possibly put a new aspect on the face of things for us. How many a man has dated a new era in his life from the reading of a book. The book exists for us perchance which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at present unutterable things we may find somewhere uttered" (p. 153). Thus, in every situation, there is a book "for us." It is difficult not to remember the "for us" with which Christian authors evoke Hebrew texts: for Paul, in the *I Corinthians* the events of the Exodus find their meaning "to admonish us, who have arrived at the end of time."[14] Along with this, we remember the "even greater wonders" which Jesus promised that his disciples would perform (*John* 14:12). The reward of reading is thus the acquisition of words of wisdom – "wisdom" is here the key term: "golden words, which the wisest men of antiquity have uttered, and whose worth the wise of every succeeding age have assured us of" (p. 152). Let us return to the beginning of "Reading": reading, finally, is the appropriation of past experience, to the point of becoming the same person who first had that experience: "It was I in him...and it is he in me."

4. Having sketched the similarities between the two hermeneutical approaches, it is necessary at this point, in conclusion, to highlight the differences, by referring however to elements which have already been mentioned.

First of all, while it is true that the expansion of the sacred text, the open unlimited structure of the canon (to the point of including not only the classics and the scriptures of the past, and not only future

[13]On the reading of texts of the past as prophecy, cf. the text of the first version, quoted in n. 15.

[14]Cf. Emerson, *History:* "Law was enacted, the sea was searched, the land was found, or the blow was struck, for us....So all that is said of the wise man by Stoic or Oriental or modern essayist, describes to each reader his own idea, describes his unattained but attainable self."

works, but also the book of nature itself)[15] occurs through an extensive use of sacred terminology, there is no doubt that the general process is one of secularization. It is what Novalis describes, when he narrates how the follower of Sais, lifting the veil of the goddess, discovered under the veil nothing but himself.[16]

Furthermore, this insistence on the aspect of learning the language presupposes the reformed idea of "claritas Scripturae" (that is, its independence with regard to the context of ecclesiastical tradition), presupposes the humanistic upheaval and thus the autonomy of the critical method, and alludes to the first romantic philology, of F. Schlegel, for example: where philology, as precise linguistic research and the search for "intentio auctoris" often coexists happily with the interpretation of the textual segment in a wider connotation, because in the content directly meant by the author "the entire world" is present, as a concomitant representation (thus Schleiermacher).[17] Again, it is

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[15]An obvious aspect, which I have not stressed, and which appears in our own chapter: one cannot neglect the study of ancient authors with the excuse that they are old: "We might as well omit to study nature because she is old." (p.146) This sentence is missing in the first version, where, instead, we find an important variation: books "have to be studied in the same spirit that we study nature. They are only valuable commentaries on her works, never ancient, and never modern." (Shanley, *The Making of Walden*, p. 147) An identification of works of art and works of nature is also missing in the final version (*ibid.* 149). But the theme of nature is developed in "Sounds": "Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer?" cf. n 19.

[16]The first version contains the most noteworthy variations, in my opinion, in the entire chapter. The last sentence of the first paragraph "That time which we really improve...is neither past, present, nor future" was at the beginning, and was illustrated as follows: "I might say that the student always studies antiques. In our studies we do not look forward but backward into antiquity with redoubled pauses. Where is that lost first page of history? We have never found the literature that dated from an antiquity sufficiently remote. The most adventurous student seeks the remotest antiquity, the history of a time, as it were, prior to time. Or, if we prefer, such is the Protean character of things, we may say that he always interprets prophecies and oracles, and is interested solely in the future. In accumulating property...." (Shanley, *The Making of Walden*, p. 144) This first version emphasizes atemporality, while the final version highlights self-identification. It is fascinating to remember how Proust expressed the same impression with regard to *Walden*, when writing in 1904 to the countess of Noailles: "Lisez...les pages admirables de *Walden*. Il me semble qu'on les lise en soi-même, tant elles sortes du fond de notre expérience intime."

[17] Cf. *L'interpretazione infinita* , p. 149.

the secularization, that is the criticism and rational recovery of the ancient hermeneutical procedure.

Finally, the encounter between text (with its author) and reader does not occur any more as the construction of symbolic connections (myths such as the allegory of virtue, or the Old Testament as a stock of typologies for the New Testament), but as a conceptual construction at a level which is essentially rational and ethical,[18] or, that is, as as the discovery of the permanent validity of certain models, the exemplary nature of certain figures, and the pertinence of certain answers, because the questions are universal, and human nature is fundamentally the same everywhere.[19]

Thus, my task is completed. And yet, that which is most characteristic and fascinating in Thoreau has probably not been mentioned, and that is the extraordinary political intensity of his cultural proposal. Thoreau, as is known, strongly supports an aristocratic knowledge (note his scorn for popular literature), but refuses an aristocratic model: "Their authors are a natural and irresistible aristocracy in every society, and more than kings and emperors, exert an influence on humanity" (p. 148). And he also refuses

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[18]One notes again how the opening passage quoted, with its mystical nature, ends with an ethical tone, the ancient idea of spiritual progress: "That time which we really improve, or which is improvable,is neither past, present, nor future." This passage was in different position in the first version, cf. n. 16.

[19]This is the only "larger sense" allowed at present: differently from S. Cavell's interpretation, and in coherence with W. Benn Michaels', I see in the reference to oriental polisemy (the "four different senses," p. 373, quoted in n. 6) the perception of a no more superable cultural gap between the ancient and the present way of interpreting: the latter one has its pattern in the interpretation of nature, which is necessarily monosemic: "the power of figurative reading is not the only thing Walden teaches us; it also urges upon us the necessity of reading literally, not so much in addition to reading figuratively as *instead of* reading figuratevely." In this sense, W. Benn Michaels rightly quotes the beginning of "Sounds" (p. 156): "But while we are confined to books, though the most select and classic, and read only particular written languages, which are themselves but dialects and provincial, we are in danger of forgetting the language which all things and events speak without metaphor, which alone is copious and standard....Will you be a reader, a student merely, or a seer?" (*Walden False Bottoms*, in *Modern Critical Views, H. D. Thoreau* cit., p. 92; in the same direction J. Carlos Rowe, *The being of Language: The Language of Being*, *ibid.* p. 146f.) On cultural distance, cf. "The Pond in Winter," last paragraph: "...and I doubt if that philosophy [i.e. the Bhagavad-Gita] is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions." (see Matthiessen, *American Renaissance*, I, III, §2)

the usual model of aristocratic knowledge, opposing this with nothing other than that of the first medieval university: "As the nobleman of cultivated taste surrounds himself with whatever conduces to his culture, genius, learning, wit, books, paintings, statuary, music, philosophical instruments, and the like, so let the village do....New England can hire all the wise men in the world to come and teach her." (p. 155) Just before this he had already used this provocative *hire*: "Can we not hire some Abelard to lecture to us?"

But the force of his proposal is in the fact that it comes from someone who speaks, paradoxically, from outside the city and outside the university, and who affirms overbearingly that it is possible to return, in solitude, amongst the trees, to the most ancient and universal idea of knowledge, that in which book and nature are mingled: "My residence was more favorable not only to thought, but to serious reading, than a university; and though I was beyond the range of the ordinary circulating library, I had more than ever come within the influence of those books which circulate round the world, whose sentences where written on the bark, and are now merely copied..." (p. 144).[20]

[20]Cf. H. Bloom: "Thoreau's crucial swerve away from Emerson was to treat natural objects as books, and books as chunks of nature, thus evading all literary tradition, Emerson's writings not excepted" In *Modern Critical Views, H. D. Thoreau, Introduction*, p. 7.

I must finally thank Cristina Giorcelli (University of Rome): she read this paper and made useful suggestions to a simple *amateur* of American literature, as I am since, many years ago, we read Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, with C. Pavese's introduction to the Italian translation.

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L. A. Arieli and the Literature of the Second Aliyah

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The second wave of immigration to Palestine – known as the Second Aliyah (1904-1914) – was noted for producing a number of remarkable writers. Among them was Levi Arie Arieli (Orloff), who was instrumental in giving literary shape to a new model of protagonist: the Jew in Palestine.

Arieli was born in the Ukraine in 1886, emigrated to Palestine in 1909, left for the United States in 1923, and died in New York in 1943. His writings reflect a strongly existentialist outlook, infused into the subtle irony with which he views Jewish life in Russia, Palestine and America. His typical protagonist is marked by uprootedness and a sense of doom – an outlook derived from the Jewish experience of persecution, as well as of the decline of religious Judaism as an all-embracing ethos.

His narrative is rich and complex, interweaving a loosely-knit fabula into a literary fabric that is tight and linguistically dense. Despite frequent departures from the main story line, he achieves a fictional unity through the use of imagery, figuration and the fantastic. Certain aspects of his literary technique were innovative for his time (in Hebrew literature) – e.g., his use of stream-of-consciousness and dream sequence.

Accordingly, we may say that Arieli is one of the seminal figures in the Hebrew literature of the early modern period, and his contribution to it is by now undisputed (despite the neglect into which he has fallen). His capacity for perceiving the intricacies of the human psyche – with all its faults and foibles – is reminiscent of Russian novelists at the height of Psychological Realism. On the other hand,

Arieli belonged very much to the Aliyah that built the literary, political and cultural substructure of the Jewish presence in Palestine (and Israel) – along with Brenner, his literary patron and ideal, and Agnon, his contemporary. Yet although he belongs in that circle, Arieli does depart from the typical paths, taken by Second Aliyah writers, in his own literary and personal experience.

In 1912, Brenner noted, in his "Pages from a Literary Notebook,"[1] the emergence of two unique talents, writers of insight and sensitivity in search of their individual self-revelation. The two are S. Y. Agnon and L. A. Orloff (he changed his name to Arieli around 1914). Some of the stories written by Arieli during his Palestine years (1909-23) are considered among the best produced by the Second Aliyah – stories such as "The Pale Heinrich" (1909), "To the Light of Venus" (1911), and "Wasteland" (1920). One of the turning points of his life was his emigration from Palestine – and one eminent critic has justifiably linked the declining quality of Arieli's literary output to his departure from Eretz-Israel and the beginning of his American experience.[2]

Brenner exerted an immeasurable influence on the writers of the Second Aliyah. In his fiction, dramas and essays, Brenner introduced the ineluctable issues reverberating within Judaism and Zionism in the second decade of this century, and ever since. Arieli was a pupil of Brenner and his great admirer. The personal and literary relationship between Arieli and Brenner lasted through the duration of Brenner's life (he was killed by Arab marauders in 1921). In a letter of 1910, Arieli informed Brenner that he had made the transition from agricultural laborer to "shomer" – a roving sentry guarding Jewish settlements from attacks by Arabs.[3] Brenner had been looking for a more substantial position for Arieli. Eventually, Arieli became a teacher. In this respect, Arieli shared with Brenner the familiar image of the Second Aliyah writer who came to Palestine with the intention of becoming a tiller of the soil, then moving on to "shomer," and finally becoming a teacher.

In their relation to one another as writers, their connection is more intimate: both criticize the "art-for-art's-sake" ideal which sees literature detached from all sociopolitical reality; in addition, both are vitriolic in criticizing one aspect of what might be called

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[1]*Kol Kitvei Y. Ch. Brenner* (Brenner's Collected Works, in Hebrew) (HaKibutz HaMeuchad, 1960) Vol. 2, p. 306.

[2]G. Shaked, "The Twin Who Descended" (in Hebrew), *Siman Kri'a*, No. 5 (Tel Aviv: February, 1976) pp. 481-491.

[3]For making these materials available to me, I wish to thank the Gnazim Archive, in Tel Aviv, and its director, Mr. Ben-Yaakov.

"normative" Judaism. Indeed, the critique of Judaism is a constant element in Arieli's fiction – from his first published story, "The Pale Heinrich" (1909), to the late 1930s and beyond. His 1909 protagonist, Itzhak Bloom, raises a challenge that is almost Brennerian in its scope and tone: "...we have no Maccabees, no Crusades; we don't have such a nationality...we do not have nationality as such."[4] More than thirty years later, there is an echo of this metahistorical judgment in Haim Hazaz' story, "The Sermon."[5] For the protagonist in this story, there is no Jewish history ("...we have no history at all..."), since Jews have not created their own history – and towards the conclusion of his "sermon" he declares: "I believe that this land of Israel already is no longer Jewish." This secular perception of the Jewish past is manifest in Hebrew fiction from the earliest years of this century. It is to be found as well in Arieli's 1920 story, "Yeshimon" ("Wasteland"), which is seen by one commentator as "a cruel and brutal parody of Jewish history."[6]

One aspect that underscores Arieli's negative relation to Judaism is the absence of a father-image in his fiction. This is to be linked with Arieli's rejection of any attempt to revive the past by fictionalizing it. And yet the protagonist in the 1911 story, "To the Light of Venus," is not blind to the antisemitism from the members of his Russian platoon. To him, Judaism carries with it a tragic determinism. He wants to dissociate himself from it; his Socialist ideology gives him a deep contempt for the Jewish bourgeoisie. And although he realizes that he will never "belong" to the Ukrainian people, he feels close to their simplicity and innocence: the Ukrainian poetry of Taras Shevchenko touches him more profoundly than the Hebrew poetry of Yehuda Leib Gordon. He "belongs" to neither culture – even though he realizes that the army he serves in will kill Jews in the next pogrom.

After participating in a failed attempt at assassinating a Russian officer, the protagonist finds himself in Palestine (only because he lacked enough money to take him elsewhere), and we meet him there, at work as an agricultural laborer. Before leaving for Palestine he happens to pass a synagogue. As he listens to the chanting, he leans his head against the cold stone wall, and he senses his uprootedness and

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[4]L. A. Arieli, "The Pale Heinrich" (in Hebrew), *HaPoel HaTzair* (Tel Aviv: 1909) pp. 21-22. See G. Ramras-Rauch, "The Reflection of Angst-Literature" (in Hebrew), *Moznaim*, Vol. 53, No. 5-6 (Tel Aviv: 1971) pp. 384-389.

[5]H. Hazaz, "The Sermon," translated by B. Halpern, in R. Alter (ed.), *Modern Hebrew Literature* (New York: Behrman House, 1975) pp. 281-287.

[6]A. Zemach, "Sex and National character" (in Hebrew) *Moznaim* (see note 4, above) pp. 371-383.

loneliness. (A story dating from his American experience is titled "How I Became an Antisemite."[7] It criticizes the Jewish community, especially the synagogue, for the emphasis on money and the will to power.)

Arieli's lonely protagonist, in Russia and Palestine, is one of the first of his type in modern Hebrew fiction. Much of contemporary literature depicts a protagonist in a collective setting. This dimension is not there in Arieli's writing. This individualistic emphasis – along with the absence of a father, mentioned earlier – underlines a sense of freedom from any prescriptive authority. Thus his characters are marked by pessimism, skepticism and nihilism; they see Judaism as a confining factor, limiting free choice – yet they are aware of their own rootlessness, as though they also bemoan it. They are Jews in their very being – and although they have severed their intellectual and emotional ties with Judaism, they also realize that the outer world cannot serve as a replacement for it – especially as that outer world denies their rights and their humanity for being Jews.

In the Hebrew literature of Palestine and Israel, we may see two tendencies at work: the myth-making tendency and the tendency towards demythicization. The writers of the First Aliyah (1881-1904) were eager to portray the life of the emerging Jewish settlement in a positive light – pointing to the achievements of men and women in reviving the land. For writers such as Jabetz, Barzilai and Moshe Smilansky the reasons justifying the positive approach were clear: there is the Zionist zeal; there is the romanticism in perceiving reality; and there is the conviction that it is wrong to speak ill of the Biblical land and its people.

Brenner, in an influential article of 1911 titled "The Eretz-Israeli Genre and its Attributes,"[8] challenges the literature of the First Aliyah, in view of the small number of Jewish settlers at that time and the relative absence of an established social structure. Above all, he criticizes it for trying to promote the myth of positive Jewish achievement in Eretz-Israel – and so this article can be seen to have inaugurated the tendency of demythicization. Following Brenner's lead, Arieli's story, "Rainy Days,"[9] has his protagonist offering the suggestion that First Aliyah writers resort to high-flown language for

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[7]L. A. Arieli, "How I Became an Antisemite" (in Hebrew) *HaDoar*, (New York, 1928) pp. 32-43.

[8]Brenner (see note 1, above) Vol. 2, pp. 268-270.

[9]L. A. Arieli, "Rainy Days" (in Hebrew) *HaToren*, Vol. 2, Nos. 1 and 2 (1913-14); *BeSha'ah Zo*, Vol. 3 (Jaffa, 1916).

fear that their "belles lettres" will turn into an "ugly literature" if the reality were presented truthfully.

Arieli is essentially a realistic writer, creating characters who find themselves in extreme situations. This lends a universal quality to his fiction. Thus he depicts Jewish fate as a microcosm of human fate per se. This realistic strain in Arieli (as in so many other writers of the Second Aliyah) can be traced back to the unsettling experiences of the 1905 revolutionary period in Russia and the pogroms that swept Russia and the Ukraine, before and after. Arieli himself participated in Jewish self-defense activities in the Ukraine (1903-5), and his brother-in-law was killed in one of the pogroms. As a result, a vision of the inevitability of Jewish fate haunted Arieli throughout his life. Further, he was influenced by the deterministic outlook of late-nineteenth-century thought, and by the nihilistic and pessimistic trends in Russian literature and philosophy.

Arieli's typical protagonist is a person who has long since cut his ties with the collective Jewish mentality; as a result, as we suggested, he gains a measure of liberation but also sinks into the depths of despair. In Brenner, self-exposure and self-laceration serve the ultimate purpose of social change, as the Jew becomes increasingly self-aware and autonomous. For Arieli, such self-exposure has none of the social mission it has for Mendele, Berdichevsky and Brenner. Thus, for Arieli, self-examination has no extra-textual function; rather, the ironic and tragic dimensions are ultimate and *sui generis* for him.

Despite the deterministic perspective, however, Arieli does not simply write within the naturalistic framework wherein the individual is merely seen as a victim of his or her passions and societal forces. Rather, Arieli brings into his narrative an existential perspective, showing the individual as thrown into a situation in which he is a stranger, in a world beset by anxiety, doubt, paradox and aloneness. Thus Arieli widens the gap between man's optimistic projection towards the future and the facticity of his existence. Further, one's personal expectations are thwarted by random irrationalities. Arieli's is a world without providence (human or divine). Characters are caught in their personal predicaments in time and place, and they are at the mercy of forces beyond their control. (Arieli wrote not only about pogroms in Russia but also about Arab massacres of Jews in Jerusalem, in the early 1920s.) To Arieli, as to Brenner, there were two deterministic aspects to Jewish existence in Palestine that were a source of disquiet: first, the Jew had not yet shed his Diaspora mentality, despite the expectations voiced by Zionist ideology; second, the Arab attacks on the Jewish population were repetitions of the pogroms in Russia.

Arieli's fiction is marked by a persistent tone and point of view, which he transmits with total clarity. Arieli was a talented musician, with an ear open to languages and accents. His depiction of the Arab in a variety of roles and the Yemenite Jew, the Hassidic Jew, lend his narrative fabric richness and color. He quotes German and Russian speech, thus giving the reader a direct experience of those sounds.

His texts also involve irony, sarcasm and parody. He uses all types of irony – from the traditional gap between the seeming and the real, to the open-ended nihilistic irony that withholds any comprehensive truth. He also uses situational irony by juxtaposing two realities: e.g., the ruminations of a self-centered individualist vs. the murder of an infant, thus under-scoring the gap between innocence and catastrophe, or between justice and injustice.

A distinctive feature of Arieli's fiction is its dramatic quality. In Arieli the personal, confessional voice so prevalent in the fiction of his contemporaries gives way to the technique of "showing" rather than "telling," of dramatization in place of narration. The implied voice of the author is thus accompanied by irony, but in essence it allows for only one reading of the text (rather than multi-valenced readings). In addition, it is characteristic of Arieli to set his protagonists in extreme situations.

In "Allah Karim"[10] Arieli gives us a play about Jewish pioneers of the Second Aliyah. This play about a group of newcomers is in the genre of what came to be known as the "settlement play." (Others in the genre are Ashman's "This Land" and Mosenson's "In the Plains of the Negev.") But instead of focussing on the difficulties faced by the newcomers in the new land, Arieli takes the play into the sphere of interpersonal relations. Into a commune of four men who share a room in Jaffa, there descends a young woman, Naomi, who is just off the boat from Russia and is nominally engaged to one of the four: Bronskul. He is a novice writer with an exaggerated sense of himself; he looks and acts the "artiste." Against all expectations of the reader and of the characters themselves, however, she falls in love with an Arab who is a street-vendor of sweets. Each character is richly drawn, and each has an elaborated life-story.

In his fiction as in his drama, Arieli is a master of the rich texture wherein his characters are depicted through subtle vignettes and anecdotes. Occasionally, his characters are even too "heavy" for the limited dramatic movement. But as a rule his well-drawn characters are placed amidst a plot that verges on extremes of situations and

[10]L. A. Arieli, "Allah Karim" (in Hebrew) *HaShiloach*, Vol. 27 (Tel Aviv, 1912) and (New York: Kadima, 1918).

actions. Arieli is also a master of the interplay between the main plot and subplot. But apart from the various subplots and complications, each character constitutes a dramatic story in his or her own right. In addition, each character is connected to the plot in a fully operative way, but so as to give us a sense of the time as well. Despite all this, Arieli often thwarts the reader's suspension of disbelief: Is it likely that an intelligent young Jewish woman, from a cultured family in Russia, will fall in love with an Arab vendor?

In the dramatic improbability of that situation, the reader eventually sees the author's reasons for that choice: namely, this is a dramatic device that evokes the sense of failure attached to the characters, their ruined personal lives and the failure of the land to provide "solutions" to their problems. There is the uprooted, over-intellectual Jew pitted against the Arab who is a "native son." Arieli does not try to cover the situation, or to apologize for it: The value-system the newcomers brought with them, as Socialists and Zionists, is challenged in this encounter with the land and with the Arab. As a result, there is a skepticism that marks Arieli's characters as well as the implied author. In much of Arieli's work, there is the sad note that the encounter with the land is the final encounter with the self and with a strained reality. Even the characters who could be redeemed by love end with a sense of loss and unfulfillment.

In encountering the new land, it is not only the Jewish intellectuals who are uprooted. Even the supposedly "practical" characters, such as Fogel, the young "shomer" who is the symbol of grounded sanity, is afflicted with a malaise. This unsettling situation is made worse by the plot's own instabilities, thereby diverting the story from the reader's expectations: Naomi, the strong-willed young woman, can fall in love with the handsome Fogel, or with the self-effacing student, Yunter – with anyone, it seems, other than her alleged fiance. She becomes the arch-manipulator and arch-catalyst in the play. The four members of the commune are nothing new to her; she had met their likes in Russia. Moreover, the old self-doubt exhibited by some of these men bores her; she is in search of something new in the East, a man who will not waver, but will cling to his goal without compromising.

Ironically, she finds this in the Arab vendor, Ali, in his total dedication to avenging the death of his father. In his simple tenacity, he represents to Naomi – herself a refugee of failed ideals – the model of an uncomplicated man. Yet she does not aspire to a simple and uncomplicated existence for herself. There is an element of destructiveness (as well as self-destructiveness) in the fact that she is capable of having and mastering any man she chooses; what she wants to do is to make her man a slave to her whims and her very theatrical

foibles. Her cynical relation to the weakness of men is borne out by reality.

The other active character in the play is Fogel, the "shomer" – and he and Naomi relate in different ways to Ali: he sees the Arab as infiltrating the orchard he is guarding; she sees the Arab as something of a "noble savage." Between them, they exhibit the two extreme poles of the relation to Arabs in Hebrew literature: fear and fascination, threat and attraction.[11] In Arieli's drama, Arabs are portrayed as people who belong to the locale, Jews as a foreign element introducing destruction into the dormant East.

Arieli's is not the first play to have been written in Palestine, although it is the first to depict an Arab in a central role. The relations of the characters to Ali varies, and Arieli avoids stereotyping the Arab, as so much of previous literature had done. Another departure from previous molds is that "Allah Karim" is an ironic play: it does not celebrate Jewish settlement in Palestine, and it is devoid of sentiment or nostalgia; on the contrary, it portrays the rootlessness and inauthenticity of most of the characters. Except for the Arab, the male characters are burned-out idealists, beyond redemption. Arieli's characters do not dance the horah; the situation is not ameliorated.

The play ends with the death of Fogel, in an encounter with Arabs. The one-time romantic revolutionary had been bent upon self-destruction. His existence is shattered by his own sick soul. He had taken to drinking, as a way of escaping his no-exit situation. Fogel wounded an Arab shepherd who had been grazing his sheep on Fogel's territory. The shepherd died, and his blood had to be avenged. Ali kills Fogel; he also attacks Naomi for blocking his road to Nablus. She breaks the medallion she has been wearing; the studious Yunter tries to hang himself with the cord.

Bronskul, the "artiste" poet and Naomi's erstwhile fiance, is mocked by her for being a "poetaster" singing the glories of the land while ignoring the reality. In this she is reflecting Arieli's own attitude regarding the sort of belletristic poetry that does not address the ills of society. She sees writers as superfluous beings, content to praise beauty but live in squalor. Further, Naomi is something of a she-devil in Ali's world as well: despite his dedication to his vendetta, he becomes dominated by her and is made to change his course – after which she no longer finds any interest in him.

In the concluding scene, Naomi expresses hatred for the weak and nerve-wrecked men. There is only the lesson taught her by Ali: "Allah

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[11]G. Ramras-Rauch, *The Arab in Israeli Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

Karim" ("God is great") – and these are the last words of the play as Naomi leaves the stage with a vigorous stride. Despite the dramatic effect, there is an irony that cannot be avoided: Naomi is devoid of any belief in a romantic quest for something that will excite and captivate her; like the others, she too is afflicted with a certain ennui....

All in all, this is a play about choices: the active characters are those who choose their way of life, even if the choice is not conventional. In this, we have something of Arieli's self portrait and the composite portrait of the Second Aliyah. Judged on their own, however, Arieli's early works reflect modernity, daring and commitment: to literature, language and the new experience.

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In Search of "Authentic" Anglo-Jewish Poetry: The Debate over A. M. Klein's *Poems* (1944)[1]

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Marvin Fox once observed that "no Jewish education can ignore...the challenges to Jewish morality posed by contemporary society." His own interest in Jewish philosophy, I suspect, has been stimulated in part by precisely this effort. The study of Jewish philosophy is critically important, he believes, because "more than any other Jewish intellectual enterprise [it] has always arisen as a response to intellectual challenges posed by the cultures and civilizations in which the Jewish people found themselves."[2]

The paper that follows, while outside the realm of Jewish philosophy, focuses on a contemporary example of this age-old confrontation. Specifically, it deals with the debate over a volume of poems written by Canada's foremost Jewish poet, A. M. Klein (1909-1972), and published by the Jewish Publication Society of America in 1944. Correspondence surrounding this volume, reposited in the JPS archives, sheds new light on North American Jewish cultural life in the 1940s and raises two questions that, following Fox's lead, I consider to be of central importance: First, given the challenges posed by the

[1]An earlier version of this paper was read before the Association for Jewish Studies Conference in 1984. I am grateful to Dr. Usher Caplan for his comments on that version.

[2]Marvin Fox, "Translating Jewish Thought into Curriculum: Moral Philosophy in Jewish Education," in Seymour Fox and Geraldine Rosenfield (eds.), *From the Scholar to the Classroom* (New York, 1977), pp. 59, 81.

surrounding culture, what standards should English language Jewish poetry seek to uphold – what qualities, in other words, identify a poem as being *authentically* Jewish? Second, and more broadly, what kind of editorial controls should a Jewish publisher, faced with these challenges, seek to exercise – what should it agree to print and what should it reject?[3]

Before proceeding to these questions, some background is required. A. M. Klein was born in Ratno, Volhynia (a fact that was later concealed[4]) in 1909, and shortly thereafter his parents immigrated to Canada. He obtained a traditional Jewish education, attended Baron Byng High School and McGill University, became active in the Young Judaea Zionist youth organization, studied law at the Université de Montréal, opened in 1934 a law office with his friend Max Garmaise, and a year later, on his twenty-sixth birthday, married his high school sweetheart, Bessie Kozlov. By then he was already a recognized poet. He had published poetry dealing with secular and Jewish themes as early as 1927, saw his poems published in the prestigious magazine *Poetry* in 1928, and soon became a regular contributor to the *Menorah Journal*, *Opinion*, as well as other secular and Jewish periodicals in Canada and the United States. By the age of 23 he had already written over 150 poems, and had been the subject of an article in the *Canadian Forum*. As a young writer, he was a leading member of what Leon Edel calls the "Montreal Group,"[5] a miniature Canadian Bloomsbury consisting of young, alert, politically engaged, and rebellious cultural figures.[6]

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[3]On the history of the Jewish Publication Society and its changing publication standards, see Jonathan D Sarna, *JPS: The Americanization of Jewish Culture* (Philadelphia, 1989).

[4]Usher Caplan *Like One That Dreamed: A Portrait of A. M. Klein* (Toronto, 1982), p. 17.

[5]Leon Edel, "Marginal *Keri* and Textual *Chetiv:* The Mystic Novel of A. M. Klein," in Seymour Mayne (ed.) *The A. M. Klein Symposium* (Ottawa, 1975), pp. 19-20; idem, "The Montreal Group," in Edgar A. Collard, *The McGill You Knew* (Don Mills, Ontario, 1975), pp. 112-122.

[6]Caplan, *Like One That Dreamed*, is the basic biography, and I have followed it closely; see also Elijah E. Palnick, "A. M. Klein: A Biographical Study" (Unpublished M. H. L. Thesis, Hebrew Union College, 1959); Mayne (ed.) *The A. M. Klein Symposium;* Adam G. Fuerstenberg, "The Poet and the Tycoon: The Relationship Between A. M. Klein and Samuel Bronfman," *The Journal of the Canadian Jewish Historical Society* 5 (October 1981), pp. 49-69; "A. M. Klein's Montreal," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 19:2 (Summer 1984) [special

On September 16, 1931 Klein submitted a volume entitled "Greeting On This Day" to the Jewish Publication Society in Philadelphia. The Society's then resident poet and poetry critic, Solomon Solis-Cohen, aged 74, read the manuscript, and reported that there was "a good deal of first rate material there," and "a whole lot which is very bad." He felt that "the book could not be published without somebody reading each verse, and suggesting to the author that he omit certain things or make a selection from them." Stockbroker Oscar Loeb, who also read the manuscript, was far more enthusiastic. He called Klein a "sage and poet in one" and predicted that he "might easily climb to greatness." Other readers, however, felt uncomfortable with the title poem – a militantly pro-Zionist response to the 1929 Hebron riots – and complained that the collection as a whole was too grim, even "repellant." Rabbi Max D. Klein was even more negative; he growled that the poems had "too much of death and worms, spit, spittle and spew." As a result, the volume was rejected in 1933. Klein revised the volume and resubmitted it under the title "Gestures Hebraic" in 1935, but to no avail. Solis-Cohen complained about "the same faults that I found before," and the volume was rejected again.[7]

In 1940, Behrman House in New York did publish a volume of Klein's poetry – his first – entitled *Hath Not A Jew.* It contained "Greeting On This Day," as well as a good many other Jewish poems, many earlier published in contemporary Jewish periodicals. The volume created a minor stir in Jewish cultural circles, due in no small measure to Ludwig Lewisohn, one of the community's most distinguished literary figures and a proud Jew. Lewisohn, in his foreword, pronounced Klein "the first contributor of authentic Jewish poetry to the English language," and "the only Jew who has ever contributed a new note of style, of expression, of creative enlargement to the poetry of

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issue]; and Pierre Anctil, "A. M. Klein: The Poet and His Relations with French Quebec," in Moses Rischin (ed.) *The Jews of North America* (Detroit, 1987), pp. 247-264.

[7]JPS Publication Committee Minutes, Feb. 7, 1932, p. 2; A. M. Klein to JPS (September 16, 1931); S. Solis-Cohen to JPS (February 8, 1932); Oscar Loeb to Cyrus Adler (nd, February 1932); Harry Ettelson to Julius Grodinsky (March 30, 1932); Max Klein to JPS (nd, March 1932); Julius Grodinsky to A. M. Klein (June 20, 1933); A. M. Klein to Isaac Husik (March 1, 1935); Solomon Solis-Cohen to Jack Solis-Cohen (June 11, 1935); Isaac Husik to A. M. Klein (July 17, 1935) all in Klein file (copies in author's possession) unpublished books series, JPS Papers, Philadelphia Jewish Archives Center, Balsh Institute, Philadelphia, PA. [hereafter: PJAC]. The brief account in Caplan, *Like One That Dreamed*, p. 71 needs to be revised on the basis of these new documents.

that tongue." This was high praise indeed, and the Jewish Publication Society soon sat up and took notice.[8]

Surviving correspondence suggests that Judge Louis Levinthal of Philadelphia, then chairman of the JPS Publication Committee, took the initiative in soliciting a new volume of poetry from Klein, apparently at Lewisohn's behest.[9] The fact that Levinthal himself came from an East European Orthodox background, played a prominent role in the Zionist movement, and had turned to law, just as Klein did, may help to explain the personal interest that he took in the poet; he found in Klein a kindred spirit. Whatever the case, Klein was clearly flattered. He began working on a new collection at once, and boasted to his friend, the writer and critic A. J. M. Smith, that the Society had a "subscription list of five thousand" – a larger audience by far than the average book of poetry could ever hope to reach.[10] As it turned out, Klein's book was not distributed to the entire general membership, as many JPS books then were, but was published only as an alternate selection, available just to members who specially selected it. Still, its first printing did amount to two thousand copies, which for poetry was a highly respectable figure.[11]

On February 18, 1942, Klein dispatched his manuscript, tentatively titled "Poems by A. M. Klein," directly to Judge Levinthal at his chambers. Levinthal read the manuscript, liked it, and turned it over to Solomon Grayzel, JPS editor since 1939, with the comment that "there is some really fine writing in this work and I have a feeling that the

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[8]A. M. Klein, *Hath Not A Jew....* (New York, 1940); Lewisohn's foreword is reprinted in Miriam Waddington (ed.) *The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein* (Toronto and Montreal, 1970), pp. 350-352. According to Caplan, *Like One That Dreamed*, pp. 71-74, Leo W. Schwartz put Klein in touch with Behrman House, which scheduled the book, then titled *Selected Poems*, for 1937. Owing to financial problems, the volume did not appear until 1940. Klein was reportedly disappointed "at the small amount of attention his book received from serious reviewers of poetry" (Caplan, p. 86). In Jewish cultural circles, however, the book seems to have won more notice.

[9]Palnick, "A. M. Klein," chapter 3, p. 13.

[10]Klein to A. J. M. Smith (November 28, 1941), reprinted in Mayne, *The A. M. Klein Symposium*, p. 1.

[11]Maurice Jacobs to A. M. Klein (December 20, 1943; January 3, 1944), Klein file, Box 24, Published Books correspondence, JPS Papers, PJAC [hereafter: Klein file, JPSP]; JPS Publication Committee Minutes (December 10, 1944), part II, p. 4: "This is a small book of 86 pages, and only 2,000 copies were printed. While The Society does not expect a large sale of a book of poetry, we feel it necessary to occasionally print such a book in order to encourage Jewish poets."

Society would enhance its own reputation if it published this...."[12] Following JPS policy, the manuscript was sent out to readers, and in this case they seem to have felt a particularly weighty responsibility. JPS had published only two other original books of modern poetry in its entire history going back to 1888 – Philip Raskin's *Songs of a Wanderer* (1917), and Jesse Sampter's *Brand Plucked From the Fire* (1937) – and neither proved particularly popular with members. American Jewish literature suffered in those days from what Milton Steinberg called a "poverty of poetic creation." While this stimulated JPS to continue the search for a native Jewish bard, it knew perfectly well that what members really craved in the midst of World War II was not somber poetry, but uplifting literature and lighthearted humor.[13]

II

At least eight different readers read Klein's manuscript, and each came back with a different opinion. Some loved the poems, others hated them, and most suggested deletions or substitutions. Grayzel, who found himself in the middle of this controversy, believed that the debate was futile: "it all boils down," he wrote, "to a matter of taste in poetry." Viewed from a historical perspective, however,the clash takes on a great deal more meaning, for it concerned nothing less than the standards by which Anglo-Jewish poetry should be judged. JPS, as the foremost publisher of Jewish books in English, perceived itself as the arbiter of Jewish culture; it saw its logo as equivalent to a community seal of approval. Before offering its imprimatur to Klein, it needed to be certain that he represented what authentic Anglo-Jewish poetry should be.[14]

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[12]A. M. Klein to Louis E. Levinthal (February 18, 1942); Louis Levinthal to Solomon Grayzel (Feb. 24, 1942), Klein file, JPSP.

[13]Milton Steinberg to Grayzel, (November 16, 1942), Klein file, JPSP; Sarna, *JPS*, esp. chapter 6. S. Felix Mendelsohn's *Let Laughter Ring*, a joke book published by JPS in 1941, went through at least six different printings and sold tens of thousands of copies.

[14]Solomon Grayzel to Louis Levinthal (August 16, 1942), Klein file, JPSP. Some of the evaluations of Klein's manuscript have not survived. We know that Rabbi Harry Ettelson of Memphis, Professor Shalom Spiegel of the Jewish Theological Seminary, and Henry Hurwitz of the *Menorah Journal* all recommended that the volume be published, but so far their letters have not turned up. What do exist are the letters back and forth between Klein and the JPS, and also the evaluations of Felix Gerson, Milton Steinberg, Julian Feibelman, Robert Abrahams, and Mortimer Cohen.

Robert Abrahams, a Philadelphia lawyer, author and poet, active in JPS, suggested a simple two-part test for evaluating volumes of poetry:

> Books of poetry to be worthy of publication should fall into either of two categories....First, those in which the poet has something of broad interest to say which will strike an immediate emotional response in the general reader. Second, a book in which the poems are of such high literary merit that even though the general reader may not value them, the discerning one will derive so much inspiration and stimulation from them as to warrant their publication, even though the audience will be limited.[15]

Klein's poems seemed to him to belong "in neither category," and he refused to recommend them. Klein, given the chance to respond, attacked Abrahams' scheme as "both wide enough to include everything and ambiguous enough to mean nothing." The first category, he complained, suggested to him that JPS "should publish the doggerel used to advertise Lifebuoy soap – its interests are broad, its response immediate, and its readers general." The second, he charged, "begs the question....Who is the discerning reader?"[16]

Julian Feibelman, the cultured Reform rabbi of New Orleans, employed a far more traditional and subjective standard to his criticism of Klein's poetry. He expected Jewish poetry to offer him "deep devotional refreshment," and to be "in keeping with the spirit of our past, in tradition, in history, and in faith itself." Only some of Klein's poems, he thought, passed muster. In a somewhat related vein, Felix Gerson, editor of the Philadelphia *Jewish Exponent*, insisted that poetry be judged on the basis of its "beauty" and "strength." He demanded that new offerings hold up not only in comparison to biblical and classical poetry, but Elizabethan poetry, Browning and Whitman as well. These lofty standards notwithstanding, he "unhesitatingly" recommended Klein's poems. By making them widely available, he wrote, "we would be honoring ourselves." Rabbi Mortimer Cohen, also of Philadelphia, scorned this approach as "anti-modern." He proposed instead yet another two-part standard for poetry: first, that modern Jewish poetry should speak in a modern idiom – not employ archaic forms as Klein did, and second that the poetry should reflect "some basic philosophy...of Jewish life and its values." Since he found Klein

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[15]Robert D. Abrahams to JPS (July 7, 1942), Klein file, JPSP.
[16]Klein to Louis Levinthal (August 7, 1942), Klein file, JPSP.

wanting on both counts, and thought besides that Klein "would not be read by any of our members," he voted for the manuscript's rejection.[17]

Klein, who at 33 was substantially younger than any of his critics, urged JPS to adopt a more flexible approach to poetry. Like so many modern poets, he refused to be straightjacketed by any single definition; poetry, he pointed out "has eluded definers *from time immemorial*." The only guidelines he employed were aesthetic ones: "emotion recorded in tranquility" (Wordsworth), "a surprising by a fine excess" (Keats), and "thought in blossom." *Jewish* poetry, he believed, implied a kind of dualism. Anticipating the most remarkable feature of his later books, particularly *The Rocking Chair* (1948) and *The Second Scroll* (1951), he identified himself as "the bearer of two cultures," writing "the thoughts of one, in the language of the other." His work, he thought, carried forward the same diaspora tradition as "the Arabic of Maimonides and the German of Heine."[18]

The significance of this debate over Anglo-Jewish poetry is two-fold. First, it largely mirrors a secular debate of the day, transferring questions of definition and standards into the Jewish realm, but without really adding anything new. When Klein showed his impatience with suggested standards and opined that "books of poetry published by the J.P.S. should be first of all – poetry," he was echoing a view then being expressed by many modern poets. Wallace Stevens, for example, explained in a note prepared for the *Oxford Anthology of American Literature* that "My intention in poetry is to write poetry: to reach and express that which, without any particular definition, everyone recognizes to be poetry, and to do this because I feel the need of doing it."[19]

The second significant fact about this debate is that only Klein himself really came to grips with the specific question of what defines "Anglo-*Jewish* poetry" – how, for example, it is to be distinguished from poetry that happens to be written by someone of the Jewish faith. Klein's understanding of his dual role – bearer of two cultures, mediating between the one and the other, searching for a Jewish idiom in the English language – is easy to understand today when such views have been widely echoed. But in 1942 these ideas had not yet been frequently expressed, and most Jewish writers had totally different

[17]Julian Feibelman to JPS (n.d.); Felix Gerson to JPS (May 18, 1942); Mortimer J. Cohen to Solomon Grayzel (July 24, 1942), all in Klein file, JPSP.

[18]Klein to Levinthal (August 7, 1942), Klein file, JPSP.

[19]Quoted in Samuel French Morse, *Wallace Stevens Poetry As Life* (New York, 1970), p. 113; see generally Charles Norman (ed.) *Poets on Poetry* (New York, 1965).

aspirations. Klein's conscious awareness of the special role reserved for the multi-cultural poet was a cry in the wilderness – a cry, one might add, that a Canadian Jewish poet living in the multi-cultural atmosphere of Montreal was much more likely to sound than his contemporaries in the United States. In Canada, Jewish writers faced no established literary tradition to which they were expected to conform. Expressions of bi- or multi-culturalism thus came easier to them than to their neighbors to the South, for they were consciously molding a new tradition rather than moving forward within an already established one.[20]

III

For all of his eloquence, Klein did not fully convince the literary moguls of JPS that his view of poetry was the right one. In mid-June 1943, after over a year of wrangling, the Society did accept his book for publication, but only with an important caveat – "that some of the poems submitted should be omitted from the volume." Leaving aside those poems that were objected to on literary grounds – Klein agreed that these "were not as good as those that remained"[21] – two major categories of poems were called into question: 1) poems deemed undignified, improper, or obscene, and 2) poems deemed blasphemous of God, or unduly critical of the Jewish people. Both categories reveal much about JPS's sense of propriety, for as a Jewish publisher, it felt obliged to uphold standards that would place it above reproach.

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[20]American Jewish poets at this time proposed far more apologetic and less sophisticated definitions than Klein did; see Philip M. Raskin (comp.) *Anthology of Modern Jewish Poetry* (New York, 1927), esp. p. 9; Louis Untermyer, "The Jewish Spirit in Modern American Poetry," *Menorah Journal* 7 (August 1921), pp. 121-122; and the general discussion in Louis Harap, *Dramatic Encounters* (New York, 1987), pp. 51-52. For Canada, see the roundtable on "Jewish Culture and Canadian Culture" in M. Weinfeld, W. Shaffir and I. Cotler, *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 315-342; and the illuminating comments of Seymour Mayne in his interview in the literary supplement of the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* (March 23, 1984), p. 1.

[21]Klein to Levinthal (July 1, 1943), Klein file, JPSP. Caplan, *Like One That Dreamed*, p. 55 claims that "rarely in his life did Klein stand for red-penciling." He reiterates this in a private letter to me (January 31, 1985), writing of Klein's "barely suppressed anger" at JPS for his treatment of him (see also Caplan, pp. 90-91.) The correspondence I have, however, does not quite support this interpretation. Although Klein clearly lamented some of the changes JPS imposed, he agreed that others would improve his manuscript, and he went out of his way to thank Grayzel for his "fastidious editing" when the book appeared.

The first category reflects, to a considerable degree, the temper of the times, considerably less liberated than our own. The Society, born in the late Victorian era, felt an obligation even to readers who had a high (or prudish) sense of morality, and sought to project an image of Jewish probity, dignity and righteousness, especially in matters concerning love and sex. Accordingly, when Rabbi Feibelman found "too much biology...mostly feminine" in Klein's poetry, that was a serious criticism. As a result of this and other suggestions, six love sonnets were deleted completely. A malediction on Hitler that he "be remembered if remembered at all,/ In the name of some newly found, particularly disgusting fly,/ Or in the writing on a privy wall," was also removed; the word "privy" proved objectionable. In addition, "gutter" was changed to "pavement," "ugly filth" became "ugly words," and at least one reader sought to tone down a steamy reference to "nine months" in relation to the birth of a first-born child. In this case, Klein put his foot down: "I am informed by my wife and by the Civil Code of the Province of Quebec," he wrote, "that the period of gestation is nine months."[22] The offending reference remained in place. One might note, however, that the Reconstructionist Haggadah, published at about the same time (1941), did censor the reference to those unseemly "nine months" from its translation of *"Ehad Mi Yodea,"* and the earlier Reform Haggadah (1923) deleted the "nine months" even from the original Hebrew.[23]

One final example of a poem deemed inappropriate on these grounds is Klein's "Psalm 154, A Song of Loves" which he described as "a benediction upon the Lord's poisonous chemicals." Half a dozen drugs including cannabis and morphine find praise here, and though Klein insisted that he only had in mind medicinal purposes, that "he would be a churl who would not be grateful for this piece of the Lord's creativeness," and that specifically in the case of morphine he had himself "on several occasions received the blessings of its effects, and they are precisely as described in the last lines of the poem," JPS was unyielding; all Klein's protests came to naught.[24]

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[22]Caplan, *Like One That Dreamed*, pp. 90-91; Klein to Levinthal (July 1, 1943); Solomon Grayzel to Klein (December 3, 1943), Klein file, JPSP; see Miriam Waddington, *The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein* (Toronto, 1974), pp. 257, 213, 230, 221.

[23]Mordecai Kaplan et al (eds.) *The New Haggadah for the Pesah Seder* (New York, 1941), pp. 155-57; *The Union Haggadah* (New York, 1923), p. 88.

[24]Klein to Levinthal (July 1, 1943); Grayzel to Klein (December 3, 1943), Klein file, JPSP; Waddington, *Collected Poems*, p. 256; Klein reprinted the poem as "Grace Before Poison" in his *The Second Scroll* (1951; NCL Classic edition,

Moving on to the second group of objectionable poems, those deemed blasphemous or unduly critical, there was, for example, the poem "Rabbi Yom-Tob of Mayence Harangues His God." Under JPS pressure, "harangues" was toned down to the more acceptable "petitions," and printed. By contrast, Klein's "A Psalm of Resignation," with its plaintive cry, "For who indeed can keep his quarrel hot/ And vigorous his cries,/ When he who is blasphemed, He answers not,/ Replies no word, not even a small sharp word?" proved too unsettling. It was excluded. So was "Kalman Rhapsodizes" with its uncomplimentary reference to angels, as well as "Psalm 173," a frightening evocation of inner madness that could easily be interpreted in a Jewishly negative way (but in fact probably referred to the mental illness that later silenced Klein's pen altogether.)[25] The JPS sought to appeal to a full spectrum of Jews, and felt that it had to keep within certain acceptable theological bounds. Furthermore, there were those who questioned the wisdom of projecting too "hopeless a cry in a day when nearly the only thing left to the Jew is hope."[26] Klein understood: "The J.P.S., which knows not who its evesdroppers [sic] are," he wrote to Judge Levinthal, "cannot afford to give its imprimatur to something which the enemies of Israel might use against us." He realized, since he himself occupied a responsible position in the Jewish community, that prudence was the better part of wisdom. On second thought, however, he was not so certain. "We have indeed come to a sorry pass," he mused, "when we cannot even afford the luxury of self-criticism, lest the foe seek to confound us out of our own mouths."[27]

Poems finally appeared late in 1944. Klein pronounced himself "greatly pleased." "Even the fastidious editing, against which I sometime struggled," he wrote Solomon Grayzel, "is in the totality now justified and confirmed."[28] But if *Poems* represented the true search for authentic "Anglo-Jewish" poetry, we are left with a paradox. On the one hand, according to Klein, authentic Anglo-Jewish poetry involves

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Toronto, 1982), p. 137. Klein's acquaintance with drugs and apparent use of them deserves further study. In his letter to Levinthal, he identifies the drugs alluded to in the poem as cannabis ("hemp of India"), aconite ("monk's hood"), belladonna ("nightshade"), and digitalis ("blossom of the heart"); he also mentions by name hemlock and cocaine.

[25]Klein to Levinthal (July 1, 1943); Grayzel to Klein (December 3, 1943), Klein file, JPSP; Waddington, *Collected Poems*, pp. 239, 261, 49, 260.

[26]Felix Gerson to Grayzel (May 18, 1942), Klein file, JPSP.

[27]Klein to Levinthal (July 1, 1943), Klein file, JPSP.

[28]Klein to Levinthal (January 5, 1945); Klein to Grayzel (January 5, 1945), Klein file, JPSP.

mediation: writing the thoughts of one culture in the language of the other. On the other hand, authenticity also mandates so great a concern for community interests that the poet is constrained from giving full expression to his thoughts; he is, in other words, mediator and censor at one and the same time. The extent to which this dilemma – which, *mutatis mutandis*, has affected culturally creative Jews throughout diaspora history – subsequently influenced Klein's shift away from Anglo-Jewish poetry, I do not know. Most critics interpret the shift as one toward greater universalism as well as an effort to achieve wider acclaim.[29] But I am intrigued by the following stanza in Klein's "Portrait of the Poet as Landscape" (1948) that may allude to the dilemma I am suggesting, even if it points to no solution:

> O schizoid solitudes! O purities
> curdling upon themselves! Who live for themselves,
> or for each other, but for nobody else;
> desire affection; private and public loves;
> are friendly, and then quarrel and surmise
> the secret perversions of each other's lives.[30]

[29]Cf. Caplan, *Like One That Dreamed*, p. 91.
[30]Waddington, *Collected Poems*, p. 333.

52

Tadeusz Rozewicz Faces the Holocaust Past

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Europeans, especially those nations who were more or less directly involved in the extermination of Jews, have yet to face up to the Holocaust. What is true of Europeans generally, has also been true of European writers, who have done little to forge in their souls "the uncreated conscience of their race." German writers have tried, as indeed they should, more assiduously than others, but still have fallen far short of the mark.[1] Austrian writers have failed so miserably to waken the conscience of their countrymen that a former Nazi was elected to the presidency of the country in an orgy of self-righteousness. And in the wake of the Klaus Barbie trial, and after the appearance of two films: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah,* and Marcel Ophuls's *Hotel Terminus,* it is clear that the French have yet to begin to deal with the extent of their complicity in genocide. Unfortunately, this inability of European literature to face its past has been further covered up by deconstructionist literary criticism, promulgated by a former Nazi collaborator seeking to efface his own shameful past.

Poles have perhaps had an even more difficult time facing the cultural and moral stain of Auschwitz, which flourished on Polish soil, because their role has been more ambiguous than that of the Germans. The French and Poles were truly both victims and perpetrators in a way that was not true of Germans and Austrians, who were, with only minor exceptions, pure perpetrators. Captives in their own land, living under

[1]See Ruth K. Angress, "A 'Jewish Problem' in German Postwar Fiction," *Modern Judaism,* V (1985), 215-233.

the harshest occupation known to man, Polish citizens were often compelled to do what the Germans ordered them to. Poles did not conceive "the final solution," to be sure, but a significant number of them helped implement it. Some were willing and even eager collaborators. Others collaborated for profit, and still others to save themselves and their families, while the majority perhaps did nothing worse than watch. And, not to be forgotten, a small heroic minority risked their own lives and the lives of their closest relatives to frustrate "the final solution," to oppose Nazism, and to save individual Jews, as well as the honor of their country and their religion.

The Poles, of course, suffered their own staggering losses during the Nazi occupation and during the bitter warfare that took place on Polish soil in the years 1939-1945; and since the war they have lived a more or less captive nation under a succession of more or less cruel and repressive regimes. It is therefore understandable that Polish artists and writers have not been quick or eager to confront their own complicity in the crimes against humanity that took place on their soil. Nevertheless, Tadeusz Rozewicz, a Polish poet and former resistance fighter who has written many powerful poems about post-Holocaust Poland, takes a step toward forging the "uncreated conscience of his race" in a masterful story titled *"Wycieczka do muzeum"* ("Excursion to a Museum.")[2]

The story, as the title indicates, is about a museum tour that starts as a rather festive occasion on a brilliant autumn day. The opening description of the visitors to the museum depicts them in a holiday mood: "...girls in colored sweaters, men in elegant shoes, and women with young children. They bring with them baskets of food and photo equipment." But the author soon makes it clear that there is an ironic twist to the festive mood. It is not an ordinary museum that is being visited but the museum at Auschwitz – that is to say, not only a museum but a monument commemorating (or a grim reminder of) man's inhumanity to man. One of the first things to greet the holiday visitors is a book stall run by an old crone hawking her wares: books about "deportations, transports,...torture, and the burning of human bodies."

An excursion to a museum usually affords instruction and delight. But this museum turns out to be a house of horrors. Moreover, it turns out that the visitors to the museum are more interested in lurid entertainment than in learning human compassion. The fact that they

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[2]*Wycieczka do Muzeum*, Warszawa, 1972. Czytelink. Publication date of the title story given as 1959. To my knowledge this story has not yet appeared in an English version. The passages cited here have been translated by Roslyn Hirsch.

are visiting the remains of a "death factory" does not dampen their spirits. Indeed, the first question asked of the guide reflects the crowd's lurid interests: "Sir, where is the gallows?"

The crowd then moves to the gallows, which is preserved in a rather seedy state of repair, on ground "...overgrown with weeds," and "littered" with various kinds of organic and inorganic refuse. Rozewicz's description of the gallows, which I assume is accurate from a mimetic standpoint, also functions in a symbolic perspective. The gallows exists in a "wasteland" atmosphere reminiscent of T. S. Eliot's poem of that title and of his *Preludes* ("The burnt-out ends of smoky days./ And now a gusty shower wraps/ The grimy scraps/ Of withered leaves about your feet/ And newspapers from vacant lots....") The circus atmosphere is established by one of the visitors who describes to no one in particular how he would have treated the former official who had been hanged on the gallows. "I would hang him till he was within an inch of his life, then I would hang him again – five times, until he finally croaked."

This outburst of moral indignation stands out against the complacency of the rest of the crowd. It is characteristic of this crowd that no one responds to the unnamed man's outburst. Rozewicz does not cater to fond human illusions. The people on the excursion act as if they are treading on ordinary ground. But the ground of Auschwitz, soaked in the blood of innocent victims (Jewish as well as non-Jewish), is either hallowed or accursed: A hell sanctified only by the suffering of the victims. Lacking in sensitivity as they (or their forebears) once lacked compassion, the visitors also lack the insight to realize that their freely willed behavior is a bizarre imitation of the coerced behavior of the former inmates. As they turn from the gallows, "The door of the block opened, and the people started pushing through a narrow corridor." When the camp was active, prisoners were pushed through the corridor by SS guards or by Ukrainian or Polish functionaries. These vacationers, pushing to get into one of the infamous "blocks," are a mockery of the reality that the museum is intended to commemorate.

Not only are they a mockery, they trivialize the horror. Nothing else can be expected, of course. The visitors have not come here to suffer or to mourn, and they certainly do not want to fall into gloomy thoughts, so they turn the "monument" into a circus. "Is it worth it to go in there [to see the movie]?" one of the visitors asks. So natural a question in a normal world, but so absurd in the context of Auschwitz. In a normal situation, on a normal tour, the question would mean something like, "Is the movie interesting?" or "Will it give me pleasure, or edify me, entertain me?" But in the Auschwitz context, and in the context of the story, and given the carnival atmosphere and the

insensitivity of the prospective viewers, what can possibly make their effort worthwhile? What they cannot understand is that their "humanness" (that is, this callous indifference to the suffering of "outsiders") is what made Auschwitz possible. As they continue pushing to get in to see the movie, for example, a woman cries out, "Let us out. People are shoving." Whereupon, one of the other visitors, a male, comments to her, "Aren't you shoving yourself, Missy?" (*panieneczka*). The insensitivity of the visitors prevents them from recognizing the grotesque irony of their situation, which is, however, clearly stressed by the narrator. In their pushing and shoving to get into the block they are a distorted reflection of the inmates who were pushed into the blocks against their will by sadistic guards and other camp functionaries.

The film turns out to be the "usual" Auschwitz fare, which the narrator describes in a series of verbal images that convey the visual images being seen by the visitors: "Prisoners. Corpses, Nurses. The living dead. Another pile of corpses. Children, nurses, doctors." The viewers apparently draw no parallels between the images on the screen and their own present reality, or even between the images and a living historical past. They might as well be watching a film about Mars or some other distant planet. As the viewers emerge from the screening room, squinting, the guide feels obliged to give them a lecture (which apparently falls on deaf ears) about decorum. People, he moralizes, especially males, play and laugh on this accursed ground, as if nothing unusual or tragic had happened here. What the guide seems not to understand is that though these people are at the museum they are here merely on an excursion. They did not come to recapture the past, certainly not to mourn or honor the dead. They are here for fun, on an excursion, a day in the country, a picnic.

Perhaps the guide's lecture does remind some in the crowd of where they are, but not, it would seem, in a very constructive way, for though the talk returns to the business at hand, to the brutalities of Auschwitz, it does so in a trivial way. Someone asks to see "the hair," and then a mother asks her son Ignace whether he knows where they keep the hair and prostheses. Someone in the crowd, who does not see the point of looking at hair and artificial limbs, turns out to be at least a second-time visitor who adds some noteworthy information about the deterioration of the museum: it is losing its artifacts. Ten years ago this place had been overflowing with hair and prostheses. Now there seems to have been a quantitative diminution. Why? What has happened? Have the authorities who run the museum decided to sanitize it? Or have ten years' worth of visitors pilfered some of the artifacts as "souvenirs?" Or is the speaker perhaps remembering inaccurately? Is

he, perhaps, merely imagining that the museum was once overflowing? Whatever the answer to these questions, the conversation itself never rises above the quantitative level. There is no expression of moral outrage (as there had been earlier by the man contemplating the gallows). Perhaps the most perceptive of the visitors is the young boy in the blue suit (is it Ignace or some other boy?) who wants to know what kind of museum this is anyway. He at least recognizes that Auschwitz does not fit the conventional definition of a museum.

The guide himself, who is trying to bring Auschwitz to life for the visitors, combines statistics and dead facts with moral outrage. Explaining the gallows, he starts with the numerical datum that ten prisoners were hanged all at the same time. But as if that were not enough to qualify as a crime, or perhaps because he wants to make the experience come alive by focusing on an individual, he slides into the story of Teuton bestiality and disregard of all civilized law in hanging one young man repeatedly until the execution is finally successful, in spite of the fact that civilized custom demands a reprieve for the prisoner when the first attempt at execution has failed. Indeed, the guide tries to establish a historical context in which the behavior of the Germans in 1939-1945 is compared to "the character and behavior of the Teuton Crusaders," behavior which apparently has been kept alive for him not in history books, but in two works of historical fiction.

As his lecture continues, the guide's narrative shifts into a confessional vein. Yet, even this confessional vein is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the horrors. The guide is trying to express his moral outrage, but he can do so only in absurd quantitative images. Moved to confess his disturbed evening ponderings to his audience, he tells them that these meditations wind up in "calculations," absurd estimates of how high the corpses would go if piled on top of one another, or how far they would reach if laid side by side. Later in the tale the guide takes another crack at converting quantitative data into moral reality. After the narrator has revealed that "the guide, a former prisoner, gives the most accurate information," he permits the reader to listen in on some of this information:

> He provides information on such matters as numbers, the weight of the clothes, women's hair, thousands of shaving brushes and bowls, millions of burned bodies, and into all this information he weaves philosophical remarks, moralistic comments, aphorisms of his own, as well as citations from lectures. He wants to bring the visitor in close contact with the "Hell" enclosed behind the gates of the museum. He keeps emphasizing to the visitors, doing his best to explain, that whatever is to be found here now is but a tiny fragment of what was once here, and that it is impossible to describe what actually took place on these grounds. It was Hell.

But Rozewicz brilliantly demonstrates the guide's failure to describe the Hell that was the true Auschwitz by the interplay of dialogue which undermines the guide as it moves the story forward, forcing the reader to focus as much on what goes unreported as on what is reported. When Ignace's mother, for example, has to interrupt the guide's musings to tell her son to be quiet and "listen to what the man is saying," the reader can infer that the guide's words have been falling on deaf ears.

The guide's speech in the next paragraph confirms the accuracy of the earlier comment by one of the visitors that ten years ago the place was "overflowing" with those macabre reminders of the actual conditions pervading the camp in its heyday. The guide announces that they are going to "tour the entire museum" and that the visitors "will see everything there is to see," but he immediately must qualify his assertion: "Everything will be here. Everything, although not much remains here now." The guide's qualification is ambiguous. He may be saying only that the original museum materials have been depleted or that the materials left in the museum cannot convey the volume and depth of human suffering and degradation of the original "living" Auschwitz (that is, the "everything" that "remains here now" is the mere flotsam and jetsam of human suffering, which are only a poor reminder of the actual degradation of the human spirit that took place in the camp).

The guide's next statement penetrates, consciously or unconsciously, to the pith of the museum. "What is here," he advises, "is symbolic." The sheer quantitative bulk of Auschwitz is overwhelming, as we know from the guide's own evening ruminations and from the narrator's report of the guide's exposition. The guide realizes that contemplating the number of corpses is a dead-end business leading to absurd measurements. So he now tries turning to the qualitative, in fact, the symbolic. He tells his audience that "...what there is is symbolic. Take, for example, the few Jewish prayer shawls hanging in this hall. The older people know what the Jews used to look like while they were at prayer." In symbolic terms what becomes important is not what is present, but precisely what is absent. What is missing, of course, not only from the museum but from Poland is the three million Polish Jews who succumbed to the savagery of Nazism while so many of their neighbors looked on, and, in some instances, contributed to the slaughter. What the prayer shawls symbolize are the missing Jews who once used to worship the Lord in them.

The guide presents the "facts" in a straightforward, understated way: "As we know, Hitler murdered the Jews. Now there are almost no Jews in Poland." (It should be remembered that this story [1959]

antedated the Russian-instigated expulsions of Jews conducted in 1967 and 1968 which left Poland to all intents and purposes *Judenrein*.) While the guide does not seem to be conscious of ironies the same cannot be said for Rozewicz. The guide tells the visitors what they want to hear (or else he is spouting the official line): "**As we know**," he says, "**Hitler** murdered the Jews." As Jake Barnes says in response to a sentimental outburst by Lady Brett in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, "Isn't it pretty to think so?" The Germans and Austrians would like to claim no less. Responsibility should go right to the top and only to the top. We were all good people doing our duty, as former Nazi Kurt Waldheim puts it, obeying orders, as Adolf Eichmann put it. But Rozewicz is a much more intelligent and perceptive moralist than the guide, or Waldheim, or Eichmann, or even than Eichmann's formidably intelligent apologist, Hannah Arendt. He has the conscience of an artist, not of a politician or a philosopher. Rozewicz knows that it took more than one man to kill six million Jews and three million Poles, and many millions of other nationalities.

The guide himself falters at this point, sliding from the symbolic to the mimetic, descending into talk about plans to build a perfect replica of the barrack of the women's camp in Birkenau, as if such a replica could reconstitute the reality that the film, the hair, the shaving brushes, the millions of burned bodies have already failed to body forth. At any rate, it really does not matter what the guide has been saying, since no one appears to be listening. Now, another couple emerges from the faceless mass, this time a mother and her daughter, Grazynka. More triviality. Grazynka wants to see the movie, while her mother wants to stuff some chocolate into her (another ironic reminder of both the severe starvation conditions under which prisoners lived and of the callousness of the visitors to the museum). Apparently finding the guide's commentary too dry, Grazynka's mother turns to another visitor who also happens to be a survivor, Joseph, and asks him to "tell us what happened" because not realizing that the guide is also a survivor, she feels that he is merely spouting book knowledge. She expects Joseph to be able to re-create the reality because "You saw everything and you know all about it." Joseph, however, is a reluctant witness, and while he tells the story differently from the guide, he does not come any closer to reproducing the "living reality." Joseph tries to pin down at least the banal physical details, stumbling into what almost seems to be an irrelevant note: there were no trees "at that time" (that is, when the German death machine was in full operation), and the "land was flat and bare."

Joseph started out by asking, "What is there to tell?" again reminiscent of T. S. Eliot, this time of the lines in *The Love Song of J.*

Alfred Prufrock: "...That is not what I meant at all./ That is not it, at all." What a strange question for *Joseph* to ask! There must be hundreds of books by survivors bearing witness, many of them in Polish, trying to deliver some sense of what it felt like to be on the receiving end of the most brutal atrocities ever committed in the recorded history of the human race. So Joseph, who wonders what there is to tell, starts with the landscape. The museum at Auschwitz is not Auschwitz, neither is the present landscape the reality of 1940-1945. Now there are trees to break up the starkness of the flat land. Back in the early forties the land was bare, without sheltering and decorative trees. But like the guide, Joseph gets sidetracked into inanity. In fact, Mr. Jospeh does not do as good a job as the guide, for he digresses into blatant inaccuracies. For some reason (either deliberately or because the memory is still too painful) he tells a story that contradicts what all other witnesses have told, as well as what has just been shown in the film.

Joseph asserts that the new arrivals were received "politely and efficiently," and he seems to be saying it seriously. But the efficiency is, ironically (whether Joseph intends it that way or not), the efficiency of the death machine; and the "politeness" (perhaps an unwitting comment on what had become of the famed Austro-Germanic *Gemutlichkeit*) is the mock politeness underscored in some previous descriptions of the unloading ramp, including that of Joseph's gifted Auschwitz-survivor countryman, Tadeusz Borowski, who describes the brutality and cruelty of the unloading ramp in the story "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen" (1946). One would assume that Rozewicz had read Borowski's account, and also that he is depending on the reader to know enough about Auschwitz to realize that Joseph is turning reality upside down. Lest the reader miss the point, however, Rozewicz has Joseph continue by denying that there were children on the unloading ramp, though the narrator has described the content of the film about the inmates of Auschwitz with the sentence, among others: "Children, nurses doctors," and though eyewitness Borowski relates a most cruel and disquieting incident involving a mother and child on the ramp. Then Joseph makes the bizarre assertion that "When someone left...suit, shirt, and other belongings...were returned. They were even all washed and ironed." But the reality of Auschwitz, testified to many times over, was that prisoners were never released. If they left at all it was by escaping or through the chimneys. Thus, the "when they left..." in fact means never!

Joseph's fanciful account is further undermined by Ignace's mother, who comments somewhat later, "I don't even know if it's worth going [to Birkenau]. I can't bear to look at the children's clothes." At least Ignace's mother shows a modicum of compassion, but even that is later

eclipsed by her trivializing remarks about the pacifiers, and her positivist-historian skepticism that they may not be part of the "authentic" detritus of the death camp, but rather "a display" that has been added, an observation that trails off into further absurdities, including one that the pacifiers are made of rubber, and rubber rots.

This paroxysm of trivializing having played itself out, Rozewicz shifts the conversation back to one of the anomalous elements in the descriptive opening paragraph ("The crowds streamed past the long blocks of buildings. The windows were open....Children were playing...."). Somebody remarks to Ignace's mother, almost as though commenting on the irony of the opening paragraph, about the oddity of people living normal, and apparently unreflective and unperturbed, lives in the shadow of this center of infamy. When someone comments, "...I can't understand how people can live here," Ignace's mother responds with the question, "Where?", an indication that she sees no link between past and present, and a clear signal that she has drawn no parallels between the children who were beaten, starved, and gassed and her own pampered Ignace. Some more chatter by the visitors is followed by the guide's exposition on Kaduk's Chapel, which Rozewicz cleverly uses to underscore the ambiguity of the Polish role in the genocide. *Rapportfuhrer* Kaduk's name, the guide points out, suggests that "...he might have been of Polish descent, because you don't find names like that among the Germans." Kaduk, then, who may have been a Pole, was a "...sadist who tortured prisoners."

No one in the Polish crowd responds to this bit of disturbing information. No one even bothers to deny that a Pole would have tortured fellow Poles (of Jewish persuasion), and no one, apparently, finds the information in the least bit shocking. Instead, the conversation once again falls into banalities about the roll-call bell, but less than banal, and indeed revealing, is the guide's observation that the bell that used to call [Jewish] prisoners to the murderous *appel* was "probably stolen from a church." Not only the prayer shawls are symbolic but the bell, too. Its symbolism testifies to the impotence of the Poles in the face of the Teutonic barbarians. They have not been able to prevent the Nazis from defacing a sacred place, from stealing the church bell and perverting it from its intended use of tolling people to prayer and announcing both solemn and festive occasions. In one sense, then, the bell symbolizes the victimhood of the Poles themselves, just as the prayer shawls symbolize the victimhood of the Jews. But in another sense the bell symbolizes the failure of the Catholic Church generally (so graphically portrayed in Rolf Hocchuth's *The Deputy*) and of the the Polish Catholic Church in particular to intercede in behalf of the victims and to try to prevent the slaughter. Thus, the

church bell symbolizes not only the tragedy of Poland as a nation but also the Catholic Church's (and especially the Polish Catholic Church's) complicity in the genocide, because of its age-old commitment to the ideology that if the Jews crucified Jesus once, then Christians must crucify the Jews till the end of days.

The bell as symbol, set against the symbolic shawls, also calls attention to a difference in degree which becomes a difference in kind between what the Poles (and other Europeans) suffered and what the Jews suffered. The church bell can be replaced. Another bell will call other worshippers to prayer. A severe and tragic human loss has indeed been sustained by the Poles. Nevertheless, for the Poles the blow has not been mortal. For the Jews, on the other hand, the blow has indeed been mortal – the death of a thousand-year-old language and culture. Unlike the church bell, the missing Jews and their culture cannot be replaced.

The realistic narrative resumes with more small talk about the orchestra, etc. But one element that seems to be emerging from the small talk is that the excursioners are, in fact, not ignorant about what went on in Auschwitz. Their questions seem to indicate that they all know something. One asks to see the gallows, another to see the hair, another the hall where the experiments on women were conducted, another the "death wall," etc.

They know bits and pieces, but they cannot imagine the reality and the futility of trying to re-create it. One of the visitors expresses, with some chagrin, this frustrating inability to grasp the "total reality" of Auschwitz: "Take this death block, for example. I see the windows are all boarded up. So what does that mean? Somebody has to explain the whole thing and show you just what happened here." And then, again, a return to details and artifacts, frustrating because they cannot "explain themselves," and finally, a reference to the ashes of those consumed in the crematories, but a reference that mocks itself. Just as the ashes were carried away by the Sola and Vistula rivers, obliterating all trace of the dead, so the guide's remarks about the ashes are also carried away and doomed to obliteration by the crowd's indifference to the human beings who suffered here.

What is perhaps the most shocking instance of insensitivity occurs at this point. A child asks her father about the function of the penal bunkers, which were one of the most demonic inventions devised by the sadists who ran the camps (and which have been described in earlier Polish memoirs of the camps). In his annoyance, the father tells his daughter that if she does not behave "they'll lock you up here also." Not only does this answer betray an insensitivity to the horrors of the penal bunkers and to those of the camp generally, but it accepts the

premise that there was some kind of moral order, or justice, in the camp, that the inmates might have been in the camp for good reason, and that there was some equation between the penal bunkers and wrongdoing. As if to comment on the grotesqueness of this assumption, the narrator moves from the dialogue between father and daughter to a description that underlines the museum's failure to educate, and to inspirit the reality it is intended to commemorate. The "pictures of the dead and the murdered...hanging in a dusty corridor...stare blankly all day and all night. [But] at night, when there are no people in the museum, their faces exude a suffering that no longer exists in the museum itself." The narrator calls attention to this disparity between the suffering still present in the pictures and the inability of the visitors to notice it by immediately drawing a parallel between the shabby remnants still in the museum and pre-historic fossils.

The dialogue, which now resumes, maintains the vacillation between the guide's frustration at his inability to encompass the total reality ("'There is so much,' my dear Madam.") and the trivializing irrelevancies of the visitors ("I thought that all of this stuff lying on tables would be on the floor.") And then, once again, the guide tries to make the museum, specifically the horror of the penal bunkers, spring to life, this time with a gory tale of cannibalism that throws individual sufferers into relief, but a tale whose veracity the guide will not vouch for ("There is a story going around...."). Without skipping a beat, the guide switches from the horror story to the ubiquitous "inscriptions and signs" which "looked completely different at the time" (as, it will be remembered, did the landscape, according to Joseph).

The German sign reads: "There is one path to freedom, whose milestones are called: obedience, diligence, order, honesty, cleanliness, truthfulness, self-sacrifice, and love of the Fatherland." Out of context the sign is a compendium of noble German middle-class virtues, the embodiment of the highest ethic of Germanic culture – "obedience, hard work, honesty, love of country." But within the camp context the sign can only have been a parody, not only of itself but of that high culture which had brought into being a death-factory system. The sign extolling these high German-Christian middle-class virtues that endorse stability and security could only have mocked the prisoners who knew that in Auschwitz the only path to freedom was death and that the virtues extolled in the sign were at the antipodes of the Nazi order established in the camp and being instituted all over Europe.

And now, as if in a refrain, the story returns once more to the human detritus which may as well be relics uncovered in an archaeological dig: dishes, bowls, pots, etc. Some more banter finally brings the guide,

the excursioners, and the reader to the *piece de resistance* of the museum and of Western Christian culture's and technological man's and secular humanism's pretense to having created a "high civilization": the crematory. Here again, the museum can only mimic the reality. The real crematory is no longer available, having been blown up (by the Germans trying to efface their crimes). So the visitors must be content with a replica erected on the ruins of the real thing. It is still a grim scene, but not grim enough to prevent three young boys (who were probably born after the war) from making merry, an indication not only of their insensitivity but of how miserably the museum fails in its task of cultivating human compassion for the victims. The dialogue that follows must give the reader pause:

> "The gas was poured in here," a man says to a woman. "The gas was poured in on them and they choked."
>
> "Let's get out of here," says the woman. "I've been here already. My legs are killing me. I've had enough."

It is difficult to get at the spirit of the man's words. Is he being merely descriptive, indifferent? Or is he expressing satisfaction? The woman is clearly indifferent. She has had enough, and is tired, as she states with unconscious irony in the cliche "My legs are killing me."

The narrator moves the reader from the inside of the museum to the surrounding area with a lyrical description of the tranquil beauty of Autumn. He even grafts nature imagery onto his description of the murderous electrified barbed wire ('...and a honey-colored leaf floats gracefully....Double rows of barbed wire join concrete pillars honeycombed with white transformers."), thus creating a grotesque bond between the peaceful autumn and the murder machine. The narrator also emphasizes the disparity between the museum and natural landscape, and also the disparities between the lives of the former inmates of Auschwitz and the affirmation of life that can be seen going on in immediate proximity to the museum.

In the shadow of the death factory, which was also a hunger farm, where as many people may have died of malnutrition-related diseases as of bullets and gas, Grazynka's mother tries to stuff some little chocolate ("*czekoladke*") into her, and someone else wonders – again with unconscious irony – whether the tour will include dinner. The woman to whom the question about dinner has been addressed grumbles something about her displeasure with the whole tour, which has been poorly organized (perhaps, also, an ironic echo of the camp itself, which *Pan* Jozef had hinted was well organized). The woman takes the opportunity to deliver herself of some more complaints, recurring to the previously mentioned motif, which is an ironic comment on the Poles (as

well as Germans and other Europeans) who claimed that they knew nothing. Even those who lived in the town of *Oswieciem* would have the world believe that they knew nothing. Seeing they saw not. Hearing they heard not. Jewish neighbors and townsmen rounded up, trucked away like cattle, dispossessed of all their belongings, beaten in public, herded into ghettos, yet no one suspected that they were being harmed. The mentality capable of such peculiar ignorance is brought to mind by this woman. With her own eyes she has seen the "boarded windows" and the death block and the "gallows," to say nothing of "the hair, the boots, the bowls, the brushes, the moldy skins, the pacifiers, the quilts," the rebuilt gas chamber, the barbed wire. She has seen it all, but she still needs "somebody...to describe and explain exactly what it was like...." And then, she makes the wonderfully irrelevant observation, an observation worthy of the so-called revisionist historians and the blissfully innocent Noam Chomsky who foolishly defends their right to turn the truth upside down: "Those chimneys over there – they belong to the kitchen. They're not from the crematory."

Rozewicz's closing paragraph is a masterpiece, and is worthy of being cited in full:

> The electric train is waiting at the station. The people who have visited the museum are seated in the compartments. Little is said about the museum. In the direction of the city, smoke can be seen spewing out of large factories. A roar can be heard from the nearby stadium. Trees are silhouetted against the silver-gray autumn sky. Copper clouds stretch leisurely in the fading sunlight. Church steeples loom in the background. Old women sit along the tracks. Bony, white goats with pink udders are grazing. The sun-washed clouds flare a deep red, then quickly cool and darken. A freight train rolls by on the adjoining track.

On a descriptive (or affective) level, he reproduces that sense of fatigue and satiety, familiar to all sightseers, that sets in when a holiday excursion is winding down to its natural conclusion. The autumn day itself is shutting down. The tired and surfeited excursioners are ready to return from their "diversion" to their everyday lives. But into this realistic mood, Rozewicz has continued to weave suggestive and even symbolic meanings. For example, "The electric train is waiting at the station," waiting to carry the tired excursioners back to their homes, a far cry from the steam engines that in the early forties used to transport people here from their homes, to be tortured and murdered, and at the same time an echo of the electrified barbed-wire fences. In their fatigue, and in contrast to their idle chatter in the museum, the people are silent. What are they thinking? One would like to imagine that they are ruminating over what they have seen, pondering the

cruelty and barbarism of a high culture become "an old bitch gone in the teeth," perhaps even weighing their own complicity (or that of their countrymen) in genocide and mass murder. But their behavior and talk in the museum would make such thoughts unlikely.

Now it is also possible for the excursioners to see one of the "realities" that was missing from the museum at Auschwitz, the smoke that so traumatized every Auschwitz survivor (and inmate) that not one of those who writes about the camp fails to mention it. Rozewicz has inserted a (perhaps not so subtle) reminder of those who would absolve themselves by claiming to have known nothing. If these homebound excursioners can see the smoke spewing from the factories of the distant city, then is it possible that no one but the inmates saw and smelled the smoke that bellowed out of the crematories of Birkenau?

In a most tender lyric vein, Rozewicz continues the description of the waning day as if he might be describing any sunset: Nature sinking to rest, silhouetted trees, copper clouds, church steeples in the background. Then the day gives its death rattle and expires, as "The sun-washed clouds flared a deep red, then quickly cooled and darkened." But artist that he is, Rozewicz does not let the reader leave on this deceptively tranquil note. Against the depicted scene of exhausted vacationers sitting in their comfortable railroad compartments waiting to go home to the meal that they missed at the museum, Rozewicz casts one more devastating Holocaust symbol that shocks the reader into recognizing the excursioners' complacency and unwillingness to face the past: "A freight train rolled by on the adjoining track." This, like the smoke, has been missing from the museum: the cattle cars filled with human cargo – including women and children – rolling all over Europe, and certainly through Poland. But the good people of Europe were as oblivious to the cattle cars then as the tourists are to the freight train now.

Rozewicz's story succeeds precisely where the museum itself fails. The museum as a whole represents "history" untouched by imagination. Those who visit the museum are ordinary unthinking people, insensitive, perhaps, but not malicious. The museum has failed them and failed those it is intended to commemorate because it is founded on the assumption that "facts will speak for themselves." But, as Rozewicz knows, facts in themselves are mute; unless they are brought to life by a spark of creative imagination they dwindle and eventually disappear, or else they lose their authenticity (the woman who cannot believe that the "pacifiers" could have been left over from the time that the camp was functioning). The guide struggles to make the dead facts live, but his imagination is not up to the task. The best he can do is shuffle numbers. As many Holocaust historians have pointed out, there

is no historical situation to which to compare the death camps; so the guide is reduced to calculating how much space the dead bodies will occupy either if piled on top of each other or laid side by side. Joseph seems to go to the other extreme. He appears to want to make facts live by understating (or even misrepresenting) the actual brutality and savagery. Either he feels that he must tone down the reality to make it bearable, or he misuses his imagination to paint over the horrors in the hope of making them more credible. But this misuse of imagination backfires by creating an absurd and inexplicable gap between the account it renders and the data shown in the film and the museum.

Rozewicz, however, like Robert Frost's Oven Bird, "...knows in singing not to sing." His imagination finds exactly the right note. He knows from the museum itself, and from his own moral imagination, that he cannot encompass the crimes and suffering of Auschwitz by treating them directly. So he invokes the reality of the death camp by writing about it indirectly, describing the moral abomination itself by innocently pretending to describe only its aftermath.

Part Seventeen
THE MODERN AGE: HISTORY

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The Politics of Yiddish in Tsarist Russia

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In 1897, Tsarist Russia conducted a census in which it recorded the nationality and language of its inhabitants. Of the 5,215,000 Jews living in the empire, 97% declared Yiddish as their native tongue. Only 24.6% claimed to be able to read Russian.[1] Given this impressive degree of Jewish linguistic cohesion upon the threshold of the twentieth century, one would expect to have found a lively and developed modern Yiddish culture in Russia at the time, in the spheres of literature, the press, periodical publications, theater, education, as well as social and cultural organizations. In fact, however, there was not a single Yiddish newspaper, daily or weekly, and not a single Yiddish literary journal in all of Tsarist Russia in 1897. Nor were there any established, well-known Yiddish theater ensembles, any modern Jewish schools with instruction in Yiddish, or any social or cultural organizations operating in Yiddish. Few other languages in central or eastern Europe could "boast" such a paucity of cultural institutions.

Whereas Yiddish fiction, published in book or pamphlet form, was a substantial force in Russian-Jewish life from the 1860s on, the other institutions of modern Yiddish culture lagged far behind it in their historical development. The Yiddish short story and novel were among the most important vehicles by which Jewish intellectuals expressed themselves and communicated with the Jewish public. Tens of

[1]Solomon M. Schwartz, *The Jews in the Soviet Union*, Syracuse, New York, 1951, pp. 12-13.

thousands of Russian Jews flocked to their local book-peddlers to obtain the belletristic writings of Isaac Meyer Dik, Mendele Moykher Seforim, Isaac Yoel Linetski, Nokhem Meyer Shaykevitch (Shomer), and the young Sholem Aleichem. The spread of Yiddish belle lettres altered the reading habits, leisure activity, and – most of all – thinking patterns of a broad segment of the Russian Jewish community. But in the areas of press, periodical publications, theater, and schooling, Yiddish activity was sparse, sporadic and flimsy at best. During the 1890s it was virtually non-existent. Not until the first decade of the twentieth century did a multi-dimensional modern Yiddish cultural system (i.e. not only belle-lettres, but also the above mentioned spheres of cultural endeavor) emerge, and begin to have an impact on a sizeable segment of Russian Jewry. This fact has often gone unnoticed because of the remarkable literary achievements of Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, and Peretz during that very period of time. Indeed the very term "Yiddish culture" did not gain currency until the early years of the twentieth century.[2]

The retarded development of modern Yiddish culture demands a historical explanation. After all, the nineteenth century was a period when the languages of so many nationalities in eastern and central Europe came into their own – the flourishing of Polish-language theater, the rise Russian-language education, the development of a strong and diverse Czech and Hungarian periodical press.[3] Yiddish would have all of this too, but only much, much later than its co-territorial languages.

Those who have addressed the question directly or indirectly have offered two complementary explanations. The first maintains that Russian Jewry underwent minimal economic, social, and cultural modernization during the nineteenth century. The vast majority of Russian Jews continued to live in small market-towns (*shtetlekh*), and their every-day lives conformed to traditional pre-urban, pre-industrial cultural patterns. The need for knowledge, information, moral guidance and spiritual enrichment, entertainment and leisure-activity were satisfied by the kheyder, beys medresh, Hasidic *shtibl* and Hasidic court, and of course in home and neighborhood settings. Only on the verge of the twentieth century did a significant proportion of Russian Jewry become urbanized, industrialized, and secularized.

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[2]Chaim Zhitlovsky may have been the first to use the coinage "yidishe kultur" in his "Tsionism Oder Sotsialism" (1898) *Gezamlte Shriftn* vol. 5, New York, 1917, p. 72.

[3]Ricardo Piccio (ed.), *Aspects of The Slavic Language Question in the 19th Century.*

The complexity and impersonality of urban life, and the spread of a secular, rational world-view made the adoption of modern European cultural forms, such as the newspaper, magazine, theater, and modern school, possible and indeed necessary for Russian Jewry. The requisite social and economic conditions for the rise of a modern Yiddish culture did not exist until the turn of the century.[4]

The problem with this macro-sociological explanation is that it flies in the face of many facts. Its static and simplistic view of Russian-Jewish life in the nineteenth century is untenable. The urbanization and industrialization of Russian-Polish Jewry was well-apace by the 1860s, as was its cultural transformation. To cite just a few major developments: the secularizing influence of Haskalah-ideology was pronounced in such centers as Vilna, Kovna, Berdichev and Odessa. There emerged a sizeable Russified Jewish intelligentsia in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and Kiev, and by the 1870s, the number of Jews in Russian gymnasia and universities superseded the number of yeshiva students. In Warsaw, a Polonized Jewish bourgeoisie assumed key positions in the Jewish community and, more strikingly, in Polish cultural life. A spectrum of modern-Jewish schools – state-sponsored, private, and communal – arose, combining Jewish and general studies, and the Hebrew press (including, as of 1886, two dailies) flourished.[5] However, these modern cultural trends expressed themselves overwhelmingly in Russian, Polish and Hebrew; not in Yiddish.

At this point, the second explanation is usually raised. The Maskilim and Jewish intelligentsia viewed Yiddish with disgust and contempt, as the living embodiment of the much-hated medieval past. The Maskilim created their cultural outlets in Hebrew, which they worshipped as "the beautiful tongue, our last remaining remnant" (*ha-safa ha-yafa ha-serida ha-yehida*), whereas the intelligentsia enthusiastically embraced Russian as the language of its periodicals, schools and organizations. Yiddish was supposed to wither and die, the sooner the better. At best, it was viewed as a necessary evil and relegated to the limited, transitory role of spreading enlightenment

[4]This is the impression conveyed by Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog in *Life is With People*, New York, 1952; Avrom Menes' erudite and evocative study "Di Mizrekh Eyropeishe Tkufe In Der Yidisher Geshikhte," *Algemeyne Entsiklopedye – Yidn* vol. 4, New York, 1950, pp. 275-430, suffers from the same misconception.

[5]Steven Zipperstein,"Haskalah, Cultural Change and 19th Century Russian Jewry: A Reassessment," *Journal of Jewish Studies* vol. 34, no. 2 (1983) pp. 191-207, and his *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History*, Stanford, California, 1985; Jacob Shatzky, *Geshikhte fun Yidn In Varshe*, vol. 3, New York, 1953.

among the older generation of unlettered Jews, for whom it was too late to acquire another language. With such a negative attitude toward the language, there was no ideological basis for the emergence of a modern Yiddish culture. Only at the turn of the century, primarily under the influence of the Jewish labor movement and its political arm, the Bund, did a segment of the Jewish intelligentsia change its attitude toward Yiddish, and begin to view it as a valued cultural medium or as a national cultural treasure. That is when the Yiddish press, school, and theater burst forth onto the historical arena.[6]

This ideological explanation, which was especially popular among Bundists who wished to lay claim to the emergence of modern Yiddish culture, is much too smooth and easy. From the 1860s on, a growing number of writers and intellectuals endorsed the use of Yiddish as a tool for spreading enlightenment. Alexander Zederbaum, S. J. Abramovitch, Moshe Leyb Lilienblum, Abraham Ber Gotlober, and Abraham Goldfaden are only the most famous early examples. They may have felt uneasy about writing in the despised "jargon," and have doubted its long-term viability and desirability, but nonetheless they plodded ahead, in the face of rather vociferous opposition. Even some Russified intellectuals such as Iyla Orshanski and Menashe Margulis saw merit in advancing enlightenment by means of the folk-idiom.[7] After the pogroms of 1881-2, a sizeable segment of the Jewish intelligentsia shed its embarrassment or ambivalence toward the language. The view that Yiddish was a legitimate cultural medium with an invaluable role to play in both the present and long-term future gained greater acceptance. Sholem Aleichem and I. L. Peretz were the pre-eminent converts to this view during the 1880s, but many others followed in

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[6]"The Bund created a Yiddish culture...it turned the market jargon into a language in which serious scientific affairs can be discussed. Furthermore, the Bund taught the Jewish masses how to read. Before...only the enlightened understood Mendele Moykher Sforim, only a few read Peretz's *Bletlekh*. The Bund created a great circle of readers which needed good books and newspapers, and it created a new literature for that circle." This tendentious statement by a Bundist newspaper is taken by Samuel Portnoy to be an accurate summation of the Bund's contribution to Yiddish culture; *Vladimir Medem: The Life and Soul of A Legendary Jewish Socialist* New York, 1979, pp. 475-6.

[7]One can even point to I. J. Linetski and Y. M. Lifshits as writers who insisted on Yiddish as the sole valuable vehicle of enlightenment and mockingly disparaged the use of Hebrew; on Margulis, see Peter Shaw, *The Jewish Community of Odessa: A Social and Institutional History*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1988, on Orshanski, see below; cf. Miron, *A Traveler Disguised*, New York, 1973, pp. 1-66.

their aftermath, including Y. H. Ravnitsky, Simon Dubnow, and Yankev Dinezon. A comprehensive study of the subject would, in my opinion, reveal that the favorable change in the attitude toward Yiddish occurred first among a segment of the "bourgeois" intelligentsia (in the 1880s), and only later among the Marxist and radical intelligentsia (in the 1890s).[8]

If the requisite socio-economic and ideological conditions for the flourishing of a modern Yiddish culture were in place perhaps by the 1860s, and certainly by the 1880s, then why was there no broad cultural renaissance until considerably later? In my opinion this delay aught to be attributed to an "external" factor, which has been much neglected; i.e., the problematic political status of Yiddish in Tsarist Russia. The Tsarist policy of banning and outlawing Yiddish in various contexts prevented the full scale flourish of modern Yiddish culture until the prohibitions were relaxed or removed. It is to this subject, the Imperial politics of Yiddish, to which we now turn.

Periodical Press

During the nineteenth century, there was only one Jew in all of Tsarist Russia who was successful at obtaining a state permit to publish a newspaper in Yiddish – Alexander Zederbaum. Zederbaum had the necessary political connections in the government chancellories, and was an accomplished "shtadlan" who knew how to persuade, reassure and bribe Imperial officials. Nonetheless even he encountered considerable official opposition to his publication of *Kol Mevaser*, the first modern Yiddish newspaper (Odessa, 1862-1871). His initial request to publish the weekly was rejected by the Ministry of Interior. He was only able to secure a legal status for the paper by issuing it as a "supplement in Jewish German to *Ha-Melitz*," the Hebrew weekly of which he was editor and publisher. For years, *Kol Mevaser* labored under the legal fiction that it was a supplement to *Ha-Melitz*, and that it was in German. In 1868 the Imperial censor nearly discontinued publication of Kol Mevaser, when it realized that, contrary to the original permit, the weekly was not in German with Hebrew letters, but in Yiddish. It took months of lobbying with the authorities, and an

[8]See E. Goldsmith, *Modern Yiddish Culture; the Story of the Yiddish Language Movement*, New York, 1987, pp. 45-70, and on the polemic generated by the publication of Sholem Aleichem's *Yudishes Folks-Bibliotek* in 1888, see G. Kresel "A Historishe Polemik Vegn Der Yidisher Literatur," *Goldene Keyt* no. 20 (1954) pp. 338-355.

apparent editorial decision to recommit itself to "Germanizing" the language of *Kol Mevaser*, to save the paper from forced closure.[9]

When Zederbaum obtained permission to move *Ha-Melitz* from Odessa to the capital city of St. Petersburg, a similar petition to relocate *Kol Mevaser* was refused. Zederbaum was forced to leave the Yiddish paper behind, in the hands of an inept editor who sealed its fate rather quickly. Once in St. Petersburg, Zederbaum faced an iron wall of bureaucratic opposition to his issuing a Yiddish newspaper in the capital. For years, his interventions were to no avail. Finally, during Count Nikolai Ignatev's brief term of office as Minister of Interior (March 1881 – June 1882), Zederbaum obtained a permit for the publication of the weekly *Dos Yudishes Folksblat* (1882-1890). Zederbaum and Ignatev were long-standing personal acquaintances.[10]

The existence of a Yiddish language press in Russia depended entirely on this one man's luck and perseverance. When *Dos Yudishes Folksblat* closed down (after it too was placed in the hands of an inept new editor), the 5.8 million Jews of Tsarist Russia were left again without a single newspaper in Yiddish. All other applicants met with total failure. Mendele Moykher Seforim was frustrated time and time again during the 1860s, 70s and 80s in his efforts to obtain permission to edit a Yiddish news-paper.[11] I. J. Linetski faced failure more ingeniously. He crossed over into neighboring Galicia (in the Habsburg Empire), joined forces with Abraham Goldfaden, and began publishing *Yisrolik* (Lemberg, 1875-6), a newspaper expressly intended for readers in Russia. But before long, the Tsarist authorities prohibited the mailing of the newspaper into Russia, and having lost its clientele, Yisrolik closed down. Mikhoel Levi Radkinzon followed Linetski's lead, and published *Kol La'am* (Koenigsburg, 1876-1879) from neighboring Prussia, with a Russian Yiddish readership in mind.[12] It seems likely that already in the 1870s, the Ministry of Interior had adopted a ban on Yiddish newspapers in Russia as a matter of policy (rather than mere bureaucratic obstructionism and foot-dragging). At least one contemporary observer, Aaron Lieberman, the father of modern Jewish socialism, believed such a ban was in effect. Writing to

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[9]S. L. Tsitron, *Di Geshikhte Fun Der Yidisher Prese*, Vilna, 1923, pp. 9, 63; also chapter on Zederbaum in *Dray Literarishe Doyres*, vol. 3, Warsaw, 1928, pp. 96-129.

[10]Tsitron, *Geshikhte* p. 117; Dubnow "Dos Yudishe Folksblat in Peterburg," *Fun Zhargon Tsu Yidish*, Vilna, 1929, pp. 10-16.

[11]Chone Shmeruk, *Sifrut Yiddish – Prakim Le-Toldoteha*, Tel Aviv, 1978, pp. 289-290.

[12]Tsitron, *Geshikhte* pp. 89-116.

the Russian socialist V. Smirnov to explain why he was publishing his journal *Ha-Emet* in Hebrew rather than Yiddish, he stated:

> Since we are talking about a legal newspaper,the Hebrew language had to be chosen. Zhargon [i.e., Yiddish] is suppressed by the Russian government in order to Russify the Jews; and zhargon publications issued abroad encounter insurmountable hardships, regardless of their content.[13]

Lieberman's assumption that the ban on Yiddish periodicals was designed to further the Jews' linguistic Russification may well have been on the mark.

The picture is much clearer for the 1880s and 1890s. Y. Feoktistov, the official in charge of press-affairs at the Ministry of Interior, repeatedly turned down applications to issue Yiddish dailies or weeklies with the flat declaration that "there will never be a Yiddish newspaper in Russia." In his memoirs, Feoktistov claimed that Yiddish newspapers would be impossible to control, since one couldn't find reliable censors for them. No one in the office of press-affairs knew the language, and experience proved that Jews, even converted Jews, simply couldn't be trusted with the job of censorship. His successor, Soloviev, likewise opposed licensing any Yiddish newspapers, and warned that "Yiddish is extremely dangerous from the state's point of view." Since Jews were well-known to be revolutionaries, Yiddish newspapers would, if published, undoubtedly spread revolutionary ideas. He cited the underground Yiddish press of the Bund as proof.[14]

As a result, the requests to publish a Yiddish daily newspaper by Mordechai Spector in 1894, S. Rapoport (a partner in *Ha-Melitz*) in 1896, Eliezer Kaplan (chief of the Warsaw publishing house "Ahiasaf") in 1898 and later, by Leon Rabinovitz (editor of *Ha-Melitz*) in 1900, and Zvi Prilutski in 1902, were all rejected. According to one account, the ministry of interior had 35 such requests on file in 1902.[15]

With no hope for a governmental permit, Kaplan resorted to an old ploy of Linetski and Radkinzon. His Warsaw-based publishing house

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[13]K. Marmor (ed.), *A. Liberman's Briv*, New York, 1951, p. 141.

[14]S. Ginzburg, "Di Ershte Yidishe Teglekhe Tsaytung in Rusland – 'Der Fraynd,'" *Amolike Peterburg*, New York, 1944, pp. 185; Dovid Druk, *Geshikhte Fun Der Yudisher Prese* (In Rusland Un Poyln), Warsaw, 1927, pp. 9-10. Forty issues of the Bundist *Arbeiter Shtime* appeared in Russia between 1897 and 1905; see Y. S. Herz "Di Umlegale Prese Un Literatur Fun Bund," *Pinkes Far Der Forshung Fun Der Yidisher Literatur Un Prese*, vol. 2 (ed. Chaim Bass), New York, 1972, pp. 294-366.

[15]Druk, *Geshikhte* pp. 14-15, 20, 21, 23; Niger, *Yitskhok Leybush Perets*, Buenos Aires, 1952, pp. 228-9.

issued a Yiddish weekly, *Der Yud* (1899-1903), which was edited by Y. H. Ravnitski in Odessa, but was printed across the Austro-Hungarian border in Cracow. From there it was mailed to readers in Tsarist Russia.[16]

Salvation came from unexpected quarters. When Vyacheslav von Plehve became Minister of Interior, in 1902, he decided to permit a single Yiddish daily in Russia as an experiment, in an attempt to counter the influence of the Bundist underground press. That is how *Der Fraynd*, the first Yiddish daily in Russia came into being. A true explosion of Yiddish dailies and weeklies occurred during and after the revolution of 1905, when a greater measure of freedom of expression was instituted, and mass circulation dailies such as the *Haynt* and *Moment* appeared on the scene.[17]

But the internal social conditions for the emergence of a Yiddish-language daily press existed long beforehand. In Rumania, with a fraction of Russia's Jewish population, but without the interference of Imperial authorities, a Yiddish daily first appeared in 1877, and numerous weeklies engaged in fierce competition during the late 19th century. And in Russia itself, there were two Hebrew dailies from 1886 on – *Ha-Melitz* in St. Petersburg, and *Ha-Tsefirah* in Warsaw. (A third daily, *Ha-Yom*, was short lived.) No doubt Yiddish, with its larger potential readership, could have sustained at least as many dailies, were it not for the Tsarist ban on Yiddish newspapers during the late 19th century. The ministerial policy toward Hebrew was more lenient, precisely because Hebrew newspapers reached a much more limited reading audience.[18]

The same policy applied to literary and other journals in Yiddish as well. According to Tsarist administrative regulations, all periodical publications – regardless of frequency, format, or subject matter – were subsumed under the category of newspapers. Hence there were no Yiddish magazines of any sort in 19th century Tsarist Russia. Sholem Aleichem's *Yudishes Folks-Bibliotek* (1888,1889), and Mordechai Spector's *Hoyz-Fraynd* (1888, 1889, 1894, 1895, 1896) were not journals

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[16]Druk, *Geshikhte* pp. 23-30; after half a year of publication, Ravnitsky was replaced as editor by Dr. Yosef Luria, a resident of Warsaw, thus simplifying the complicated logistics involved in the newspaper's publication.

[17]Druk, *Geshikhte* p. 15; on "Der Fraynd" see Ginzburg, "Di Ershte Yidishe..."; on the subsequent explosion of newspapers see the comprehensive listing of Avrohom Kirzhnits, *Di Yidishe Prese In Der Gevezener Rusisher Imperye*, Moscow, 1930.

[18]Volf Tambur, *Yidish-Prese In Rumenye* Bucharest, 1977; relaxity toward Hebrew, Ginzburg, "Di Ershte..." p. 185; Druk, *Geshikhte* p. 9.

(although they are occasionally referred erroneously to as such), but thick literary almanacs, which appeared no more than once a year. As such, each volume was considered by the Tsarist authorities to be a separate book. The publication and censorship of books belonged to a separate section of the Ministry of Interior; there was no administrative policy prohibiting the publication of books in Yiddish.[19]

The impossibility of publishing a Yiddish periodical of any sort led I. L. Peretz to a rather ingenious idea. He issued a series of pamphlets in 1894-6, each one ostensibly in honor of a different Jewish holiday or fast, and was thereby able to publish a de facto magazine, which historians of Yiddish literature refer to as the "Yontev Bletlekh." Legally and administratively, each pamphlet was a separate book, with its own title ("the Shofar," "Hoshanah," "Hamisha Asar," "Greens for Shavuos" etc.). The only signs of continuity between one pamphlet and the next were the inscription "Peretz publication" on the title page, and the type-face. Other Yiddish writers attempted similar projects.[20]

But such pseudo-journals were difficult to negotiate through the censorship bureaucracy. The Ministry of Interior may have been wise to the schemes used to circumvent the ban on Yiddish periodicals. In any case, the longer lead-time for books between their composition and their review by the censors was an impediment against such devices. As a result, Yiddish magazines and journals only began to appear in the first decade of the twentieth century, when the press-policy changed.

Theater

The most sensational Tsarist decree against Yiddish was the comprehensive ban on Yiddish theater issued in August 1883. A secret memorandum from the Ministry of Interior to all provincial governors announced:

> Taking into consideration that certain plays in the Yiddish language which were permitted to be performed are absolutely inappropriate, it

[19]The three volumes Peretz's literary almanac *Di Yudishe Bibliotek* (two in 1891, one in 1895) were was likewise considered by the censors as separate; see Niger, *Perets* pp. 204-222.

[20]Niger, *Perets* pp. 229-246; Linetski had published a series of 11 pamphlets on a monthly basis, each under a different title, in 1887; Z. Reisin,"Yitskhok Yoel Linetski," *Leksikon Fun Der Yidisher Literatur, Prese, Un Filologye*, vol. 2, Vilna 1930, p. 171.

has been deemed necessary to prohibit the performance of plays in Yiddish in the theaters.[21]

Enforcement of the ban was put in the hands of the police-authorities.

This curt and categorical directive is of little help in uncovering the motives and reasons for the theater-ban. It has been suggested that the ban was the result of denunciations by members of the Russified Jewish bourgeoisie in St. Petersburg, who were offended and embarrassed by the performance of Yiddish productions to packed halls in the capital city. Others have suggested that Goldfaden's operetta *Bar Kokhba*, which idealized the ancient Judean uprising against Rome, was taken by the authorities to be a veiled allegory in favor of revolution in Russia.[22] The latter explanation strikes me as more convincing, given the official paranoia over revolutionaries and, specifically Jewish revolution-aries. It also seems to be supported by the text of the ban, which alludes to permitted plays which ought not have been performed.

In any event, the more important question is why the Ministry of Interior vigorously enforced the ban on Yiddish theater for seventeen years (until 1900), reiterated its validity in 1888, 1891, 1897, and 1900, and frequently invoked its authority in later years as well.[23] There was certainly no sustained denunciation- campaign against the Yiddish theater on the part of the Russified Jewish bourgeoisie for nearly two decades! Bureaucratic inertia can be given some share of the credit, but broader political considerations of "state security" must have been involved as well. Since the official memoranda are silent on the subject, we can only surmise. Jews were viewed in official circles as treacherous, treasonous, plotting to destroy Russia, and the stage was recognized as the most uncontrollable of public forums. Texts (of books, newspapers, and even plays) could be censored, but who could control the content of what people actually said on the stage, in front of a large audience? The fear of revolutionary propaganda being spread via the Yiddish stage must have loomed large. The ban of 1883 dealt a devastating blow to the brief flourish of Yiddish theater in Russia which began in 1879, when Abraham Goldfaden, the father of modern Yiddish theater, brought his troupe from Rumania to Odessa. His plays were smash hits,

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[21]Y. Riminik, "Redifes Kegn Yidishn Teater in Rusland in Di 80er un 90er Yorn," *Teater-Bukh*, Kiev, 1927, p. 87, S. Ginzburg, "Der Farbot Fun Yidishn Teater," *Historishe Verk* vol. 1, New York, 1937, p.167.

[22]The former hypothesis is pursued by Riminik "Redifes..." the latter is mentioned by Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond Stars*, New York, 1977, p. 62.

[23]Ginzburg, "Der Farbot..." p. 170, Riminik "Redifes" p. 88.

and before long Goldfaden's company was performing in cities and towns throughout the Pale, and even in Moscow and St. Petersburg, where the general Russian press reviewed his work favorably. Rival theater-groups sprung up, some of them off-shoots from Goldfaden's original cast, and plagiarized the master's repertoire. Odessan Jewry was in the throws of a veritable theater-mania when the ban was issued. Goldfaden traveled to St. Petersburg and appealed to the authorities to reverse their decision, but had no success.[24]

The effects of the ban were felt rather quickly, and before long, the best Yiddish actors (e.g., Jacob Adler, Boris Tomashevsky, Zigmund Mogulesko) left for England and the United States. Goldfaden moved to Warsaw in 1886, where enforcement of the theater-ban was lax during the first few years. His company was able to perform there on a quasi-legal basis, it being officially subsumed as part of a licensed Russian theater-company, with which it shared facilities. But by 1887 Goldfaden found this arrangement and the overall condition of Yiddish theater in Russia intolerable, and he too left for America.[25]

One of the few remaining Yiddish theater directors in Russia, Avrohom Fishzon, is credited with developing the stratagem of presenting Yiddish plays under the mask of "German" theater, which saved Yiddish theater from extinction. He submitted translated German texts (of Goldfaden's operettas!) to the censors, and applied to local police officials for permission to stage German plays in town. This guise became the life-line of wandering Yiddish theater troupes in Russia during the 1880s and 90s. But it was far from a panacea. In most cities and towns, police officials weren't willing to play the fool, and refused to grant permits to the bogus "German" performances. The larger Jewish cities (Warsaw, Vilna, Berdichev, Zhitomir and others) were closed to Yiddish troupes. According to the memoirs of writer Yankev Dinezon, there was no Yiddish theater in Warsaw for 18 years. Yiddish performances were could not be staged in entire gubernias (Kiev, Chernigov, Vohlyn, Poltava, Grodna et. al.) where police officials strictly enforced the ban. Wandering Yiddish theater companies had better chances of obtaining (or, more accurately, purchasing) a permit in small God-forsaken towns, where the local

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[24]B. Gorin, *Di Geshikhte Fun Yidishn Teater*, New York, 1918, vol. 1, pp. 204-256; B. Vaynshteyn, "Di Ershte Yorn Fun Yidishn Teater in Ades Un Niu York," *Arkhiv Far Der Geshikhte Fun Yidishn Teater Un Drame* (ed. Jacob Shatzky), New York-Vilna, 1930 pp. 243-254; Zalmen Zilbertsvayg, "Avrohom Goldfaden," *Leksikon Fun Yidishn Teater*, vol. 1, New York, 1931, pp. 302-312.

[25]Gorin, *Geshikhte* vol. 2, chapter 10; Jacob Shatzky, "Goldfaden In Varshe," *Hundert Yor Goldfaden*, New York, 1940, pp. 1-16.

constable was less fearful of being caught by his superiors. Thus, Fishzon's troupe performed in the small town of Zvil [Russian: Novograd-Volynski] for half a year, but couldn't find anywhere else to go.[26]

There were problems even when permits were granted. The local constable usually required that the performance be in German, and would send a spy or come by himself to check what language was being used on the stage. If the actors weren't speaking something approximating German, he would annul the permit after the first performance, or even worse, interrupt the play and confiscate the box office. If, on the other hand, the actors did their utmost to speak German, the audience couldn't understand what they said, and after one or two performances people stopped coming to see the show. Bribes were essential to the existence of the Yiddish theater in those years, and the burden of paying a quarter or even a half of the box to the constable led most troupes into bankruptcy.[27]

Yiddish theater existed in Russia under these severe constraints for close to twenty years. All the while, waves of aspiring young actors and actresses kept emigrating to America. What kind of "brilliant career" could they hope for in Russia with the doors of Warsaw, Odessa, St. Petersburg and every other major city closed to Yiddish theater, and actors leading a life resembling that of fugitives on the run? The lure of emigration contributed further to the instability and short-livedness of ensembles.

Officially, Yiddish theater was still contraband in Russia on the eve of the revolution in 1917, and as late as 1904, the Russian senate considered (and rejected) an appeal by Fishzon to formally lift the ban. But in fact, the police began to relax their enforcement of the ban in many parts of the Empire in the year 1900. That is when the first reviews of Yiddish plays began to be published in the Russian-Jewish periodical press. Shortly thereafter, impresarios started arranging

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[26]The most important source on Yiddish theater in Russia after the ban are Fishzon's memoirs, "Fuftsik Yor Yidish Teater" (Zikhroynes) which appeared in serialized form in the *Margin Zhurnal* on Fridays, October 10, 1924 to May 1, 1925, October 23, 1925 to November 13, 1925, December 11, 1925, January 15 and 22, 1926. See in particular the installments of October 23, 1925 and November 13, 1925; also Yankev Dinezon, "Dos Yidishe Teater," *Zikhroynes un Bilder*, Warsaw, 1927, p. 222, Noyekh Prilutski "Di Rekhtlekhe Lage Fun Yidishn Teater," *Yidish Teater*, Bialistok, 1921, pp. 73-77.

[27]Fishzon, "Fuftsik Yor..." *loc. cit.* and January 15, 1926; Prilutski, "Di Rekhtlekhe Lage"; Y. Lubomirsky, "Der Yidisher Teatr In Tsarishn Rusland," *Teater-Bukh*, Kiev, 1927, pp. 95-98.

special guest-tours for actors and troupes from America. In 1904, the censors at the Ministry of Interior began to review scripts in Yiddish, without requiring that the texts be submitted in German.[28]

The renaissance of Yiddish theater in Russia began in 1905. The Kaminski-theater starring Ester Rokhl Kaminska, which had been for many years one of the struggling, wandering troupes in the Empire, acquired its own building in Warsaw; several popular ensembles revived the Goldfaden repertoire and staged the melodramas of Jacob Gordin and others, with considerable financial success. And in 1908, the "Hirschbein Troupe" with its literary repertoire was founded in Odessa, and launched a successful tour throughout the major urban centers of the the Russian Pale.[29]

The crucial factor behind the theater explosion of 1905 and later was political. The Tsarist authorities loosened its reigns, and allowed pent-up cultural forces to flow.

Schooling

Yiddish was the language of instruction in thousands of Khadorim across the the Russian empire whose curriculum consisted almost exclusively of "khumesh un gemore" (the Pentateuch and Talmud). But modern Yiddish schooling was a negligible phenomenon in Tsarist Russia until shortly before World War I. By modern Yiddish schooling, I mean schools where general subjects (such as mathematics, geography, and natural science) were taught in Yiddish, or alternately new Jewish subjects (such as Jewish history, Yiddish language and literature) were taught in Yiddish. The total absence of the children's native language, Yiddish, in some capacity, is a striking feature of modern Jewish education in Russia in the nineteenth century. Classes were conducted in Russian, from the earliest grades on, although this created tremendous pedagogical difficulties. The idea of providing modern Jewish schooling in Yiddish first occurred to Ilya Orshanski, the Odessan Jewish lawyer and historian, who wrote a memorandum on the subject to the Society for the Dissemination of Enlightenment Among the Jews of Russia ("Hevrat Mefitse Haskalah").[30] Others may have shared

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[28]Ginzburg, "Der Farbot..." pp. 170-172; B. Gorin, *Geshikhte* vol. 2, pp. 190-197; N. Oyslender, *Yidisher Teater 1887-1917*, Moscow, 1940, pp. 7-52, 315.

[29]Oyslender, *Yidish Teater...*; Zalmen Zilbertsvayg, "Avrom Yitskhok Kaminski," *Leksikon Fun Yidishn Teater*, vol. 6, Mexico City, 1969, pp. 5254-5281, "Hirshbeyn Trupe," vol. 1, New York , 1931, pp. 612-613.

[30]Orshansky's memorandum is mentioned in passing in A. Golomb's "Di Yidish-Veltlekhe Shul (Algemeyner Iberzikht)," *Shul Almanakh*, Philadelphia,

Orshanski's opinion that teaching young children in a language they hardly knew was counter-productive, but there was little they could have done, given the educational policy of Tsarist Russia. After the Polish uprising of 1863, the Tsarist Ministry of Education imposed Russian as the sole language of instruction in all elementary and secondary schools in the Kingdom of Poland and the western provinces of Russia (including the Ukraine). This step was primarily designed to uproot Polish and combat the spread of Polish nationalist sentiments among the younger generation. Secondarily, it was intended to pre-empt the independent cultural development of other small Slavic languages, such as Ukrainian and Lithuanian. But it also had a direct impact on modern Jewish schooling, and their use of Yiddish.[31]

In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were three main types of modern Jewish schools: (a) the network of state schools for Jewish children, originally established under Nicholas I; (b) private and association-sponsored schools, led and underwritten by Maskilim, intellectuals, and philanthropists; (c) Talmud Torahs, financed by Jewish communal funds and intended for the poorest children. According to state directives, Talmud Torahs were required to provide a program of general studies. All three types of schools were subject to the supervision of the Tsarist Ministry of Education, which certified their teachers and regulated their curriculum. Like all other elementary schools in the Empire, the mandatory language of instruction was Russian. An exception was made for the Talmud Torah, which was a hybrid institution, half-kheyder, half-modern school. For half a day, general studies were taught in Russian, and half a day, the traditional khumesh un gemore were taught in Yiddish.[32]

In the Jewish state, private, and association schools, teaching in Yiddish was totally prohibited. Hirsh Abramovitsh, who studies in a state school in the early 1890s, writes:

> All studies in the Jewish state schools were conducted in Russian, even religion ('zakon bozhi' [God's law]) and the prayers before the beginning of class....The children, especially in the first grade, didn't know a word of Russian. There was a regulation that in the first grade (and only in it) one could translate into Yiddish in an emergency, if a

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1935, pp. 19-20; I have not yet located the original document in Rosenthal's or Cherikover's histories of "Mefitse Haskalah."

[31]Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Lands of Partitioned Poland*, Seattle, 1974 , pp. 196, 243.

[32]Zvi Scharstein, *Toldot Ha-Hinukh Be-Yisrael Ba-Dorot Ha-Ahronim* vol. 1, New York, 1945, pp. 320-321, Sabina Levin, "Toldot Bate Sefer Ha-Yehudi'im Ha-Hiloni'im Be-Polin Be-Arbai'm Ha-Shanim Ha-Ahronot Shel Ha-Meah Ha-19," Gal-Ed vol. 9 (1986) pp. 77-90; H. S. Kazhdan, *Fun Kheyder Un Shkoles Biz Tsisho*, Buenos Aires, 1956, pp. 194-202.

child couldn't understand. But the teachers, including Gozhansky, almost never availed themselves of that regulation. They struggled long and hard in order to avoid using Yiddish.[33]

Dr. Zemach Shabad similarly reported that "the Tsarist government severely suppressed the teaching of 'zhargon' in the schools. Only one language of instruction was permitted – Russian."[34]

The traditional kheyder, on the other hand, was a bastion of Yiddish, thanks to the fact that it was exempt from ministerial regulation. In 1859, Imperial law recognized the kheyder as a strictly religious institution, and from then on the authorities did not interfere in the kheyder's affairs, including its language of instruction. The Russian Zionists took advantage of this loophole in the law to create the "Heder Metukan" in the 1880s and 90s. Since these schools were registered as khadorim, they were not subject to the supervision of the Ministry of Education. This enabled them to construct their own curriculum, and more importantly, utilize Hebrew as the language of instruction in classes of Hebrew language and literature, Jewish history and Bible. Scores of such Khadorim Metukanim functioned in Russia at the turn of the century, and formed the basis for the modern Hebrew schools of the "Tarbut" network.[35]

The modern Yiddish school had a much more difficult time emerging than its Hebrew equivalent. Since these schools did not teach any religious subjects, they could not pass as khadorim and register themselves as such. (Usually such registration required a certification from the local Crown Rabbi concerning the religious character of the school.) The first Yiddish schools were illegal, underground institutions. Avrom Reisin visited such a school in Warsaw in 1900, with 20 to 30 students, which functioned clandestinely in the building of a legally registered private Jewish school. In Nesviezh, a school in which all studies were conducted in Yiddish (with 60 students), existed from no more than two years before the police closed it down in 1903,

[33]Hirsh Abramovitsh, "S. Gozhansky," *Farshvundene Geshtaltn*, Buenos Aires, 1956, pp. 33-34. I would like to thank Ms. Dina Abramovitsh, Research Librarian at the YIVO Institute, for drawing my attention to this reference.

[34]Zemach Shabad "Di Yidishe Shuln In Vilner Kant (A Kuk Oyf Tsurik)," *Shul-Pinkes*, Vilna, 1924, p. 43.

[35]Scharfstein, *Toldot Ha-Hinukh* pp. 305-6, 377-410; Rahel Elboim-Dror, "Temurot Ba-Hinukh Ve-ba-hevra Ha-Yehudit," *Ha-Hinukh Ha-Ivri Be-Eretz Yisrael* 1854-1914, Jerusalem, 1986, pp. 11-57. Elboim-Dror's contention that there were 774 Hadarim Metukanim in Tsarist Russia in the early 20th century seems to be exaggerated, but there is no doubt that this type of schooling had spread across scores of Jewish communities, whereas Yiddish schooling was a negligably small phenomenon.

and confiscated all its possessions. Other underground Yiddish schools existed for short spans of time in Mir, Baranovitsh, Gorodeya, Stoipts, Zamirie, and elsewhere. The first secret teachers-conference of Yiddish language schools was held in Vilna in 1907, at which time the police arrested the participants, and their deliberations continued in prison.[36]

The first larger, stabler Yiddish language schools in Russia arose in the years before World War I in Demievka, a suburb of Kiev, and in Warsaw. Both had several grades of classes and over 100 students. Their impact was limited, given the fact that they could not be written about in the then-flourishing Yiddish press. Because of their questionable legal status (the Demievka school was registered as a kheyder, the Warsaw school – as a Talmud Torah), it was considered wise not to attract too much publicity and attention. As a result, few Jews in Russia new about their existence. A correspondent of a Bundist newspaper lamented in 1913 that there were not a single Yiddish-language model-school in Russia. "Despite all the obstacles," he wrote, "it would not be impossible to establish such a school," apparently unaware that it had already been done.[37]

Conclusions

The suppression of cultural, educational, and social activity in Yiddish was an integral feature of Tsarist Russia's repressive policies toward the Jews. Official Judeophobia expressed itself not only in the policies of restricting Jewish residence-rights and occupations, instituting quotas on Jews in higher education, condoning and supporting outbursts of violence against Jews and so forth, but also in the prohibitions against Yiddish in print, on the stage, in schools and in other public forums.[38] Yiddish was, in a word, part of the "Jewish question" In Tsarist Russia.

The struggle for the rights of Yiddish in Russia was taken up by virtually all the Jewish political movements, including the Russian Zionist movements in its Helsinsfors platform (1906). It also underlay the key resolution of the 1908 Czernovitz conference for the Yiddish language, which is rarely cited in its entirety:

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[36]Kazhdan, *Fun Kheyder un Shkoles....* pp. 178-184, S. Niger, *In Kamf Far A Nayer Dertsiung*, New York, 1943, chapter 1.

[37]Kazhdan, *Fun Kheyder Un Shkoles....* pp. 186-193.

[38]Police also supressed the use of Yiddish at public meetings, and disrupted, for instance, the meetings of legal trade unions in 1906, ordering that Russian be spoken; *Di Geshikhte Fun Bund*, vol. 2, New York, 1962, pp. 426, 433.

> The first conference for the Yiddish language recognizes Yiddish as a national language of the Jewish people, *and demands for it political, social, and cultural equal rights.*[39][emphasis added]

It would be false to leave the impression that Yiddish was the only language which was persecuted by the Tsarist regime. Polish was systematically hounded out of the schools, and excluded from all official governmental functions in "the Kingdom of Poland." But the suppression of Polish was not as comprehensive; Polish theater flourished in Warsaw and other cities during the late nineteenth century, and the number of Polish-language periodicals grew from 22 in 1864 to 92 in 1894. The treatment of Ukrainian was harsher. In 1876, the Tsarist regime proscribed the use of Ukrainian in print – books, newspapers, journals, everything – and banned Ukrainian theater (with certain very limited exceptions). The use of Ukrainian in schools was, of course, prohibited. If one is to find an analogue to the Tsarist policy toward Yiddish, it is Ukrainian.[40]

But Jews as a group were more modernized than Ukrainians – more urbanized, secularized, in contact with modern culture and science. The prospects for a rich, modern cultural sphere in Yiddish were greater than for Ukrainian. If such a culture did not come into existence until the early twentieth century, the delay should be attributed first and foremost to the politics of Yiddish in Tsarist Russia.

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[39]*Di Ershte Yidishe Shprakh-Konferents*, Vilna, 1933, p. 108; for the text of the Russian Helsingsfors platform, and its demands concerning the rights of the "national language" (Hebrew) and the "spoken language" (Yiddish) see Yehuda Reinhartz and Paul Mendes Flohr, *The Jew in the Modern World*, Oxford, 1980, p. 343-344.

[40]Wandycz, *Lands of Partitioned Poland*, pp. 253, 264, 267; George Y. Shevelov "The Language Question In The Ukraine In The Twentieth Century (1900-1941)" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* vol. 10 no. 1-2 (1986) pp. 70-171; more generally see Riccardo Piccio, *Aspects of the Slavic Language Question In the Nineteenth Century*.

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From *Yishuv* to Sovereign State: Changes in the Social Structure of the Jewish State in the 1940s[1]

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I

The new state of Israel, born to independence on May 14, 1948, arose upon the foundation of a society that was itself young and incomplete. In the first years of its existence, Israel absorbed a mass of immigrations equal in number to its original population but sharply different in many significant social, economic, and cultural traits. What does it mean, then, if, under these circumstances, one speaks of the social structure of the new Jewish State?

Obviously, an analysis of the structure of a society implies a description of its stable elements. But only the future can really tell us how far and in what respects Israel today exhibits the elements of stability characteristic of older, better established societies. Thus, a description of Israel's social structure is necessarily a venture in prediction. The best approach may be to analyze Israel's most significant unsolved social problems – those, that is, whose solution is likely to have the most significant historic effect.

In this respect Israel is similar to other states that have emerged in our time. History and social structure are inseparably joined in such states, as they are in all revolutionary – or, as we now call them,

[1]This article is based in part on a larger work "The Emergence of the Jewish State," written by Ben Halpern and myself.

rapidly developing – situations. The contemporary social problems of the new "underdeveloped" nations are clearly rooted in their past history, while the shape of their historic future is being decided by the very policies through which they attempt to solve these contemporary social problems. Thus, the extreme poverty and wretched conditions of India's "untouchables" are closely connected with the religious tradition of Hinduism; and, on the other hand, whether India will become a united, stable, and powerful modern nation greatly depends on its raising the level of literacy, the degree of social acceptance, and the economic productivity of the pariahs and other depressed groups.[2]

These relationships are usually well understood by those responsible for determining the policies of new or rejuvenated nations. Even half a century ago the young Turks under Kemal Pasha Ataturk held the veiling of women and other Moslem traditions responsible for the cultural stagnation and social debility of the Ottoman regime. Consequently, they made "Westernization" a paramount aim of nationalist policy. Thus, measures intended to abolish social ills were also intended to accomplish historic – or even more precisely, political aims.[3]

The same observations apply to Israel. The Jewish State is one of those modern societies that seeks to make itself more easily understood by proclaiming its fundamental purposes (not only political, but social, economic, and cultural) as elaborately articulated principles. Israel is both a state and a social structure conceived before its birth as a means of solving a specific social problem – the modern Jewish Problem – in all its ramifications; moreover, since its establishment, Israel has continued to regard the solution of the Jewish Problem as a fundamental purpose. Consequently, the institutions and values of Israel, both the state and the society, have been and continue to be structured by their functions in solving the Jewish Problem. This, at least is an ideological

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[2]See for example the following: Dilip Hiro, *Untouchables of India*, new 1982 ed. London: Minority Rights Groups, 1982; Veena Das, *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual*. 2nd ed. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982; Mark Juergensmeyer, *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement Against Untouchability in 20th Century Punjab*. Berkely, California, 1981; Milton Israel, *National Unity: The South Asian experience*. New Delhi: Promilla, 1983.

[3]See the following: Bernard Lewis. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*. London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1961; Seif Mardin. *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1962; Richard D. Robinson. *The First Turkish Republic: A Case Study in National Development*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.

demand that Israel recognizes. History alone will decide how far reality will conform to the ideal.

Thus, the Zionist movement before the rise of Israel proclaimed, in addition to the goal of political sovereignty, the following nationalist objectives: to develop Hebrew as a spoken language and as the foundation of a Jewish national consensus; to transfer to Palestine all Jews who could not or did not wish to live in Diaspora countries; to establish a Jewish community in Palestine free from the peculiar social, economic, and cultural problems that beset the Jewish status as a minority people scattered throughout the world; and to carry out the transformations in the Jewish social and economic distribution, to create the appropriate social institutions, and to foster the cultural changes that were the necessary means for attaining the above ends.

The State of Israel has committed itself no less clearly and comprehensively than did the Zionist movement before it to elaborately articulated ideological principles. Upon the creation of the state in 1948, the ideal of national independence was institutionalized in the ultimate form, that of political sovereignty. By that date, too, the Jewish community in Palestine had already developed institutions realizing the related nationalist aims. Hebrew was a spoken language, widely enough disseminated to become the national tongue of the new state, and social and economic institutions had been developed, an occupational distribution achieved, and cultural values established in conformity with the ideal of a self-sustaining, balanced community capable of controlling its own destiny in the same way as other free peoples do. But following 1948, in extending its welcome to all Jews who could not or would not remain in their old homes, Israel received a mass immigration that, for the most part, did not possess the specific national attributes already developed by the settled population. In consequence of this immigration policy, Israel's tasks henceforth included the following: to enable the newcomers to master the language and share in the other elements of social consensus existing in the settled community; to enable them to participate in the social institutions and cultural life of the settled community; and transform the social and occupational distribution of the new immigrants so that they would conform to the settled population and become self-supporting, at the same time helping the state become economically self-sustaining.

From this survey it is evident, however, that in certain respects Israel is sharply different from the other new states to which we have compared it. The problem intended to be solved by acquiring sovereignty in Israel and establishing a free Jewish society there was not the problem of an autochthonous community whose pattern of living

was rooted in centuries of adjustment to its own locale. It was instead the problem of a people suffering exile. Its first stage was the return of the people to a homeland to which only their dreams but not the minute details of their diverse ways of life, were intimately attached. In the very act of migration, the returning Zionists implicitly committed themselves (as did other emigrants to other overseas lands) to renounce habits that might not be suited to the new country; and their adjustment to modern requirements in the new country, too, was relatively free from the handicaps of a rigid local tradition. Thus, the establishment of new patterns of living, rationally suited for adjustment to the social, cultural, and economic as well as political requirements of a modern nation in Palestine, was made far easier than for the native Asian and African communities that have acquired independence in our time. A rather more suitable comparison would be new nations of the Western Hemisphere, colonized by immigrants from Europe.

Another major difference from the new Asian and African states (and here, too, the situation may properly be compared with other modern societies built up by colonization) is closely related to the first. Israeli society, as it stood in 1948, represented (in conception, at least, and to a considerable degree in fact) a successful solution of the social problems with which the Zionist movement is concerned. While the mass influx of new immigrants after 1948 undoubtedly produced severe, new social problems, one might contend that Israel had already succeeded in developing the social institutions, or at any rate the values and principles, which in appropriate application could solve the new problems. If this were a fully satisfactory description of Israel's present situation, Israel would then resemble the United States during the mass immigration of 1880 to 1920 more than it does a country like India or Egypt today. Its major task would be *merely* social – how to absorb a "formless" mass of newcomers into an already established social milieu – rather than historic – how to devise new institutions or convert traditional social forms into a suitable environment for "modern" living.

The differences from other "underdeveloped" countries in this respect must indeed be recognized from the outset; but it is equally essential to recognize how different in magnitude and in kind was Israel's task from such a process as the integration of immigrants in rapidly developing nineteenth-century America. If there is a proper comparison, it would more nearly be to the impact of immigration in

colonial America[4] or, later, just behind the moving Western frontier, for the relative scale of immigration to Israel was so great that the "established" institutions had to adjust to the immigrants no less than the immigrants to the institutions. In addition, the change from a community living under a Mandate government to an independent Jewish State, with all the other political, social, economic, and cultural upheavals that attended it, undoubtedly loosened the underpinnings of the old institutions. It could be said, therefore, that Israel's social institutions and values were and are more in flux than they are fixed.

In sum, the study of Israel's pressing domestic problems today can and should be more than a study of *merely* social issues. The questions that demand solution, if we may put the issue in technical terms, probably arise from something more than a merely frictional maladjustment, and the answers to them may represent something more than the restored equilibrium of a stable, "boundary-maintaining" social structure. The solutions of Israel's social problems are likely to have historic significance. They may determine the shape in which still undefined Israeli social institutions and values eventually become fixed and stable.

Any social structure that is at all involved in historic processes is, to that extent, a structure of hypotheses and of provisional values that are continually challenged by alternatives. In a situation as fluid as that of Israel, such alternatives assert themselves with special force. In no rapidly developing country that absorbs large numbers of immigrants do the newcomers have to adjust to a monolithic code of values; instead, they find a range of nuanced alternatives that are recognized as legitimate by the social consensus of the settled community. In no rapidly developing country are the newcomers integrated into a direct social relationship with all or even a representative sample of the settled population; instead, they enter into complex relationships of reciprocal acceptance and rejection with selected elements among the old settlers according to the particular social functions they take up or are assigned. Where the relative weight of the immigrant population is so large as it is in Israel, the support the newcomers lend to alternative values, which may lie latent among the older settlers, could well force the revision of the patterns of

[4]See Bernard Bailyn. *Peopling of British North America: An Introduction.* New York: Knopf, 1986; Daniel Boorstein. *The Americas: The Colonial Experience.* New York: Random House, 1958; Richard D. Brown. *Modernization: The Transformation of American Life 1600-1865.* New York: Hill & Wang, 1976.

society throughout the whole range of its functions – political, economic, cultural, and purely social.

So large an immigration relative to the settled population could also force recognition of quite new alternatives to Israel's institutions, not represented even as latent, deviant trends among the older settlers. Moreover, the right of Jewish immigrants to determine the patterns of Israel's future existence has a strong ideological grounding in Zionist principles. Israel exists, according to its own proclamation, in order to solve the problem of the homelessness and lack of independence of the Jewish people[5] – that is, to provide a rational solution for the problem of Jews in exile and to allow the Jews of the dispersion, in returning to the homeland, to become masters of their own national destiny. This surely means that the new immigrants are not less entitled to advocate their own patterns of living as appropriate for Israeli society as a whole, or for part of it, than were their predecessors who established the social institutions with which Israel began in 1948.

II

In all the new states that have emerged in our day, the conversion from dependency to sovereignty has produced new, complex social problems and raised issues of historic significance. Israel's independence was won in rebellion and war; and the conditions under which Israel had to plan its future after the hostilities subsided were radically different from all that had existed under the Mandate and from anything that was ever planned or would have seemed likely beforehand. From the very beginning the Jewish State was confronted not only by the ordinary readjustments to independence, taxing enough in all cases, but by quite unusual special difficulties.

In Israel, as in many other instances, the colonial administration did not hand over to the new state functioning institutions and trained officials fully able to cope with the responsibilities of sovereignty. On this count alone, the transfer of authority to Israel could not be smooth. It came as an abrupt challenge that had to be met at the first shock by improvised expedients, with many attendant difficulties. Over the long pull, the readjustment to a new governmental structure placed a severe strain on many institutions of the *Yishuv*, which had been built up in the absence of a Jewish state, and here, too, difficulties similar to those of other new states arose.

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[5]Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. *Israel in the Middle East*, p. 14. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

In some ways, however, Israel was much better equipped for sovereignty by the legacy of the Mandate period than were other ex-colonial areas. Even though the Mandate administration was unable to create a legislative council or an advisory council enabling the population to gain experience in government at the highest level, a fair number of Jews were employed in the higher ranks of various government departments. Additional personnel with general administrative experience could be drawn from the many welfare and development agencies with which the *Yishuv* was so well supplied. The Jewish Agency, the Histadrut, and the minor party organizations conducted social, economic, cultural, and political activities in many ways parallel to those of a state. There were, nevertheless, many important functions not paralleled or not adequately represented in the experience of the Jewish public institutions. The Mandate government, bitterly hostile to the United Nations' resolution to partition Palestine and particularly antagonistic to the plan for a Jewish State, did nothing to help, and a great deal to hinder, Jewish preparations for statehood during the brief transition from Mandate to independence in 1947-1948. The United Nations Palestine Commission worked to the best of its ability under difficult conditions to help the Jews meet this problem; and the Jews applied themselves vigorously to the task. Owing to these efforts and to the well-established infrastructure of a modern state that the *Yishuv* bequeathed to Israel, the new Jewish polity was able to avoid the crippling confusion, conflict, and general political instability that has often beset early years of independence in other states. Even so, Israel at its birth had to struggle with severe and urgent problems of reorganization in order to convert its existing institutions and improvise supplementary agencies capable of preserving its independence. The extraordinary extent of the activities carried on by the *Yishuv's* partisan organizations separately, as well as by most of them jointly through the Jewish Agency and the Palestinian Jewish community council, was a curse as well as a blessing in the first years. The new state was born with relatively well-developed organs of self-maintenance, education, and self-defense. The difficulty was that it had not only one but many well-staffed agencies for absorbing immigrants, not only one but many full-scale school systems, and, worst of all, not only one but many military organizations, each seeking to establish and defend the Jewish State according to its own strategic and tactical plans.

Israel was very early able to overcome its inherited, plural form of military organization. The clear and present danger of defeat was enough to make the Israeli government take drastic measures and the Israeli population supported them. The state represented, however, a

new force intent upon unification not only in military matters but over a wide range of inherited institutional structures, and in these unifications did not have the same support. There were strong interests, and strong functional demands as well, for the continuation of the pluralistic institutional structure Israel derived from the New Yishuv. This applies even to Israel's political institutions.

The values and habits essential to the efficient functioning of a state were not lacking in Israel to such a dangerous extent as in many another new state. Although large numbers of the new immigrants came from countries where industrial civilization and democratic government were not familiar, the *Yishuv* had long been accustomed to modern ways of administration and was prepared by experience to induct newcomers into its advanced institutions.

Nevertheless, there were certain respects in which the sudden assumption of new governmental functions, and the sudden expansion of central bureaucracies, sharply altered the conventional attitudes of the *Yishuv*. The *Yishuv* had valued expansion, growth, dynamism, and initiative as much as any modern code of rational values could wish, and it had generally favored the idea of planning. But from the beginning in the Second Aliyah it had also strongly stressed the autonomy of small groups and the right to experiment with a variety of approaches to social, economic, and cultural problems. It had grown into a pluralistic society even more diverse, perhaps, than was desired by the protagonists of group autonomy themselves – for each partisan group felt, after all, that the others ought to accept the principles it upheld. But the rise of the state machinery, with its broad-range drive toward unity, not only endangered the vested interest of established partisan organizations. The value it placed on central authority, on discipline, on obedience, also ran counter to the established values of grass-roots autonomy, spontaneity, and initiative that were conventional in the *Yishuv*. Thus the sudden rise of the state machinery forecast possible conflicts not only over matters of social organization but over values. Not only were the vested interests of the *Yishuv* challenged, but is ideals were questioned and its sensibilities shocked.

The assumption of sovereignty, then, meant the rise of social problems and historic issues for Israel, as for other new states of our time, though not of the same kind or severity. The circumstances in which Israel gained its independence and had to defend it in the early years, raised almost unique difficulties. Not to recognize the legitimate existence of new states is an innovation not infrequent in our times; but few new states are so completely encircled as Israel by neighbors that deny its right to exist. Undeclared, cold, and other varieties of unconventional war are also not without precedent in our times; but few

states are so harried with blockades, boycotts, and border clashes as Israel has been since its birth. As a result, Israel has been an armed camp, and its entire population, a citizen army.

The social and cultural consequences of a virtually total conscription policy have been far-reaching and significant. The army has been the meeting place of all Israelis, segregated so sharply in their civilian capacities. The common danger and the common service have inspired a high *esprit de corps* throughout the nation, particularly responsive to outer threats. For the immigrants, the army has served, by conscious plan, as a primary school of Israeli naturalization.

No less significant have been the economic and political effects of Israel's exceptional security situation. Only by a high productive capacity can Israel sustain relatively huge military capabilities. Cut off from its immediate hinterland, Israel has been forced to seek economic ties abroad. It has had to compete in the markets of the advanced industrial countries of the West; and it has had to seek economic as well as political relations with distant, new territories emerging into independence in Asia and Africa. Unable to rely on resistance to Arab blacklisting by foreign transport lines, Israel has been driven to organize its own merchant marine and airline, to develop new ports and expand its airline terminal facilities.

Even an Israel left at peace by its neighbors would face extraordinary social and economic problems. The new country was half arid, and the mass of entering immigrants, unprecedently great. The insecurity of Israel immeasurably complicated the situation. As political refugees, most immigrants entered in a state of utter deprivation and many in poor health. So, too, the supply of capital and the location of industry and agricultural settlements, the methods of absorption and the aims of acculturation of immigrants were all different in the encircled Israel that arose out of the Arab-Israeli conflict than would otherwise be the case.

Like other new countries, independent Israel faced social and economic readjustments that developed from its having severed the ties that bound it to another people during its colonial period. But the new Israel not only broke its bonds with Britain, the far-off colonial power. It also found itself, after the war of independence, separated from a major part of the local population of prewar Palestine, the Arabs. Both changes involved drastic revisions in the social and economic relationships contemplated for the new state.

It was, of course, the fundamental purpose of Zionism to make the Jews autonomous not only in their political but in their social and economic institutions. Nevertheless, success in achieving sovereignty

brought with it unexpected problems arising from the sudden erection of a state apparatus. So, too, when Zionism achieved an intrinsic aim by freeing Israel from the subordination of its judiciary to British legal practices and legal authorities, it encountered the unexplored difficulties of living according to a Jewish law.

British control of Palestine's economic policy had been a major obstacle to Zionism, most serious after the adoption of the 1939 White Paper. The advantages of Britain's departure were clear. Israel now had a free hand to explore the mineral resources of Palestine and plan the intensive development of land and water without restriction. Another economic grievance had been the tariff policy of the Mandatory, which, Zionists charged, was unduly rigid in granting equal access to the Palestine market for all League of Nations members while unduly responsive to the commercial interests of neighboring countries, and inconsistent with the rapid development of a modern industrial economy in Palestine. With independence, Israel obtained the freedom to adopt such foreign trade policies as would best serve its ends.

But the economic consultants of the Zionist Organization, in criticizing British economic policy in Palestine, had naturally proposed alternatives that assumed the continuance of the Mandate – that is, the persistence of an economic connection with Great Britain. They proposed, for example, the inclusion of Palestine within Britain's imperial preference scheme. The immediate effect of Israel's independence, even before the formal proclamation, was the severance of all economic ties with Britain. Palestine was removed from the sterling bloc. The new Jewish State was not obliged to devise such policies that could support a more or less stable currency upon the sole basis of its own economy instead of sharing, as previously, in a balance comprising total economic activities of the sterling bloc.

Whether or not the severance of economic ties with Britain had critical economic significance, it gave new prominence to a task that Zionism had not clearly considered earlier and required an emphasis on somewhat different economic criteria. In the many plans that Zionists had made for the economic development of Palestine, the stress had been strongly technological: how to derive maximum yields from the land and to achieve the most efficient employment of all available men and women and capital. The criterion of a profitable balance at a given level of productivity was given less prominence, regarded as an economic goal that could be deferred until the prior aim of raising the level of productivity to a maximum had been achieved. The question the Zionists asked was how they could best use *any* piece of land in Palestine and in what way they could best provide employment for any

immigrant who might come, not which lands should be exploited first and at what point land became submarginal or how many immigrants should be allowed to enter at a given time. The latter, of course, were the criteria that a hostile Mandatory pressed upon them. After Israel was created and cast upon its own resources to achieve a balance of its accounts, the objective situation required Israel itself to make solvency, not merely efficiency, a major economic aim.

Much more far-reaching were the effects of separation from the Palestinian Arabs. In its economic planning during the Mandate, Zionists had elaborated proposals for large-scale land acquisition throughout Palestine. This involved gradually, but radically reducing the overwhelming preponderance of Arab landownership and extending to the maximum the area cultivated by the advanced methods of the Jews. It also involved specific plans for raising Arab agriculture, on the reduced areas available, to the highest level. The idea was to begin with the resources and techniques available to the Palestinian *fellaheen* and, by a graded progression, supply them with new facilities and accustom them to new methods, arriving by a different route at the same destination as Jewish agriculture.

The fighting of 1947-1948 brought in its train the mass flight and some expulsions of Arabs out of the area of Israel. All at once, instead of by gradual stages, virtually the whole land area became available for development by Jews. The problem became one not of slowly purchasing occupied areas but of rapidly settling vacant areas, which would otherwise run to weed and which, unoccupied, might be overrun by the unopposed incursion of border raiders and enemy forces. Plans for agricultural retraining now had to be designed in terms of new Jewish immigrants with virtually no farming tradition, not in terms of the much less pliant Arab *fellaheen*, with their set ways and ancient precedents.

The absence of the Arabs also altered the terms in which the problems facing Jewish agriculture itself had to be understood. In spite of the Zionist aim to build a balanced economy in which Jews would themselves produce all their own necessities, at least to the same extent as other nations in their own land, Jewish farming under the Mandate had an uneven development. Many characteristic farm products, natural to the Palestinian soil, were provided to the Jewish economy either entirely or in large part by the Palestinian Arab farmers. Unable to compete with local Arabs in growing native grains and certain fruits and vegetables, Jewish farms produced, like the Arabs, citrus for export and dairy products for the *Yishuv*. We have referred to the many factors that threw the new state of Israel on its own resources: the Arab boycott and blockade, the severance of economic

ties with Britain. The disappearance of so many Arab farmers from Israel and the cessation of trade with Arab suppliers across the border had a similar effect. Jewish farming now had to plan to supply many basic commodities previously available from Arab sources. In view of the new importance of national solvency, it now also had to plan to use the whole area at its free disposal in the light of the requirements of Israel's foreign trade balance.

The sudden absence of the Arabs from Israel's countryside and from the cities where they had been neighbors of the Jews obviously had direct social and cultural effects. Among these, one had a significant impact on the Israeli code of values. Living next door to a hostile neighbor nurtured the militancy inherent in the Zionist ethos as surely when the Arabs lived in close conjunction with Jews throughout a common land under the Mandate as when they were separated by political boundaries after independence. In the earlier period, the fact that Jews and Arabs would some day have to reach a *modus vivendi* was brought home to the Zionists in every field of their daily activity: at work, in the marketplace, at home, and on the roads. After independence, the need for an understanding with Arabs became remote and was relegated mainly to the field of external politics, in which the Israeli man-on-the-street was personally involved only when mobilized for military service.

Another value of the Zionist ethos was affected, too, in a more tenuous form. The principle that Jews, in order to liberate themselves from economic dependency (or "parasitism"), must become workers had a specific relevance and impact when Arab farmers and workers were available in such numbers to supply the *Yishuv*. Jewish labor and Jewish self-supply, the slogans of the socialist Zionist parties, found considerable opposition from the middle-class party. They were, nonetheless, ideals generally recognized by the consensus of the Yishuv; and the constant clash of these ideals with Palestinian realities made Jewish labor a particularly live issue in the community. Those who dedicated themselves to the realization of this part of the Zionist ideal enjoyed an undisputed elite position. With the flight of most of the Arab population, the whole question was sharply depreciated in significance. Now the Jewish community had to supply itself to the fullest extent possible – quite apart from any ideals involved. Now many of the new immigrants had to become workers and farmers; and it was a bureaucracy, not an idealistic youth movement, that proved best suited to the task.

III

In achieving independence, the new State of Israel achieved or incurred sharp changes of the conditions under which it would thenceforth have to pursue its national purpose. In some respects the transition was smoother for Israel than for other new states of our era. Before becoming independent, the community had already created a social infrastructure quite capable of supporting a modern polity. There would undoubtedly be strains to overcome, in the long as well as the short run, but the fundamental political stability of Israel was beyond question.

In other respects, Israel's situation was unusually difficult. The land was small and poor. The Israeli policy of open doors for all displaced or unsettled Jews presented unprecedented problems of economic absorption and social adjustment. These difficulties had been foreseen and were more or less inherent in the essential purpose of Zionism. Other problems had not been expected and were due to extraneous circumstances. The sudden collapse of the Mandate, the sharp conflict with and persisting hostility of the Arab states, and particularly the vacuum created by the absence of the Palestinian Arabs, abruptly and totally altered the conditions under which Israeli policy would thenceforth have to be formulated.

The changes were no less significant for Israel's domestic problems than for its foreign policy. To some of the new demands of the times, Israel was able to adjust its institutional structure rapidly and effectively. To others, the adjustment is still to be made. The problems involved are not only the major social questions that concern the people of Israel today but the historic issues that will shape the institutions of Israel in the future.

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Ideology of Antisemitism: The American Jewish View

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I. Introduction

Much of what is written about antisemitism focuses on the antisemitic beliefs and attitudes of non-Jews. A vast literature documents antisemitic incidents, discrimination, and violence. Histories have been written on antisemites, authoritarian personalities, and the roots of antisemitic beliefs and behaviors. The idea of antisemitism, however, cannot be properly addressed without analyzing the ideology of Jews as they assess antisemitism. This essay explores how Jews in the United States think about antisemitism in contemporary America.

Antisemitism is a combination of ideology, attitudes and behavior. Ben Halpern, in his article "What is Antisemitism?" defines it as "a hostile attitude toward the Jews (regarded as a threat) that develops into a tradition and becomes institutionalized."[1] Halpern notes that the threat can be expressed collectively, socially, economically, or politically. This threat, he states, can vary in terms of intensity, and be expressed by minor fringe groups or through major political forces. Most Jews in the United States share this outlook.

American Jewish perceptions are molded by events of the past, what is happening now, and how all the information from both the past and the present is transmitted to them. To a great extent, Jews

[1]Ben Halpern, "What is Antisemitism?" *Modern Judaism* 1 (December 1981), pp. 252-253.

teach one another about antisemitism in all its forms and expressions. An individual's awareness of antisemitism has its roots in a collective awareness that was, and continues to be, passed on through a wide variety of mechanisms.

Although Jews are well integrated into American culture, they have maintained distinct neighborhood, friendship, and cultural institutions. They operate freely in two worlds, mixing with non-Jews where they live, where they work, where they go to school, and in a wide array of social, political, and economic contexts. At the same time, there exists a separate world served by Jewish institutions and organizations, a separate Jewish media, close friendship patterns, and some clustering of Jews in particular neighborhoods. Thus, Jewish awareness of antisemitism stems both from their integrated life within American culture and from their more separate life as part of the Jewish subculture.

American Jews are positioned along a continuum of assimilation and isolation. For example, Orthodox Jews are much more likely than non-Orthodox Jews to live in densely Jewish neighborhoods, and Reform Jews are much more likely to marry a non-Jew than either Conservative or Orthodox Jews. Furthermore, Jews are differentiated by class, political beliefs, and many other factors. They are by no means unidimensional. As a result there is no single view or single set of perceptions that Jews hold about antisemitism. Jewish perceptions are a collection of views.

But along a continuum of varying views, some common perceptions do appear. Nearly all Jews believe that there is some antisemitism in the United States, and nearly all Jews say that they have experienced some form of antisemitism in their lifetime. The extent to which they have experienced antisemitism and their interpretation of those experiences exemplify a wide variety of views. But there are some commonly held beliefs.

First, it is almost universally believed that antisemitism cannot be completely eradicated. Jews view it as a constant, a problem that may ebb and flow but that never disappears. This basic precept colors all other perceptions of antisemitism. Second, even among the few who believe that antisemitism has almost disappeared, most believe that wariness is essential. They hold that if antisemitism cannot be eradicated, then it must be closely watched, monitored, and combatted.

Contemporary Jewish experience is influenced partly by a collective history, both modern and premodern. Indeed, the litany of persecutions that Jews have suffered is an intricate part of their liturgy and their traditional ritual observances. Formal Jewish education, which touches nearly all Jews in the United States at some point in

their lives, focuses on the mistreatment of Jews in a variety of contexts, from Egypt through Spain and into the 20th century. Jews are taught about one antisemitic culture after another, and the ultimate expulsion or discrimination that beset Jews in every society in which they resided.

Most first- and second-generation American Jews carry with them multiple sets of collective memories. In addition to what they have been taught, either through formal Jewish education, ritual observance, or the adopted folklore of the subculture, these Jews experienced first-hand systematic discrimination in the United States. Housing, for example, was closed to Jews in most areas through legally enforced restrictive covenants. These were not declared unconstitutional until the late 1940s. Universities had quotas on the number of Jews that could be admitted, certain employers would not hire Jews, positions of leadership were often closed to Jews in the cultural and political circles of the local and national scene. While the United States was a hospitable environment, it was by no means a completely open system for Jews. Certainly, the United States offered economic opportunity, even though certain avenues were closed. Jews experienced a social and political freedom that they had rarely known elsewhere. Nevertheless, forms of institutional antisemitism were an integral part of the American scene 40 years ago.

The extent of antisemitism in the United States until the coming of age of the third generation of American Jews should neither be overstated nor minimized. On the one hand, antisemitism in the United States was different from antisemitism in Europe. Discrimination against Jews was never part of official government action in this country. The legitimacy of state-sanctioned or -instigated violence never took root in the United States. Furthermore, Jews found themselves enfranchised in the political system in this country. Here they were able to utilize the electoral process to protect their individual and civil rights.

But discrimination in schools, housing, and employment were all quite real. Although the government did not promulgate antisemitic rhetoric and action, the government certainly sanctioned, and in some cases enforced, certain forms of antisemitism until the recent past. For example, restrictive covenants were supported through the courts, endorsed by the Federal Housing Administration, and enforced by state governments. Until the late 1940s, the imprimatur of federal and state legitimacy was granted to the segregation of neighborhoods by race and religion. Legal protection of many civil rights is a very recent phenomenon in American history.

In addition, in the first half of the 20th century many Jews were foreign-born. They carried with them the experiences of Eastern Europe. Primarily from Poland and Russia, these Jews were the victims of systematic discrimination and state-sanctioned violence. Grandparents have relayed to third and fourth generations of American Jews stories of pogroms – sanctioned violent attacks on Jewish settlements. These stories, too, continue to be a part, although a fading part, of Jewish consciousness in the United States.

More than any other factor, the Holocaust now frames all Jewish perceptions of antisemitism. About half the Jews in the United States lived through this time period. For them it remains a conscious memory. Much has been written about the Holocaust and its effect upon Jews in the United States. The Holocaust represents the ultimate expression of antisemitism, a systematic destruction of Jews throughout Europe. Persecution in Egypt and Spain cannot possibly affect Jewish perceptions as profoundly as the Holocaust.

The Holocaust took place in the modern civilized world. It flashes on film before American Jewish eyes, registering as the most horrible event of the 20th century. Furthermore, the meaning of the Holocaust is now a major component of almost every child's Jewish education. Children are taught that an assimilated Jewish community in Germany and less assimilated Jews elsewhere were systematically massacred by a nation at the height of its scientific and cultural achievements. They are also taught that most people of other nations did not rush to help the Jews. Furthermore, questions are raised repeatedly about why the Jews did not resist more, and why they denied the impending Holocaust. These are questions that haunt first- and second-generation Jews and perplex third- and fourth-generation Jews.

II. The Dual Identity of American Jews

American Jewish ideology about antisemitism comes from American Jews living in two worlds. Most Jews are increasingly well integrated into the fabric of American society and culture, while at the same time maintaining a separate Jewish identity, although often marginal and vague. America's Jews are clearly just that: products of the general society. In many fundamental ways American Jews behave and believe much as do other white middle-class Americans. Yet distinct differences remain. Most Jews still adhere to enough minimal religious activity to separate them from the Christian majority.

As a result of their dual identity, the Jewish looking glass through which antisemitism is examined is really more like a pair of bifocals. The vision changes depending on whether or not the Jewish lens or the

American lens is used. And as with bifocals, until the wearer adjusts to them, objects tend to blur, unless the view through the lens is perfectly balanced. The vision of antisemitism seems less threatening when viewed through the American lens: security, acceptance, and success characterize the American experience. The Jewish lens offers something different: marginality and a collective history of persecution. Jewish perceptions of antisemitism are molded by the tension of living with a multiple personality.

The dual character of American Jews can be conceptualized along a continuum of identity, with greater and lesser degrees of assimilation. A relatively small proportion of Jews behave only as Americans and not as Jews, while the proportions who would identify themselves only as Jews, and not Americans, are even smaller. The vast majority find themselves somewhere between these two extremes.

Nor is an individual's identity permanently fixed in time. Each identity is buffeted and moved by external events, both personal (life cycle) and more global. While the Six-Day War affected the consciousness of an entire generation of Jews, a college course, the death of a parent, or the birth of a child may alter the religious consciousness of an individual.

A certain kaleidoscopic quality characterizes the identity of American Jews, both individually and as a group. This amorphous identity shifts with time and events, sometimes dramatically and sometimes subtly. Colors combine differently with each turn of a kaleidoscope, and the picture changes if it is passed from one person to another. No matter how one might try, the colors shift ever so delicately with the slightest movement.

Indeed, the American Jewish community, as a descriptive phrase, is something of a misnomer. America's six million Jews hardly constitute a monolithic entity. Occupation, geographic distribution, recreational patterns, and other dimensions of American life are substantially different within the Jewish population. Jews are very likely to hold white-collar positions, to have high levels of education, and to live in large metropolitan areas. But not all Jews are professionals, not all Jews have Ph.D.s, and not all Jews live in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. Too often, disproportionate differences between Jews and non-Jews are somehow exaggerated into false stereotypes believed by Jews and non-Jews alike.

Differences among Jews in terms of religious profiles are even more pronounced. One of the more troubling aspects of Jewish life in the United States is the ever-deepening rift occurring along denominational lines. Contemporary Jews in the United States are segmented by differences in levels of ritual observance and belief, as well as relative

assimilation into the greater mainstream of American society. A Jew can be at one end of the assimilation continuum, a largely observant Jew in terms of ritual practice and observance, and be well integrated into most aspects of general American culture, in terms of social, political, and economic activities. An Orthodox Jew can make sure his head is covered at a mainstream American activity, such as a major league baseball game, by simply donning a baseball cap.

On the other hand, one can be a largely nonobservant Jew and yet have relative isolation from mainstream American life, in terms of neighborhood, friends, and social life. It is often assumed that the most observant Jews are also the most geographically or socially isolated. Such is the case for clusters of Orthodox Jews in sections of New York. However, even the least observant, those who consider themselves "just Jewish," practicing few if any Jewish rituals, exhibit tendencies to remain within the Jewish realm. Many say that the majority of their closest friends are Jewish, live in neighborhoods where Jews constitute substantial minorities, and in a multitude of other ways remain within the Jewish world, although they certainly do not remain religiously observant.

Except for those Jews who completely abandon their Jewish identity, some separateness for Jews remains a reality. No matter how much Jews dress like other Americans, have the same recreational patterns, adopt white middle-class values and accept white middle-class cultural norms, participate in the political system, or advance economically, they continue to adhere to a minority religion. While Judaism has been accorded status as one of three of America's "main" religions, this status does not imply "sameness."

Whether Jews define themselves as "just Jewish," "ethnic Jews," "nonreligious Jews," or some other phrase that classifies them as more assimilated, most know that they differ from other Americans. Furthermore, when Jews say that they are not religious Jews, in terms of their self-definition, they are usually indicating that they are not ritually observant Jews and do not attend synagogue or temple very often.

Jews, as long as they remain Jews, are different from most Americans. While Polish Americans, Irish Americans, and German Americans may maintain some sentimental ties to their country of origin and may have developed sociocultural patterns that define them as differentiated subgroups of Christian Americans, they remain part of the religious majority. Italians and other white immigrant groups have gradually lost or will lose their more distinguishing characteristics. But Jews, although well integrated as white middle-class Americans, maintain a singularly separating characteristic, their

religious identity, which keeps them apart. Jews are certainly free to practice their religion, and in some ways they are even encouraged to do so by the general culture. Such acceptance and tolerance do not negate the reality of the distinctiveness and minority status of Judaism within the Christian society.

Nearly all Jews are aware of this marginality. Some may believe that it is insignificant. Others may feel that the schisms between American Jews and other Americans are deep. Some Jews assert that they are neither like nor different from other Americans: They are Jewish Americans. Others see the differences as all-encompassing. Yet it is the recognition of this difference, for most Jews, coupled with the collective histories of the Jewish place in other host cultures, that keeps Jews wary. Most Jews still practice religion differently from nearly all other Americans, and these practices are part of a set of religious beliefs that are fundamentally different from those of other Americans.

III. Denial, Wariness and Fear

Living in two worlds produces a complicated set of feelings about antisemitism. Looking through American eyes, signs of economic, social, and political success indicate very low levels of discrimination against Jews. Such an assessment might lead some to deny that antisemitism exists at all. However, looking through Jewish eyes may produce feelings of fear. Signs of antisemitism in the United States, both behavioral and attitudinal, continue to be present in one form or another. For most Jews, this results in wariness, the large middle ground between denial and fear.

Sometimes the interpretation of what is seen through American and Jewish lenses is reversed. The bitter history of antisemitism, viewed through Jewish eyes, causes some Jews to deny the continued presence of prejudice, hostility, or violence. Coping is facilitated by denying the problem. Yet American Jews, as Americans, have an almost obsessive concern with individual rights and freedoms, and abhor potential infringements upon those rights. Such an obsession may produce fear, and this fear may in turn result in obsession, mutually reinforcing one another. American Jewish responses to antisemitism are clearly a combination of their hyphenated identity. But neither response, whether it be fear or denial, is the sole product of identity as either Americans or Jews.

The wariness response is the most common blending of the dual identity. Ties to collective Jewish history cannot be disengaged, but neither can the collective experiences and acculturation of Jews in

American society. Combining the two identities, Jewish Americans or American Jews, separate and blended, results in a broad perceptual view of antisemitism, both as a group and as individuals within the group.

Some Jews are at either extreme in their views of antisemitism. At the denial end of the continuum is complacency. Since antisemitism is not, for those who deny its existence, a reality – that is, overt, actions against Jews never take place, or when they do are random and trivial – there is no need for concern, and certainly no need for action. Jews at the denial end of the continuum are most likely to see their fellow Jews as "paranoid," looking for enemies that do not exist. Often, they believe that organizations that fight antisemitism are self-perpetuating, fostering myths of antisemitism in order to serve their own bureaucratic and institutional ends. Antisemitic acts are somehow explained away by those denying its presence. If a swastika is painted on a synagogue, they produce explanations as to why it is not an antisemitic act. The denial response is usually most prevalent and strongest among the most assimilated Jews.

Fear of antisemitism centers around issues of acceptance, social and political power or lack thereof, and concern for physical safety, individually or for all Jews. Such fear itself may result in several responses: withdrawal, the need for collective isolation within the larger society, or combativeness, the need to fight back, either as individuals or collectively through organizations and institutions. Again, most behavioral response will be between the two extremes. Sometimes, a combination of fear and denial may cause organizations and individuals to downplay the threat of antisemitism, while simultaneously calling for strategies to combat it. The rhetoric of community relations agencies frequently reflects this perceptual conflict. They play a balancing role, taking these disparate beliefs into account in their program planning. The results are often programs characterized by caution and wariness, sometimes aggressive, sometimes timid.

Those who want to feel that they are fully assimilated Americans are particularly likely to be a part of the denial contingent, generally supporting less emphasis on programs to combat antisemitism and advocating very careful assessment of a "Jewish" response to particular political and social issues. At the most extreme end of the fear continuum are those who have translated the combativeness that comes from fear into a more aggressive seek-and-destroy mode. Feeling that only Jews can take care of Jews, these individuals, or groups such as the Jewish Defense League, even advocate violence if they perceive it as necessary to protect Jewish interests.

Interestingly, at both ends of the continuum, both groups are so comfortable as Americans that neither questions their freedom within the larger society to state their views. In either extreme, both underplaying and overplaying their hands may be the result of a distorted view of how accepted, integrated, and "safe" they are within the American context.

Most Jews are unlikely to be found at either extreme of the fear and denial continuum. Few would argue that antisemitism no longer exists in the United States. Nor would many argue that Jews are immediately threatened by any large-scale antisemitic behavior. Most rest in the large gray area in between, wary and concerned. The primary evidence used by those on the denial side that antisemitism is not a problem is the widespread success of Jews in the United States and various polling data. For those most fearful of antisemitism, bits and pieces of information, including the rhetoric of extremist groups, isolated acts of discrimination, and their own personal experiences are utilized in order to draw the conclusion that antisemitism is dangerously active in the United States. Those most afraid of antisemitism also link trends in the United States to those of other countries, particularly the Middle East and the Soviet Union, to corroborate their view that much of the world, including the United States, remains hostile to Jews.

The denial philosophy has its adherents. Recently, Charles Silberman argued that "antisemitism is no longer a significant factor in American Jewish life."[2] He cites the economic, social, and political success of American Jews since the 1960s as evidence in arguing that the old antisemitism is dead (old stereotypes and discrimination) and that there is no possibility of a new antisemitism in the future. Silberman states that Jews "have difficulty distinguishing between reality and their own worst imaginings."[3]

Some of those at the denial end of the continuum are actually responding to what they perceive to be the hysteria of other Jews. They seek to be a calming influence, placing any particular act of antisemitism into a broader context. Individuals who play this role attempt to determine the motive of perpetrators of antisemitic acts, in order to assess whether or not an act, such as painting a swastika on a synagogue, is "ideological" or just an activity of adolescent hostility. Of course, to the victims of such acts, the trauma may be deep, regardless of the perpetrator's motives.

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[2]Charles Silberman, *Certain People: American Jews and Their Lives Today*, as quoted in Kenneth L. Woodward, "Jews in a Soulful Debate," Religion Section, *Newsweek* 106 (23 September 1985), p. 77.
[3]*Ibid.*

Nevertheless, some of those who deny the existence of antisemitism may state the need for moderate response, careful analysis, and measured examination, expressing through actions rather than by statements their belief that antisemitism has not disappeared. But a few refuse to acknowledge the presence of antisemitism. Milton Himmelfarb has been one of the leading proponents of the denial philosophy, using polling data to substantiate his view. In an article on Jewish voting patterns, Himmelfarb argued that Jews do not even vote in their own self-interest because they have a paranoid view of antisemitism in the United States. He presented data showing that 47% of Jews believed that antisemitism is still a serious problem, alongside data from the same study showing that Jews believed by a very wide majority, 83% to 6%, that the United States has offered Jews more opportunities and freedom than any other diaspora country. Juxtaposing these two sets of polling data, Himmelfarb flippantly comments about what he obviously views as Jewish paranoia. In combination, these data, he states, "evoke a kind of pity for the poor little rich girl."[4] He is essentially mocking the Jewish public that holds these seemingly conflicting beliefs, when he himself believes that "prejudice and discrimination are lower than ever before."[5]

To those furthest along the denial continuum, all important discriminatory barriers are now gone. Any exhibitions of antisemitic behavior or attitudes are viewed as aberrations, and therefore trivial, or they are not even antisemitic. Painting a swastika on a synagogue is usually explained away by such adherents as an adolescent prank, even though the adolescent chose a swastika for the symbol and a synagogue as the target. The effect on the victims is almost dismissed, because they should "recognize" the irrelevance of the act. All antisemitism is ultimately explained away. For example, rising black antisemitic beliefs are described as antiwhite and therefore somehow not anti-Jewish by those asserting that antisemitism is no longer significant. Antisemitic statements couched in anti-Zionist diatribes are viewed as third world philosophy, and again not antisemitic. It is odd that these Jews, who believe that other Jews are looking for antisemites under every rock, could be hit over the head by an antisemite (with the same rock) and either deny it took place or find a logical and rational argument for why the perpetrator was not really antisemitic.

Milton Himmelfarb, in a forum sponsored by *Present Tense* magazine that featured Charles Silberman and Marvin Schick, a

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[4]Milton Himmelfarb, "Another Look at the Jewish Vote," *Commentary* 80 (December 1985), 41.
[5]*Ibid.*

columnist for the *Long Island Jewish World*, defended Silberman's thesis. Schick had challenged Silberman's optimistic premise that antisemitism is no longer a major factor shaping the lives of American Jews. Himmelfarb, the third panelist in the forum, supported Charles Silberman's book, saying that Jews "attack the messenger that brings them good news."[6] He believes that most American Jews are paranoid, and that "quite simply, we do not allow the facts to invalidate our logic."[7] Clearly, the same can be said for those who are so adamant about dismissing the antisemitism that still persists in the United States.

On the other hand, there are numbers of Jews who see antisemitism in every act, deed, and word of the gentile world. Like those at the denial end of the continuum, they account for only a small proportion of all Jews. Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League (JDL) and a prominent spokesman for this group, argues vociferously against relying on non-Jews or on the American system alone. "Nor will all the efforts to mingle with the gentile, to prove to him our melting-pot qualities, succeed in our winning favor in his eyes in time of crisis," he stated in 1971. "At best we are tolerated; the tolerance, sooner or later, wears thin. All our attempts to compromise and tailor our Jewishness so that it may prove acceptable to a modern world are foolish, self-hating moves that, properly, earn us nothing but the contempt of the gentile."[8] In this view, the world has a clear delineation, a "them" and an "us." Some may not view Kahane as an "expert," but he speaks for Jews at the fear end of the continuum.

Whatever real progress American Jews have made in developing intergroup cooperation is trivialized by these views. To some, the United States is merely another society waiting to exploit the Jewish minority as a scapegoat in times of economic or social crisis. Individuals who are the most concerned about antisemitism existing everywhere use the isolated incidents of antisemitism coupled with the rhetoric of either the right or the left, but usually the right, as their primary evidence of antisemitism's prevalence. The collective history of Jews, along with continued antisemitic rhetoric from around the world, corroborates the composite picture. Furthermore, there is a continuous barrage of information about the danger of antisemitism, coming primarily from the Anti-Defamation League and, more recently, the

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[6]Benjamin Levitman, "Silberman and Schick Debate Nature of Anti-Semitism," *Palm Beach Jewish World*, 18-24 April 1986, p. 2.
[7]*Ibid.*
[8]Meir Kahane, *Never Again? A Program for Survival* (Los Angeles: Nash, 1971), p. 210.

Wiesenthal Center. The ADL consistently publishes information on the radical left and right, which finds its way into both the Jewish and the general press. Each release of one of these documents is used by those who are most fearful to substantiate their views.[9]

Each antisemitic incident is viewed as part of the ultimate move toward another Holocaust. This fear, the ultimate expression of antisemitism, is incorporated into this group's view of America as simply another temporary good time for Jews. An article in the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, which looked at antisemitic literature spread by hate groups, noted: "Those who say 'It can't happen here' should be reminded that not very far from Baltimore – only a 45 minute drive from the White House – at Loudon, Virginia, Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr., has recently established on a $2.3 million property the national headquarters of his well-read anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi organization which lists as its enemies 'narcotic gangsters, liberals, Zionists, agents of Moscow, the Rockefellers, the Trilateral Commission, the Queen of England and international terrorism.'"[10] The article concludes by saying, "Not only *can* it happen here; it *is* happening here."[11] For example, Sylvia Mandelbaum, writing from Safed, Israel, warned American Jews that they must leave the United States for Israel. In describing all sorts of antisemitic incidents, she says: "These are signs of the times...can we see them? Can we hear them? Do we understand them? Jews are guests in their host country for as long as the host pleases. It appears that Jews have outworn their welcome."[12] After

[9]Below is a sampling of some ADL publications: *The Populist Party: The Politics of Right Wing Extremism*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Fall 1985; *Extremism on the Right: A Handbook* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1983); Franz Mintz, *The Liberty Lobby and the American Right* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985); *Terrorism's Targets: Democracy, Israel and Jews*, ADL Special Report (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1981); *Extremism Targets the Prisons*, ADL Special Report (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1986); *Liberty Lobby and the Carto Network of Hate*, ADL Facts, Vol. 27, No. 1 (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1982); *Propaganda of the Deed: The Far Right's Desperate Revolution* (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1985); *Holocaust "Revisionism": A Denial of History*, ADL Facts, Vol. 31, No. 1 (New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Winter 1986).

[10]"Anti-Semitic 'Literature' Apparently Proliferating," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, 25 October 1985.

[11]*Ibid.*

[12]Sylvia Mandelbaum, "Anti-Semitism on the North American Continent," *Jewish Press* (Brooklyn, NY) 1 November 1986, p. 9.

raising the specter of discrimination and, ultimately, the Holocaust, she argues that a safe climate exists only in Israel.

For those at the most extreme end of the fear continuum, antisemitism is not assessed solely in terms of levels of discrimination, or the rise and fall of antisemitic attitudes, but rather whether or not American Jews will be subjected to mass violence or murder. While most Jews classify the Holocaust as a unique historical event within the context of societies that are unlike those of the United States (even though they are wary about potential signals), those at the fear end of the continuum cannot distinguish between the United States and other societies at all. Therefore, the Holocaust is not just a threat that can happen at almost any time, it is just around the corner.

Most Jews take the middle road, neither oblivious nor fearful. An article by one Jewish author, Rochelle Wolk, which analyzed Jewish perceptions of antisemitism, was entitled "Prophecy or Paranoia?"[13] The title alone represents the more extreme views of Jewish perceptions of antisemitism: prophecy of another Holocaust, and paranoia about unreal enemies, the myth or reality of the levels of antisemitism in the United States today. Abraham Foxman, of the Anti-Defamation League, says that the Jewish community may be affected by "schizophrenia."[14] We live, he says, in what we might call the other "promised land," and yet, he continues, there is "uneasiness, a tension, and an anxiety."[15] Most Jewish observers neither predict nor fear another Holocaust, but neither are they sanguine that antisemitism is no longer a potential threat in the United States.

American Jews are vigilant. The Jewish public is unsure of how to realistically assess antisemitism. Earl Raab, the former executive director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council, offers an insightful summary of the nature of this dilemma. He notes that "American Jews have been supplied evidence that antisemitic attitudes are decreasing while antisemitic incidents are increasing. In their innocence, many Jews believe that these two signals are incompatible. They are not. Jews perceive no real growth in economic or social discrimination against Jews, or Neo-Nazi groups; but public expressions of antisemitism seem more common, along with warnings about growing antisemitism from their non-Jewish friends. Complacency derives from reliance on one set of signals; despair derives from reliance on another set. Neither mood is warranted."[16] For Raab,

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[13]Rochelle Saidel Wolk, "Prophecy or Paranoia?" *Lilith* 7 (Fall 1980), 8-10.

[14]Abraham H. Foxman, "The Jewish Soul," *B'nai B'rith Record*, December 1983.

[15]*Ibid.*

[16]Earl Raab, "Anti-Semitism in the 1980s," *Midstream* 29 (February 1983), p. 11.

a keen observer of the state of antisemitism in the United States, unpleasant signs in the 1980s point to the need for action on the part of the Jewish community, measured action commensurate with both the degree and the nature of antisemitism in the United States. His views are shared by most American Jews. Jews remain sensitive, and sensibly so. But those who see no antisemitism and those who see only antisemitism everywhere represent minorities, relatively small ones, of American Jews.

Wariness about the present and the future are an integral component in the Jewish psyche in dealing with antisemitism. While Jews assess antisemitism in the past and the present, their feelings are also colored by attempts to assess how antisemitic attitudes and behaviors will affect Jews in the future. The ultimate effect of Jewish perceptions of antisemitism on the ways they lead their lives is unknown. However, it is clear that perceptions of antisemitism are neither overly pessimistic nor free from fear and concern. Jews remain uncertain about the exact nature of antisemitism today. They accept the current good times, recognizing relatively low levels of antisemitism. But at the same time they look over their shoulders to make sure antisemitism does not creep up from some unknown corner.

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French Jewry and the Centrality of Israel: The Public Debate, 1968-1988

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I

In 1968 the phrase "centrality of Israel" was catapulted to the foreground of the on-going debate about relations between the state of Israel and the Jewish Diaspora. In adopting its now-famous "Jerusalem Program" in June of that year, the twenty-seventh Zionist Congress reformulated an earlier definition of Zionism which had included three aspects, ingathering of Diaspora Jews in Israel, guaranteeing the unity of the Jewish people, and strengthening the state of Israel.[1] Perhaps in tacit acknowledgement of the permanence of the Diaspora and the unlikelihood of aliya ever to appeal to the majority of Jews, the 1968 program, while still calling for ingathering of Jews in Israel, proposed the formula, "the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in its life...."[2] "Centrality" appealed to those who called themselves Zionists but who could not commit themselves to settle in Israel. It was an elastic notion, admitting various interpretations, and gave rise to a range of individual and collective behaviors, short of aliya, which focused on Israel.

[1]The 23rd Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, August 14-30, 1951 (the first to be held in the State of Israel); *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, Jerusalem, 1971, p. 210.
[2]*Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, p. 212.

Although the phrase became common parlance only after 1968, "the centrality of Israel" was already being used in Zionist circles since the early 1960s and had been introduced to the general public by Georges Friedmann in his 1965 publication, *La Fin du Peuple Juif?*[3] It reflected sentiments that had been developing gradually throughout the first two decades of Israel's existence, and even had roots in pre-state Zionist ideology.

During the twenty years under consideration here, from 1968 to 1988, the phrase was repeated frequently, both approvingly and disapprovingly, but it was not understood in a single, consistent manner. Analysis of the controversy engendered by the Jerusalem Program is complicated by the lack of a uniform understanding of the term and its implications. French Jewry, perhaps more than any other Diaspora community, has pursued a vigorous public debate over the acceptability of the notion, and in clarification of the alternative ideological options open to Jews living outside the Jewish state.

One of the ambiguities of the phrase "centrality of Israel" resides in the multiple meanings of "Israel." Although the Jerusalem Program undoubtedly refers to the modern state of Israel, it is possible, intentionally or otherwise, to construe the word as the people of Israel (the world Jewish community) or as the land of Israel (the Holy Land). When defending the slogan of centrality, polemicists have often wavered among these definitions in order to find acceptable formulas based on traditions that were less controversial than are modern political ideologies or realities.

The Zionist leaders who promulgated the 1968 document clearly intended to strengthen the Diaspora's orientation toward the state of Israel, and not simply to reinforce traditional messianic yearning for redemption in the ancestral land. Nor did the drafters of the Jerusalem Program intend to place the locus of centrality in the collective world Jewish population, but rather, in the modern Jewish state. Yet, in defending the notion of centrality, such alternative interpretations were indeed offered to a French Jewish population reluctant to relegate the Diaspora to second place in funding, programming, or loyalties.

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[3]Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, wrote in 1963 that "Acceptance of the 'centrality' of Israel is certainly not yet fully shared by all the Jews of the world...." He called on Zionists to explain to the Diaspora that "Israel is the center of Jewish life and the source of the main values on which the communities in the Diaspora will live spiritually." *Jerusalem Post Weekly*, March 29, 1963, quoted by Georges Friedmann, *The End of the Jewish People?*, New York, 1967, p. 227. (The French edition of the book was published in Paris in 1965.)

French Jewish leaders posited an identity between Judaism and Zionism, raising support of Israel to an eternal religious duty, and introduced liturgical changes that strengthened this interpretation.

French Zionists circulated a fourteen-page document which, after sketching the history of the idea of centrality, and explaining it in terms of the classical Zionist notion of negation of the Diaspora, argued that in three major ways the State of Israel is central to Jewish existence: 1) Unlike any Diaspora Jewish community, Israel must embrace and reconcile all types of Jews. 2) Israel serves as a central source of protection for world Jewry, and must be capable of handling Jewish needs anywhere in the world and absorbing Jews from everywhere. 3) Israel is a spiritual, intellectual, linguistic and cultural center for the Jewish people, the only place it is possible to put into practice the specific values of Judaism. Jews everywhere consider Israel a source of encouragement for their intellectual efforts.

But if Israel is supposed to be a cultural center from which Diaspora Jews can derive stimulation and support, is it paradoxically in competition with the Diaspora, draining energies or creativity from local communal institutions and programming? Does Israel siphon off local funds that could be used for community projects, and threaten the future of the community by appealing to its youth to relocate in the Jewish state? Is Israel guiding Diaspora political behavior by forcing world Jewry to make political choices in function of Israel's needs?

A portion of the French Jewish population believes that such a conflict does, indeed, exist. Such critics object to what they see as the substitution of Israel for local Jewish concerns, and of Israeli culture for Diaspora culture. For them, "Israelocentrism" is sapping local creativity and diverting funds. On the other side, defendants of centrality scorn the notion that Diaspora culture is viable in France. They mock Diasporists, claiming that such dreamers think French Jewry can replicate the Yiddishkeit of the pre-war Polish Jewish population which supported a full-fledged Jewish culture.

An unresolved problem with the concept of the centrality of Israel is the question whether this doctrine requires French Jews to accept unquestioningly all policies and actions by Israel. Or do French Jews, while recognizing a special relationship between themselves and Israel, yet retain the right of public criticism? Although it is possible in theory to reconcile centrality with the right to criticize, in practice most French Jews have assumed that if they accept centrality they must give Israel unconditional support.[4]

[4]It was the understanding that centrality implies unconditional support for Israeli policies that led Armand Zerbib, in his review of *Le Sionisme*, by Claude

French Jews have long been divided on these questions. For some there is no problem accepting either the centrality of Israel or the need to give unconditional public support to the Jewish state. Others are strongly critical of Israeli policies and favor a strong Diasporist position. The policy of much of the organized community is to accept centrality, although it is divided on the issue of unconditional support.

II

"The centrality of Israel" may with justification be traced to traditional messianic expectations of redemption. Upon destruction of the Jewish state in 70 A.D. the exiled population began contemplating its return, which was expected to take place under the protection of a redeemer. This conviction became thoroughly imbedded in religious ritual, philosophy, and poetry, and profoundly affected the psychology of the dispersed Jews.

Exile and redemption constituted the central myth of Jewish Diaspora culture during the nearly 1900 years of statelessness. The land of Israel served as a beacon, a destination for those hoping to fulfill the religious commandment to live in the Holy Land. During the two millenia of exile, stories of the holy places, meetings with emissaries from the land, collecting money to send to those living there, gatherings around false messiahs and making preparations to travel to the land provided an important part of the social and cultural focus of Diaspora life.

Even in the nineteenth century, when religion no longer united all Jews in messianic belief, the ancestral land continued to be regarded with special affection. Only the staunchest Diasporists or secular anti-Zionists of the first half of the twentieth century refused a special role to Zion. With the rise of political Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century, aliya had become the principal goal of the new movement. Zionism demanded a very different kind of commitment to the land than had religion. Whereas traditional commitment to Zion attracted mainly an elderly, piously scholarly immigrant, who expected to spend the balance of his life in religious study, supported (however meagerly) by alms from world Jewry, aliya was expected to attract the

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Franck and Michel Herszlikowicz, to reject the authors' contention that "nul ne peut nier la centralité de l'Etat d'Israel dans la vie juive." Zerbib's criticism of Israel has mainly to do with the problem of the role of oriental Jews in the Jewish state. Arguing that Israel is not pluralistic, he refuses his unconditional support, and therefore denies Israel the right to "centrality." *La Presse Nouvelle*, No. 39, September 1986, p. 7.

young and the vigorous for the heavy physical labor of building a new society.

It is well-know that Zionism failed in the pre-World War II years to gain a Jewish consensus for the establishment of a sovereign state. By 1945, however, the massive destruction of European Jewry had made Jewish statehood a principal goal of world Jewry. French Jews, who had been among the most hesitant, now expended much of their communal effort in support, first of the establishment of the state, and then of its defense. Although few Jewish leaders intended to settle in the Jewish State, their support of Israel grew into an increasing preoccupation, and a de-facto centrality of Israel began to take shape.

French Jewish ideology in the post-war years was influenced by the arguments expressed by Arthur Koestler in his 1949 publication, *Promise and Fulfillment*. Claiming that exile in the traditional sense no longer exists now that the State of Israel has been established, and that all future Jewish life would take place in that state, Koestler declared that Jews who remain in the Diaspora will either cease being Jews through assimilation, or will prepare themselves for settlement in the Jewish State. The logic of Koestler's analysis stimulated some people to plan their own aliya, and this group of people awaiting resettlement in Israel may be said to have lived a life in France which was centered on a future move to Israel.

In the post-war years there were far fewer observant Jews in France than there had been before the deportations. This was not only because foreign Jews, who suffered greater decimation, had constituted a high percentage of the religious population.[5] It also appears that non-religious native Jews who before the war had found no way to express their Jewishness other than through religious institutions, now tended to accept an ethnic and political identification. Activity on behalf of the Jewish state filled the void left in the community by the decline in ritual observance. "Israelocentrism" began to characterize community institutions well before "centrality" became an explicit ideological slogan.

This tendency is observable in two major organizations that were formed during and after the war, the Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France (CRIF) and the Union des Etudiants Juifs de France (UEJF). The first was an umbrella organization formed clandestinely towards the end of the war to serve as a political spokesman for French Jewry. The second was the national Jewish student association formed just after the war. The two organizations

[5]Loss of religiously observant population was partially offset by the immigration of traditional Jews from North Africa in the early 1960s.

had in common a characteristic that was new to French Jewry: they both united a broad spectrum of political and religious opinion for the purpose of concerted effort toward mutual interests. One of the principal concerns of the membership of each group was the creation of a Jewish State. To be sure there remained anti-Zionists among French Jews, both within and outside the organized community, but post-war French Jewish institutions were overwhelmingly supportive of the creation of a Jewish State in Palestine.

From 1950 the newly-created central funding agency, the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU), undertook to shape French Jewish planning and to set priorities. It, too, emphasized the importance of Israel, and through its power of the purse strings significantly contributed to the tendency for Israel to become the prime subject in Jewish cultural programming and political activity. Although the consistories (the administrative bodies which supervised religious institutions) were cooler to Israel for some years, by the 1970s they, too, incorporated enthusiastic pro-Israel programming, and the rabbis instituted liturgical changes which incorporated Israel into religious rituals.

Israelis and Zionists, in the first two decades of the state, before the promulgation of the Jerusalem Program, routinely took the notion of centrality for granted. The world had opportunity to note this fact during the much-publicized Eichman trial of 1961, when, in defense of holding the trial in Israel, the judges stated that Israel was the sovereign state of the entire Jewish people.[6] The successive Zionist congresses, always taking pains to define Zionism and the nature of the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora, repeatedly stressed the bond between these two poles of Jewish existence. Zionists believed that it was Israel's responsibility to help Diaspora Jewry in its struggle against spiritual disintegration and assimilation. In 1964-5 Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Zionist Organization, called on Israel and the Diaspora to join in a new era of cooperation.[7]

When the twenty-seventh congress, in its Jerusalem Program, proclaimed "the unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in its life,"[8] the slogan ignited polemical fires in France. Yet, as we have seen, the creation of the phrase was little more than a belated naming ceremony for a phenomenon that was already fully grown. Supporters of the slogan were challenged within the Jewish

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[6]Wladimir Rabi (pseudonym for Rabinovich), *Un Peuple de Trop sur la Terre?*, Paris, 1979, p. 85.

[7]At the 26th Zionist Congress, Jerusalem, December 30, 1964- January 11, 1965. See the summary in *Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, p. 211.

[8]*Encyclopedia of Zionism and Israel*, p. 212.

community, on the one hand by Diasporists, who found the notion of centrality excessive, and on the other by Zionists who found it insufficient. From outside the community they were accused of "double loyalty," a serious charge implying potential treason against France. The organized community, which largely accepted the slogan of centrality, felt itself pressed both to explain and to justify the formula, and they expended much effort in this endeavor throughout the 1970s.

Throughout the 1970s, in partial response first to the Six-Day War, and to De Gaulle's Middle East policy at that crucial time, and then to the Yom Kippur War, and clearly influenced by the spirit of the Jerusalem Program, Jewish leaders and institutions exhibited a growing concentration on Israel. French rabbis became active in Mizrachi and they revised synagogue ritual by incorporating prayers for Israeli Independence Day. Religious leadership argued with increasing frequency that support for the State of Israel is a religious obligation.[9]

One such leader was Emile Touati, a member of the Paris consistory. Touati identified Zionism with religion, and not just with Judaism, but with universal salvation. He emphasized the link between the people and the land, and between the people's election and the salvation of the whole world. In a mystical vein, he tied together faith and law, body and soul, earth and heaven, material and spiritual, political and religious, temporal and eternal, religious and national particularism and universalism.[10] After the war in Lebanon the consistory went so far as to issue a declaration that "it identifies fully with the people of Israel and the State of Israel."[11]

The religious institutions were not the only ones to embrace Israel in the 1970s. Jewish social and political organizations were also engaged in similar pursuits. Early in the decade, the central funding and planning agency, the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU), developed the slogan, "a strong community to help Israel." Although this is not traditional Zionist ideology, as it emphasizes strengthening the Diaspora, the entire rationale for strengthening the community is cast in terms of benefit to Israel. Centrality was here working its way into French Judaism both theoretically and practically.

At the same time, the president of the Fonds Social, Guy de Rothschild, sought to explain the depth of French Jewish feeling for

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[9]At the annual meeting of the Paris consistory, in 1971, for example, the consistory expressed solidarity with Israel on behalf of "all French Jews whatever their degree of identification." *Le Monde*, June 10, 1971.

[10]Emile Touati, "Sionisme et Judaïsme," *Sens*, March 1976.

[11]Shmuel Trigano, "Zionism as a Strategy for the Diaspora: French Jewry at a Crossroads," *Zionist Ideas*, No. 9, Fall 1984, p. 73.

Israel. In 1970, apparently following Albert Memmi's theory about the liberation of the Jew, Rothschild emphasized that even for those who are assimilated and have no plans to emigrate, Israel's existence has liberated them from the disgrace of persecution. This is why Diaspora Jews feel such strong distress when the existence, identity, or honor of Israel appears threatened.[12]

Albert Memmi, whose analysis of Jewish bondage and liberation, based on a colonial model, had done much to sensitize French Jews to Israel, reflected much of French Jewry's fear of the reemergence of Diasporism after the war of 1973. At a meeting of Jewish intellectuals Memmi said that Jewish existence is based on the notion of a people-nation that anticipates restoration. If this idea were to disappear, he warned, Judaism would fall back into exilic notions of eternal Jewish suffering or the inferiority of Jewish existence, with no perceptible way out of the impass.[13]

The language of centrality began more explicitly to enter the vocabulary of spokesmen for the community by the middle of the decade. Speaking only for herself in 1976, Annie Kriegel described Israel in relationship to a peripheral Diaspora.[14] Her ideas quickly found expression in a critical communal document when she played an important role in the committee of intellectuals established to define Jewish existence in the Diaspora and the relationship between French Jews and Israel. Acting on behalf of the CRIF (Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France), the committee drafted a "charter" which was published early in 1977. This document declared that "for almost 4000 years the Jewish soul has been attached to Israel and to Jerusalem. This historical, spiritual, and essential link explains why the French Jewish community considers Israel the privileged expression of Jewish existence."[15] This declaration that there existed an historic, spiritual, and vital link between Israel and French Jewry, promulgated

[12]*Le Monde Juif*, No. 57-58, 1970.

[13]Typed notes of a "study day" organized by the "Circle of Jewish Intellectuals for Israel," June 23, 1974, on the topic, "The Diaspora after the Yom Kippur War, Awakening or Resignation," quoted by Rabi, *Un Peuple*, p. 88.

[14]Annie Kriegel, *Israel Hebdo*, No. 47, October 15-21, 1976, in which she wrote, "Etre sioniste signifie que l'unité du monde juif est pour aujourd'hui et pour un avenir prévisible, constitué par le rapport indissoluble unissant la Diaspora périphérique et l'identité juive en fonction d'Israel."

[15]The "charter" was discussed and approved by the general assembly of the CRIF on January 25, 1977 under the name, "la communauté juive dans la cité." It was widely disseminated in the general and Jewish press in January and February 1977, and was also distributed in pamphlet form by the CRIF. *Le Monde* published it on January 28, 1977.

by an umbrella organization representing nearly all of organized French Jewry, was the strongest expression of pro-Israel orientation ever publicly made in the name of a wide spectrum of the French Jewish population.

The charter received much publicity. It was printed in the major daily newspapers and much commented in the press. Through it France was put on alert that its Jewish population intended to hold France accountable for a foreign policy that might jeopardize the security of the Jewish State. This came in the wake of increasing terrorism, the laxity of western governments in bringing terrorists to justice, and the United Nation's declaration that Zionism is racism (1975).

Even former anti-Zionists and non-Zionists felt compelled to defend Zionism from the abhorrent charges. At the same time a movement of return began to take place among Jewish former leftists, who gravitated to a pro-Israel position after their disillusion with the international left, especially with that of the Arab world after the Munich attack on Israeli athletes. From anti-Zionism, the former leftists moved toward a non-Zionism that supported Israel's right to exist. Some of these "returnees" went on to become vociferously right-wing and Israelocentric. Others retained a left-wing perspective and, while supporting Israel, refused to condone all her policies or to accept the centrality doctrine. Some of them joined groups affiliated with the Alliance of Jews of the Left, a coalition of various French Jewish left-wing organizations.

By 1978 there were frequent public discussions in which French Jews expressed strong feelings of attachment to Israel. At one such gathering in a Parisian Jewish community center, a prominent Jewish leader declared, "We have a visceral attachment to [Israel]...It is the essential factor irrigating our conscience...the guarantee for the Jew of his right to be Jewish...." A reporter for *Le Monde* noted that several of the speakers emphasized "the centrality of the State of Israel for the Jews."[16]

Because vociferous opposition continued to impede the development of a consensus on the centrality of Israel, encouraging instead Diaspora culture based on minority status in a culturally pluralistic France, those who called themselves Zionists increased their effort to defend the value of centrality. The popular Zionist journalist, Arnold Mandel, for example, attacked and ridiculed Diasporist thinking, arguing that

[16]The meeting was held at the Centre Rachi on May 21, 1978, and the speaker was Gérard Israel, of the Alliance Israélite Universelle. A reporter from *Le Monde*, Robert Ackermann, published an account of the meeting on May 25, 1978.

what had been possible in Eastern Europe was not reproducible in France. The only possible geographical locus now for French Jewish culture is the Holy Land. No tradition ties Jews to France, not even as much as Ashkenazic culture relates to Germany or Sephardic culture to Spain. In fact, even Sephardic tradition is strongly linked to Zion, Mandel argued in an article in 1980. As though to clinch the argument he quoted the great Spanish Jewish poet, Yehuda Halevi, who had written that although he, himself, was in the west, his heart was in the east. "He believed in the 'centrality of Israel,'" Mandel triumphantly declared.[17]

The debate continued to stir passions within the community. Each time "official" spokesmen declared that all French Jews embraced the concept of the centrality of Israel, irate Jews, affiliated with dissenting groups, or entirely unaffiliated, protested publicly that they and many others like themselves wished to be excluded from such statements falsely made on their behalf.[18]

In defense, the pro-centrality leadership expanded its campaign. At a meeting about Israel-Diaspora relations, held by the FSJU, leaders defended the slogan against what they thought were misunderstandings. The organization's president, David de Rothschild, tried to destroy the impression that one must make a choice between Israel and the Diaspora. It is possible to accept the centrality of Israel and still live happily in the Diaspora, he insisted.

Ady Steg, a popular community leader who had been president of the CRIF, expanded upon this notion of reconciling existence in the Diaspora with a strong and unconditional attachment to Israel. He argued that French Jews are mainly "Israelocentristes" who are not planning aliya, and who, in order to reconcile themselves to their unconsummated affair with Israel, become very staunch supporters of the Jewish state. They are less critical of Israeli policies than are

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[17]*L'Arche*, September-October, 1980, pp. 282-283. To demonstrate what he considered to be the ludicrous nature of Diasporist thought, Mandel sarcastically imagines a future "Bund" in Paimpol and a "Bashevis Singer Institute" in Honfleur. He mockingly predicts the establishment of French shtetls, such as "Kassrilevké in Dauphiné," and "Jerusalem in Tarn-et-Garonne."

[18]See, for example, Georges Brissac's open letter to Jean-Paul Elkan, president of the Paris consistory, published in *La Nation*, June 15, 1971. Brissac is angry that Elkan presumes to speak in his name when he declares publicly that all Jews experience solidarity with Israel "in deeds as well as in words." Brissac condemns identification with a foreign country. He chastises Israel's policy of occupation, even if he congratulations her for some accomplishments. He accuses Zionism of playing into the hands of antisemites.

many other Jewish communities. Steg cites the war in Lebanon as an example of Israeli policies that French Jews supported with less hesitation than did other Diaspora Jewries.[19]

Critics and advocates, alike, have been united in the observation that identification with Israel provides the substance of French Jewish collective identity. The philosopher, Shmuel Trigano, explains this phenomenon as a product of French social and cultural values. Because French society leaves no room for Jewish specificity within a purely French context, French Jews find themselves required to masquerade in Zionist garb in order to gain recognition as an authentic community with its own identity. Israel is a substitute for local collective identity.[20]

Trigano's persuasive argument that Israel provides a focus for communal identity acceptable to the host society, furnishes only part of the explanation for Israelocentrism.[21] It is necessary also to look at internal Jewish dynamics, both in Israel and between Israel and the Diaspora. In Israel the war of 1973 marked the end of a period of euphoria and inaugurated a recognition of vulnerability and danger. Despite the Jerusalem program, the centrality idea had not been fully accepted, nor entirely worked out. Israel renewed its commitment to encouraging divergent elements within the Diaspora to come together to develop or strengthen their commitment to work in partnership with Israel.

Less intrusive, authoritarian and offensive than they had once appeared to French Jewish leaders, resentful of intrusions into their own area of authority, Zionist emissaries had now learned to flatter Diaspora egos with this emphasis on partnership. French Jews responded positively to the new approach, feeling that Israel was at last acknowledging their importance. Nor was Israel offering vain flattery. There was clearly a desire to cultivate French Jewry as a path to the French government, whose Middle East policy had not been favorable to Israel since 1968. The Yom Kippur war had convinced Zionists of both the isolation of Israel and the powerlessness of the

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[19] *Bulletin de l'Agence Télégraphique Juive*, March 5, 1984. Ady Steg was president of the CRIF from 1970 to 1974. At the time of this writing he is president of the Alliance Israélite Universelle.

[20] *Zionist Ideas*, No. 9, Fall 1984, p. 73. Richard Marienstras had already made a similar point in "Les Juifs de la Diaspora, ou la vocation minoritaire," in *Les Temps Modernes*, August-September 1973.

[21] Although Trigano's argument is persuasive in part, we must also keep in mind that the opposite response was often produced by French Zionism or Israelocentrism. Frenchmen often used Jews' attachment to Israel as an excuse to accuse Jews of "double loyalty."

Diaspora, and had persuaded them to strengthen the Zionist movement in Europe. In this way Zionists expected to overcome their powerlessness and to be able to use the Diaspora to help Israel out of its isolation.[22]

One of the organizations that Zionists saw as useful in this endeavor was the Comité Juif d'Action, which had been founded in 1973, and which in 1976 and 1977 had been largely responsible for two very successful demonstrations called "Twelve Hours for Israel." Although of local inspiration and leadership, and proud to proclaim itself a French group which takes no orders from Israel, the reorganized group, known after 1979 as "Renouveau Juif," has had close ties to the Jewish Agency. It is mainly a one-issue organization, focusing on maintaining concern and support for Israel and on pressuring the French government to adopt a Middle East policy more favorable to Israel's interests. Yet the group does take some interest in Jews in precarious situations in other lands and in the transmission within France of Jewish culture.

Renouveau Juif has explicitly endorsed the centrality of Israel, while not insisting that all French Jews must commit themselves to settlement in Israel. It encourages aliya for those who wish it, and for those who cannot make this commitment, it urges increased involvement with Israel in a number of ways. "There is a centrality of Israel in Jewish life of the end of the twentieth century. This is manifest in an increasing number of areas, including what we could call 'Jewish civilization,' especially in cultural, religious, and moral aspects. Jews of our time are active subjects in history through Israel." In case the full meaning of this is not sufficiently clear, the group's credo states categorically that they consider themselves "doubly loyal, and with no sense of being torn apart."

It is generally assumed that members of Renouveau Juif take an unconditional approach to their support for Israel. Yet Henri Hajdenberg, the president of the group, has made it clear that he is independent of Israel and considers himself free to criticize particular Israeli policies. When, however, in September 1982 he spoke out against the Israeli army's failure to prevent the massacres at Sabra and Chatilla, more than half of his audience of about 2000 people became infuriated. Outshouting his speech, they chanted, "Begin and

[22]Arie Ya'ari, in his response to Richard Marienstras, "Après la Tragédie, la Farce," in *Nouveaux Cahiers*, No. 36, Spring 1974, said that the war of 1973 showed both how isolated Israel is and how powerless the Diaspora is to help Israel. Bernard Chaouat repeated the same idea in his "Le Retour de la Diaspora," in *L'Esprit*, April, 1983.

Sharon, we are with you!" Although Hajdenberg later declared that the disruptive individuals were high school radical Zionists from groups like Betar and students who belonged to extreme Zionist organizations, he was not successful in dismissing the impression that Renouveau Juif includes among its members many who do not tolerate any criticism of Israel.[23]

III

Just as the idea of centrality pre-dated the creation of the phrase, so did opposition to the concept. The opposition was, of course, rooted in the anti-Zionism of the pre-state period, but later it took the form of resistance to the tendency of world Jewry to concentrate its resources, energy, and sense of identification on Israel. People who spoke out against the channeling of Jewish identity into an Israeli mold were often mistakenly identified as anti-Zionists, accused of being hostile to Israel, and recently some of them have been denigratingly labeled "neo-Bundist," despite the inaccuracy of the tag. In truth, with only a few exceptions, Jews who questioned the tendency to transfer Jewish identification from the local community to Israel were supporters of the Jewish State. Their quarrel was with those who would give Israel

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[23]Writing in *Le Monde* as early as October 26-27, 1980, Hajdenberg tried to explain that Renouveau Juif does not approve of all of Israel's policies. Yet, he explained, French Jews must first build a strongly identified Jewish community which will be in a position to push France for a more favorable Middle East policy, and only then will French Jews be able to afford outspoken criticism of Israel.

See, also, the collection of press clippings and other memorabilia of the organization, distributed by the group in 1983 under the title, *Renouveau Juif, 1973-1983*. Unfortunately not all the clippings include dates of publication. Appended to the volume is a manifesto, "Perspective 2000," possibly written at the time of publication, which provides the point of view of its leadership on the major questions we are interested in here. See, especially, pp. 167, 176, 183-187.

See, also, *Le Monde*, September 24, 1982, in which Hajdenberg declares that Israel is the "center of Judaism," and *Le Quotidien de Paris*, September 22, 1982, one among the many accounts of his being forced off the podium and escorted away from the September 1982 demonstration called by Renouveau Juif.

In all, three giant meetings have taken place under the banner of "Twelve Hours for Israel," in 1976, 1977, and 1980. The impact of this repeated spectacle, half political demonstration, half fair, cannot be underestimated. As many as 150,000 people are thought to have attended at least the second and third "Douze Heures," and this both helped to promote and reflected a de-facto centrality of Israel in French Jewish life.

priority as a center for Jewish expression and those who would insist that all Israeli policies be endorsed by world Jewry.

Perhaps the first French Jewish intellectual to call attention to the threat to Diaspora cultural independence posed by such concentration on Israel was Richard Marienstras. As early as 1952 Marienstras urged Jews to strengthen Diaspora culture and to repudiate their assigned role as a reservoir for the future population of Israel.[24]

Others had already argued that the Zionist label need not be reserved for those who intend to settle in Israel. In the Algerian Jewish press a schoolteacher urged that Zionists in France support the existence of the Jewish state for the benefit of unfortunate Jews who have nowhere else to go. In Paris the Jewish student union republished his article in their journal, *Kadimah*. They endorsed his view of Zionism, which not only failed to require plans for aliya of those who would call themselves Zionists, but actually opposed the aliya of Jews who hold citizenship in the free countries.[25]

Although, when pronounced in the early years of the Jewish State, such ideas were intended as resistance to the domination of Israel, they actually helped to develop the notion of "centrality of Israel" in Zionist theory. By promoting definitions of Zionism which did not require a personal commitment to settle, but only support for the state, such definitions encouraged the development of the "Israelocentric" Jews identified by Steg as suffering an unconsummated affair with Israel.

The third colloquium of French Jewish intellectuals, meeting under the auspices of the World Jewish Congress in May 1963, discussed the topic, "Israel and the Diaspora." The Israeli cultural attaché, Saul Lewin, spoke at length about the contribution of Israel to rescuing Jewish culture after the destruction of the ghettos. World Jewry, he declared, would have run a great risk after the war if it had not found a living center in a Jewish State where it had the necessary conditions for the development of Jewish life.

French Jewish intellectuals in attendance at the meeting were quite irritated by what seemed to them like suggestions of Israeli hegemony in matters of Jewish culture. They spent a lot of time defending the Diaspora's past and present contribution, and rejecting any cultural superiority of Israel. Among the participants arguing for full recognition of the value of the Diaspora were Emmanuel Lévinas,

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[24]Richard Marienstras, "La Fin de l'Exil," in *Kadimah*, 6th year, Summer 1952, p. 2.

[25]Henri Cohen-Bacri, "Sionisme et Patriotism," *Kadimah*, No. 33, July 1950, pp. 1, 3 (reprinted from *Information*).

Edmond Fleg, Isaac Pougatch, and Alexandre Minkowski. Lewin tried to soothe the hurt feelings by insisting that the state of Israel was not an end, but a means, and that it was at the service of world Jewry. Israel, he assured them, did not negate the value of the Diaspora, which also plays an essential role.[26] Despite such reassurances, French Jewish intellectuals in the years before the Six-Day War continually bridled at Zionist attempts to arrogate to Israel a privileged role.

When, in the aftermath of the 1967 war, French Jewry began to concentrate increasingly on Israel, it was again Richard Marienstras who led the resistance. As the French Jewish community was reorganizing to take up the fight on behalf of Israel, to raise money, to improve Israel's public image in France, and to gain more favorable treatment for Israel from the French government, Marienstras and his friends were creating a new organization, the Cercle Gaston Crémieux,[27] which was devoted to propagating Diaspora culture and resisting the growing Israel-orientation. The Jerusalem Program's 1968 call for "the centrality of Israel" provided a clear focus for their rebuttal of the majority position.

Although the group has remained small over the years,[28] the Cercle Gaston Crémieux can perhaps boast disproportionate influence. They have defended Diasporism in the very public forum of the general intellectual press, including *L'Esprit* and *Les Temps Modernes*. They have organized public meetings to celebrate Yiddish culture, and have supported the teaching of Yiddish in the universities. Through their efforts the French public has been educated to the existence and vocabulary of Diaspora culture, and has experienced aspects of it in public places of culture, such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Marienstras has joined with other minority groups in France working for a pluralist society, and was appointed by Mitterand to the committee which reported on minority cultures shortly after the socialists came to power in 1981.[29]

In his various writings and talks Marienstras has articulated the right of all minorities to assistance for cultural survival. He compares

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[26]*La Conscience Juive, Colloque des Intellectuels Juifs*, Paris, 1963, pp. 22-33.

[27]The group was named for a Jew who died in the Paris commune. Most of the French are unaware of the existence of Gaston Crémieux, whom they tend to confuse with Adolphe Crémieux, the Jewish statesman and Minister of Justice responsible for granting citizenship to the Jews of Algeria in 1870.

[28]Marienstras estimated a membership of one hundred families in 1981 when I interviewed him.

[29]Henri Giordan, *Démocratie Culturelle et Droit à la Différence (Rapport au Ministre de la Culture)*, Paris, 1982.

the fate of the Jews in France with that of French provincials; they were all misled into abandoning their old identities and developing a patriotic chauvinism for France. Eventually the Jews transferred their loyalties to Israel. Marienstras prefers the Diasporist choice, rather than either Zionism or religious Judaism, and blames France's denial of recognition to cultural minorities for the excessive Jewish identification with Israel.[30]

Attacked by Zionists for his public pronouncements, Marienstras, in the following year, defended his ideas in a further explication of his position. Defense of minority rights is not Bundism, but a widely-held value in the contemporary world. Nor is he anti-Israel, as the Bundists were. Marienstras warns that the only centrality is a centrality of danger and risk. Only in Israel is Jewish life in real danger today, and this fact should make Jews of the Diaspora worry very much. He repudiates the plans of the Zionist Organization to control Diaspora institutions through institutional and financial involvement, and calls instead for a real partnership between the two and for the development of local Jewish culture.[31] In the same year, 1974, the Cercle Gaston Crémieux participated, together with Basques, Bretons, Occitans, Armenians, and others, in a large public meeting of national minorities, held at Versailles.[32]

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[30]*Les Temps Modernes*, Aug-Sep 1973, especially pp. 72, 73, 82, 87.

[31]Richard Marienstras, *Les Nouveaux Cahiers*, 36, Spring 1974. It is interesting to note that shortly after this publication the Zionist rhetoric did begin to change, as we have mentioned above, and they addressed the French Jews more in terms of partnership. In the same issue there appears the major attack to which Marienstras is responding, an article by the Zionist emissary, Arieh Ya'ari, who misrepresented Marienstras as an anti-Zionist Bundist. Ya'ari also argued that without Israel Diaspora Jewry's survival would have been inconceivable. Furthermore, he challenged, the very reason that there has been a post-war revival of faith in diasapora culture is the existence of Israel. Ya'ari warns that culture was never enough to protect a defenseless minority and that even those who affirm the centrality of Israel but argue that there is a safe future for the Diaspora are committing a serious error.

[32]The meeting was called "Six Hours for the National Minorities." It appears to have provided the inspiration for the name for the pro-Israel rallies that were later held under the banner "Twelve Hours for Israel."

Another group, the "Association of Anti-Zionist Jews," participated in the national minorities demonstration along with the Cercle Gaston Crémieux. Not much is known about this group. In an interview with the left-wing journal, *Libération*, they explained that they refused to accept Zionism as a stage in the liberation of the Jewish people, but, rather, saw it as a result of the interests of the great powers. They also stressed the positive nature of the Diaspora and

In the following year Marienstras published a book in which he collected his writings and talks on this topic. The book received much publicity when it was reviewed in the general press, and helped to spread knowledge about internal Jewish ideological disputes and the efforts of the Diasporists to combat the growing concentration on Israel. Alain Guichard, in his review in *Le Monde*, explained that Marienstras is concerned with conserving the values of Jewish tradition in a secularized world. This effort is hampered by the centrality myth, which is antagonistic to many Diaspora values. In fact, many of the major values, including the religious ones, are not historically linked to the Land of Israel, but developed elsewhere.

The reviewer showed that Marienstras' ideas fit the growing demand in France for the "right to be different." He explained that Marienstras had been urging the Jewish community to become a model for other cultural minority groups by renouncing its focus on Israel in favor of developing a strong cultural movement focused on the Diaspora.[33]

Two years later, the Cercle Gaston Crémieux took the pains to reply to the CRIF's 1977 "charter," which we have discussed above. In a long communiqué published in *Le Monde*, they denied that there is any "privileged" expression of Jewish existence. Before and beyond the State of Israel there has always been the People of Israel, the collective existence of the Jews, wherever they are. It is this *people* of Israel that is central, not the modern *state* of Israel.[34]

There have been other intellectuals, unaffiliated with the Cercle Gaston Crémieux, whose views bear certain similarities, although they, themselves, have emphasized the differences that separate them, rather than the similarities that unite them. Wladimir Rabi, after whom a Diasporist group in Strasbourg has since been named, contrasted his own views with those of Marienstras. He objected to Marienstras' analogy between the Jews and the territorial minorities within France, such as the Bretons and the Corsicans, who have both language and land. Rabi chastised Marienstras for minimizing the "gut" feelings of Jews for Israel. It is not possible, he said, to brush away the fact that for several years 100,000 to 150,000 Jews have turned up for massive pro-Israel rallies.

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the need to direct their political activity toward society in general and not just toward Israel. *Libération*, June 12, 1974.

[33]Alain Guichard, *Le Monde*, May 3, 1975.

[34]*Le Monde*, February 6-7, 1977; The communiqué added that a vital link between the Diaspora and Israel is felt more in Israel, which depends upon the Diaspora's financial assistance.

Rabi emphasizes his own dualistic view of the nature of Jewish existence. He reminds us that the tension between centrality and polycentrality in Jewish life has existed since the Babylonian dispersion, and that the modern ideological split dates from the end of the nineteenth century when the Zionist movement met the resistance of the Diasporists. In a Dubnovian vein, he argues that it was decentralization that allowed the Jewish people to survive over the centuries, because each time one center of Jewish life was destroyed, another arose.[35]

After the war of 1973, Rabi was one of the intellectuals who created a pro-Zionist pressure group, but he distanced himself from the centrality value. He continued to argue for equality between Israel and the Diaspora. Although he believed that Zionism needed protection against strong anti-Zionist propaganda, he became increasingly skeptical of the relative weight of Israel's role in world Jewish life, and stressed the need to strengthen the Diaspora component.

When we examine Rabi's writings and his personal involvement, it is hard to discern much concrete difference between him and Marienstras. Neither repudiates Israel, nor even lacks sympathy for the Jewish state.[36] Nor does either grant it the "centrality" it seeks. The differences between the two thinkers are largely in the matter of whether Jewish existence may profitably be described in the same terms as those used for territorial cultural minorities within a modern western state, and whether such an analysis provides a pathway to gain support for Diaspora culture.

Shmuel Trigano, like Rabi, has taken Marienstras to task for applying the term "minority" to Jews, but has, nevertheless, also endorsed many of Marienstras' basic ideas. Trigano, too, stresses the concept of "Knesset Israel," the Jewish people, as more central than Israel to Jewish existence.[37] Writing in 1984, Trigano reiterates what Marienstras had already suggested in 1952, that identification with Israel has been a substitute for local collective identity. "...in order to gain recognition as a collective Jewish community in France," he writes,

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[35]Wladimir Rabi, *Un Peuple de Trop*, chapter 5, "Remise en question de la centralité d'Israël."

[36]Rabi, in *Le Monde*, March 18, 1980, for example, warns Giscard d'Estaing's government that France's Jews are becoming dissidents. They are at odds with their government over its Middle East policy because of the importance of Israel to the Jewish community.

[37]Marienstras' insistence on the importance of the entire people of Israel, in all the communities where they may be found, is stressed again in the communiqué of the Cercle Gaston Crémieux, in *Le Monde*, February 6-7, 1977.

"the Jews have been forced to rely on the Zionist symbol three thousand kilometers away." Their real desire is to express themselves as a Jewish community in France, and they should be encouraged to do this. Trigano calls on French Jews to repudiate the "Jacobin" terms of their emancipation and to convene a new "Sanhedrin"[38] in order to redefine the nature of their existence in France.[39]

What to the outsider may here appear to be essentially the same thesis, is to Trigano and Marienstras two different philosophies separated by a wide gulf. Whereas Marienstras is nourished by the east European model of multi-cultural states, in which Jews defined their secular cultural identity in terms of minority culture, Trigano is rooted in a combination of two conflicting elements. He is inspired by traditional Jewish communities and, paradoxically, by a political analysis that rejects aspects of the French political tradition, yet fully identifies with France. This full identification with the French tradition explains why he angrily denounces Marienstras' willingness to discuss the Jewish case in the context of minorities like the Gypsies or foreign laborers. Unlike those groups, Trigano insists, Jews have a long tradition of being fully French.[40]

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[38]Trigano here refers to the so-called "Sanhedrin," called by Napoleon in 1806, to obtain the promise of Jewish leaders that Jewish law and tradition will not prevent Jews from being good citizens. Trigano is among the minority of Jews who have interpreted that Sanhedrin as a bartering away of the Jewish right to be different, in exchange for the rights of the citizen.

[39]Shmuel Trigano, "Zionism as a Stragegy for the Diaspora: French Jewry at a Crossroads," in *Zionist Ideas* (World Zionist Organization), No. 9, Fall 1984, pp. 69-74, passim (reprinted from "Viewpoint," a publication of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs). See also, in the same volume of *Zionist Ideas*, Trigano's comments, pp. 18-21. See also his book, *La République après Copernic*, Paris, 1982, passim.

[40]Shmuel Trigano, "Communauté en Péril!," in *L'Arche*, No. 315, June 1983. When a public meeting was held at the Centre Rachi to discuss the Giordan report on cultural minorities, Trigano took the opportunity to make this point. (Personal notes taken at the meeting.)

Annie Kriegel has also denounced the use of the term, "minority," to refer to the Jews. It may sometimes be difficult for the outsider to comprehend fully why this term is such an irritant. Perhaps the answer lies not in mathematics, as a count of the population is not needed in order to ascertain that the Jews constitute a small percentage, but, rather, in the cherished notion that in most ways, politically, culturally, and socially, the Jews are an integral part of the French population. That they have certain specificities, including an attachment to Israel, which they want acknowledged by the rest of the population does not make of them a minority group, according to this way of thinking.

Luc Rosenzweig is a Yiddishist who has railed against the scope of Israel's role in French Jewish life. Noting that other vibrant Diaspora communities, especially those of America, provide a better model for creating modern relationships between Jews and non-Jews than does Israel, he exclaims that "Jewishness is not limited to Israel and the Hebrew language." In a 1978 article in *Le Monde*, he accuses the French Jewish establishment of displaying indifference to the survival of the Yiddish language.[41]

Included among the opponents of the centrality of Israel throughout the 1970s were those who spoke in the name of religion. While it is true, as we have seen, that the religious institutions were at this time embracing Israel ever more warmly, adding religious rituals that honored the state, and propagating philosophical/theological systems of thought that tried to link Zionism with religion, other religious thinkers, both affiliated and unaffiliated with the "official" community, were complaining about the emphasis on Israel's centrality. Among them were the former secretary of religious affairs at the consistory of Paris, Robert Sommer, and Joel Askenazi, a Bible and Talmud professor in the independent university-level Jewish studies program of courses offered to students in Paris alongside the official university.[42]

In his courses and in his writings Askenazi argues that inasmuch as Israelis often identify only as Israelis, and not as Jews, only the Diaspora guarantees the retention of traditional Jewish identity. Askenazi rejects as antagonistic to religious tradition all claims that Israel embodies messianic fulfillment. He insists that the traditional religious centrality of the land of Israel is entirely different from the claims of political centrality made by the Zionists. He denounces the ties that exist in Israel between religion and the state.[43]

Robert Sommer's argument is based on the observation that in post-war France the acceptable definition of "Jewish" had been changing.

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[41]*Le Monde*, June 25-26, 1978. See also his edited book, *Catalogue pour des Juifs de Maintenant*, No. 38 in the series, "Recherches," Paris, 1979.

[42]The Centre Universitaire d'Etudes Juives during many years offered non-credit courses in all aspects of Jewish studies. It later became incorporated into a community center, the Centre Rachi, and received permission from the Sorbonne to offer credit-bearing courses.

[43]Joel Askenazi, "Centralité d'Israel?," in *Nouveaux Cahiers*, No. 38, Fall 1974. As early as 1965 Georges Friedmann had already alerted France to the Israelis who do not consider themselves Jews. He had conluded that therefore Israel is not a Jewish State. "There is no Jewish nation. There is an Israeli nation." Georges Friedmann, *La Fin du Peuple Juif?*, Paris, 1965 (English edition, p. 239).

Whereas previously even the non-observant among French Jews accepted the premise that Jewish identity was essentially religious, now they embrace the pluralistic value that there are many equally good definitions of Jewish identity. Israelocentrism is attacked by Sommer as an unacceptable substitute for a religious conception of Jewishness.[44]

Some of the other religious thinkers who argued against centrality evinced extreme hostility to the Jewish State. Emmanuel Levyne, in a 1969 book entitled *Judaism against Zionism*, accused Zionism of promoting the same goal as had been promoted by the Nazis, the removal of all Jews from Europe. Levyne argued that Jewish strength had always derived from the fact that Jews were stateless and lived only in the realm of Jewish law.[45]

From a left-wing perspective, many of the groups affiliated with the Association des Juifs de Gauche have repudiated centrality. (The major exception, of course, has been the Mapam-affiliated Cercle Bernard Lazare.) At a meeting of this coalition, held in May 1983, the consensus of the 300-400 people who represented various groups was that the Diaspora must be independent culturally and politically. They felt that Israel's war in Lebanon, of which they disapproved, had confirmed them in the view that as Diaspora Jews they must develop their political views locally, and reject any attempt of Israel to dictate or to enlist their aid to defend policies which they could not accept. They urged greater emphasis on the development of Diaspora culture, and discussed a plan for a Jewish cultural center.[46]

From the opposite point of view, some of the more radical Zionist groups, especially the Comité de Liaison des Étudiants Sionistes Socialists (CLESS), repudiated the centrality theory because it tended to minimize the importance of aliya, allowing Israelocentrism to suffice as a criterion for Zionism. The CLESS, active during the 1970s among student groups, held public meetings, distributed literature, displayed posters, and eventually captured the leadership of the French Zionist organization, all in an effort to promote aliya.[47]

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[44]Robert Sommer, "Crise d'Identité du Judaïsme Français?," in *Le Monde*, December 27, 1972.

[45]Emmanuel Levyne, *Judaisme contre Sionisme*, Paris, 1969. The book was reviewed in *Combat*, December 18, 1969.

[46]Personal notes taken at the meeting, May 28-29, 1983.

[47]Among the leaders of this student group was Simon Epstein, now of Jerusalem, to whom I owe a great debt of thanks for many hours of explanation about these and other matters.

IV

What has been the effect of the centrality debate on the French Jewish community? The answer to this question is not as clear or as fixed as one might have supposed. While it is true that for a long period of time much of French Jewry had become "Israelized,"[48] it is less certain that French Jewry is continuing to remain faithful to the model proposed by the Jerusalem Program.

Any attempt to evaluate the relative weight of the groups whose ideas and ideologies have been sketched above is fraught with risk of distortion. All conclusions are necessarily impressionistic, as much of the available source material consists of polemical literature that may have been designed more to win adherents than to portray accurately the shifts in Jewish public opinion.

Thus, when members of the Association of Jews of the Left proclaimed that Israel's 1982 war in Lebanon caused many French Jews to decide that they could no longer remain tacit unconditional supporters of Israeli policy,[49] this statement may have been an observation, but it was more likely an appeal for distancing from Israel. Similarly, when Ady Steg assured an audience that French Jews were not seriously divided in their support for Israel in 1982,[50] he may have been reflecting a true absence of the serious divisions that had characterized other Diaspora communities at that time, but it is more likely he was trying to quiet dissent.

Will French Jewry pursue the path of "Israelization" or of "Diasporization?" One can convincingly paint the picture either way. Perhaps growing dissatisfaction with Israel's military policies is combining with a growing French appreciation of the importance of minority cultures to drain support for the centrality of Israel and to facilitate Diasporism. On the other hand, it may be Israel, rather than the Diaspora, that increasingly dominates French Jewish consciousness. As Henri Bulawko, of the Mapam-affiliated Cercle Bernard Lazare asked, is it really possible to deny centrality when everything Israel does implicates all Jews of the Diaspora?[51]

Happily, it is not the role of the historian to prophesy. Not even a historian foolish enough to tackle a contemporary subject need feel obligated to look into the future. Were we, however, tempted to map the future of this tension between Israel and the Diaspora, we might

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[48]Pierre Nora, quoted by Rabi, *Un Peuple*, p. 85 and p. 205, note 5.

[49]Personal notes taken at the meeting, May 28-29, 1983.

[50]*Bulletin Quotidien d'Informations, Agence Télégraphique Juive*, March 5, 1984, p. 4.

[51]Personal notes taken at the meeting, May 28-28, 1983.

rely on evidence such as rhetoric about pluralism in France. We might cite the advocates of territorial minority rights or the ministerial instructions that schools should discuss and encourage pluralism. But if we did rely on such evidence we might reach an over-confident assumption that Diasporism had found fertile ground in a new pluralistic France.

Were we to attempt to predict the future we might just as easily cite the growth of the radical right in France, with its racist and anti-foreign slogans. We might suggest that the lip service given to pluralism will not necessarily translate into anything concrete. We might even become cynical and argue that classroom discussions about pluralism held one day each year may be the best way to thwart any serious movement in that direction. If we reasoned in this way we might conclude that xenophobia in France will lead to a resurgence of Zionism.

If the historian is not obligated to furnish a blueprint for the future, he does, nevertheless, have the job of suggesting how we have arrived where we are today. Who and what have determined the direction of the debate about the "centrality of Israel?" Many of the major players in the story have already been mentioned, and I will only summarize what seems to me to have been the significant lines of development.

Texts that were of primary importance in setting the parameters and definitions of the debate include Koestler's 1949 *Promise and Fulfillment* and Friedmann's 1965 *The End of the Jewish People?* These books posed the basic challenge to the Diaspora and popularized the dichotomy between an assimilating Diaspora and Israel. Memmi's 1966 classic, *The Liberation of the Jew*, appeared at a critical moment; and his analysis of Zionism as the national liberation movement of Jews contributed to the "Israelization" of French Jewry that occurred in the wake of the 1967 war.

At the same time Richard Marienstras, who had not waited until 1967 or 1968 to notice the threat posed by Israel to Diaspora cultural development, began to have an impact on larger numbers of people. He succeeded in disseminating notions about the importance of Diaspora culture that have influenced even many who disagree with him.

In the late 1970s and the early 1980s the Renouveau Juif and its "Twelve Hours for Israel," reached unprecedented numbers of people. The potential audience of this same leadership group was extended dramatically when Serge Hajdenberg began the first Jewish radio station to appear in France after Mitterand's election signalled an

invitation to establish private stations.[52] "Radio J," and its three competitors, which later became partners, have been influential in keeping Israel a constant presence in French living rooms.

To the extent that Diasporism has been gaining adherents, one cannot ignore the influence of the United States. Whereas the east European model has nourished the ideologists of the Diaspora, that model is considered to be incarnated today in the American Jewish community. Jewish life in the multi-national, multi-racial, multi-cultural United States, and especially New York, serves as an inspiration to those who would believe that cultural creativity particular to Jews, and yet in a secular and non-territorial form, can continue to flourish.

Writing in 1969, Sylvie Korcaz concluded that although Israel was the focus of French Jewish self-identification, it was not the cause of this identification.[53] The implications of Korcaz' observation have been insufficiently appreciated. It is possible that Israel serves merely as the focus of pre-existing Jewish group sentiment and ethnicity in the absence of other symbols or ideologies. Religion no longer serves this uniting function, and French Jews have not decided to what extent they will accept ethnicity as a rationale for Jewish cohesiveness. Moreover, since ties of family, folklore and sentiment bind Jews to the Land of Israel, making it difficult to separate the land from the state, Israel should not necessarily be credited with maintaining Diaspora Judaism's cohesiveness.

The debate over the "centrality of Israel" has not been limited to France. The Jerusalem Program had been addressed to the entire Diaspora, and it had repercussions in all large Jewish communities. In France it took on a special significance because of the nature of the French political tradition and the style of French intellectual debate. But, most importantly perhaps, the flavor of the debate has been determined by the unique composition of the French Jewish community. The passion of the struggle between Israelocentrism and Diasporism derives from the varied historical experiences within French Jewry, including those of the "native" Jews, whose identification with the

[52]Until Mitterand's election in 1981 the airwaves were a government monopoly. The socialist government was expected to legalize private broadcasting and a number of would-be radio stations sprang up quickly after the election in order to claim recognition. The radio authorities ultimately regulated the chaos by assigning frequencies, forcing the merger of some stations and the closing of others. The four Jewish radio stations that had been opened were merged into one frequency, with divided broadcast time.

[53]Sylvie Korcaz, *Les Juifs de France et l'Etat d'Israel*, Paris, 1969.

French Revolution's concept of Jewishness had been disturbed by their experience of Vichy, the east European holocaust survivors, who transmitted the double legacy of Diasporism and Zionism, and the North African Jews who entered metropolitan France late enough for their ties with Israel to have been directly with the state, rather than via Zionism.[54]

[54]The observation about North African Jewry's attachment to Israel is made by David Lazar, in his "Comment," (on the article by Doris Bensimon on French Zionism), in Moshe Davis, ed., *Zionism in Transition*, New York, 1980, p. 152.

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