

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR
EDUCATION IN ISRAEL

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Gershon Winer

1959

This is to certify that the
thesis entitled

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR EDUCATION IN ISRAEL

presented by

Gershon Winer

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Foundations of Education

Paul L. Dressel

Major professor

Date April 24, 1959





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ABSTRACT

Gershon Winer

The State of Israel, established in 1948, represents the realization of the Zionist program evolved in about seventy-five years of ideological speculation, political organization, and practical colonization.

In the course of ~~state~~making and frequently traumatic developments, and in the encounter of fructifying ideas, there were crystalized concepts and values operative in Israel society and reflected in its school curriculum. The thesis examines these ideas and traces their origin to the contributions of twelve major Zionist thinkers who critically appraised the Jewish problem in its political, social, economic, cultural and psychological complexities and proposed specific solutions. These were directed toward individual and national reconstruction in Palestine. The plethora of platforms produced an intellectual synthesis of past norms and present needs in a pattern of values affirmed in Israel society and emphasized in its education.

In a period of sixty years between 1860 and 1920 the founding fathers of Zionism, residing in Eastern and Central Europe, Palestine and the United States, expounded their views largely in Hebrew, but also in German, Yiddish and Russian. These were formulated in

tractates, essays, or novels according to their particular genre of writing, exerting a powerful influence on numerous disciples.

Zionism was defined in terms of a political autonomous entity, a reconstructed socio-economic order, a revived language, a spiritual renaissance, and a psychological adjustment, frequently set in universal and messianic dimensions. The aim was for a change in the status of the Jewish people, a re-orientation of Jewish culture, and a metamorphosis of the Jewish personality. This has been achieved in Israel.

The Twelve, and their contributions, chronologically arranged are:

- Hess - messianic vision
- Smolenskin - spiritual nationalism
- Pinsker - auto-emancipation
- Eliezer Ben Yehuda - revival of Hebrew
- Herzl - a national state
- Achad Ha'am - a spiritual center
- Berdichevsky - freedom for the individual
- Gordon - redemption through nature and labor
- Syrkin and Borochoy - a new socio-economic order
- Brenner - psychological re-adjustment
- Rabbi Kuk - religious rebirth

Historical factors and social forces instrumental in forging contemporary Israel included the various manifestations of anti-Semitism in religious intolerance, political disability, economic discrimination, social prejudice and cultural limitation in Europe and

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Asia. There was also the lure of assimilation, and the impact of the resurgence of nationalism among the subjugated peoples of Europe.

In Palestine the Zionist settler faced the challenges of climate, geography, hostile neighbors, and the problems of an acutely diversified mass immigration.

The values of Israel education are to be seen against a background of military exigency, national conflict, economic pressure, and religious, cultural and social heterogeneity in a confluence of problems in the accelerated pace of historical events as they affected the Jewish people in the twentieth century.

Education in Israel today incorporates the values of Jewish tradition in their emphasis upon the intellectual, moral and messianic. It is also predicated upon the newer concepts inspired by the above mentioned Zionist theoreticians, embracing the return to nature and physical labor, social justice and equality, collectivist ideology, a fusing of Socialist economy and capitalistic enterprise, aesthetic norms, a pioneering spirit, prophetic universalism and identification with a world Jewish community beyond the borders of Israel. The curriculum is organized to inculcate these values.

DELONIA FOUR

Submitted to the Secretary
Michigan State
Applied Science
the report

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR EDUCATION
IN ISRAEL

by

GERSHON WINER

A THESIS

Submitted to the School for Advanced Graduate Studies of
Michigan State University of Agriculture and
Applied Science in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Education

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study of the ideologies
which limited to an extent
the scope of its leading
thoughts to numerous historical
societies. In addition
to other educational
subjects, history, religion,
science, ethics in philosophy
and art should we study
history, the recent trends
of Europeans, the effects
of the atomic age,
controlling the forces of
nature. An understanding of
the history of American society
and religious roots.
This applies to Israel
and precedents are
people, the cataclysmic
events, the international
trends, philosophic and

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A study of the ideological foundations of the American public school would not be limited to an analysis of its educational philosophy and the major writings of its leading exponents. Considerable attention would have to be given to numerous historical and contemporary factors in the making of American society. In addition to the contributions of men like Dewey, Kilpatrick and other educators, we would be bound to appraise the insights of Turner in history, Veblen in social psychology, Whitman and Sandburg in literature, James in philosophy, and others in various fields of intellectual endeavor. Nor should we stop there. The political-economic revolution of the New Deal, the recent technological development, the immigration of millions of Europeans, the changing status of the American negro, the emergence of the atomic age, America's new role as a world power--all of these are among the forces and concepts related to educational goals and methods. An understanding of American education therefore, calls for an understanding of American society and its social, economic, political, philosophical, and religious roots.

This applies to Israel as well. Israel is a new state, founded in 1948. Its antecedents are the religious ideals and institutions of a dispersed people, the cataclysmic events of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, far-reaching historical sources of inspiration, political developments on the international arena, organized efforts of dedicated groups and individuals, philosophic speculation and creative experimentation of men

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of genius, and the outcome of particular crises. Though comparatively small in area and population, Israel has been a centrifugal and centripetal force for world Jewry, with a history of thousands of years. This was true when Israel was romance of the past and dream of the future. This is true when it has become a reality of the present.

It is the purpose of this thesis to examine the ideas and values that make up the cultural climate of the new state as articulated and characterized by its educational goals and methodology. Without attempting an analysis of three thousand years of Jewish civilization--a possibility suggested by the above-mentioned ramifications of educational theory--I shall attempt to analyze the events and ideas of the century leading up to the establishment of the state. In the first category of events will be considered national and international developments acting upon that major segment of Jewry preoccupied with the return to the Holy Land. The second category of values will necessitate a study of the literary remains of crucial men of stature, how they reflected the physical and intellectual pressures of the age, with an eye for the permanent contributions to an emerging philosophy of national survival and educational revival in Israel today. The first part demands a comprehensive knowledge of modern European Jewish history; the second requires an acquaintance with the original literature in Hebrew, Yiddish, and German, wherever it is not available in English translation. Most of the sources quoted and analyzed would fall into that class.

The literary analysis--and that represents essentially the originality of this thesis--is based upon the writings of a dozen personalities. These had to be carefully selected from scores of poets, novelists, philo-

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sophers, statesmen, religionists, social and economic thinkers of diversified opinion and location. The test of veracity for the thesis is, therefore, the validity of the chosen list of luminaries, as a representative and authoritative group, shaping directly or indirectly the emerging Israeli mind, at least in its normative aspects. Our recourse in this matter is to supply evidence from accepted living authorities approving the selection made by this author. Then, there is the question of reliability as far as interpretation is concerned, a problem which can be alleviated by quotations and references cited. The third, and final criterion for corroborating the premises and conclusions of this thesis, is dependent upon the extent to which the author's interpretation of Israel education approximates the truth. Documentary testimony of an official nature may prove helpful though not decisive; for, drawing another analogy from American education, it is extremely difficult to observe, on the surface, Whitman's or Emerson's influence on proclamations of the Office of Education of the American Government, or on statements of policy of national educational agencies.

In keeping with the recommendations of the Faculty Guidance Committee, an introductory section is prefixed to the thesis describing succinctly the historical setting of the new State, the background of the Zionist movement which brought it into being, the major facts and figures necessary for an understanding of Israel, and the history of education since the re-emergence of Palestine on the Jewish scene some seventy-five years ago.

The importance of this study is beyond parochial interest. A people that has made a signal contribution to the spiritual growth of mankind merits attention when it reconstitutes itself on its ancient soil and resumes the cultivation of human and universal values. Out of the matrix of a new society

we are again ide-
ally, the nation of a
realm of enlightenment
and influence its neigh-
bouring cultural back-
ground world Jewry.
and deeply moved by Isra-
elism under the
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values and issues from
the generation. There
and a Jewish education
and our present inquiry

This includes intro-
duced pronunciation,
and folk dances,
and Israel studies
and the school atmosphere
both to the old
and frontier adventure.

there may emerge once again ideas and insights of benefit to civilization. Certainly, the one bastion of democracy in Middle East totalitarianism, and the one island of enlightenment in a Levantine sea of ignorance and bigotry, is bound to influence its neighbors destined to rid themselves of medieval feudalism and cultural backwardness. Last, but not least, what happened in Israel has affected world Jewry. Five and one half million American Jews have been deeply moved by Israel events. Jewish education in America has been revolutionized under the impact of Israel developments.¹ Understanding the ideological foundations of Israel education makes for an appreciation of the factors and issues fundamental to the religious education of American Jews in our generation. Therein is suggested a further study of the influence of Israel on Jewish education in America--unexplored as yet--which may logically follow our present inquiry.

¹ This includes introduction of conversational Hebrew, adoption of the Sefardi pronunciation, Hebrew-speaking summer camps, modern Israeli lore, music and folk dances, idealizing the Israeli Chalutz (pioneer) type, incorporating Israel studies (such as geography and history) in the curriculum, charging the school atmosphere with Israel romance -- the latter in contradiction both to the old East European Orthodox experience and the newer American frontier adventure.

and comprises an area
extensive as it was in
1948. Its boundaries
are a length of 190
miles. These
are in position in
the situation.

The population is over
1,000,000. More
than half of the State
is Jewish, followed by
Arabs (with 150,000). The
immigrants are above the

The form of government
is the franchise is of
the type. There is a
120-seat Parliament with
a coalition government
which has been successful.
State. Communists are

CHAPTER II

THE STATE OF ISRAEL

Israel comprises an area of 8,000 square miles, or about twenty per cent of Palestine as it was known after World War I, and is slightly larger than New Jersey. Its boundaries stretch about 600 miles by land and 160 by sea. The total length of Israel is 260 miles and the width ranges from seven to seventy miles. These figures are significant for an appreciation of its precarious position in the midst of hostile nations, and the implications for education.

The population is over 2,000,000, including about 200,000 Moslems, Christians, and Druzes. More than half of the Jewish population arrived after the birth of the State in 1948. The largest city is Tel Aviv with 400,000 residents, followed by Haifa (under 200,000) and the capital, Jerusalem (with 150,000). The countries of origin supplying more than 1,000 immigrants are above thirty in number, spread over five continents.

The form of government is democratic, the only one in the Near East, and the franchise is open to all citizens, irrespective of race, creed, or sex. There is a president as in France, and a premier responsible to the 120-seat Parliament which is elected periodically on a party basis. The present coalition government is controlled by Mapai, a centrist labor party, which has been successful in maintaining its lead since the founding of the State. Communists now occupy only five seats in the Parliament.¹

¹Israel 1954, (New York: Israel Office of Information, 1954); and Eight Years of Israel Independence (New York: Israel Office of Information, 1956).

History of Israel was
announced on November 28
in the declaration of independence
which, hopefully, regarded
the state, was followed by
an underground army
was a first step towards a new
state which has existed
in the past.

During Jewish statehood
in 1948, following
the community continued
the types of restoration
in the subsequent decline
of the centuries, which
was, however, was there
in the present
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century by East European Jews
after the launching
of agricultural
in 1900. The Balfour
Declaration, recognized Jewish
rights and local Palestinian
of the Allies. The

The State of Israel was born in 1948, in accordance with the United Nations decision of November 29th, 1947 dividing Palestine between Jews and Arabs. The declaration of independence issued in May 1948, upon the withdrawal of the British (hopefully regarded by them as temporary) after thirty years of Mandate rule, was followed by an invasion by seven Arab nations. The suppressed Jewish underground army, rising to the challenge, successfully defended the infant republic against the onslaught. A state of war with sporadic outbursts has existed to the present day, the Arab countries refusing to make peace.

Ancient Jewish statehood came to an end with the war of liberation against Rome in A.D.70, followed by a final abortive revolution in A.D.132. The Jewish community continued to flourish in Palestine, with intermittent unfulfilled hopes of restoration of sovereignty, for another five hundred years. The subsequent decline was checked somewhat by infrequent immigrations throughout the centuries, with a revival taking place in the sixteenth century. At no time, however, was there an interruption of Jewish communal life, from ancient times to the present day.

In the eighties of the nineteenth century, colonization efforts were initiated by East European Jewry. A slow but steady increase took place, especially after the launching of political Zionism in 1897. By 1914, there was a network of agricultural colonies and a growing city population, totaling about 90,000. The Balfour Declaration of 1917, issued by the British government, recognized Jewish historical rights to Palestine, and rewarded the world wide and local Palestine Jewish community for its war participation on behalf of the Allies. This charter, approved by the Allies, stated:

British Government
in violation of a Mandate
and in their best interest
and in object, it be
known which may pre-
vent the existing in-
sufficient political sit-
uation.

which, at the Conference
renewed the Mandate on
the League of Nations
and the establishment of
the Mandate of Palestine
in 1920. The British
Government were not

In following decades
aimed at cultivating Arab
interests were ignored per-
manent efforts led to
the establishment of Palestine
the operation of the
the 1929 riots and
the Jewish settlement.
Percent of the total
population interfered

1. Dr. Weizmann, The
Balfour Declaration
2. Samuel Joseph, B.
(New York, 1942), p. 73.

3. Book of Documents,
1918-1948: Jewish
People's Council, F.

His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.²

Subsequently, at the Conference of Allied Powers held in San Remo, Italy, Britain received the Mandate over Palestine, which was finally ratified in 1922 by the League of Nations, entrusting Britain with the responsibility of assuring the establishment of the Jewish National Home. Replacing the shifting irregularities of Turkish rule, the nations of the world--acting through a great power--were now committed to a Jewish Palestine.³

The following decades proved otherwise. The policies of British colonialism in cultivating Arab nationalism, presented numerous obstacles. "White Papers" were issued periodically, limiting immigration and colonization. Sporadic Arab outbursts led to bloodshed. In 1922 Trans-Jordan, comprising about two-thirds of Palestine, was removed arbitrarily by the British government from the operation of the Mandate. The Passfield Commission of 1930, following the 1929 riots encouraged by the Palestine government,⁴ attempted to halt further settlement. At that time the Jewish population was 175,000, twenty per cent of the total. Various government commissions and proclamations constantly interfered with the implementation of the Mandate. In 1937

²Chaim Weizmann, Trial and Error (New York: Harper, 1949) p. 208, citing the Balfour Declaration.

³Bernard Joseph, British Rule in Palestine (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1948), p. 73.

Book of Documents, submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations (New York: Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1948), p. 8.

⁴Maurice Samuel, What Happened in Palestine (Boston: Stratford Co., 1931).

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the Peel Commission recommended the dividing of Palestine among Jews, Arabs, and British, with the former receiving the smallest part. Two years later, a new White Paper practically liquidated the Mandate in its Jewish aspects, assuring British control notwithstanding. Illegal Jewish immigration continued, especially during the second World War. A Palestine Jewish Brigade fought in Africa and Europe. Masses of survivors from the Nazi camps were pressing against the closed gates of Palestine, where a Jewish community was waiting eagerly to receive them. World public opinion was increasingly condemning the British government on this score. An Anglo-American Commission in 1946 recommended the immediate admission of 100,000 "displaced persons," but this was not carried out.⁵ Finally, England referred the Palestine problem to the United Nations Special Commission on Palestine (UNSCOP) in 1947, upon whose recommendation Palestine Partition was voted on November 29th, 1947, and the State of Israel came into being a half year later on May 15th, 1948.⁶

From its inception, the infant State met with nearly insurmountable difficulties. A community of 700,000 faced the converging armies of seven Arab nations, representing 70,000,000 people, openly defying the United Nations decision. A British-American embargo prevented Israel from securing the necessary arms. With the help of volunteers, Jews and gentiles from Europe and America, the war was won. The population pressure of nearly three-quarters of a million immigrants fleeing Arab persecution, Red terror, and Nazi memories, created unparalleled housing and food shortages, and resulted in

⁵Bartley C. Crum, Behind the Silken Curtain: a Personal Account of Anglo-American Diplomacy in Palestine and the Middle East. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947).

⁶Albert M. Hyamson, Palestine Under the Mandate: 1920-1948, (London: Methuen, 1950).

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economic imbalance. World Jewry rushed to the aid of Israel, and in a relatively short time made possible the absorption of a hundred per cent increase of population, transferred from the transient immigrant-camps--oftentimes inhabited by the same people for two or three years--to productive labor and settlement in the cities and farming communities. An education system had to be set up to serve the needs of young and old from many lands, speaking different languages and bound to diversified traditions. On the international political arena, constant vigilance was maintained against the combined forces of Arab hostility, Anglo-American oil interests, and Communist plotting. At the armed borders, continued restlessness and incendiary activity by the shaky regimes of neighboring countries created an atmosphere of fear and unending "incidents" and reprisals. In the midst of economic difficulties, military emergencies, political dangers, inner cultural barriers, and religious problems, a nation forged its destiny, inspired by an ancient prophetic tradition and a two-thousand-year odyssey toward freedom, security, and creativity. This in essence is what the "still small voice" of Israel has spoken so articulately from the platform of the United Nations, which helped to bring it into being and accepted it into its fold.

The magnitude of the problems confronted by Israel cannot be overestimated. Their solutions touch upon all aspects of Israel society, molding its national character and determining considerably its social, economic, cultural, and religious orientation.

(a) The existing socio-economic pattern of 1948 had to cope with a doubling of population within seven years. The masses of immigrants were, to a large extent, urban storekeepers and uprooted individuals liberated

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from the concentration camps, without any vocational background. These had to be transformed in a short time into productive industrial laborers and self-sustaining independent small farm holders. Towns and villages sprang up, but not fast enough to absorb the new immigrants. Job opportunities in a pioneer country with limited resources were not plentiful. Temporary tent camps became dwelling quarters for a number of years. The primitive homes, abandoned by hopeful Arabs lured by the promise of returning with the victorious sweep of Arab armies, housed many newcomers. At one time there were nearly 200,000 people in the Maabaroth (immigrant camps). By the end of 1957 they were reduced to a quarter of the number. A vast program of vocational training was launched and courageous economic expansion programs undertaken. The means for absorbing the people came from self-imposed austerity, reinforced by increased labor productivity and financed by modest international loans and the philanthropic efforts and investments of world Jewry, mostly from the United States. The annual campaigns in the United States and abroad supply the additional funds for the rehabilitation of tens of thousands of immigrants still reaching Israel shores, year after year.

Economic experiments in collectivization and cooperation abound, serving to alleviate the strain of initial adjustment and restoration of physical human resources. The Negev, southern desert, is now being reclaimed for agriculture in an imposing concentration of effort and resourcefulness. Intensive farming, hopeful mining ventures (oil was recently discovered), collective agricultural units, accelerated technological research--all contribute to an expanding economy geared to operate in an emergency situation.⁷

⁷Between Past and Future: Essays and Studies on Aspects of Immigrant Absorption in Israel. (ed.) C. Frankenstein. (Jerusalem: Henrietta Szold Foundation for child and youth welfare, 1953).

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(b) The military exigencies have created an atmosphere of permanent mobilization to meet surprise attacks. Though an armed truce is in effect, peaceful coexistence is still a distant goal. The Arab nations have refused to recognize Israel, or to accept it de facto. Smouldering in the defeat of 1948, they are committed to the ultimate annihilation of Israel, determined to win the "second round." There are repeated provocations on the borders of Israel, involving tragic loss of life and property. The half million Arabs who voluntarily abandoned their homes in 1948, in accordance with the strategy of the Arab High Command, are kept in permanent transitoriness and tension to serve as a threat and obstacle to peace.

Military training is compulsory for all men and women in Israel. In a country where war is imminent and the battle lines are fifteen or twenty miles away, even school children are brought up in the art of warfare. Farming communities are military forts. Air raid shelters are rapidly being constructed. These efforts accelerated in the years 1955-6, after Egypt began to receive jet planes from Russia, while Saudi Arabia⁸ was secretly being armed by the United States. At the time, Israel was falling behind in the arms race, having been refused defensive weapons by both East and West, with the exception of France, while the United States efforts at peace in the Middle East did not appreciably diminish the tension. Israel's successful offensive against Egypt, at the end of 1956, eliminated the threat of aggression and the border incidents involving continuous loss of life and property. United States policy, however, has re-

⁸ Saudi Arabia was officially committed to destroying Israel at the expense of "sacrificing ten million Arabs" -- quoted by the Associated Press release, January 9, 1958.

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sulted in the restoration of Egyptian militarism with its proclaimed belligerency toward Israel. The Suez Canal remains closed to Israel shipping, in violation of international law. An economic boycott is in force, and a worldwide campaign is waged by the Arab powers against commercial firms dealing with Israel. The Jewish minorities still residing in Arab lands are subject to increasing oppression.

But what Israel lacks in arms, it hopes to make up in courage and determination. And if aggression comes, the people of Israel will defend their hard-won independence with the stubborn tenacity of a last-ditch battle fought in final desperation, somewhat encouraged by the faith that the democracy-loving people of the world will not fail them in their trying hour. In the meantime, Israel is an armed camp in a state of emergency, engaged simultaneously in the pursuit of peaceful arts and cultural values. To maintain the one within the other is the unique problem affecting its very survival.⁹

(c) The cultural integration of Israel's heterogeneous ethnic groups is a major challenge to the new nation. Small, dark-complexioned, bigamous, and scholarly Yemenites, emerging overnight from the Middle Ages; tall, colorful, patriarchal orientals of the tribes of Central Asia and India; exotic, Arabic-speaking refugees from the ghettos of North Africa and oases of Sahara; multi-lingual, alert but sensitive and tense survivors of Nazi camps; cultured, assimilated, westernized professionals and businessmen of Italy, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria; dynamic, intellectually creative but shiftless Yiddish-speaking Luftmenschen from Poland, Lithuania, and Romania; preciously needed artisans

⁹I. Z. Schwartz, Israel's War of Liberation, trans. Itzoak Ivry. (Jerusalem: Mass., 1951).

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and sailors from Greece and Turkey; sophisticated, enterprising, conservative Westerners from France and the English-speaking countries: these, among many more, are to be welded into one people. The levels of culture, the linguistic differences, the tribal traditions, the diversified mores of family and community present a kaleidoscopic panorama without a unifying pattern. The problem of attaining unity in diversity is colossal, since it must be achieved at an accelerated pace.

A vast network of schools for both youth and adults disseminates the spoken Hebrew. The army is a powerful educational and unifying force. To preserve the positive aspects of each heritage, to remove parochial mores in conflict with contemporary moral standards, to super-impose the Israeli Hebrew culture of an indigenous minority on an unorganized majority of newcomers, is a three-fold task of unequalled proportions. What all this means in the religious domain alone--always a terribly important matter to Jews--is obvious without elaboration. Suffice it, for the moment, to record that the traditional division of Jews into Ashkenazi and Sefardi with its ritual differences necessitates two independent Chief Rabbis with appendaged hierarchies. Beside these century-old loyalties to particular religious traditions, there is an equally vociferous and numerous group of devotees to aggressive secularism, antagonistic to all religion.

The linguistic difficulty is considerably aggravated by the peculiar nature of modern Hebrew. Reintroduced as a living tongue some fifty years ago, it is now being developed for all-embracing usage in a degree commensurate with European languages.¹⁰

¹⁰Raphael Patai, Israel Between East and West: a Study in Human Relations. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1953).

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(d) The complex psychological factors should not be ignored. The overwhelming preponderance of people with past traumatic experiences, conducive to maladjustment, places Israel society in an unenviable position. The remnants of European Jewry are emotionally scarred after the many years of terror, hounded by Nazi brutality. Those who escaped Red tyranny have been accustomed to a clandestine way of life, suspicious of all outsiders. Fanatic partisanship, fragmentization, and restlessness plague Israel society. The masses from Arab lands, never having known freedom, are unprepared for the responsibilities that come with it. The Western tempo is alien to the Eastern way of life. The additional pressures of war atmosphere contribute to tensions bearing down upon the individual and society. The ability to emerge untainted in spite of this is of course the sublime test. The proven adaptability of adherents to the Jewish faith, in overcoming historical crises and challenges, may serve as a reservoir of strength to their descendants in the present emergencies.¹¹

The rise of Israel in many respects has its counterpart in American history. In both instances agricultural pioneering, economic trail-blazing, and social experimentation were necessities and opportunities. A conglomeration of peoples and cultures swarmed to both places, creating a new member in the family of nations. Israel, too, must choose both the "melting pot" and "cultural pluralism" in the emergence of the nation's future. But what sets Israel apart is the pace with which all this is to be achieved. What took America centuries has to be done on an equal scale within a decade or

¹¹ S. N. Eisenstadt, The Absorption of Immigrants. (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955).

less. This is not because of an inherited impatience characteristic of Jews, but because of the unprecedented critical condition of segments of Jewry, which requires their saving now or never. Consequently integration, acculturation, and productivization become immediate short-term demands.

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

CHAPTER III

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

Zionism is the mass movement which fathered the State of Israel. It is the modern reformulation of religious yearning which animated and revived troubled Jewish hearts throughout the ages. Based on the ancient reality of an independent Judean State, a national dream found expression in ritual, literature and faith, reinforced by the two-thousand year old homelessness of a dispersed people. It emerged as a moving force and program of action at the end of the nineteenth century. Within fifty years of its inauguration, the ideal of Jewish statehood was transformed into a fact. The story of the antecedents, formation, and development of the Zionist movement is important for discerning the basic elements of Israel life and thought today and discovering its educational values.

Over half of the Jews of the world before 1914 lived in the Russian and Austrian Empires of Europe. It was there, among the compact Jewish masses, that a religious culture flourished and it was in this geographic area that new ideas and leaders were born that left their imprint on all of Jewry, Israel and America included.

The nineteenth century found East European Jewry still in the mental climate of the Middle Ages where religion was the sum total of all intellectual and recreational pursuits. Enlightenment came late to European Jewry, for the broadening of the scientific intellectual horizons of European society was accompanied by the intensification of bigotry and oppression of minorities.

Catholic universalism, at least, tolerated Jewish non-conformity. Protestant nationalism and enlightenment was infuriated with persistent Jewish differentness. Economic discrimination, political repression, social alienation and religious persecution could hardly constitute the fertile soil from which the fruit of science and the crop of ideas would grow.

It was at the end of the eighteenth century that the Haskala movement, as Enlightenment became known in Hebrew, began. Moses Mendelsohn, a scholarly German Jew who became an important modern philosopher, opened the gates of the ghetto for the culture of Europe. Henceforth, thousands of young men in the towns and villages of Eastern and Central Europe engaged in the study of languages, arts, and sciences in a furtive manner. It was believed by the exponents of the new movement that it was the lack of secular culture that prevented their co-religionists from acquiring full citizenship rights. The solution to all evils was, therefore, in a new education that could bring the sciences, the arts, languages and philosophy to the ghetto. Here is an interesting phenomenon of an historic movement suggesting a new school curriculum as a solution to political and economic difficulties. They maintained that, in the wake of inner changes, full emancipation, political and social, would follow. Beside secular education, already mentioned, European garb was to be adopted; and productive labor, especially farming, cultivated, partially replacing commerce. Believing in the dawn of a new age, the men of Haskala naively felt that, once the Jews became modernized sufficiently to share the products of Enlightenment, they would merit and receive equality of treatment at the hands of the ruling classes.

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(Mendelsohn's own grandson, the composer Felix, was a convert). In Austria and Russia, a modern literature arose in Hebrew, and later in Yiddish. The Prophets and Wisdom books of the Bible, long replaced by the study of religious law, were reintroduced; Hebrew grammar and language enjoyed a new emphasis. Mendelsohn's disciple, Naftali Herz Wessely (1725-1805), who wrote poetry and propagandized secular education among Austrian Jews, is regarded by some as the father of modern Hebrew letters.¹ Mendele Mocher Seforim, "grandfather of modern Yiddish," satirized the unwholesome and sterile aspects of Jewish life, its socio-economic structure and removal from contemporary knowledge. J. L. Gordon (1830-92) sang of the virtues of Haskala and was critical of the maze of religious legalism interfering with individual freedom and happiness. A host of other writers joined in the praise of modernism. Becoming primarily didactic and moralistic, Hebrew literature nevertheless was released from its religious chains and prospered in its new secularistic freedom. In the meantime, the Russian government had made some overtures to enlightened Jews, and these, in turn, had their hopes raised high.

But the panacea soon proved a mirage. There came the pogroms of 1881, engineered by the Czarist regime. With the ashes of victimized Jewish communities were consumed the hopes and promises of the Haskala. The above-mentioned Gordon, "king of the poets," called: "Back to your tents O Israel!" Europe had disappointed them. The Jewish intelligentsia suddenly awoke to the realization that the Jewish problem cannot be solved by relying upon benevolence from without, but by some drastic steps taken

¹Joseph Klausner, History of Modern Hebrew Literature, vol. I, in Hebrew. (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1948)

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from within. Pinsker (see Ch. VIII.) published his history-making pamphlet Auto-Emancipation, focusing attention upon Jewish homelessness and pointing to the need for a separate territory as an end to the road of persecution traversed for nearly two thousand years. The "Chibbat Zion" (Love of Zion) movement was launched, and the first group of young volunteers from the Universities (Bilu) set out for Palestine as the vanguard of the masses returning to the ancient homeland. Hebrew and Yiddish literature reversed its invidious praise and criticism in favor of its own people. Hundreds of thousands of Jews streamed to America and Argentina, and a small tributary was rechannelled to Palestine. The story of the colonization of Palestine, the first ground-breaking for the later great national structure, now begins.

Forerunners of the Zionist movement already appeared in the first half of the nineteenth century. Benjamin Disraeli, himself of Jewish birth, published a novel, Tancred, on the theme of Israel's return to Zion. The English novelist George Eliot, depicted the new Jew restored to his homeland in her Daniel Deronda. An American statesman of the Jewish faith, Mordecai Manuel Noah, attempted to form a Jewish territory as "an asylum temporary and provisionary . . . under the protection of the American Constitution without relinquishing hope of eventually regaining possession of their ancient homeland."² In Prussia, Rabbi Zvi Kalisher (d. 1874) preached the message of return and urged the adoption of practical measures in the settlement of the Holy Land. Palestine-born Rabbi Judah Alkalai (d. 1869), occupying a

²Rufus Lears, Fulfillment: the Epic Story of Zionism (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1951) citing Noah p. 32.

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pulpit in Serbia, projected a political organization representative of European Jewry to negotiate with the Great Powers and Turkey. David Gordon, editor of the all-important Hebrew periodical Hamagid, opened the pages of this Haskala organ to the exponents of the new idea and joined their ranks in propagating Zionism.

A romantic setting for the predecessors of early Zionism was provided by the middle of the century in the works of Abraham Mapu (1808-67). This intellectual Lithuanian Jew, of prosaic scholarly stock, fired the imagination of generations of young people by his moving dramatic and romantic novels of Judean life in the days of the First Temple. So far removed from Palestine in distance, climate and environment, he yet captured the fragrance of Judean hills and valleys, and revived the Biblical landscape in his poetic re-enactment of historic events. Into the crowded, dreary, impoverished villages of the Russian Pale he brought the romance and radiance of a glorious past, and increased the desire for immediate redemption.³

The aforementioned spokesmen came from the ranks of traditional Jewry and communicated with them. A voice from other quarters was heard when Moses Hess (see Ch. VI), former socialist and assimilated intellectual of Western Europe, appeared with his German book Rome and Jerusalem in 1862. It was a repudiation of assimilationist theory and an expose of the failure of emancipation, calling for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Seven years later, Peretz Smolenskin (see Ch. VII), leading Hebrew novelist and essayist, founded in Vienna the monthly Hashachar (Morning Star), committed to a dignified revival of the Hebrew tongue and Israel's

³Hazan and Feller, The History of Zionism, in Hebrew, (Jerusalem: Kiryat-Sefer, 1948) pp. 31-38.

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national spirit. Until his untimely death, Smolenskin preached national cultural rejuvenation and exerted powerful influence on the new generation. Along with other writers of the age, he became aware of the bankruptcy of Haskala which, in the process of bringing western culture, alienated the Jew from his people, and led him to assimilation and, oftentimes, to conversion.

The shock of 1881, therefore, came to an element prepared for a re-evaluation of ideology in the direction of nationalism. In addition to the personalities that ploughed the rough terrain of Jewish consciousness and planted the first seeds of Zionism, there was another development in the international arena which helped to usher in the Zionist movement. This was the stirring in South Eastern Europe, the national uprising against Turkish domination which gave birth to new states. The upsurge of national feeling, the desire for independence, the emphasis on ethnic culture, stimulated parallel sentiments in articulate Jewish groups. Thus, when the crisis came, the weather was not inolement for the new breezes.

The first group of Bilu (an acrostic on the verse "The House of Jacob, come ye and let us go," Isaiah 2:5) some twenty of them, arrived in Palestine in 1882, three years after the founding of the first agricultural settlement (Petach Tikva--Gate of Hope--now a flourishing town) by local people. The little group of pioneers distinguished itself from native Jewry in two salient characteristics: (a) they were young students who came to live, as against the resident old people who, previously, had come for the purpose of dying in the Holy Land; (b) they were modern, educated, conscious of their mission, inspired with zeal to engage in productive labor, essentially

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agriculture; the indigenous population was fanatically pious, living off charitable contributions from all over the world.

Before leaving Russia, the Bilu issued this proclamation, as meaningful in content, for the understanding of Zionism, as it is naive in form:

What we want:

1. A home in our country. It was given to us by the mercy of God, it is ours as registered in the archives of history.

2. To beg of the Sultan, and if it be impossible to obtain this, to beg that at least we may be allowed to possess it as a state within a larger state; the internal administration to be ours, to have our civil and political rights, to act with the Turkish Empire only in foreign affairs, so as to help our brother Ishmael in his time of need.

We hope that the interests of our glorious nation will arouse our national spirit in rich and powerful men, and that everyone, rich and poor, will give his best labors to the holy cause.⁴

The fact that university students of liberal arts proved miserable failures as farmers in a strange land, is not important. They ignited the spark which charged the motor of the Zionist revolution. Twelve years beforehand, in 1870, an agricultural school (Mikveh Israel) was founded, thereby becoming the first outpost of modern Jewish colonization in Palestine. An enterprise of the inspired mind of one of the leaders of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, an organization of French Jewry, it exists as an experimental and training station to the present day. However, it remained an isolated incident without successors. The Bilu adventure, in contrast, though insignificant in practical achievements, launched a new era. A number of other colonies followed in the eighties and nineties, and societies throughout Russia were engaged in the two-fold task of supporting the colonists abroad

⁴Maurice Samuel, Harvest in the Desert, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1944). p. 50.

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This first stage of practical Zionism faced a constructive challenge with the appearance of Achad Ha'am (see Ch. XI) by 1890. Without deprecating the importance of the program in effect to his time, he demanded a spiritual awakening as a prerequisite. To him, the movement was to concern itself with creed as well as deed, in the "preparation of hearts" for the new cause. Notwithstanding all these luminaries and projects, Zionist activity was sporadic--limited and frequently abortive--until the eventful year of 1897, one of the most important dates in Jewish history.

Theodore Herzl, brilliant Viennese journalist, while covering the dramatic Dreyfus case in Paris, suddenly awoke to the hopeless and helpless position of the Jewish people, epitomized through Dreyfus, serving as a scapegoat at every opportune occasion. Out of these deliberations, there dawned upon Herzl the idea of a Jewish State as a haven of refuge and a rock of strength, elevating the Jew to an equal role among the nations of the world. The Jewish State was composed, and the First World Zionist Congress was convened in Basle in 1897. The manifesto, issued by the first international Jewish conclave, explicitly states the purpose of Zionism, known as the Basle Program: "The aim of Zionism is to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public law."⁵

Zionism now became an organized movement seeking international recognition for its aspirations. Herzl attracted Jewish dignitaries of Western

⁵Alfred Werner, "Basle to Jerusalem" Jewish Affairs, October 15, 1946, vol. I; no. 10. (New York: Office of Jewish Information) p. 8.

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Europe and set out to win by diplomacy, the leading European statesmen to his cause. His goal was a "charter" for Palestine. Seven years of frantic activity in the capitals of the world brought no immediate results, as far as acquiring Palestine was concerned, but did focus considerable attention of government circles on the Zionist cause, and mobilized Jewish masses in service of the ideal.

Herzl's diplomatic mission was continued by his successors after his untimely death in 1904. This finally culminated in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which was heralded as the first great victory for political Zionism.

The World Zionist Congress, assembled annually, and, after Herzl's death, biennially, became the platform on which Jews from all continents met, and from which the united articulate voice of Jewry spoke to the world. With the growth of the Movement, a number of "factions" or parties crystallized, all sharing loyalty to the Zionist ideal but differing in interpretation.

(a) The Orthodox oriented delegation led by Rabbi Reines of Lithuania, formed the *Mizrachi* (abbreviation of the term "spiritual centre") party dedicated to the creation of a theocracy in Palestine enabling Jews to lead a religious life, obeying all the commandments of the Biblical tradition--an impossibility in gentile society.

(b) A liberal group headed by Leon Motzkin, called itself the "democratic faction." It was concerned with the possible "clerical" domination and inclined toward extensive cultural and social reconstruction. From this emerged the Socialist Zionist parties that played a leading role in the rebuilding of Palestine.⁶

(c) The militant elements, regarding themselves as the true heirs to

⁶Isaac Greenbaum, *The Zionist Movement*. Book I & II, in Hebrew. (Jerusalem: Mass, 1942) Bk. II, p. 8.

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Hersl, became impatient with the slow progress, and under the banner of "Revisionism," were the vociferous champions of a Jewish State. The colorful and controversial Vladimir Jabotinsky (d. 1940) was their dynamic leader.

(d) The General Zionists, uncommitted to any ism, but dedicated to the general welfare of the people and the land of Israel--politically, philanthropically, and economically--remained a loose federation of middle-of-the-roads. In America they have always been in the majority and included in their ranks the most important leaders of the American Jewish community.⁷

While Herzlian Zionism was intensifying its political engagements, the Second Wave of immigration to Palestine began in 1904. This brought the men who still stand at the helm of the State, such as Premier David Ben Gurion. Set in motion by the positive factor of a growing awareness of the Zionist imperative, and accelerated by the negative force of the Russian pogroms of 1903-05, these men and women differed from the Bilu of the First Wave by their greater social consciousness and realistic appraisal of conditions in Palestine. They came determined "to build and be rebuilt," after the revolution of 1905 resulted in such a disastrous failure. Upon arrival they found a group of colonists who had lost their early idealism and in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties had compromised on a life of two defeats: Arab labor in the plantations, and continued subsidies from Baron de Rothschild. The newcomers, Chalutzim (pioneers)

⁷In listing these groupings we run the risk of being unnecessarily pedantic. However, the above summary is important for classifying the contributions of personalities to be considered later in the thesis.

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Shimon Baklan, Yoda
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as they were called, considered this a parasitic existence, differing little from the old community in Jerusalem which subsisted upon handouts from organized channels. To them, Palestine meant not only a change of location, but also economic reconstruction. A Jewish homeland, they insisted, could only be built by Jewish labor. These ideas were not popular with the older settlers, who considered menial labor undignified for intelligent young men. The resulting conflict became known as the struggle for "the Conquest of Labor."

The driving spirit of the age is reflected in the "Vitkin Manifesto," issued in 1906 by the Palestine teacher Joseph Vitkin, as a call to Jewish youth in the diaspora for renewed immigration and pioneer enterprise. It aroused many young people to embark upon a creative life in Palestine. It contains the basic motivation and fundamental principles which became the driving force of a new generation.

The major causes of our blundering lie in our search for a short cut, our belief that the attainment of our goal is close at hand. . . . And so we have turned with contempt from the harder road which is perhaps the surest, and in the end, the shortest. . . . Indeed, brothers, our strength is limited, though our purpose is high. For that very reason do not let us sit with our arms folded, if we still register the will to live. . . . We must work and struggle to redeem our land, and fight with the courage of those for whom there is no possible retreat. . . . God forbid that we deceive ourselves, or the people whose cause we would champion, by describing the task as easy, the road as short. . . . Let us be fully aware that our ships are burned, that for us there is no other way in the whole world. . . . Know, brothers, your people is sick and unhappy. Expect from it no help, encouragement or reward. . . . Come rather to help and to awaken, and your greatest, your highest reward will be the realization of the vision itself. Hasten and come. . . . For yet awhile longer, and we here . . . alone . . . shall perish.⁸

⁸Simon Halkin, Modern Hebrew Literature: Trends and Values. (New York: Schocken Books, 1950) citing the "Vitkin Manifesto," p. 96-97.

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The right and duty of physical work was accompanied by the cause of self-defense. Plantations had always been guarded at night by hired armed Arabs, often in collusion with marauding bands. The new pioneers fought and won the right to defend Jewish property themselves. This too, was novel. The subjugated role of Jews in exile prevented them from practicing self-defense, when attacked by incited mobs.

These frictions gradually led the Chalutzim to establish their own colonies, founded on principles dear to them. The grim reality of the new environment, combined with the social gropings and idealistic yearnings of these enthusiasts, helped to evolve the collective concept upon which hundreds of Israel communities (kibbutz) are still based. First of its kind, "mother of kibbutzim," is Degania, founded in 1909 on the other side of the Jordan at the mouth of Sea of Galilee.⁹ The collective ideal is voluntary economic communism of a limited number of like-minded individuals, joining together to redeem the land, share material possessions, and mold a supposedly ideal society. A. D. Gordon, (Ch. XIII) the intellectual leader of the movement, helped to formulate its values incorporated in a "religion of labor." It fostered an attitude of piety to physical labor and nature, emphasizing the redeeming and spiritual powers of the two. The Zionist Congress had by now accepted the plan of a German professor of mathematics for a Jewish National Fund to purchase land in Palestine as the perpetual property of the Jewish people, leased to individual settlers. This was compatible with the collectivist negation of private property, especially land. A Jewish homeland,

⁹Joseph Baratz, A Village by the Jordan: the Story of Degania. (New York: Roy Publishers, 1955).

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in its deeper meaning, was to solve the problems of the individual and nation by a reconstructed society, devoid of the evils infecting European capitalism. It was also to have a salutary effect upon the unfolding of the personality by a return to nature, from which urban Jewry had so long been divorced. There was much of New England Transcendentalism, romantic nationalism, European Marxism, and Rousseau naturalism in this brand of Zionism, destined to pave the road to Jewish statehood, despite its dreamy utopianism.¹⁰

Simultaneous with diplomatic ventures in the evasive capitals of Europe, and physical and social pioneering in the grim reality of Palestine, a cultural revolution was taking place. Eliezer Ben Yehuda (see Ch. IX), by personal example and service, engineered the resurrection of the Hebrew tongue, spelling out Zionism as a return to the language of the Hebrews as well as to the land.

The outbreak of the World War in 1914, put a halt to further colonization and immigration. Non-Turkish citizens had to leave the country. Aaron Aaronson, brilliant young agronomist, descendent of early colonists, organized the secret spy ring Nili, serving the Allies in the Middle East. He disappeared in 1919, in a flight from London to Paris on a British official plane, under suspicious circumstances. Joseph Trumpeldor, veteran of the Russo-Japanese war, and later hero of self-defense in Palestine, together with the aforementioned Jabotinsky, organized Jewish units with

¹⁰Melford E. Spiro, Kibbutz: Venture in Utopia. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

Murray Weingarten, Life in a Kibbutz. (New York: Reconstructionist Press, 1955).

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After the war, there was a great deal of rehabilitation to be undertaken in Palestine. American Jewish agencies played a leading role in this, as well as at the Versailles Peace Conference discussions of Jewish demands. In the final awarding of the Mandate to Britain, the Balfour Declaration was incorporated along with unequivocal stipulations on the task of Britain in Palestine. In addition to the words of the Balfour Declaration, the chief provisions included:

Art. II--The Mandatory shall be responsible for the placing of the country under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will secure the establishment of self-governing institutions, and also for safeguarding civil and religious rights of all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race and religion.

Art. IV--An appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine. . . . The Zionist Organization, so long as its organization and constitutions are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognized as such agency. It shall take steps to secure the cooperation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of a Jewish national home.

Art. VI--The administration of Palestine . . . shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency . . . close settlement by Jews on the land. . .¹¹

The Zionist Organization received semi-governmental status in co-operating with the Mandatory. An agreement had been publicly reached between Emir Feisel, head of the Arabs, and Weizmann, on the mutual recognition of Jewish and Arab claims to the Near East, with Palestine as the Jewish territory. Britain appointed a Jewish High Commissioner, Herbert Samuel, who in

¹¹ Book of Documents Submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, May, 1947.

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his desire to bend over backwards, considerably injured the Zionist cause. Arab mob violence broke out in 1920 and 1921. Curtailment of Jewish opportunities followed. The twenty-eight years of British stewardship were studded with British edicts appearing to obstruct and liquidate the Mandate, mostly through the "divide et impera" formula.

The upbuilding of the Homeland continued in spite of all obstacles. Economic discrimination, political and religious oppression in Europe, reinforced by the Zionist dream of redemption, brought hundreds of thousands--many of them illegally--to the shores of the Holy Land. A Polish emigration of the twenties was followed by the influx of Germans in the thirties. The Hebrew University was founded in 1925 in impressive ceremonies that reverberated throughout the Jewish world. An issue of policy, between mass-scale colonization and step-by-step reconstruction, between Brandeis and Weizmann, was decided in favor of the latter at a memorable Zionist convention in Cleveland in 1920. This led to uninterrupted but modest efforts at planned settlement with the stress on the younger idealistic elements. The Labor Battalion of itinerant volunteers attended to essential construction and road-paving throughout the country. Pioneers struggled feverishly against malaria in the swamps of the Valley of Jezreel, in the process of redeeming the land from 2,000 years of neglect. On the northern border, the previously mentioned Trumpeldor took up a last stand against Arab terrorists, and with his comrades died in defense of Jewish soil, thereby becoming a national symbol of inspiration to tens of thousands. The Hagana, underground defense army, was formed, after the government disbanded the Jewish battalions who helped to conquer Palestine. It trained the type of farmer-

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soldier upon whom the security of the Jewish population depended. In the thirties and especially during World War II, untold numbers were saved by underground forces who outsmarted the British blockade of Palestine shores. During the war the Zionist movement found itself in the enigmatic position of cooperating with Britain in the war against Germany, and fighting British policy in Palestine. The Palestine Jewish community contributed significantly to the war effort in material and men. A Jewish Brigade once again distinguished itself in Europe. Trained in the British Army, the leaders of the underground waited, while the civil population reacted with passive resistance to the repressions and imprisonment of leaders (most of the members of the present cabinet were in prison in 1947). Dissident underground elements such as the Irgun and the Stern group, met violence with violence, making the British position untenable and compelling it to submit the entire matter to the United Nations.¹²

The 700,000 Jews of Palestine in 1948 were in many ways prepared for statehood. They had a chain of semi-fortified colonies all over Palestine, an underground army, an officialdom of modest experience in public affairs, an organized labor movement, a growing economy, and a fully developed school system. They had a tradition of heroic self-defense, astute diplomatic activity, and sacrificial conquest of swamp and desert. There were indigenous values of love of labor, social cooperation, solidarity with Jews all over the world, and last but not least, a powerful religious motivation. They were fighting for freedom and democracy and knew that world Jewry was behind them. By 1948, Palestine was no more a controversial issue in Jewish life. With the

¹² Moshe Pearlman, Army of Israel. (New York: Philosophical library, 1950).

exception of a lunatic fringe of insecure wealthy Jews affiliated with the American Council for Judaism, non-Zionists cooperated through the Jewish Agency for Palestine (organized in 1929), creating a solid front of world-wide Jewish support for Israel reborn. Besides, they possessed a secret weapon--the "no alternative"--assuring victory, for this was the one last hope of millions of persecuted human beings, survivors of the Nazi holocaust. The American Jewish community, acting through a legally-convened democratically elected American Jewish Conference, representing all shades of opinion, voiced its unequivocal support, in word and in deed.

With the establishment of the State, the goal of Zionism, as proclaimed in the Basle program of 1897, was fulfilled. Its present function is to preserve and strengthen what has been achieved, and intensify its efforts toward a spiritual reinforcement of far-flung Jewish communities, united by their religious ideals and manifested solidarity with Zion rebuilt. An American Zionist leader has formulated the present function of Zionism in these words:

. . . We return to the first principle of Zionism. It is a principle which must be enunciated with greater emphasis than ever, now that the State of Israel has by its existence opened the way to implement it with full effect: the principle, namely, of the indivisible unity of our People; the identification therewith of Israel and World Jewry . . . the participation of Jews everywhere in the supreme experience of creating that ideal State which Herzl and his compeers foresaw from afar. . .

. . . The Zionist Organization must pursue a long-range program. Both Israel and the Diaspora, as we have shown, are the concern of Zionism; and the long-term program must be based on the permanent relations between them--for they are the inseparable parts of an ideal harmonious whole. . .

The establishment of Israel has not altered the spiritual objectives of Zionism, but in the nature of things it has created a shift in the scope and direction of our operations.¹³

¹³Irving Miller, The Zionist Movement Today. (New York: 1950) pp. 26, 30, 35.

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CHAPTER IV

THE ZIONIST IDEAL

Six historic and socio-economic factors are responsible for the Zionist domination of Jewish consciousness and activity to an ever-increasing degree. (a) The religious aspirations of Judaism predicate a return to the Holy Land and a resurrection of the independent Jewish State and society destroyed in A.D. 70. This concept is formulated in the traditional literary sources, affirmed in the daily prayers and expressed in the pattern of ritual, reaching into all areas of individual and group living. (b) Racial discrimination and religious persecution suffered by the Jewish people for twenty centuries made the alternative of liberty and autonomy in Palestine increasingly desirable. Hate intensification in the twentieth century led to the mobilization of national energies toward attainment of the national goal. (c) The assimilation of Jewish intellectual and upper classes after the emancipation of Jews in Western Europe, revealed the increasing danger to the survival of the Jewish minority as a religious and cultural entity in Europe and America, major centers of Jewish population. (d) The deterioration of the economic conditions among the compact Jewish masses of Eastern Europe as a result of a reshuffling of national and economic structures in eastern and central European countries, coupled with economic repression, focused attention on Jewish helplessness and uprootedness—homeless wandering people adrift among nations firmly established on their own soil and controlling their own economic fate. (e) The emergence of modern nationalism as a political,

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cultural and psychological force in the nineteenth century channeled in the struggle for territorial liberation, reawakened parallel Jewish national consciousness which crystallized into an organized movement. (f) The unprecedented catastrophe of the Second World War in the annihilation of six million Jews presented a situation whereby independent Jewish statehood became an immediate necessity rather than an ultimate goal and brought about the sudden creation of the State of Israel.

Zionism represents the modern organized effort in the historical aspirations of the Jewish people to reconstitute itself partly or wholly as a political, economic, religious, and cultural entity in its ancient homeland. Its program is all-encompassing, rooted in the experiences of Jews, inspired by their traditions and forged in the cataclysmic events of the twentieth century. The Zionist solution to the Jewish problem takes in land, language, religion, culture, society and personality. Theory is combined with practice in promoting a revolution against what is considered an abnormal existence of a people in exile. The aforementioned factors instrumental in the emerging supremacy of the Zionist formula, have given rise to fundamental values spelling out the meaning of Zionism. After having traced its historical development we can analyze its ideological components basic to Israel society.

(a) In the first place, Zionism is inseparable from the Messianic dream of redemption with its universalistic as well as particularistic ramifications. Judaism, from its earliest origins, has projected into the future the inevitability of redemption in terms of peace and brotherhood. The millennium, which will bring the ultimate triumph of justice and freedom for all,

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will not be complete without the restoration of the people of Israel to its land and the spiritual rejuvenation of Zion. The Jewish Messiah destined to come, will find a leading role for Israel in the new scheme of things in the World to Come.

Deprived of its theological trimmings, the messianic yearnings have not left untouched even the secular Jew. Justice to the Jewish people, by recognizing its historical association with the Holy Land and a vindication of the faith and sentiment centered around it, is essential for the blueprint of the New World. Ancillary to this striving is the concealed hope that a new light may radiate from Zion, illuminating the path of mankind once again. Messianic Zionism of this dimension is characteristic not only of mystics like Alkalai and pious rabbis like Kalisher, but pervades the writings of the former dialectic materialist who turned spiritual Zionist--Moses Hess. (see Ch. VI)

(b) An integral aspect of this messianic era is the concept of "Ingathering of Exiles," a term in vogue even in the contemporary terminology of official pronouncements. The dispersion of Jewry throughout the globe is to be corrected by the concentration of large numbers in Israel. The age of the Messiah will be characterized by that very process. This conception was manifest in the reaction of Yemenite Jews when 50,000 of them were transported to Israel immediately after the founding of the State, to cite only one outstanding example.¹ The design of the Ingathering is both to amass numerical strength and to gather and sustain the scattered remnants of far-flung tribes of a dispersed people. The countries of origin for immigrants to Israel, in the five year period following independence, adds up to thirty-

¹ Shlomo Barer, The Magic Carpet. (New York: Harper, 1952).

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four recorded by name (while many others are not listed) divided among six continents.² What makes this most remarkable is the fact that the thirty-four population sources of diverse tongues and cultures are all Jews, members of a small people numbering less than twelve million throughout the world.

The process of redemption, originally defined in terms of divine intervention and interpreted by Zionism in the frame of historical development and organized initiative, implied the rebirth of political independence in Palestine and the return of the scattered brethren from all corners of the earth. Subsequently, this was to lead to an elevated status of Jews abroad, transformed from a persecuted and helpless minority to an accepted equal; the stigma of homelessness replaced by the banner of national sovereignty, uplifting to oneself as well as in relation to others.

The rush of events partially vindicated the faith and the program of Zionism. Thus a state resurrected 1878 years after its demise, seen in the light of all that has transpired, can hardly be overestimated in its impact on the formation of the national character and influence on education. Criteria for its development, defense, and function, pervade the atmosphere of education, providing both the content and the purpose.

(c) A third principle of Zionism, complementary to the first two, is the socio-economic. The Prophetic Gospel of Social Justice, combined with adaptations of Marxism, engaged the allegiance of the pioneer. He had revolted against the humiliating limitations imposed upon the Jew by a hostile world. He rebelled against the economic structure of Jewish society. He also tried to escape the injustice of capitalistic exploitation and the

²Israel 1954. (New York: Israel Office of Information; 1955), p. 219.

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The neo-Marxist reinterpretations of Austrian theoreticians were applied to the Jewish scene. In the early part of this century Ber Borochov (see Ch. XIV) saw the opportunity for a "productive" proletariat in Palestine to replace the "unproductive" and rootless "Luftmensch" of the Russian Jewish communities and the petty-bourgeoisie of westernized Jewry. Nachman Syrkin (see Ch. XIV) further related the Jewish problem to a reconstituted classless system in Palestine. A. D. Gordon (see Ch. XIII) preached and practiced the message of "personal realization" in a return to nature and soil and the spiritual rehabilitation of the individual by the salutary effect of physical labor. A youthful, embittered, but yet enthusiastic generation dedicated itself to this task, becoming loyal followers of this "religion of labor." They brought about the conquest of the seemingly uncontrollable impediments of Palestine's natural and climatic conditions, the successful colonization of an abandoned land, the establishment of hundreds of Collectives, and the emergence of organized labor as the most positive and powerful political and spiritual force in Israel today.

That this economic philosophy in its entirety cannot be accepted by all segments of Israel society is obvious. The predominantly socialist-oriented pioneer element, in its various political shadings of numerous and supposedly distinct demarcations, subscribe to these theories with little modification. The basic proposition, however, the reconversion of the unbalanced economic structure of European Jewry, is universally affirmed by all schools of Zionist thought, including the "capitalist" groups. They recognize the need for a transfer from commercial and clerical pursuits to industry and agriculture. For this purpose, vocational training institutions

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originally sprang up under the auspices of French, German, and Russian Jewish organizations. Agricultural preparatory farms for Palestine existed for decades in Europe and America, and were discontinued abroad only a few years ago. The Jewish National Fund for the purchase of land in Palestine, was designed to expedite economic rehabilitation, by making farm land available at nominal rates.

The peculiarities of Jewish life have elevated a normal development to what may be considered by American standards--artificial lofty heights. Charging an ordinary economic process with idealistic content, may seem exaggerated, to say the least. We must be cognizant, however, of the historical factors compelling Jews to congregate in a few occupations. Prohibitions upon land ownership were nearly universal, as far as Jews were concerned. In Russia, for example, most fertile areas were even outside the official Pale of Settlement to which Jews were restricted. Commercial enterprises generally involve fluid assets and depend upon mental rather than physical tools--a necessary condition for self-preservation in the frequent expulsions throughout the centuries. It was natural, therefore, that the main occupational activities associated with the "diaspora" should be relegated to an inferior position by the Zionist ideal. Beyond the negative consideration there was also the indispensable need for farmers, heavy laborers, skilled workers, and civil service in establishing firm foundations for a self-sufficient Jewish society in Palestine.

It is in this area, the socio-economic, that the message of Zionism was most universalistic in its nationalistic application. Espousing world socialism, a classless society, peace between nations and harmony within them, the Zionist pioneers undertook to lead by example. It is amazing,

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and little recognized, that the voluntary, communistic, agricultural colonies in Israel are the only Utopian-inspired experiments in the world, which have not failed. Similar American and English ventures of the nineteenth century all had to be abandoned. Russian collectives have never been more than compulsory labor camps. In Israel, they flourish since their inception forty-five years ago, today numbering hundreds of settlements.³

(d) The personality redeeming power of Zionist realization previously mentioned, needs further clarification. It is the thesis of Zionism that the personality of the Jew has been scarred and marred in the long exile. A victim of circumstances beyond his control, his physical and psychological security constantly threatened, he has emerged abnormal or maladjusted inwardly and outwardly. Proper balance, inner harmony and creativity, may be restored by a changed environment in Israel. His sick soul will benefit from its healing balm. His human dignity is to be recaptured in its purer atmosphere.

These advantages will accrue not in any automatic fashion. No less than a total revolution is to take place before a metamorphosis of personality results. Specifically, this will come about in the presence of three conditions. First, is a change in the mode of living from shiftless, commercial, speculative enterprise to solid physical labor. Second, is a transfer of location from urban to rural life. Third, is a modification of attitude in re-educating toward the courage of active self-defense in the face of challenge and jeopardy.

The first concept in the frame of national urgency has already been discussed; its economic intellectual premises will be elaborated upon when

³ Esther Tauber, Molding Society to Man. (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1955).

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we analyze the writing of the socialist theoreticians. The psychological dimension deserves our present scrutiny.

The Grandfather of Yiddish Literature, Mendele Mocher Sforim (1835-1917) reflected the Haskala thesis, that the economic imbalances have caused mental and moral aberrations. The daily uncertainties, oscillations, speculations, and machinations in the pursuit of the meagre profits eked out for a subsistence of bare necessities, have created habits of thought and social relationships which were anything but healthy. Occupational training in productive and skilled labor for employment entailing physical exercise, regular routine, assured income and established patterns, are thus destined to be of psychological therapeutic value.

The second condition of return to nature places a premium upon agriculture in the gamut of gainful employment. The cramped shabby quarters of East European Jewish communities ruled out any contact with nature. Bialik, the Hebrew poet of national revival, dramatically depicts, how pausing to observe the natural wonders of the seasons, was regarded as sinful idleness detracting from the study of the Holy Law.⁴ On the other hand, the Bible abounds in idyllic rural description. The Israel landscape is a tangible tie with the spiritually gigantic figures of the Bible, associated with particular locations. The life of a farmer cultivating the soil of the Holy Land is fraught with possibilities of meditation, inspiration and aesthetic experience, elevating and enriching. As Thoreau in New England and Tolstoy in Russia, the Israel pioneer escaped the tumult and tension of urban concentration to find peace and serenity in the midst of nature. The devoted proponents of this ideal, frequently veered far in this

⁴ Hayyim Nahman Bialik, "The Talmud Student," in A Treasury of Jewish Poetry, ed. Nathan and Marynn Ausubel (New York: Crown Publishers, 1957), p. 86.

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direction in the Zionist youth movements under their influence, to the point of stressing agricultural pioneering as the only contribution toward the up-building of the Jewish Homeland. Such over-emphasis is understandable in the light of the needed ruralization of urban masses and the spiritual opportunity for individual rehabilitation unfolded by the Zionist promise.

The third area of operation, self-defense, deals with the problem of warding off anti-Jewish hostilities. Age old persecution has conditioned the Jew to retreat and escape, as the only resort in face of physical aggression. A defenseless minority without arms at its disposal may find this sound strategy, against the overwhelming odds of military campaigns. But a people subject to frequent mob rioting, will only invite more attacks by cowardly inaction and flight. The pogroms of Eastern Europe, when ignorant peasants were incited against Jews by Church and government authorities, inflicted severe injury on Jewish life, property and honor. The old community of Palestine, as well as the first settlers, were attractive targets for Arab violence and deceit. The Zionist call for courage and self-defense against onslaught, opened a new chapter in inter-faith relations. Numerous pitched battles discouraged outbreaks considerably and checked the excited passions of Gentile mobs. In Palestine, such tactics took the Arabs by surprise, and gained their respect for Zionist elements, spontaneously and effectively rising to the defense of a threatened community. The Hebrew term for defense, Hagana, was added to the sanota of modern Jewish vocabulary. What is particularly significant in the context of our present analysis is the psychological effect of this change. It brought self-respect and human dignity to Jews hitherto ashamed of their own cowardice.

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conflicts and complexes of the exile personality. A justified pride of achievement has replaced a sense of inferiority. Self-acceptance is substituted for the pangs of rejection by others and self-hate by oneself, so characteristic of many assimilated Jewish intellectuals, even those of considerable fame. The acquired inner harmony reduces tensions and neuroses. A feeling of equality detracts from the Chosen People concept, often used as a rationalization. The ability to fight bravely and do it well has bolstered the spirit. This psychological revolution, brought in the wake of the Zionist ideal, has left its impact upon the Jewish personality outside of Israel borders as well. Shmarya Levin, the Zionist orator and propagandist of the past generation, succinctly summarized the Zionist program as dedicated "not only to take the Jew out of Exile, but also to take the Exile out of the Jew."

Zionism... rather means facing the cold exoruciating fact that the restoration of the land to the people is the painfully slow process of the people returning to the land, of individual Jews shouldering the task of returning as individuals, each settling in the land himself, each undergoing metamorphosis of the returning exile.⁵

(e) Zionism calls for national revival of cultural creativity. This applies to the vehicles of communication, literature, theatre, press, art, and music. To ignore one's own tradition and partake to one's full satisfaction of another, at the exclusion of the former, is assimilation. In the realm of faith it becomes conversion. Assimilation and conversion are aspects of each other. That was becoming the fate of emancipated Jewry before Zionism appeared on the scene. The awakening of national consciousness expressed itself in growing attachment to the cultural traditions of creative continuity,

⁵Simon Halkin, Modern Hebrew Literature: Trends and Values. (New York: Schocken Books, 1950), p. 104.

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especially in literature. At about 1880, J. L. Gordon, poet of the Haskala, thought of himself as "the last of the singers of Zion." Two decades later, a youthful dynamic literature was flourishing. What made the difference was the Zionist movement.

A culture is revealed in a language. Here another difficulty arose. European Jewry created its own language, resting upon medieval German, Hebrew and Slavic components. It developed from a jargon to a rich idiom of expression comparable to other European tongues. Parallel to the Haskala literature in Hebrew, a vast heritage was accumulating in the Yiddish vernacular. At first the masters wrote in both; later writers adopted one or the other medium.

Zionism had to choose between a spoken language and a holy tongue relegated to the higher forms of life since antiquity. European Jewry was the senior partner in the restoration of the homeland and with no competitors in the spiritual realm. Yet the far-flung tribes of Jewry would be united only through Hebrew. The epic story of the resurrection of a supposedly "dead" language is told in the chapter on Ben Yehuda (see Ch. IX). Zionism became identified with Hebrew in Palestine, but it could not ignore the magnetism of Yiddish in the diaspora as an authentic indigenous Jewish product containing the rich treasures of the Jewish spirit and uniting European Jews in their dispersion throughout the Americas, Australia and Africa.

In contemporary America, literature plays a modest role. We could hardly appreciate the tremendously important part of Hebrew literature (and to a lesser degree, Yiddish literature) in the Zionist renaissance. The essays of Achad Ha'am (see Ch. XI), expounding Zionist theory, were awaited eagerly as they appeared in the periodicals and passed from hand to hand serving as topics for discussion in hundreds of communities throughout Poland,

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Lithuania and neighboring states. The poems of Bialik inspired young men to organize illegal self-defense units against peasant mobs. The lyrics of even a second or third rate minstrel like M. M. Dolitzki or B. Z. Imber, author of the Zionist anthem, stirred the souls of tens of thousands and helped to bring many of them to Israel. The short stories of the great writer, J. L. Peretz, evoked yearnings and gropings for a finer and better life.

The dichotomy of newspaper and book does not apply in Jewish culture. The daily, weekly, and monthly periodicals were the organs of expression for the poets, essayists, novelists, and dramatists of Hebrew literature. To date, the American Yiddish daily press reaching the masses, is the medium for artistic expression which, in its English counterpart, is found only in philosophical or literary journals.

For Hebrew literature to emerge as this driving force, it had to be released from the religious chains, depict life in all of its phases, reflect the inner world of the individual, cope with social, economic, intellectual and emotional problems, experiment with adopting and adapting many European forms of literature, style, motif, plot and craftsmanship. These elements account for its enveloping scope beyond the border of aesthetic experience. Modern Hebrew literature, secular as it is, has enjoyed an influence commensurate with religious books, although it did not become didactic nor programmatic. But its standards and values were under constant scrutiny, resulting in controversies on Europeanism versus Jewishness, aesthetics as against ethics, and similar issues touched upon in later chapters of this thesis. Poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists had their own retinue, not limited to sophisticated circles.

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From its halting beginnings in the eighteenth century to its latest full-throated utterances in Palestine, Hebrew literature has been intimately connected with all the vital manifestations of Jewish group living, furthering some of them passionately, but often even violently challenging some and bitterly condemning others. More significant still, it has always pioneered among those forces that have impelled and channeled the Jewish group will, calling the group to new forms of living, setting up new standards, anticipating social ideals long before they crystallized into organized movements, creeds and parties.⁶

Much of what has been discussed for literature applies equally to the press, the theatre and the arts as they were conceived in Europe, transplanted and grafted in Palestine, where they blossomed forth into a reborn Hebrew culture of the Jewish people, with Israel as its spiritual center. It has been the plan of its architects, that the new Hebrew culture will engage the interests and loyalties of Jews everywhere as an additional or, at least, supplementary culture to that of their domicile. There is an international Jewish agency, the Brit Ivrit Olamit (World Hebrew Covenant) dedicated to this ideal.⁷

(f) The Orthodox wing of Zionism has focused attention upon Israel as the only opportunity for a life compatible with the precepts of the Jewish faith. The Jewish code of civil law, partially adhered to up until the nineteenth century, became inoperative when Jewish groups sacrificed ghetto autonomy for personal emancipation. It can once again be implemented only in a state under a Jewish government where Jews make up the majority of the population. The ritual practices, such as Sabbath observance and dietary laws, are kept with less discomfort in a predominantly Jewish environment.

⁶Ibid., p. 101.

⁷Shalom Spiegel, Hebrew Reborn. (New York: Macmillan, 1930).

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The integration of secular and religious education, without the dissection into two languages, is possible only in Israel. Furthermore, the ancient Jewish code contains a body of laws applicable only to the Holy Land. The spiritually rewarding opportunity to fulfill all the commandments is limited to those who reside in Israel.

Religious Zionists have conducted a battle on two fronts in defense of their position. On the one hand, conservative authoritarian elements still insisted upon waiting for the Messiah to bring them back to Israel, and regarded human initiative in that direction as atheistic digression. On the other side were the articulate secularist elements who, in their enthusiasm to break with minority exiled status outside of Palestine, were ready to rebel against the religious tradition as well. Religious Zionism, has won the first battle in toto, and is scoring important gains on the second front. There is a growing recognition in Israel today of the immeasurable opportunity for a religious Jewish revival of unprecedented scope, inherent in a Jewish State. Rabbi Abraham Kuk, late Chief Rabbi of Israel, was the inspired exponent of this view. His contributions will be evaluated in a later chapter (XVI).

It is worth noting that American Jewish theological seminaries are now insisting on one year's resident study in Israel before ordination. Strangely enough, the most liberal wing--Reform Judaism--originally anti-Zionist, is taking the lead in this venture. The religious meaning of Zionism, for Israel and Jews abroad, is now understood more than ever before.

The ideological and historical foundations of Zionism are formulated in the Proclamation which brought the Jewish State into being on May 15, 1948.

The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people.
Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was formed.
Here they achieved independence and created a culture of national

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and universal significance. Here they wrote and gave the Bible to the world.

Exiled from Palestine, the Jewish people remained faithful to it in all countries of their dispersion, never ceasing to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their national freedom.

Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove throughout the centuries to go back to the land of their fathers and regain their statehood. In recent decades they returned in masses. They reclaimed the wilderness, revived their language, built cities and villages, and established a vigorous and ever growing community, with its own economic and cultural life. . . .

In the year 1897 the First Zionist Congress . . . proclaimed the right of the Jewish people . . . to national survival. This . . . was acknowledged by the Balfour Declaration . . . and reaffirmed by the mandate of the League of Nations. . . . The Nazi holocaust . . . proved anew the urgency of the re-establishment of the Jewish State. . . . In the second world war the Jewish people in Palestine made a full contribution in the struggle . . . [which] gained them title to rank with the peoples who founded the United Nations. On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a Resolution for the establishment of an independent Jewish State in Palestine, and called upon the inhabitants of the country to take such steps as may be necessary on their part to put the plan into effect. It is, moreover, the self-evident right of the Jewish people to be a nation, like all other nations, in its own sovereign State.

Accordingly we, the members of the National Council, representing the Jewish people in Palestine and the Zionist movement of the world, met together in solemn assembly today, the day of termination of the British Mandate for Palestine, by virtue of the natural and historical right of the Jewish people and of the Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, hereby proclaim the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called ISRAEL.⁸

⁸ Joseph Dunner, The Republic of Israel: Its History and Its Promise. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1950). Excerpts from the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence, p. 93-94.

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CHAPTER V

THE EDUCATION PICTURE

Israel's educational system is

the mirror of the life of the country . . . it is perhaps the most important of the forces that will determine the character of this new state for the years to come. In the light of these circumstances Israel's educational efforts should be of great interest to all students of modern social and educational trends. To such persons the story of education in Israel . . . should serve at least as an introduction to a particularly complex educational situation in a country which once contributed greatly to the advancement of civilization and which is now the scene of great national and social endeavor of world wide significance.¹

To the end of the nineteenth century, education in the former Palestine consisted of independent ventures of ethnic groups conducting schools in accordance with the traditions of their countries of origin. The language of instruction was Yiddish or Ladino (a Spanish-Hebrew dialect) depending upon the sponsors of the school.

By the end of the century, three Jewish philanthropic organizations established schools with some vocational opportunities. The Alliance Israelite Universelle, the Anglo-Jewish Association, and the Hilfsverein der Deutschen Juden founded schools in the spirit and vernacular of their respective countries, allotting time for Hebrew religious instruction.

The Zionist settlers organized their own schools pervaded with the ideals they espoused. Hebrew, undeveloped as it was for modern usage, became the language of instruction in these schools and fought an uphill battle into the institutions under European auspices. In one instance involving

¹ Noah Nardi, "Education in Israel," Israel Youth Horizon (Jerusalem: February, 1956), p. 11.

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a high school in Haifa, only a teacher-student strike succeeded in replacing German with Hebrew. It was the schools of Palestine, their constant need for Hebrew terminology in the arts and sciences, that accelerated the growth of the Hebrew language. The Zionist movement abroad supported the new schools and dreamed of an integrated educational system, from elementary through university level, in the Hebraic spirit.

The first to push for Hebrew as a living language in the schools was Eliezer ben Yehuda, who later became famous as the father of modern Hebrew. His efforts in the late seventies of the nineteenth century were followed by teaching in the French Alliance School in Jerusalem, where, in 1883, he became the instructor of spoken Hebrew.

The Zionist settlement provided the natural setting for the new "national" school. At first there were the old type one room "cheder" tutoring, with Yiddish as the medium. In the last decade of the century the battle for Hebrew was waged in these colonies, and by 1904 it had triumphed. The later lexicographer, Judah Grozovsky, and the religious thinker, Zev Yaavets, were among the first teachers using the "natural method" of "Hebrew into Hebrew" for the traditional subjects. The goal was now to introduce this method for the arts and sciences as well, in spite of the paucity of technical terminology in the Hebrew of that day.

The first all-Hebrew school was opened in Jaffa in 1890, but it was short-lived. This was followed by two separate schools for boys and girls, supported jointly by Russian Zionists and the French Alliance. Friction between the agencies led to separate sponsorship, with the girls' school remaining the Hebraic institution. The need for preparing children in the spoken Hebrew before entering elementary school led to the founding

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Because of linguistic problems, the teachers of this period were pre-occupied with the Hebrew language per se, at the expense of other learning, without coordination or direction. The first attempt at a teachers' organization in 1892, proved abortive. But, in 1903, the Hebrew Teachers' Federation of Eretz Yisrael was finally launched with a two-fold aim of:

1. improving education in the land and fostering a nationalistic Hebrew orientation in all schools;
2. improving the material and legal positions of the teachers.²

The general educational aims of the teachers' union were first implemented in the eight year curriculum planned in 1907 for a thirty-four hour week maximum schedule. In the following year, certification requirements were set up. A "language committee" was formed to initiate, sanction and integrate all linguistic innovations which, by necessity, were being made continuously. (This agency was the authoritative linguistic body until a few years ago when it was replaced by a government department.) Textbooks were published; the sephardi (south European and Asiatic) pronunciation was officially adopted in place of the Ashkenazi (east and west European). Qualified kindergarten teachers arrived from abroad and introduced the Froebel method. Before the outbreak of the war, the schools in Palestine had made considerable progress, largely under the guidance of the teachers' union which in many instances sponsored its own schools.

Secondary education begins with the first high school in 1906, opened with seventeen students and four grades. In the following year the Hebrew

²Aaron Berman, The History of Education: Jewish and General, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Joshua Chachik), p. 142.

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Gymnasia Organization took over the school which soon became known as Herzlia, the leading high school to the present day. The term "gymnasia" was borrowed from Europe, giving the school a higher academic status. The first teachers' seminary for women was founded in 1913 with a four-year curriculum. Along with other schools, it was closed in 1917, as a result of Turkish war restrictions. Critical conditions during the war years, due to the cutting off of funds from Europe, forced the removal of the population from certain districts, and the expulsion of non-Turkish citizens--including teachers--seriously jeopardizing the educational gains. Ingenious makeshift arrangements enabled instruction to continue under the most adverse circumstances.

In 1920 the British Mandatory government accepted the educational autonomy of the Hebrew schools as private projects, not meriting financial support as received by the Arab schools. After much acrimony, the government met about ten per cent of the education budget. Taking over from the World Zionist Organization in 1932, the National Council of the Jewish Community, recognized by the government, was compelled to levy additional taxes of its own in order to finance its educational system.³

Three official school systems or "trends" were in existence up to 1953. The Labor schools emphasized to a greater extent, vocational and agricultural training and were essentially socialistic in ideology. The Mizaohi trend was religiously oriented, teaching more of the religious texts. Between them were the General schools, commanding the majority of pupils. After the establishment of the State, it became increasingly evident that a national unified state education would be preferable to the partisan ar-

³ Noah Nardi, Education in Palestine (New York: Zionist Organization of America, 1945).

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rangement. The 1953 State Education Bill stipulated as follows, in sections 3 and 4.

3. From the school year 5714 onwards, State education shall be introduced in every official educational institution. In an official educational institution which in the school year 5713 belonged to the Mizarchi trend or the Agudat Israel trend or the religious section of the Labor trend, religious State education shall be introduced.
4. The Minister shall prescribe the curriculum of every official educational institution; in non-Jewish educational institutions, the curriculum shall be adapted to the special conditions thereof.

The new system calls for a public school and religious school, both under government direction (as in Quebec, Canada). A unified curriculum was set in operation. Ultra-Orthodox schools preferring to remain independent of the State, must still conform to minimum standards. The latter receive sixty-seven per cent of the teacher salary budget from the government. These are "recognized but unofficial" schools.

Jewish education was voluntarily almost universal under the Palestine Mandate. In 1949 Israel enacted the Compulsory Education Law which affected largely the Arab population, especially since a high percentage of Arab children were not in the schools at all. The Compulsory Education Law stipulates that:

Compulsory education shall comprise all children of the ages from five to thirteen years inclusive and all adolescents who have not completed their elementary education. The parents of a child or adolescent shall each be under a duty to affect a single registration of a child or adolescent with the local education authority in whose area of jurisdiction the child or adolescent resides. . . .

. . . Official educational institutions for the provision of free elementary education under this Law to children and adolescents resident in the area of jurisdiction of a particular local education authority shall be maintained by the State and the local education authority jointly. . . .

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Also those within the age group of fourteen to seventeen who have not completed their primary schooling, are legally subject to compulsory education.

Secondary schools, unlike primary schools, are maintained by the municipalities but helped by government grants and scholarships. Some are privately owned. About one quarter of eligible youth receive secondary education. The figure includes those attending agricultural and vocational institutions. Economic conditions compel most youth of high school age to seek gainful employment.

Arab education enjoys the same privileges and is placed under the same obligations as Jewish, except for the fact that Arabic replaces Hebrew. For a community long illiterate, this was quite a revolution, even though the Compulsory Education Act has not been stringently enforced (seventy per cent enforcement) since it was "believed that drastic measures will defeat the very purpose of the act."⁴ This applied primarily to girls since female education is not appreciated. About twenty-five per cent of Arab pupils were enrolled in non-governmental Christian mission schools in 1952.⁵

ISRAEL'S STUDENT POPULATION 1957-8

Total -- 517,000				TUITION
Kindergarten		age 5	78,000	partial fees
Hebrew	74,000			
Arab	4,000			
Elementary		age 6-14	345,000	free
Hebrew	319,000			
Arab	26,000			
Secondary (and special)			47,000	tuition fees
Hebrew	46,000			
Arab	1,000			

⁴Noah Nardi, "Education in Israel," op. cit., p. 19.

⁵S. D. Goitein, The Arab Schools in Israel (New York: Israel Office of Information, 1952).

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Agricultural and Vocational (including those under government and private auspices)	14,000
Teacher seminaries	5,000
Higher education	9,500
Independent (kindergarten and elementary schools)	
Hebrew	11,000
Arab	8,000
	19,000

Sources: Government Yearbook 5719 (1958), Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1958.

The problems of education in a fast growing society are even more accentuated in Israel, where the school population has increased five-fold in ten years of statehood. Integration of non-Hebrew speaking pupils, comprising at least half of the enrollment, is a colossal task in the face of their diversified home background, religiously, socially, linguistically, and ethnically. The large number of teen-agers not in high schools are provided with educational opportunities through evening classes and various youth movements of all political and religious description, maintaining a strong hold over their adherents. There is an extensive program of adult education with interesting experiments in language instruction for immigrant groups. The army, conducting orientation and instruction programs, is a valuable educational force in integrating all youth, military service being compulsory for men and single women (orthodox women can claim exemption).⁶

Higher education in Israel centers around the Hebrew University founded in 1925. To its dreamers, planners and builders--ranging over a

⁶Israel Information Services: Building a New Generation (Hakirya: Government printing press, 1953).

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period of twenty-five years before its inception--it epitomized the great citadel of the Jewish spirit, heir to the ancient Temple as the spiritual center of Judaism. Even though these grandiose ideas are far from realization, it has become a great university for Jewish learning, general scholarship and scientific research. The imposing campus on Mount Scopus is beyond reach since the War of Liberation, but a new campus is being built in the Jerusalem hills. The 1958 enrollment is over 3700. As the repository of Jewish spiritual treasures, it contains the largest Jewish library in the world, a project initiated long before the founding of the university.

The Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa (the Technion) is serving the country in the preparation of sorely needed engineers, scientists and technicians. (The Reali School, a secondary prep school associated with the college, was the scene of a battle for the introduction of spoken Hebrew into the schools before the first World War. Interestingly enough, it was here that a successful student strike took place in 1912, which resulted in the replacing of German by Hebrew as the language of instruction, and marked the beginning of the conquest by modern Hebrew in the schools of the country.) Opened in 1924, it had 2000 students in 1957. .

The new Bar Ilan University near Tel-Aviv was inaugurated in 1955. Sponsored by American religious Zionist groups, it is modelled after American colleges and provides an education in an atmosphere of Jewish tradition. Besides providing a religious environment for a liberal arts college, it is a unique American contribution to Israel life and thought by the introduction of an American brand of Judaism--a synthesis of orthodoxy and modernism. The Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovoth is dedicated to pure science and advanced research in the spirit of "scientific pioneering." Its various

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projects are "of great theoretical and practical importance for the future of agriculture and industry in Israel,"⁷ according to official claims.

In addition there is the newly organized Tel Aviv University previously known as the School of Law and Economics, with 1800 students. Numerous teachers' colleges and theological schools, a music academy and conservatory in Jerusalem, and the famous Bezalel Art School in Jerusalem, complete the picture. The art products of the latter have been cherished decorations in Jewish homes throughout the world.

⁷Report 1953: The Weizmann Institute of Science, p. 12.

PART II

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CHAPTER VI

MOSES HESS

Moses Hess is the first literary forerunner of the Jewish national ideal among occidental Jews. Simultaneous with early Zionist utterances by scholarly rabbis, and romantic speculation by creative artists in the Hebrew language, Hess appears as the harbinger of similar tidings to emancipated Jewry of western Europe. His book, Rome and Jerusalem, published in German in 1862, is the first authentic work of modern Zionist classics aimed at establishing the national movement upon firm philosophical and realistic foundations. The publication of such a volume by a prominent spokesman of European socialism, author of treatises in philosophy and an assimilated Jewish intellectual, marks the turning point in the nineteenth century climate of opinion among Jews.

"After an estrangement of twenty years I am back with my people. I have come to be one of them again . . . to share the memories and hopes of the nation."¹ Hess was one of the first of the lost sheep who found their way home again after meandering about in far off pastures. The estrangement from Judaism was longer than indicated in the above quoted confession. At the age of fifty, when he created the work which earned him a place in the Hall of Fame of Jewish notables, he already had behind him a long and illustrious career in revolutionary circles and an alienation from Jewish life reaching back to a break with his family in early manhood.

Born in Germany in 1812 into a pious and wealthy household, Hess was

¹Moses Hess, Rome and Jerusalem, trans. Meyer Waxman. (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1945) p. 40.

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raised in a religious atmosphere. During his short stay at the Bonn university he was imbued with radical ideology and dedicated himself to its propagation. Breaking with his family on account of his revolutionary activities, he travelled aimlessly through England, France and Germany. A temporary reconciliation with his father improved his financial condition, but a permanent severance was soon brought about when Moses married out of faith.

Pursuing his socialistic and intellectual ventures, he wrote a number of books on historic-political-philosophic themes, and contributed extensively to radical publications. His independent thinking brought him into disfavor with Marx and Engels, as revealed in Marx's criticism levelled at him,² a fact which suggests the importance of Hess in radical quarters. In 1848 he returned to Germany to take an active part in the revolution. Condemned to death, he fled and finally found refuge in Paris where he continued to remain productive as a philosophical writer, ardent socialist activist, and--after the reawakening of his Jewish conscience--a champion of the national revival of his people. He died in 1875.

It seems that the spark of Jewish consciousness had been smouldering in his heart for twenty years. The notorious Damascus Affair of 1840, based on a blood libel against Jews, attracted international attention and played an important role in the rude awakening of many assimilated Jews throughout the world. Hess records in the Fifth Letter of his magnum opus:

Twenty years ago, when an absurd and false accusation against the Jews was imported into Europe from Damascus, it evoked in the hearts of the Jews a bitter feeling of agony. Then it dawned upon me for the first time, in the midst of my socialistic activities, that I belong to my unfortunate, slandered, despised and dispersed people. And already, then, though I was greatly estranged from

²Sydney Hook, "Karl Marx and Moses Hess," The New International, vol. I, no. 5, December, 1934, p. 140.

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Judaism, I wanted to express my Jewish patriotic sentiment in a cry of anguish, but it was unfortunately immediately stifled in my heart by a greater pain which the suffering of the European Proletariat evoked in me.³

The record of the Hess conversion is not unique. The annals of Zionist history are studded with tales of repentent renegades, the zealous devotees of many a current foreign fad, who suddenly awoke or were shocked into an awareness of their responsibilities to their own people. Their ranks included the majority of the dignitaries who graced international Zionist platforms, as well as large numbers of lesser lights who became the pioneers of the new Palestine. Hess is chronologically the first in this category of the Zionist Who's Who.

It took an unusually long time for his initial reactions to crystallize into lasting and powerful sentiments. The Italian war of liberation and the upsurge of nationalism in Europe left their impression upon his sensitive soul. He asserts that intellectual maturation was responsible for his emerging Jewish convictions.

. . . I discovered a real and strong relationship between my ethnological studies and the modern national movement. . . These studies convinced me of the inevitable ultimate disappearance of any particular race dominance and the necessary regeneration of all oppressed peoples.⁴

Two elements in his mental development pointed in the same direction. As a socialist struggling against tyranny of all forms, he demanded the liberation of oppressed classes and peoples, Israel not excepted. This was fortified by academic investigation into cultural and national characteristics and differences, suggesting an opportunity for the Jewish people to mold its own corporate gestalt and fulfill its destiny without interference.

³ Moses Hess, "Rome and Jerusalem," op. cit., p. 60.

⁴Ibid., p. 62.

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Cosmopolitanism, preaching fusion of nations into one undifferentiated Humanity, he discovered to be totally unscientific. The new realization on his part "became a dominating trait of my character and a lasting mood of my soul. No more did I seek to suppress the voice of my Jewish consciousness."⁵

What were the essentials of his philosophy of Jewish nationalism? A succinct statement of his views is condensed into one paragraph at the beginning of his Rome and Jerusalem.

A thought which I believed to be forever buried in my heart, has been revived in me anew. It is the thought of my nationality which is inseparably connected with the ancestral heritage and the memories of the Holy Land, the Eternal City, the birthplace of the belief in the divine unity of life, as well as the hope in the future brotherhood of men.⁶

Here is the forthright self-revelation of an emerging Zionist consciousness with the related components of an all-embracing mental pattern. The nationalistic sentiments gripping him late in life are not isolated episodes, but interwoven with the total Weltanschauung of cosmic, theological, historical and humanitarian ramifications. They are an inseparable aspect of his world view charged with universal significance beyond parochial interest.

Hess postulated a divine cosmic plan unfolding in time. The world is a unity; the same principles apply to nature and society joined by the unifying force of God. The cosmic, organic and social are all subject to the genetic laws of progress operating consecutively in each of the three realms. The cosmic development as recorded in the Bible was followed upon

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 40.

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its completion by organic evolution adequately traced in scientific investigations. Man's history, being comparatively recent, is destined to take the same course, ultimately leading to the realization of the potentialities of harmony and fruition in social and spiritual achievement. The nineteenth century, marking the broadening of man's intellectual horizon and the liberation and regeneration of suppressed peoples, is the "springtime" of human history, ushering in a new age. Just as in the era of transition between antiquity and medieval times Palestine supplied a faith for mankind; likewise, in the present twilight before a new dawn, Israel restored to its homeland shall contribute to the regenerated spirit of man in the new era. Though hesitating at first in explicitly stating this potential service to mankind (reserving the major civilizing role to France), Hess develops the argument to its logical conclusion:

It is through Judaism that the history of humanity becomes a sacred history. I mean by that, that process of unified organic development which has its origin in the love of the family, the members of which will be united by the holy spirit, the creative genius of history, as strongly as the organs of the body are united by the creative natural forces.⁷

The Jewish people . . . is still today, that organ of humanity which expresses the living creative force in universal history, mainly the organ of unifying and sanctifying love.⁸

Bringing humanity to the synthesis of materialistic and spiritual aims, geared to improving the lot of mankind, is the peculiar function of the Jewish people. This shall be accomplished by realizing the moral teachings of religion in practical life, thereby fulfilling the Jewish mission in society.⁹

⁷Ibid., p. 106.

⁸Ibid., p. 111.

⁹Ibid., paraphrasing translator's introduction, p. 30.

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Israel can perform this service to mankind by setting an example on its own soil. From there, implementation of prophetic social justice will inspire emulation elsewhere:

Providence would not have prolonged your existence until today, had it not reserved for you the holiest of all missions. The hour has struck for the resettlement of the banks of the Jordan. The historical books of the royal prophets can, perhaps, be written again only by you.¹⁰

The rebirth of Israel is inevitable to anyone who understands the signs of the times.

The old frame-work of European society, battered so often by the storms of revolution, is cracking and groaning on all sides. It can no longer stand the storm.

Just as after the last catastrophe of organic life, when the historical races came into the world's arena, there came their division into tribes, and the position and the role of the latter was determined, so after the last catastrophe in social life, when the spirit of humanity shall have reached its maturity, will our people with the other historical peoples find its legitimate place in universal history.¹¹

Return to Palestine therefore will come not only as a result of the dialectical processes of history, but is necessary in order for the Jews to assume the role which is their destiny in civilization. In their dispersion, the Jewish people are unable to carry out this mission because of the abnormal economic conditions, deteriorated Jewish cultural situation, and inhibiting social status. National independence in Palestine will deliver them from plight and release the powers of rejuvenation in discharging their assumed obligation to mankind. In their renewed exalted capacity they appear as "the triumphal arch of the future historical epoch, under which the great

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 139.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 157, 158.

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The call of the hour in preparing for the regeneration of the Jewish people, is to keep alive this hope and reawaken it where it slumbers. Constant vigilance will provide the readiness for taking advantage of an international situation conducive to the restoration of "a Jewish State," preceded by colonization ventures.¹³

Hess envisaged the spiritual revival of Judaism following on the heels of a reconstituted, numerically significant community in the land of Israel. He endorsed the colonization plans advocated by the contemporary Rabbi Kalisher, urging solicitation of leading Jewish financiers for this project, and pointed to existing favorable conditions for the recognition of Jewish aims. France's involvement in the building of the Suez canal could sway her, if sufficient influence be brought to bear, toward sponsoring resettlement in Palestine under her protection. Hess' idea of viewing the international political arena with an eye for assistance from western powers, later became a most important plank in the Zionism of Theodore Herzl, architect of the World Zionist Organization.

Two roads have led to Zion from two directions during the nineteenth century. One was positive, paved with the desire for unhampered religious and cultural expression which had been suffering an inhibiting disadvantage under the pressure of a dominating majority civilization. The other had its source in negative motivation, in fleeing the scourge of anti-Semitism. The trail-blazers of the Zionist ideal traversed either one, the political or

¹² Ibid., p. 140.

¹³ Ibid., p. 129.

cultural paths, as the case may have been. Though the first approach could be traced to Hess' reactions, for anti-Semitism among his fellow socialists and hostilities against Jews elsewhere had aroused his conscience, he was largely moved by spiritual considerations. This has been sufficiently amplified in the above analysis of his philosophy. The return to Palestine meant to him a challenge and an opportunity for the unfolding of the Jewish spirit. Anticipating much of the Zionist political platform more clearly enunciated by his successors, he primarily represents the embryonic stage of a philosophy of spiritual rebirth subsequently evolved by Achad Ha'am and others. In the messianic role assigned by him to the resurrected Jewish nation, he reaches into inspired ethereal heights, beyond the grasp of his heirs, the theoreticians and architects of the national rebirth.

Central in the perspective of Hess is the road of assimilation embarked upon by occidental Jewry. The merciless criticism levelled at their denial of the national historical elements of the Jewish religion, he directed against the Reform movement as well. The religious reform sparked by the supposed desire to modernize the religious tradition, he regarded as a fiasco, emasculating the faith and transforming it into a sterile liquidated creed. He accused his emancipated co-religionists of apish behavior unbecoming to men of dignity. Rejecting international identification with Jews as a historical and existing religious entity, was too great a price for men of honor to pay for civil rights. He dramatically cries out: "If it were true that Jewish emancipation in exile is incompatible with Jewish nationality, then it were the duty of the Jews to sacrifice the former for the sake of the latter."¹⁴

¹⁴Ibid., p. 55.

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Hess perceived the deep truth which calls the bluff of assimilation-- that it never assuages the injuries of anti-Semitism, but frequently aggravates them from without and weakens the immunity from within. It is accompanied by a loss of respect on the part of the non-Jew, paralleled by diminished emotional protectiveness of the individual. The bond of peoplehood does not interfere with loyalty to one's country. History contains many examples of strong Jewish identification and dutiful patriotic allegiance existing in harmony and mutual re-enforcement. ". . . It is possible to be a good, patriotic national Jew, in the full sense of the word, and at the same time participate in the cultural and political life of the land. . . ." ¹⁵

A word is in place concerning emancipation of Jews in Europe generally. Citizenship rights were first granted to Jews by the French Revolution in 1791. Though these rights were somewhat curtailed by Napoleon, his military conquests brought relief to Jews in other countries, notwithstanding. The Congress of Vienna deprived most Jews of the recently acquired status. The upsurge of reaction led many to conversion to escape the fate of their brethren. A more positive program, designed at modernizing religion, to refute the specious argument against emancipation, was undertaken by the Reform movement in Germany. It did not satisfy itself however with external modification along aesthetic lines, but struck at the very heart of religion by eliminating the Hebrew language and all references to Zion found in the prayerbook. Many intellectuals had become zealous devotees of the new nationalism of their respective countries. The

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

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nascent nationalism was all-embracing in scope and frequently demanded considerable retreat from religious convictions as proof of meriting equal rights. This was especially true in Germany. Responding to the challenge in an over-ardent fashion, many Jews were ready to make the necessary concessions. Actually, these had little to do with the final emancipation of west European Jewry by a series of legislative enactments from 1830 to 1870, essentially motivated by political, economic and democratic considerations. In eastern Europe, equal rights were not granted until after the first world war.¹⁶ The aforementioned sacrifices of integrity and conviction, cowardly offered by many on the altar of emancipation, were the butt of the attacks by Hess. The renegades who sought refuge in total conversion, he scornfully ignored and pitied, noting, that in the new racial anti-Semitism baptism made little distinction.

Critical as Hess was of Reform, he could not at the same time fully agree with Orthodoxy. Its formalism and rigidity made it unpalatable, though he subjected it to a less severe judgment than the other. The former lacked an articulate national consciousness while the latter tried to suppress it. His reading of the newly published Jewish History volumes of Graetz, inspired him with an appreciation of the spiritual development of Judaism and love of his people. He could then say that

the main problem of the Jewish national movement is . . . how to awaken the patriotic sentiments in the hearts of our progressive Jews, and how to liberate the Jewish masses, by means of this patriotism, from a spirit of deadening formalism.¹⁷

He was not discouraged by the apparent unconcern by both camps. A tremen-

¹⁶ Solomon Grayzel, The History of the Jews. (Phila.; Jewish Publication Society, 1953) pp. 573-594.

¹⁷ Moses Hess, op. cit., p. 144.

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dous struggle would have to be undertaken before admitting defeat in that "the Jewish heart is dead . . . no more capable of patriotic inspiration."¹⁷ His was a fond hope for a third position on the religious front, removed from Reform negation, yet not too close to ossified Orthodoxy, a possibility materialized by the rise of Conservative Judaism long after his demise. Hess entertained these hopes for Palestine where "there will rise in the Holy Land . . . universities conducted by able scholars whose spirit will . . . harmonize with the ancient Jewish national religion."¹⁸

Hess did not abandon his socialism when he turned to Jewish nationalism. His entire messianic philosophy was predicated upon a new Jewish society "on the foundation of labor" setting the examples for "better and more progressive relations between Capital and Labor." The materialism of Marx alienated him from the start, but idealistic socialism saturated his soul. It forms an integral part of the pattern of cosmic and social regeneration that he outlined. The partnership of socialism and science will eventually establish a better order and the Jewish people cannot help but contribute in its own land to the "unity of different tendencies of social life into one center of activity." More than a quarter of a century after the death of Hess, pioneers streaming to the shores of Palestine raised aloft the banner he earlier held, not always aware of him who antedated them.

What was the effect of Hess' preaching on his contemporaries? The response was mostly negative. Angered at his outspoken eloquence, "the assimilationist camp aims all its political arrows at the man who dared to

¹⁷ Moses Hess, op. cit. . . .

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 156.

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negate the accepted catechism of assimilation."¹⁹ In his own day Hess seems to have lost the battle in spite of his continued efforts in the same direction after the publication of his book. Over the years, he was rediscovered as a prophet of the Jewish national renaissance, and his major writings became a source of inspiration to many. Nearly all of the tenets of Zionism received their earliest formulation from Hess. He advocated political Zionism before Herzl; dreamed of spiritual and cultural resurgence before Achad Ha'am; projected socio-economic reconstruction before Borochov; and hinted at religious rejuvenation before the advent of men of kindred spirit in America. All this was tinged in the messianic glow of universal proportions and eternal values, elevating and charging the Jewish national revival to an exalted position of humanitarian and spiritual dimensions.

Hess' influence upon Israel society was channeled through others. His ideas were rediscovered and developed by the Zionist men of thought and letters of a later generation, through whose intermediary service they were absorbed in the forms and values of the emerging society in Israel. Time has vindicated most of his conclusions, even though "his book was forgotten . . . until the Zionist movement of Russia and Poland came and raised Hess and his book from the depths of oblivion and set him up among the prophets of Zionism and the founders of its teachings."²⁰ As a primary source of inspiration Hess still points to the bankruptcy of assimilation, the messianic aspects of Zionism, the social reconstructionist ideals of the national movement, the regenerative function of Jewish spiritual creativity, the true meaning of emancipation in terms of human dignity and national character, the possibility of a religious revival attuned to the modern scene, and the fusion of universal socialism with national aspirations.

¹⁹ Simon Dubnow, World History of the Jewish People, in Yiddish (Buenos Aires: Confederacion pro-cultura Judia, 1955), V. IX, p. 277.

²⁰ Yitzhak Greenbaum, The Zionist Movement, in Hebrew (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1942), v. I, p. 32.

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CHAPTER VII

PERETZ SMOLENSKIN

The last hundred and fifty years of Jewish life can be conveniently divided into the age of Enlightenment and the age of Revival. Designating the prevailing pattern up to 1800 as the established thesis, the men of Enlightenment oscillated toward an antithesis and the generation of Revival reverted to a synthesis. The pendulum swung from religious particularism to opportunistic universalism, and from isolationist pedanticism to cultural assimilationism. Nationalism linked the group-solidifying terrain of the old with the intellectual horizon of the new. The man who himself went through all these stages, contributing more than any other person to the rise of the philosophy of nationalism, was the Hebrew novelist, essayist, and editor, Peretz Smolenskin. In performing this function, he is regarded in Hebrew letters as the father of the national ideal.

Born in 1840 in White Russia in a poverty stricken household, Smolenskin had an unhappy youth. The family had to flee from unwarranted threats, and a young brother was kidnapped as a child--the usual form of recruiting Jewish boys for the army, requiring twenty-five years of service. His father died, and at the age of eleven he was already away from home studying in a Yeshiva (a secondary school for boys devoted solely to instruction in religious law). Expelled for reading banned books--a category including everything which was not part of the curriculum--he seeks refuge in the sectarian pietistic environment of a Chassidic miracle Rabbi. He becomes a wandering member of Cantorial choirs, an itinerant preacher, and a private Hebrew

[illegible]

tutor, settling in Odessa at the age of twenty-two. Free to indulge in "enlightenment" in a cosmopolitan modern city, he begins creative writing in Hebrew. Moving to Vienna, beyond reach of the Russian censor, he issues the monthly Hashachar (the Dawn), ushering in the dawn of a new era in Hebrew thought and literature. He published seven novels and a few books of essays, suffering constantly from economic depravity and poor health, while enjoying unsurpassed popularity among the younger generation. He engages in many controversies and dies of tuberculosis at the age of forty-five in 1885.

The story of Smolenskin's intellectual growth is an integral part of the history of modern Jewish thought. Two ideologies were struggling for supremacy at the beginning of Smolenskin's career as a writer. Petrified Orthodoxy was equating conventional standards of appearance and garb, the traditional curriculum, and numerous folkways indigenous to the ghetto--with loyalty to Judaism. Pitched against it was Europe-infatuated Haskala offering secular studies, external modernization and cultural assimilation as a panacea to all ills. The Russian movement, unlike its German antecedent, found itself paradoxically fostering a flourishing Hebrew literature in the process of substituting national amalgamation for isolation. Actually, there was confusion among its protagonists, between modernization and cultural integration, in the failure to realize that identifying a secular Hebrew literature with the first, was in conflict with achieving the second. Smolenskin, an eye-witness of Jewish life during his nomadic years, at first followed the Haskala line of distinguishing sharply between the enlightened hero and reactionary villain. Residing in Vienna, he altered his perspective. There he was able to gain first-hand uncolored impressions of "enlightened" Jews. What was acclaimed in the new form was as distasteful to him as that

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which he condemned in the old. If he originally objected to superstition, corruption and intellectual suppression, he now protested vociferously against superficiality, materialism, and ignorance of Judaism, rampant about him. The liberated Jew, taught to ascribe inferiority and anachronism to his own heritage, while attributing superiority and progress to the Christian culture, was hardly the paragon of virtue and dignity he was intended to be. Smolenskin now waged an offensive war against the two opposing camps, through the journal which he edited, proof-read, half filled with his own articles and stories, printed, managed, and distributed personally, making it into an aggressive medium for an awakened national consciousness.

The statement of policy introducing the new publication is a daring proclamation of challenging ideas that later became the fighting program of a new era:

We shall be as other nations in cherishing our tongue and our people's honor. We are not ashamed of our faith in the ultimate end of our exile, when the day shall come of renewed dominion by the House of David. . . . We shall not blush as we hold the hand of the old language which accompanied us from nation to nation and in which our poets and seers sang.¹

In the first stage of reflection presented in the book An Eternal People, he defines Jews as "a nation of the spirit," unencumbered by geographic, political, and linguistic features required by other nations. He accepts in essence the basic premise of the assimilationist school which divorced Jewishness from its traditional attachment to land and language; but he rejects its conclusion that Judaism is a mere doctrinary bond among members of different nationalities, sharing a common faith. On the contrary, the national tie uniting dispersed Jewry is stronger than the political, geographic, and lin-

¹ Hazzan and Feller, History of Zionism, op. cit., p. 46.

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guistic denominators solidifying other peoples. Jews have outgrown these forms in their spiritual development. Furthermore, the common faith is not an unchanging set of dogmas but rather intellectual speculation and the priority of spiritual endeavor. The unity of Israel was preserved in exile long after expulsion from the homeland--a condition depriving it of the common manifestation of nationhood. Its destiny is to pursue its mission among the nations.

Here again is a concept borrowed from classical Reform, but the common ground shared with the assimilationist philosophy is the fertile soil for nationalistic growth. The hope of redemption and the Hebrew language, instead of being minimized as in Reform Judaism, are of paramount value in Smolenskin's thought. They are indispensable in preserving and reinforcing the spiritual nation which must retain its identity in order to serve a noble purpose. The nationalism of Jews being different in kind from the nationalism of others, cannot therefore stand in the way of emancipation. The assumption that a nation will not grant equal rights to members of an alien minority insisting upon its own distinctiveness, is not tenable. Due recognition of the uniqueness of Jewish peoplehood, combined with a constructive program of strengthening Hebrew culture, spiritual values and the messianic hope, will present a formidable obstacle to the corroding effects of assimilation.

. . . For the children of Israel have existed longer than other people because they considered themselves a people of the spirit, and so were they labelled by all their scholars, authors, and seers. . . .

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was destroyed and we were exiled from our land. And nothing which will transpire will prevent us from remaining a people. Of course we differ from other nations just as we differed from them when we dwelt in our land, in not being dependent upon state, country and laws. . . . For we were always a nation of the spirit whose Law preceded land and state.²

The national feeling should be cultivated by the modern Jew. Unity will be maintained

by reviving the Hebrew tongue and placing it in the mouths of all Israelites desiring to remain Israelites, for besides being the binding cord for all of us, it is the memorial stone for our ancestors of ancient days. . . . In it we place our hope for unity in the days to come when we shall succeed in building ourselves a home.³

He is not referring to Hebrew as a vernacular, but to the great books of the past and continued creative writing in the present.

Prior to Smolenskin, the problem most frequently posed was how to better the physical lot of Jews. He introduced the question of preserving Judaism. That entailed defining the nature of Judaism and projecting a program of reconstruction. Smolenskin attempted to supply both. Analyzing Smolenskin's philosophy, we discern that his

initial doctrine is not one of redemption but of diaspora nationalism. Unlike Hess, he is not a "Zionist". . . . Only later does he become one of the founders of Zionism. . . . In his first period he was spiritual diaspora-centered. . . . Smolenskin created the concept of the spiritual nation.⁴

Smolenskin was among the first to recognize the real dangers of the Enlightenment movement in Germany and its heir in Eastern Europe. He

²Peretz Smolenskin, "A Time to Plant." Pangs of a Nation: Selected Essays on the Problems of Existence of the Jewish People, v. I, in Hebrew. J. Ovasi et al. (New York: Israel Metz Fund, 1938), pp. 53, 55, 56.

³Smolenskin, "The Jewish Question--a Life Problem," ibid., p. 60.

⁴Ezekiel Kaufman, Exile and Estrangement, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1930), v. II, p. 289.

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was not opposed to religious change, determined by the needs of the people. Nor was he critical of the aesthetic emphasis of Reform. But the emasculation of Jewish theology which eliminated the components of Hebrew language, messianic return to Zion, and world national unity, he diagnosed as false and dangerous, in violation of the fundamental spirit of Judaism and detrimental to its survival. It instilled a sense of inferiority without pointing the way to improvement making for self-acceptance. It weakened the ties keeping a landless people together. At the same time, its promise of better relations with the non-Jew proved a mirage. He appealed for abandoning "the idols of Haskala and the folly of their acts, honoring our people and the remnant of our refuge before it is too late."⁵ He views the Haskala as a destructive force inimical to national interests. Instead of following the ancient prophetic call for abandoning the ways of the nations around them, the leaders of the Haskala reversed the criticism to achieve opposite ends. In the attack upon the Jewish reformation he was undoubtedly influenced by Hess. The motivation, however, was different--not the challenge of anti-Semitism as in Hess, but the threat of loss of national identity; spiritual survival rather than physical preservation.

When the crisis came to Russian Jewry in the early eighties, shattering the hopes of Enlightenment in the sweeping wave of anti-Jewish terror, Smolenskin felt that he had sufficiently prepared for the necessary reorientation. Unlike other intellectuals whose philosophy crumbled in the ruins of Jewish communities, he did not have to seek a new ideology. As an advocate of diaspora nationalism he was ready for the next step, the second stage of his productive deliberations--the ideal of Zionism. Though hesitant at

⁵ Smolenskin, ibid., p. 64.

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first, when in 1878 Smolenskin's own monthly printed a proposal by Eliezer Ben Yehuda (see chapter IX) for a return to Palestine, he now openly preached the Zionist message. Severe criticism was levelled at the Alliance Israelite Universelle for failing to divert its public funds to the support of immigration to Palestine. He vehemently opposed allocating all charitable collections for financing immigration to America.

Needless to prove that it would be in the best interest of the refugees coming from one land, to reconvene as a group in another. . . . There is no better place for them to turn to than the land of Israel.⁶

He vigorously campaigned toward this end with no success. The leaders of French Jewry were deaf to the rising voice of national recovery in Palestine.

The call for expediting a mass return to the Holy Land was not motivated by practical considerations alone. He became an enthusiastic protagonist of the idea of national redemption attended by a spiritual revival. In consonance with the previous emphasis upon the spiritual characteristic of Jewish nationhood, he envisioned its reinforcement by a national center.

Our unity and existence is dependent upon the ideal of the Land of Israel. If a number of families will gather in one location, that location will become the center to the Law of the people, and from there shall come forth the Law for all the lands.⁷

Thus the originator of an advanced nationalism, unattached to conventional attributes, is compelled under the pressure of events, to retreat from ethereal heights to the firmness of ground in an independent territory. It seems that even a spiritual nation should have a physical home. Smolenskin had embarked upon a new path, opening up wide vistas on the road to

⁶Peretz Smolenskin, "Let Us Seek Our Way," The Book of Zionism: the Chibat Zion Era, S. Yavnieli, ed. in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1942), v. II, part I, p. 122.

⁷Peretz Smolenskin, ibid., p. 141.

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The novelist most popular to the Haskala generation became the publicist who championed a resurgent nationalism, leading to Zionism. The author of fiction exposing the humiliation and deterioration of ghetto life, is the essayist who mercilessly reveals the bankruptcy of modernism and emancipation. There were others who called for a return to Palestine before him. These presented reinterpretations of the orthodox position within the traditional camp, or were the mystic, poetic yearnings of a neophyte like Hess-- both with little influence on an alert generation of young people captivated by the glamour of European civilization. It was Smolenskin in his aggressive and prolific writing that stimulated the mind and animated the spirit, paving the way for Zionist societies following the pogroms of 1881. He himself was organizationally active, founding in Vienna the first student Zionist group "Kadima," which fifteen years later, was so receptive to Herzl's Zionist program. He also took part in other ventures in behalf of the new movement.

Smolenskin's secular nationalism, devoid of theological trappings, but in harmony with spiritual values, was a dynamic inspirational message, developed and modified in the succeeding Zionist debate of decades. It contained interpretation of history, critical appraisal of contemporary combatant forces, and an articulate program of cultural reconstruction. No other writer of the nineteenth century reached such a large number and enjoyed such a loyal following. Commanding was the pathos and vigor of his style, the fearfulness of expression and the originality and integrity of reflection.

Smolenskin is the greatest author-warrior of modern Hebrew literature. . . . More than a writer, he was the standard bearer of a new ideal. If we assume that literary creations can plant

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and nourish national and social forces originally brought into being by vital historic causes which are crystallized and generally accepted by virtue of the fact that they take on form and content in great literary works--we have the right to consider the new national ideal of Israel and the Zionist ideal based on it, as well as its product the State of Israel, to a large measure the product of Peretz Smolenskin.⁸

In the final appraisal, Smolenskin stands for concepts that have not lost their meaningfulness in present day Israel society. Significant are the ideas of (a) a secular nationalism linked to spiritual values, charging it with ethical and intellectual implications; (b) a flourishing Hebrew culture, unifying and elevating for the scattered tribes of Jewry; (c) a healthy appreciation of the Jewish heritage with little sympathy for unchecked infiltration of alien standards and institutions, though with ample recognition of positive contributions by others; (d) an affirmation of the existence of a Jewish people beyond the borders of Israel, joined together in a spiritual bond.

Hess was a voice lost in the din of rushing events. Smolenskin had a public which was influenced by him, long after his earthy departure. Then there came Aohad Ha'am (see Ch. XI) who accepted the basic concepts of Smolenskin, erecting upon them the elaborate structure of spiritual Zionism.

⁸ Joseph Klausner, Foundation Layers for the State of Israel, in Hebrew. (Jerusalem: Aohiasaf, 1953), p. 28.

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CHAPTER VIII

LEO PINSKER

A thirty page pamphlet in German, appearing in 1882, aroused Jewish public opinion to an unprecedented degree, establishing its author among the most important of the founding fathers of Zionism. This was Auto-Emancipation, written by the sixty-one year old Russian Jewish doctor Leo Pinsker, locally prominent in Odessa as a benevolent and highly qualified physician, hitherto remote from nationalistic circles. Active in an organization promoting Russian culture among Jews, his conversion from assimilationist tendencies to nationalist convictions took place when he found himself already chronologically at the sunset of life. His metamorphosis is integrally related to nineteenth century events in the chronicle of the epic story of Zionism.

Enlightenment came late to the compact Jewish masses of the Russian empire. It drew its nourishment from three sources, two spurious and one authentic, running its course from inception to recession in less than a century. A sincere thirst for knowledge impelled the more adventure-some spirits to imbibe profusely from the fountains of European learning and Biblical scholarship (the latter, strangely enough, excluded from the ken of orthodox studies). This was coupled with the mirage of civil rights to be granted as a reward to a deserving "enlightened" community. The naive faith in this panacea for all socio-economic ills was encouraged by

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Pinsker had the unique fortune of being raised in an "enlightened" household without having to go through the emotional strain of breaking away from the old world. His father was a prominent maskil (enlightened) who made significant contributions to contemporary Jewish scholarship. Young Pinsker's education, Jewish and secular, is comparable to present day normal upbringing. He studied law, but due to anti-Jewish restrictions, changed to medicine. As a doctor he was popular and unmercenary. Having visited Germany and Austria for post-graduate work, he became acquainted with the chief exponents of religious reform and cultural assimilation, and was duly influenced by them. Returning home, he naturally drifted into the sophisticated, peripheral circles desiring to improve the lot of their co-religionists by a process of Russification. In Odessa, the most modern city of the Czar's empire, it took on a more extreme form when the Organization for Enlightenment contemplated substituting Russian for Hebrew in worship, following in the footsteps of German Reform. Toward this end, they issued a journal and planned to organize elementary schools. Associated with this program, Pinsker was a "full fledged assimilationist" committed to

total assimilation with the ruling community . . . the Messiah which our enlightened and better public awaits. . . . [There-fore] there is no need for separate community organizations nor special schools and certainly no different language.¹

In later years he referred to the former mood in these terms:

In the past I too was one of those misty-eyed idealists belonging to that church which placed freedom, equality,

¹ The Book of Zionism: The Chibat Zion Era, vol. II, Book II, ed. Samuel Yavnieli, in Hebrew. (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1944), p. 12.

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and fraternity as the supreme dogma. I also believed in the victory of progress of eighteenth century humanism and liberalism . . . and I was confident that Europe will agree to our equal rights. . . . We fought on all the battlefields of Europe . . . no less than its other inhabitants. And what was our reward?²

Then the crisis came and the Jewish intelligentsia lost its bearings, until its course was recharted in another direction. First of all there was the ominous prelude to the storm that swooped down a decade later. In 1871 the first pogrom of the century (in Russia) broke out in Odessa taking all by surprise and temporarily destroying the confidence of the sophisticated in the efficacy of Enlightenment. One spokesman of the group confessed that "the leaders of the Odessa chapter have been forcibly convinced that all efforts at joining with the Russian residents are of no avail."³

Pinsker too was taken aback. The very foundation of the program of assimilation--that it makes for greater acceptance by gentiles--was shaken. The organization was discontinued, but after a few years, reconvened and began functioning anew.

Then the Odessa episode became national policy, for all practical purposes! After Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, a wave of mob violence against Jews swept through Russia with the participation of all strata of society. The death knell for assimilationist philosophy was sounded when a bewildered Jewish intelligentsia suddenly found itself, as

² Ibid., p. 13.

³ Joseph Klausner, Foundation Builders of the State of Israel in Hebrew (Jerusalem: Aohiasaf, 1953), p. 61.

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the emperor in the fairy tale, without any clothes. Homeless throngs streamed across the borders on the way to America. Some turned their eyes toward Palestine. On the ruins of a discredited ideology, the Zionist banner was hoisted spontaneously and independently in many places. Pinsker himself recognized how helpless Jews were in their current state and how hopeless were the chances for improving their doleful lot within the existing framework. He was convinced of the indubitable need for a change of location as a basis for better conditions. His analysis of the Jewish problem and the recommended solution, was presented in a pamphlet published in 1882. It was written in German as an epistle to the more influential and potentially able Jews of western Europe in order to convince them of the fallacies of the entire emancipation theory and enjoin them to cooperate with his constructive substitute program.

The reaction abroad to Pinsker's manifesto was mostly negative. At home however, where it was immediately translated into Hebrew, Russian, and Yiddish, the effect was colossal. The Chovevei Zion groups looked up to him as their new leader. The first national conference, convening in the Silesian town of Katowitz (since political gatherings were illegal in Russia) established the national organization in 1884 with Pinsker as head. He served in that capacity until his death in 1891 at the age of seventy, faithfully devoting himself to the fund-raising projects in support of the Palestine colonists, and the slow and tedious tasks of propagating the Zionist ideal, maintaining the morale and preserving the unity of the scattered Zionist societies operating secretly until legalized in 1890.

It was not because Pinsker became the leader of Chibat Zion that he holds his place in our story. . . He was a

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man of stainless character, lofty idealism, and deep convictions, but he was unable to cope with the external forces that impeded the movement, nor with the internal conflicts that bedeviled it. Pinsker was not a great leader but a great apostle, and he owes his place in the story of Zionism to his Auto-Emancipation. . .⁴

This only published work of Pinsker is entitled "Auto-Emancipation, an appeal to his people by a Russian Jew." The name is significant. Emancipation, as the treasured acquisition of occidental Jewry, representing not only equality before the law with the ensuing privileges, but also human dignity of immeasurable psychological import, was an inadequate surrogate to the westerners who had achieved it and the easterners aspiring toward it. Pinsker claims that it solves the Jewish problem theoretically and superficially instead of realistically and actually. Anti-Semitism flourished throughout Europe unabated by the fruits of Enlightenment. Only self-emancipation, in terms other than hitherto subscribed to, offers a solution.

Nations, without exception, do not regard Jews as they do other minorities. Aliens enjoy a status based upon the existence of a fatherland elsewhere, capable of reciprocating in sundry ways the treatment meted out to its sons on foreign soil. Such respect is absent in relation to Jews, lacking as they do the normal characteristics of nationhood.

The Jewish people has no fatherland of its own, though many motherlands; no center of focus or gravity, no government of its own, no official representation. They home everywhere but are nowhere at home. The nations have never to deal with a Jewish nation, but always with mere Jews.⁵

The peculiar circumstances of the Jewish people inspire fear and suspicion in the hearts of gentiles who behold "the ghost-like apparition

⁴ Rufus Lears, Fulfillment: The Epic Story of Zionism (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1951), p. 44.

⁵ Leo Pinsker, Auto-Emancipation, trans. C.S. Blondheim (New York: Zionist Organization of America, 1948), p. 4.

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⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

⁸ Ibid.

of a living corpse of a people no longer alive. . . walking among the living without precedence in history."⁶ The fears and prejudices culminate in the socially hereditary illness of "Judeophobia." Contending against these hostile tendencies is therefore futile, since prejudice as an emotional reaction will not be counteracted by argument as a rational process. Other factors, such as economic competition, aggravate the situation; for no one appreciates competition by a stranger in his own home. Different classes ascribe to the Jew that which is most unsavory from their view, with the result that Jews supposedly assume many contradictory roles, all of them odious.

. . . To the living the Jew is a corpse, to the native a foreigner, to the homesteader a vagrant, to the proprietary a beggar, to the poor an exploiter and a millionaire, to the patriot a man without a country, for all a hated rival.⁷

Emancipation merely scratches the surface failing to cope with the pathological and economic aspects of the problem. As a legal concession it offers a palliative but never a solution, for it cannot remove the stigma of homelessness from the Jew to reestablish him in the sight of mankind.

What aggravates the case is the passive attitude on the part of the Jew himself. "Instead of realizing their own position and adopting a rational line of conduct, the Jews appeal to eternal justice."⁸ They fail to realize that in order to produce a different effect, the case must be changed. Loss of self-respect by denying their identity, humble self-effacement and retreat before a hostile environment can hardly earn for them

⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷ Ibid., p. 12.

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the human dignity requisite for acceptance on an equal footing. The very reliance upon the Messiah has proved a subterfuge for initiative toward self-liberation. Thus a vicious circle is created of inner and outer forces in collusion against recourse to a constructive program of Jewish survival. The mission idea too is a delusion, rationalizing a calamity into a privilege.

Pinsker here alludes to an issue which elicited controversy in religious quarters for many decades. Obviously a reinterpretation of the concepts of Messiah and missionhood was required to solicit the cooperation of traditional Jews for an activist program of return to the homeland.

The author maintains that Jewry can extricate itself from the sucking whirlpool of human degradation by a plan of self-help instead of reliance upon others. This entails a national revival for concerted effort to achieve unity and independence, parallel in scope to other nations. It means having a home, a geographically pliable unit, Jews can call their own.

The territorialism of Pinsker was not limited to Palestine. At first he preferred other possibilities. He failed to appreciate the intricate historical and religious associations with the Holy Land, alone able to generate within the Jewish heart the powers of sacrifice, excessive energy and tenacity required for the regeneration of the people and reconstruction of the homeland. Motivated, at the outset, by objective practical and human considerations, he hinted to an independent Jewish place of refuge somewhere in America. After the publication of the pamphlet, the author yielded to expressed Jewish sentiment for Palestine.

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The times were supposed to be propitious for such an undertaking, according to the assertion of Pinsker. Other ethnic groups were obtaining their national independence. The mass emigration from Russia of multitudes on the run, instead of a nation on the march, can be redirected in part toward a permanent home in an autonomous Jewish country. The first signs of an awakened self-consciousness are already evident, stemming from disillusionment with the slogans which have failed. World public opinion may respond more favorably to Jewish demands for territorial independence. It is incumbent upon the wealthier and mightier Jews of the Occident to rush to the aid of their less fortunate brethren in a manner holding out full rehabilitation and not momentary succor. The call of the hour is consequently for (a) the existing societies of organized Jews in various lands to "convoke a national congress"⁹ to speak in the name of a united people; (b) the congress to locate suitable territory and secure it as inalienable national property sufficient for the settlement "in the course of time several million Jews;"¹⁰ (c) the formation of a "stock company" to purchase land, reapportion and resell it equitably to prospective colonists and provide additional funds from profits and charitable collections, for destitute immigrants.

To implement the colonization project solidly and efficaciously, international recognition is required as a preliminary. "The establishment of a Jewish refuge cannot come about without the support of the governments."¹¹ Furthermore, a large scale transfer of population is im-

⁹ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 31.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 34.

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practical if not impossible. The territory could only receive the annual surplus population from larger Jewish concentration. The existence of a sovereign Jewish state will revolutionize the fate of Jews elsewhere in the world. The abnormality of their position would disappear, for as all foreigners and minorities with a home base, they will be no exception. Simultaneously the new status of nationhood will inspire individual self-acceptance and identification in place of humiliating self-abnegation. Yet a miraculous rebirth could not be expected within the span of a few years. The remedy was a slow one. "We must take the first step. Our descendants must follow at a measured and not over-precipitant speed."¹² But the beginning is to be launched immediately. It is "now or never."

In many of his ideas Pinsker was preceded by Hebrew writers. His was the first presentation in a European tongue reaching a larger public. It was timely and therefore became timeless. His analysis of anti-Semitism was original and incisive; the attack upon emancipation, denuding; the insight into the social condition of Jews, penetrating; the appeal for action, eloquent; and the outlining of a program, practical. The fact that his grandiose ideas and dramatic plea were of no great immediate consequence, is not the fault of Pinsker. He was the pioneer who pointed the way. And he drew the blueprints. The movement of Chibat Zion placed the mantle of leadership upon his shoulders against his will. He was neither young enough nor strong enough to embark upon the program. Fifteen years elapsed before a great engineer arose who constructed the bridge leading across to auto-emancipation.

¹²Ibid., p. 35.

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Pinsker's great little book poses a number of important premises of lasting value vital in the contemporary Jewish universe of discourse. There is a conviction "that humanity and enlightenment alone will not cure the malady of our people" but that concrete steps are to be taken in transferring toward self-reliance. The initiative to come from within the group in terms of what it does with itself to better its lot, begins with creating new conditions conducive to different results. Implicit in this approach is the claim that the creation of a homeland is not an act of retreat drawing away from humanity, but the only logical and dignified co-existence, as man is constituted today and quite likely, for some time to come. The cementing of national unity and preservation of corporate entity are predicated upon and conducive to restoring human stature, self-acceptance and wholesomeness of personality in the life of the individual. Standardizing the status of Jewry is a sounder basis for interfaith relations. All these are axioms elaborated and reiterated in the Zionist debate of decades.

Pinsker served by example. For a man over sixty to be endowed with the courage and integrity of abandoning a life-long cause, is a rare event. History is replete with religious conversions of old and young; but an intellectual re-evaluation, secular in character, leading to a denial of the allegiance of a lifetime, is most unusual.

A comparison between Hess and Pinsker is illuminating at this point. The influence of the latter was considerably greater than that of the former. While Hess was a voice calling out in the wilderness, removed from large Jewish centers in his French isolation, Pinsker was

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a Russian Jew in contact with his people, finding fertile ground for his ideas in the immediate environment (though that is not where he intended to plant them), enjoying at least vocal support from a movement of followers. The vantage point too was different, for the German who had been totally estranged from Judaism could make a clear break with the past and start from the beginning. In Pinksker's case, there were many decades of activity within the Jewish group, and a joint venture with numerous other men of stature implementing nation-wide policy. His was the painful task of digging up the old and replanting new seed in the same field of operation.

The two are complementary to each other. One spoke in religious-cultural terms primarily, while the other dealt in political-economic realities. Each approach affects the inner composition of man and his outer deportment. Israel is the spiritual citadel of the Jewish religion; Israel is the physical refuge for the Jewish people. These are the two parallel currents in the Zionist stream, irrigating the arid soil of the Jewish conscience in the past seventy-five years. These are the irreducible axioms of Zionist education currently operative in Israel and abroad.

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CHAPTER IX

ELIEZER BEN YEHUDA

It is difficult for a modern person today to conceive of a nation without a common spoken language. Yet the Jewish people lacked it until comparatively recent times. It is true that some nationalities, like the Swiss or the Belgian, do not have one single tongue identified with their state and people. But besides being the exception rather than the rule, these countries are each divided into two or three administrative areas corresponding to the linguistic divisions. The Jews returning to their homeland brought with them literally dozens of tongues, clashing with each other or existing side by side in confusion, in the cities and villages of Palestine. To reunite a people in its former home without dealing with the towering babel of languages, is a virtual impossibility. Zionism was to cope with the problem of language, in addition to territory, government, society and culture.

In the plethora of issues, political, social, economic and cultural, the language question was ignored by Zionist theoreticians. Herzl, in his novel Old-New Land, implies that German is the existing medium. Exponents of cultural or spiritual Zionism, while elaborating upon the need for a Hebrew literature and Hebrew education in the classics, were oblivious to the question of a vernacular, usually entertaining every possibility except Hebrew.

Two Jewish languages widely accepted throughout the dispersion were Yiddish, and to a lesser extent, Ladino. The former, mother tongue

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of millions of East European Jews, was coming into its own at the turn of the century. It was derogatorily designated as a jargon by both sophisticated Hebrew and assimilated occidental intelligentsia. Ladino was the Spanish-Hebrew dialect of Levantine Jews, without the stature of Yiddish. Educated people of Palestine, in their guarded moments, conversed in German, French, Russian, and to a lesser extent in English, Polish, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Roumanian, Italian, and Arabic. Twelve major languages enjoying lip-service of a numerically small group assembled in a geographically limited area, plus an equal number of other tongues less frequently heard, could hardly achieve the cohesiveness, harmony and integration necessary for the reconstruction of land, economy and society.

Hebrew as a spoken language was therefore a sine qua non in the new Israel. This simple self-evident truth was recognized by one person, Eliezer Ben Yehuda, who made its realization his life goal, fanatically pursuing it for over forty years. Almost single-handed he accomplished his purpose to an amazing degree of success. In the course of total commitment, he made a personal obsession into a national ideal without which Israel society would be inconceivable and may have proved unattainable today. Living Hebrew speech, usually taken for granted, is still an ideological foundation repeatedly stressed and cultivated in the Zionist synthesis upon which Israel education is predicated.

Hebrew is the only tongue linking all Jewish tribes. Not that any one group used it as a medium of conversation; but the prayers, ancient texts, legal and religious documents, and inter-community missives were all in Hebrew. A secular Hebrew literature and press had

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risen in Europe during the nineteenth century. On the debit side it should be recorded that of the languages previously listed, Hebrew was the one which was "dead." It lacked the basic vocabulary and forms of expression for modern usage. The words for "please" and "thank you," to cite an example, were cumbersome clauses. Abounding in philosophical and religious terms, Hebrew was poor in essential words for the kitchen, market place, factory, and playground. The constructions are ancient and circumlocutionary. As a holy tongue, not having been profaned in daily life for perhaps thousands of years, it was unsuitable for fast-thinking, rapid-speaking, sharp-tongued people, inspired to assume heroic functions and consume untapped energies in the upbuilding of a nation. Obviously, more than preaching was necessary to overcome what appeared to be insurmountable obstacles. Ben Yehuda accepted the challenge, never resting until the job was done by the end of his life.

Born Eliezer Perlman in Lithuania in 1858, he received the usual religious instruction. At the age of twelve he was sent to study in a larger school away from home where he came under the influence of a teacher who secretly initiated him into the forbidden texts of Bible and Hebrew grammar. Transferred to another school, he had the good fortune to be welcomed into a family of culture and means where his future wife tutored him in preparation for entrance examinations in a Russian high school. He continued with his general schooling, breaking with his religious upbringing, and identified himself with the socialist movement. The Russian-Turkish war of 1877-8, leading to independence for Balkan nationalities, suggested to him the possibility of Jewish statehood in

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Palestine. George Eliot's Daniel Deronda, which he read at that time, further stimulated his nationalistic sentiments. He went to Paris to study medicine, planning to be a physician in Palestine. Hospitalized for tuberculosis, he was compelled to retire temporarily to Algiers. In 1881 he set out with his bride for Palestine. Living, according to his doctors, on "borrowed time," he spent the next forty-one years in Jerusalem (frequently taking trips abroad in conjunction with his work), teaching, editing, writing, and engaging in many controversies until his passing in 1922.

While still in Paris, young Perlman, adopting the Hebrew name of Ben Yehuda, published in 1879 an essay entitled "A Weighty Question." It appeared in Smolenskin's Hashachar in Vienna after being rejected by another Hebrew editor. Ben Yehuda's literary debut was an assault upon assimilation, pursuing the line of attack of Smolenskin, but a step ahead of the master in urging a return to the homeland. He traces the contemporary rise of European nationalism and comes to the conclusion that

we Hebrews have the same right; for why shall our lot be inferior to that of other nations? . . . Why shall we be robbed of the hope to return to a national life in our devastated land in mourning after her children who have been driven off to distant lands some two thousand years ago.¹

The same article contains the germ of the idea which became the fixation of a lifetime.

Why do many of our people claim that we are not qualified for national life since we do not all speak one language. . . . We do have a language in which we can write everything that enters our mind, and we can speak it if we only will make the effort to do so.²

¹Eliezer Ben Yehuda, "A Weighty Question," Pangs of a Nation, ed. Ovsy and others, op. cit., pp. 130-132.

²Ibid., p. 131.

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The essay, appearing before the crucial year of 1881, was considered radical even by the editor who expressed his reservations. (Later on, convinced by the tragic events of times, he conceded to Ben Yehuda's reasoning.) Against Smolenskin's "spiritual nationalism" derived from the nature of Judaism itself, Ben Yehuda postulates a political nationalism sparked by the European national upsurge he was witnessing. The former proposed a strengthening of the peoplehood concept among the far flung remnants, to assure survival in the diaspora. The latter found this emphasis necessary but insufficient, unless followed by a concentration in Palestine. The disease of assimilation, he maintained, had not only infected western Jews enamoured by the lure of enlightenment; it had also felled eastern Jews leaving the ghetto. Ultimate disintegration was natural and logical as long as religion was losing its medieval pervasiveness. A political center of gravity serving as a cultural stronghold will reverse the trend.

Elaborating upon his first call with other appeals, Ben Yehuda reaffirms his faith in the national redemption of Israel and the revival of Hebrew. The two are inseparable from each other, with the second as the logical complement to the first and unattainable without it.

We shall not be able to revive the Hebrew language except in the land where a majority of the inhabitants are Hebrews. Let us therefore increase the number of Jews in our desolate land, and return the remnant of our people to the soil of their ancestors. Let us restore to life the nation, and its language shall live again.³

He takes the extreme position of linguistic territorial nationalism

³ Eliezer Ben Yehuda, "A Letter of Ben Yehuda," op. cit., p. 142.

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independent of spiritual values, at the same time rejecting a Hebrew language dissociated from a nation restored to its land. "If I should not have believed in the redemption of the Jews I would have cast Hebrew away as a useless thing."⁴ Smolenskin's Hebraism, devoid of the normal forms of nationalism, is quite irrational to Ben Yehuda. Operating within a secular nationalistic frame of reference, he concludes that "Judaism shall be Hebrew Palestinian, or it shall not be."⁵ He denies the possibility of survival in the lands of dispersion, being the first in the camp of the "negators of exile" in the great Zionist debate which was waged on this issue for over half a century. "In the conditions of life in the modern day Judaism cannot exist for very long."⁶ The attempts at transmitting the Hebrew tongue outside of Palestine are futile, in the minority status of Jews everywhere. He explicitly defines the new nationalism to avoid any misrepresentation.

Three things are inscribed in fiery letters on the national banner: land, a national language, and a national education. To deny one of them is to negate the essence of nationalism.⁷

Ben Yehuda was a man of action who translated creed into deed, beginning with his own person. Converted to Zionism, he emigrated to Palestine and settled in Jerusalem, a community most inhospitable to a young man educated in a European university. The local inhabitants, in-

⁴Ibid., p. 139.

⁵Eliezer Ben Yehuda, "Judaism and its Future." Selected Hebrew Essays, ed. Becker and Schpan, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Gazit, 1953), p. 147.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Eliezer Ben Yehuda, "The Banner of Nationalism," The Book of Zionism, op. cit., p. 82.

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cluding an unusual number of older people who had gathered from all parts of the world to enjoy the privilege of being buried in the Holy Land, were mostly beneficiaries of an age-old charity system, while engaging in study and prayer without gainful employment. This was known as Haluka (distribution), drawing its funds from small but world-wide regular charity collections channelled through various ethnic agencies supporting their own co-religionists residing in the Holy Cities. It was a community which excelled in fanatic devotion to the minutiae of ritual and custom, well fortified against the slightest manifestation of modernity. Ben Yehuda brazenly undertook the three-fold task of cultivating spoken Hebrew, propagandizing Zionist principles, and advocating productive livelihood in place of parasitic existence.

Ben Yehuda's triumphs and defeats are more than biographical data. The particulars of his life comprise the national saga of a generation. He influenced by personal example. Details of his public battles and private endeavors are interwoven with the fabric of Israel to an extent never approximated by any other individual in modern times. Of the personalities treated in this thesis, he alone settled in Palestine. at the early age of twenty-three and dedicated himself and his family to a specific cause. The colorful romantic events of his heroic life, inter-related as they are with the epic story of the rebirth of a people, have captured the imagination of a Christian writer whose English biography of Ben Yehuda is the only English work of such dimensions on any Zionist figure.⁸

⁸Robert St. John, Tongue of the Prophets (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1952).

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In and for the City and County of New York
In Supreme Court, Southern District of New York
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When Smolenskin saw that his pupil intends to rebuild Zion's ruins with his own hands, he hurried to warn him against it, comparing "his desire to that of a man attempting to build a tower on the roof before erecting the house. . . ." It is futile to strive toward the "establishment of a kingdom." . . for both the faithful and the enlightened shall arise against you!"⁹

But the pupil took no heed.

Ben Yehuda, after adopting a Hebrew surname, began his campaign for Hebrew by enforcing its exclusive use in his own home, though his wife was completely ignorant of it. With unrelenting stubbornness he persisted in this course, addressing his son only in Hebrew, thereby preventing him from communicating with any playmates. He influenced other intellectuals to form the first Hebrew-speaking club. As a teacher in the Alliance school, he introduced the method of teaching Hebrew in Hebrew as a natural living tongue. Gradually his influence spread to other schools. He edited a periodical Hatzvi (The Deer - a Biblical reference to the Holy Land) and made it a champion of Hebrew revived. He declared war on the German sponsored schools refusing to adopt Hebrew, thereby jeopardizing the subsidies he received for his literary activity.

The path was a thorny one. The orthodox opposed him on the grounds that a holy tongue should not be desecrated in kitchen and bath-room parlance. The modern elements scoffed at the poverty of expression in everyday speech and the limitations of Hebrew in the academic field. Officials of European Jewish agencies operating in Palestine regarded

⁹Y. Tulkiss, "Eliezer Ben Yehuda: Thirty Years After His Death," Metzudah, vol. VII, ed. S. Rawidowicz in Hebrew (London: Ararat publication society, 1954), p. 624.

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his efforts as a threat to the English, French, and German cultures they were propagating. The leading Hebrew writers had little faith in the undertaking. Zionist leaders merely tolerated his obsession. But the Hebrew teachers and the young pioneers who had been stirred by his early calls for action, now responded favorably to the linguistic challenge and rallied behind his banner. Ben Yehuda built the first Hebrew home; his wife was the first Hebrew mother; his son was the first Hebrew-speaking child in centuries. Soon there were others who followed suit. After the first World War, Hebrew as a living tongue spread to Jewish schools in Europe and America.

Stronger men would have admitted defeat. He suffered excommunication by the Rabbinate, imprisonment by the Turks, scorn by his contemporaries. When his wife died, she was refused proper Jewish burial. His children were subjected to ridicule and hostility. Unwavering in his loyalty he remained the dauntless missionary, accepting defeat with equanimity. After his wife's death, her younger sister arrived from Russia to take her place by his side, joining whole-heartedly in the dedication to her newly acquired tongue, and sharing his trials and tribulations for over thirty years.

The revival of the Hebrew language in Palestine created the need for new words and expressions, names for objects and concepts unknown in ancient times, scientific terms and definitions, forms of expression for modern thought. Ben Yehuda involuntarily became the linguist, the great innovator in the field of Hebrew philology.¹⁰

This was codified in his life work, The Complete Hebrew Dictionary. Of

¹⁰ A. Orinovsky, History of Modern Hebrew Literature, vol. II, in Hebrew. (Tel Aviv: Israel, 1950), p. 61.

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the sixteen volumes which he prepared, five he saw in print, and eleven have been published posthumously, the last one appearing during the nineteen-fifties. The monumental compilation is more than a dictionary; it includes a thesaurus, grammatical, philological and etymological studies and numerous new words. He undertook the task of gathering all the words of a three thousand year old literature, diffused over many lands, modernizing an ancient tongue and creating a vocabulary for daily and scientific usage. To achieve this he laboriously searched the libraries in Europe and America in person, communicated with scholars all over the world, and examined countless books, manuscripts and documents, rediscovering words, borrowing terms, adapting forms, and coining new words in accordance with the linguistic requirements of Hebrew. Most, though not all, of his innovations were accepted. His, too, was the determining decision to adopt the Sefardi Asiatic pronunciation of Hebrew in place of the European dialect designated as Ashkenazi.

As illustrated before, Ben Yehuda was an undiluted nationalist with a one-track mentality, relegating religious, social and economic considerations to a secondary position. During his checkered career he often aligned himself with anti-religious forces, joined Herzl in the Uganda territorialist escapade, and lashed out mercilessly against all distractions from the nationalist aim. With fanatic zeal he championed the cause of Hebrew until he was privileged to witness its recognition as an official language, alongside Arabic and English, by the Mandatory regime.

His personality fused two seemingly contradictory characteristics: scholarly research in withered folios

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and the war-like spirit of a man of action; the moderation of an erudite man and the fiery temperament of a political combatant. . . . An ancient spark ignited in his heart became a burning flame illuminating the path of many exiles to the one and only land.¹¹

Ben Yehuda's English biographer concludes his work with this succinct statement of fact:

When Ben Yehuda started work on his dream Hebrew was only a liturgical medium, as dead as ancient Latin. . . . By the time he made his last trip up the Mount of Olives, a new and vibrant Hebrew was being spoken by a new and vibrant race of Jews.¹²

In the Irish Free State a sovereign government, with all the means of support and control at its disposal, and ruling an independent nation occupying its own soil, has had little success in reviving the indigenous national Gaelic tongue. What a modern state failed to accomplish with all its machinery of government, a frail, tubercular man with little assistance from anyone except young enthusiasts, achieved in his own lifetime, adding another miracle to the wonders of the world. His fruitifying ideas on nationalism are overshadowed by the crowning Heroulian effort which established him for posterity as the Father of the Modern Hebrew Language.

¹¹ Y. Tulkiss, op. cit., p. 629.

¹² Robert St. John, op. cit., p. 367.

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CHAPTER X

THEODORE HERZL

More than any other individual, Theodore Herzl influenced the course of Zionism, founding the movement which set out to establish the Jewish State in Palestine. In historical perspective, Herzl emerges as the greatest Jew in centuries, the impact of whose work proved of lasting value. Meteor-like he appeared in the darkened Jewish skies, leaving a trail of light in his path, and was consumed in the momentum of his course. In less than a decade of service to his people, in a life prematurely ended at the age of forty-four, he transformed the face of Jewry enabling it to begin a new chapter of heroic revival. He launched an era which in half a century, brought organized Jewry to its goal.

Theodore Herzl was born in 1860 in Budapest in a typically "emancipated" middle-class home, steeped in German culture. His early education included superficial Jewish training at a school maintained by the sophisticated segment of the Jewish community. When he was eighteen, the family moved to Vienna and there Herzl prepared for the degree of Doctor of Laws. He abandoned law after one year of practice, for a literary career of composing plays and feuilletons, finally becoming associated with a leading Vienna newspaper. As its Paris correspondent he attended the Dreyfus trial involving a Jewish captain of the French army, falsely accused of treason. The case, eventually exposed as an attempt to find a Jewish scapegoat for treachery within the French General Staff, rocked Europe and shocked Herzl. It became the turning

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point in his life.

Throughout his student years and during his journalistic endeavors, Herzl witnessed the rise of racial anti-Semitism as an organized aggressive force enjoying the support of educated elements in the new nationalism. In school, he experienced anti-Jewish hostility among the students and in adult life, he was confronted with the difficulty of pursuing a successful law career in the midst of increasing discrimination. At one time he entertained the idea of mass conversion as an escape from the ills of bigotry. A later insertion in his diary reads: "At first the Jewish problem hurt me sorely. Perhaps there was a time when I would gladly have escaped into Christianity--anywhere."¹ He followed the example of many Jewish professionals who tried to be oblivious to their religion and people, hopeful of the ultimate abeyance of prejudice by the liberating powers of a new age destined to dawn on Europe.

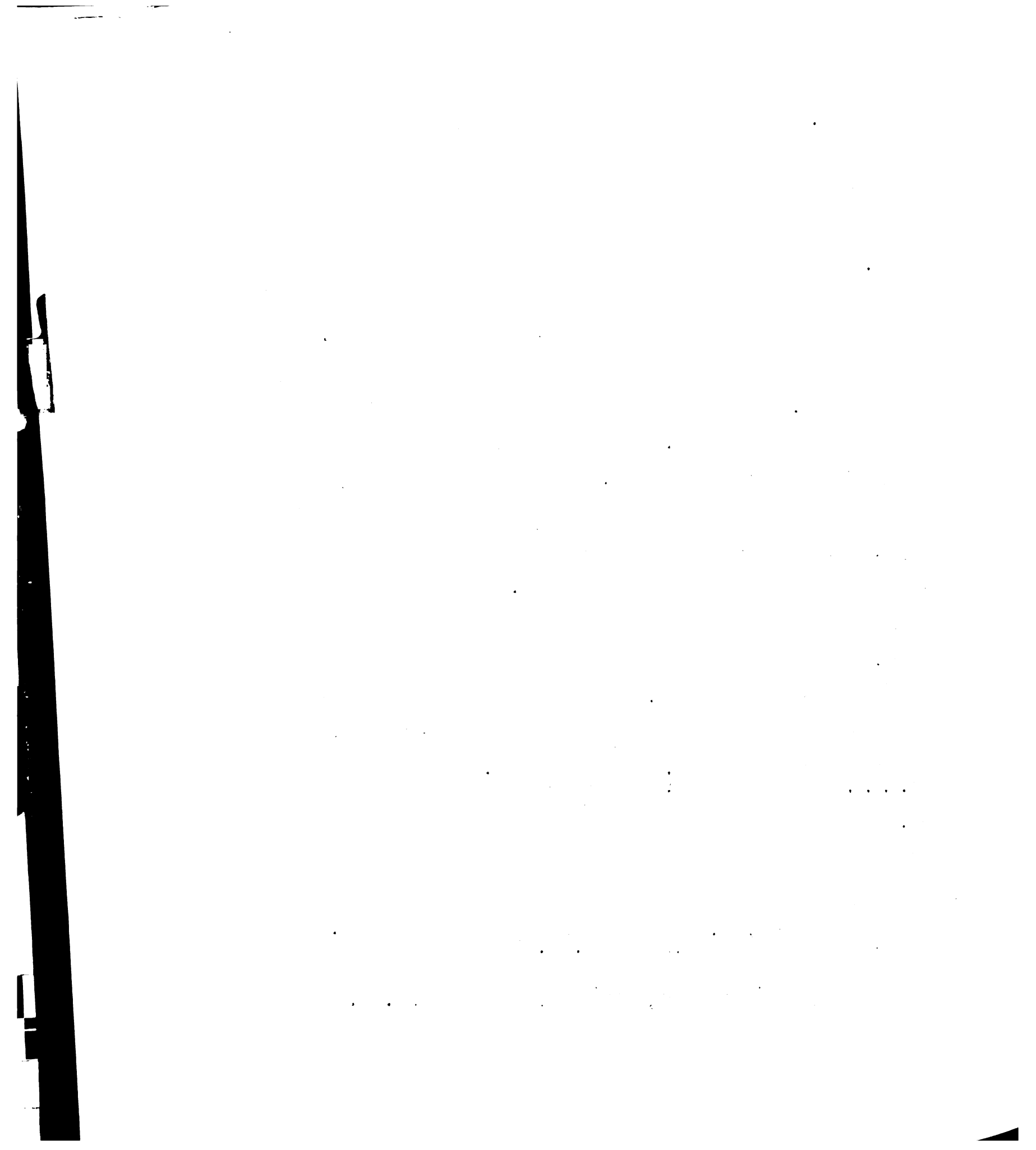
The Dreyfus Affair brought out into bold the defenselessness of the Jew, making him a vulnerable target even in an enlightened age in the most advanced capital of Europe. Some years afterwards Herzl wrote:

The Dreyfus case embodies more than a judicial error; it embodies a desire of the vast majority of the French to condemn all Jews in this one Jew. Death to the Jews! howled the mob. . . . Where? In France! In republican modern civilized France a hundred years after the Declaration of the Rights of Man!²

The episode started a train of thought with new insights into the nature

¹Ludwig Lewisohn, ed. Theodore Herzl: a Portrait for This Age. (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1955), p. 52.

²Theodore Herzl, The Jewish State. (New York: American Zionist Emergency Council, 1946), Alex Bein, biographer, citing Herzl, p. 34.



of anti-Semitism, undermining his previous convictions: "Until that time most of us believed that the solution to the Jewish question was to be patiently waited for as part of the general development of mankind."³ It then flashed upon him that this was too long a period to wait. . . . In the throes of emotional reaction to this dramatic miscarriage of justice in Paris, he composed The Jewish State, published in 1896, ushering in the dawn of political Zionism. In the following year he called together in Basle, representatives of Jewish groups from all over the world for the historic sessions of the First Zionist Congress, which formulated the official Zionist program and launched the movement bearing that name. He remained its leader through the stormy years of subsequent Congresses until his untimely passing in 1904.

Herzl's influence on the contemporary scene emanated from two sources: the book he authored and the movement he organized and led. Unlike his precursors, he was a man of action whose leadership captured the imagination of the masses, galvanizing them into unprecedented spirited activity.

To begin with his book. The Jewish Problem exercised a hold upon his mind in his pre-Zionist days. A play entitled The New Ghetto, depicts the tragedy of the emancipated Jew admitted into the modern world but not accepted by it. The solution is presented in a little book of less than one hundred pages, The Jewish State, heading the roster of books which have changed the Jewish world. He was not

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Ibid.

aware of Pinsker's pamphlet, as he later testified, for had he read the former's Auto-Emancipation, he never would have written the book. It consists of a short exposition of the grievous Jewish question, and an answer formulated in a detailed blueprint. He sums up his thesis in these words: "Let the sovereignty be granted us over a portion of the globe, large enough to satisfy the rightful requirements of a nation; the rest we shall manage ourselves."⁴

"The Jewish question still exists," he states in the introduction. Eventually humanity may rise to greater heights of charity and understanding. But that is too far distant - "beyond our day, beyond the days of our children, of our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren." He dissects anti-Semitism in all its negative components, pointing beyond the religious motive to its social, economic and psychological bias. Emancipation, removing the legal barriers against Jews, created additional friction in the economic competition of liberated men gaining foothold in business and professions. Unable to withdraw equal rights nor to single out the Jewish group for effective suppression of commercial enterprise without injury to the general economic structure, anti-Semitism becomes a seething infection, often reaching in its frustration to a dangerous point of eruption. A vicious circle has formed whereby Jews, in desperation, identify themselves with revolutionary causes or strive successfully toward economic ascendancy to escape middle-class pressure and prejudice. In both instances, wells of hostility are continuously replenished.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 92.

⁵The analysis is noteworthy as a prognosis of the Nazi mania of later years, and its catastrophic effects.

Assimilation, even if possible, is not a solution--a fact amply demonstrated in the experiences of Herzl's generation. Only total fusion through intermarriage may eventually eliminate the problem. But as long as there is some Jewish identification, there will be anti-Jewish reactions. Jews are thus "one people" bound together by a common destiny in a hostile world.

The answer lies in a Jewish State. The first step is to organize a "Society of Jews" as the political representative of the Jewish people and the "Jewish Company" as its financial and executive agent to administer the mass colonization in the new territory. Through its newly formed official channels, organized Jewry will solicit from some great power, sovereignty over "a portion of the globe." Such representation, of course, will be made only in behalf of Jews identified with the Society.

Those Jews who agree with our idea of a State will attach themselves to the Society, which will thereby be authorized to confer and treat with Governments in the name of our people. The Society will thus be acknowledged as its relations with governments as a State-creating power. [a function granted the Zionist Organization after the first World War - G.W.]⁶

For the territory to be selected Herzl suggested Palestine or Argentina, the latter then the seat of extensive Jewish colonization financed by a Paris philanthropist. He expressed a preference, though not an exclusive one, for the former. The unfolding plan of statehood outlines liquidation of property, transportation of immigrants, and resettlement in the new land. Advanced managerial methods and technological discoveries are to be utilized in the rehabilitation of the people. "The seven hour day" is set up as the regular working day of the new

⁶Theodore Herzl, op. cit., p. 94.

society to be established on economically sound and socially progressive principles conducive to maximum human benefit. There is further elaboration of social welfare policies, organization of commerce to eliminate unsavory or unsound financial speculation, planned housing, industrial promotion and methods of financing the initial enterprise. He suggests three methods for raising capital: (a) through big banks, (b) through small and private banks, and (c) through public subscription.⁷ Out of necessity, the last became the chief source, a manifestation of faith and support by the people. The plan further calls for immigration regulated by the Society, transplanting existing communities to enable them to preserve their social and cultural norms. He predicts that "those who are now desperate will go first, after them the poor; next the prosperous, and last of all, the wealthy."⁸

The idea of a Jewish State, though not new, he asserts, was never as feasible as the present. "A hundred or even fifty years ago it would have been nothing more than a dream. Today it may become a reality."⁹ Scientific progress will make possible a project on such a large scale.

The existence of an independent state will relieve the strain for those who choose to remain behind. It will be possible for them to completely give up their Jewish loyalties without regret or reproach, once Jewish political sovereignty is a fact.

Jews who wish to assimilate with other peoples now felt free to do so openly, without cowardice or deception. There

⁷Ibid., p. 119.

⁸Ibid., p. 82.

⁹Ibid., p. 155.

were also some who wished to adopt the majority religion, and these could now do so without being suspected of snobbery or careerism, for it was no longer to one's advantage to abandon Judaism.¹⁰

The salutary effects will begin immediately without having to wait for achievement of statehood. "If we only begin to carry out our plans, anti-Semitism would stop for once and forever."¹¹ For the new role of the Jew will elicit respect from all. The citizen of the Jewish State, residing in security and freedom, will inevitably prove a better human being, elevated and purified by the healing powers of the new society, which is to be predicated on the noblest principles of mankind and operating within the framework of the most advanced scientific knowledge of the age. The book concludes in a crescendo on that theme.

And what glory awaits those who fight unselfishly for the cause!

Therefore I believe that a wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabeans will rise again.

The Jews who wish for a State will have it.

We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes.

The world will be freed by our liberty, enriched by our wealth, magnified by our greatness.

And whatever we attempt there to accomplish for our own welfare, will react powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity.¹²

The daring vision of the Jewish State is continued in the utopian dream of Old-New Land published in 1902. The author revisits the Jewish homeland twenty years afterwards (by now it was to be Palestine without

¹⁰Theodore Herzl, Old-New Land, trans. L. Levensohn (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1941), p. 178.

¹¹Theodore Herzl, The Jewish State, op. cit., p. 156.

¹²Ibid., p. 156-157.

hesitation) and finds a reconstituted model commonwealth

where the intellectual proletariat of Central Europe would exercise their skill in law, medicine, journalism, administration, engineering, architecture, art, music, and philosophy for the upbuilding and progress of the land, and the proletarian masses of Eastern Europe drop their pedlars' packs to become straight-backed, sun-bronzed peasants and artisans. Then the Jew, degraded to less than man's estate by anti-Semitism, would regain the full stature of manhood on his own soil. . . .¹³

The noble experiment is an example to mankind. One of the characters in the novel explains why Jews were the logical people to lead in industrial and social pioneering. "Only we Jews could have done it, replied David calmly. . . . We only were in a position to create this new society, this new center of civilization here."¹⁴

Insisting that the Jewish problem is a national one and not merely religious or social, he urged that it "be raised to political world-rank." Governments out of a sense of duty and self-interest should cooperate in bringing this about.

It was expected that such a plan would arouse in Herzl's own words, "a mighty cry of agreement in every place where Jews suffer."

The cry was all the mightier because the Jewish masses had never expected to hear such a voice from such a quarter--from a German assimilationist writer and journalist, from one without a Zionist past, almost without a Jewish one. And this was a mighty voice. . . . a triumph bugle call, --deep and vibrant,¹⁵ because it expressed the liberation of the man himself. . . .

Weizmann, first president of Israel, reminisces on the reaction to The Jewish State.

¹³Theodore Herzl, Old-New Land, op. cit., translator's introduction, p. xi.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁵Ludwig Lewisohn, op. cit., p. 57.

The effect produced was profound. Not the ideas, but the personality which stood behind them appealed to us. Here was daring, clarity and energy. The very fact that this Westerner came to us unencumbered by our own preconceptions, had its appeal.¹⁶

Student groups and leading intellectuals such as Max Nordau and Israel Zangwill, were won over to the cause. The magnetic personality of Herzl attracted disciples among non-Jews as well. Though preceded by Hess and Pinsker, Herzl's idea was a revelation to some and an apostasy to others. His predecessors had discussed anti-Semitism and suggested a state as the remedy. Beside the fact that they had not been read by Herzl's contemporaries, his plan was new in the form of organization and program of implementation carefully spelled out in the direction of the goal. It immediately created "among a small but immensely influential group of Western Jews, a new Jewish consciousness."¹⁷

It soon became evident to Herzl himself that he cannot adhere to his intention stated in the preface to the pamphlet: "I feel that with the publication of this pamphlet, my task is done."¹⁸ He set out feverishly to drive toward the aim. He conceded to public sentiment by shifting from general territorialism to specific Zionism. "When I began, I thought only of a Jewish State. But now I have become a Lover of Zion. In my eyes there is no other solution to the great national problem known as the Jewish Question, except the Land of Israel."¹⁹ He called together the first

¹⁶ Chaim Weizmann, op. cit., p. 43.

¹⁷ Ludwig Lewisohn, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁸ Theodore Herzl, The Jewish State, op. cit., p. 72.

¹⁹ The Vision of Herzl: a Selection, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Histadrut, 1934), p. 174.

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Zionist Congress as the Society of Jews designated in the initial plan. The opening address contained these memorable words: "We want to lay the foundations of the edifice which is one day to house the Jewish people."²⁰ Having assembled around him recognized Jewish dignitaries, and prepared with the necessary pageantry for an impressive beginning, he struck a high pitch of enthusiasm and solemnity for the auspicious inauguration of Zionism as a political movement. The Congress kindled the spirit and set the tone for great things. The following years were crammed with concentrated activity on the international arena, as he conferred with the Kaiser, Pope and Sultan, British, Austrian and Roumanian ministers and Jewish philanthropists. His missions took him to all the capitals of Europe and to Palestine. In Russia, Jewish crowds welcomed him as "King of the Jews."

As far as immediate results were concerned, there were none, since the coveted "Charter" for Palestine was not offered during his lifetime. Counting on the potential support of Jewish financiers, he contemplated bartering financial backing of the bankrupt Sultan government, in exchange for a charter. This he did not attain. However, international recognition of the Zionist movement was granted in the British offer of Uganda in East Africa as a Jewish refuge under Zionist auspices. Discussion of the proposal inspired the most dramatic moment and division at a Zionist Congress, when the dissenters ascribed to Herzl and his followers treason to the Zionist ideal. With a sense of immediacy sparked by the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, Herzl was amenable to any ter-

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Ludwig Lewisohn, op. cit., p. 307.

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ritorial opportunity for colonization and sovereignty, an expedient departure the loyal followers of Zion were unwilling to accept. Herzl died the following year.

In the eight years of Herzl's dynamic leadership, the instrumentalities of Zionism were being forged. A permanent world representative body was established for the far-flung communities of Jewry; an anthem, flag and statement of aims adopted; a bank for colonization formed; the Jewish National Fund to purchase land in Palestine, organized. The Zionist Congress became a permanent institution meeting every few years as the united Jewish tribune speaking to the world. The Congress continues to reconvene with the most recent one held in Jerusalem with the participation of elected delegates from all over the world, Russia and its satellites excepted. In the short period of a few years, Zionism emerged from humble beginnings and sporadic strivings to an organized vital force operating in behalf of the Jewish people on the international scene. After World War I the charter aim was realized with the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, which gave international recognition to the Basle program, accepting at least in principle, that which Herzl had striven so vigorously to attain.

Herzl was wrong in many respects. Remote from the traditional Jewish way of life, he failed to appreciate the importance of spiritual and cultural ethnic values in the reconstructed society. Some of his ideas, such as the desirability of dueling, were quite alien to the Jewish spirit. Revival of Hebrew was not in his plan. Herzl's real contribution was not in the originality of thought, but in the inspiration

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of personality. He rekindled the faith of an ancient ideal spurring on its adherents to daring action.

Herzl was the first--and herein lies his historic greatness--who was able to breathe a new spirit, the will to act, into the faith and nostalgia of the Jewish people yearning to be revived. . . . He transformed the Jewish people for the first time since its Exile into a political force, a fighting creative force. . . . capable of reshaping its historic destiny by its own will and exertions.²¹

Such is the evaluation of David Ben Gurion, first premier of Israel.

He was a visionary who strove to redirect a Messianic hope into a political reality. He raised the banner of the Jewish State, summoning behind it millions to whom the concept was a cherished wish beyond realization, a prayer encased within the heart, concealed in the Hebrew tongue. He uttered the ineffable with daring forthrightness, describing, demanding, and striving toward its earthly translation. When he first mentioned it, he was considered mentally deranged. After his death he was regarded the prophet who prepared for its coming in 1948. Herzl's motto, "If you will it, it is no fable," became the slogan of two generations who marched on to a new life in the promised land. It is most fitting that in Israel's Declaration of Independence, Theodore Herzl is the only personage mentioned in that historic document.

For the present generation of youth, the first in independent Israel, Herzl is more than an influence. He is the hero of the century whose inspiration and dedication turned a legend into a fact, creating a halo of legendary romance about the life of a person who is nearly a contemporary.

²¹Ibid., p. 11.

Herzl's vision, and therein lies his appeal, was a national resurrection in a Messianic setting. Addressing himself to youth a few months before his demise, he emphasizes that Zionism "as I understand it, contains not only the striving for a legally assured homeland for our people, but also the striving for moral and spiritual perfection."²² The ideal of individual fulfillment was a factor in the Zionist formula. Therefore it could mean so much in personal terms, elevating, uplifting, and reinforcing. "Zionism was the Sabbath of my life," he could admit at the end, in spite of the frustrations and disappointments which studded his path. A sense of destiny inspired his efforts, providing an example for those who have identified themselves with the cause of Zion from its inception to the present day.

Viewing the whole period in perspective from the vantage point of our day, it may be confidently asserted that never in modern times has a prophet arisen among his people who saw more clearly or endeavored more nobly to guide his people along the road of honor and security.

It has been his task to overcome the inertia of centuries and set his people into motion. Deliberately and with persistence, he has striven to dispel the mood of helplessness and dull acquiescence in their fate, and breathe into them a new spirit of self-confidence and the will to achieve. . . . In a remarkable passage of his diary written at the close of the First Congress, he said: "At Basle I founded the Jewish State. If I were to say this today, I would be met by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in fifty, everyone will see it."²³

He was only one year off in his prediction.

²²Ibid., p. 345.

²³Emanuel Neumann, The Birth of Jewish Statesmanship: the Story of Theodore Herzl's Life (New York: Zionist Organization of America, 1949), p. 35.

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CHAPTER XI

ACHAD HA'AM

The central figure in modern Jewish thought, exerting the greatest influence on Zionist ideology, was Achad Ha'am, whose centenary has recently been observed throughout the Jewish world. Expounding his views in short essays on contemporary events and issues, he became the leading intellectual authority in the Jewish debate of the twentieth century, affecting social theory, literary standards, educational values and emerging religious concepts. In the impact of his creative thinking he can be compared to the American John Dewey, though the quantity of his writings are collected in four modest volumes. Like Dewey, he borrowed considerably from his immediate predecessors and was instrumental in the development of a climate of opinion conducive to an all-pervading intellectual reconstruction of society in a changed environment. Like Dewey too, he stimulated far-reaching controversy in various disciplines and was subject to much misinterpretation.

Achad Ha'am, "One of the People,"--the unassuming by-line of his first essay in 1889 which became his *nomme de plume* for the rest of his life--was born Asher Ginzberg in Ukraine in 1856. His home, that of a merchant scholarly family, provided the opportunity for growth in an atmosphere of study within Jewish tradition to the exclusion of secular knowledge proscribed in pious quarters. In the seclusion and established patterns of small town life (a wife was chosen for him at sixteen) Ginzberg

devoted himself to his books and clandestinely partook of foreign languages, classics, philosophy and science. Gradually he emancipated himself from the orthodox milieu. A number of unsuccessful attempts, at home and abroad, in the direction of formal university education, followed. At one time he even left his family to enroll in the University of Vienna, but had to return. As an autodidact he attained comprehensive knowledge of impressive proportions. This pursuit of academic interests is important in terms of later values crystallized in his Zionist philosophy.

His mature life was spent in Odessa, London, and Tel Aviv respectively. In the first location he appeared as the reassessor of the Chibat Zion in the role of the spiritual guide of the esoteric circle of altruistic elite named B'nai Moshe (sons of Moses). The secret society consisted of men of high character and noble principle dedicated to the cause of Jewish national revival in accordance with Achad Ha'am's views. Existing for eight years, it included and influenced the Russian Jewish personalities that subsequently stood at the helm of the Zionist and Hebrew creative enterprise. During this period, he also visited Palestine on a number of occasions returning with critical and constructive insights. He continued to publicize his ideas through the publications he edited or contributed to. Some educational and literary ventures elicited his cooperation, such as the organization of a modern Hebrew school in Jaffa, Palestine, the founding and publishing of the epoch-making monthly, Hashiloach, and participation in Zionist and general Jewish conferences in Russia.

The London chapter of his life where, beginning with 1907 he

resided as an official of a tea company, brought him into contact with a limited circle of intellectuals under his influence. In 1922 he moved to Tel Aviv, where he died in 1926.

Achad Ha'am's philosophy will be treated in this paper in the three categories of religion, people and homeland. These appertain to his definition of Judaism, the theory of survival as a minority in an alien world, and the concept of Zionism as a solution to the Jewish problem. Together they spell out a Weltanschauung of individual, national and universal human values. In the light of the philosophy, the educational applications can be deduced and contributions traced to the present.

Achad Ha'am accepted the basic religious tenets of Judaism without their theological foundations. To the secular Jew, unfettered from the intellectual and practical discipline of supernatural religion but unwilling to cast his moorings in strange waters, the synthesis of traditional values and modern concepts was most welcome. Two alternatives had been adopted in the nineteenth century at harmonizing the heritage with modernism. Westernized Jews sought to reform the religious tradition; Haskala tried to re-educate Jews as Europeans. Recognizing the latter as a matter of course rather than an ideal, Ginzberg approached the spiritual heritage of his people with the criterion of intellectual validity in place of social expediency. The result was a clearer demarcation of Jewish and Christian domains and the renewed emphasis upon the uniqueness of Judaism in its spiritual superiority, for the present as well as the past.

The Jewish creative genius expressed itself through national ethics originating with the prophets, pervading and enobling Jewish experience throughout the ages. This consisted of a total commitment to absolute justice, uncompromising, indivisible, and ubiquitous. Absolute morality became meaningful by the particular application in every situation rather than by pious generalization. This is the unique and regretfully, still the private insight of Judaism. Moses exemplified it, the prophets enunciated it, the Jewish people translated it into a pattern of behavior. The Hebrew creative spirit expressed it in literature. The modern Jew, by fuller identification with his people, can approximate it without the theological trappings of past ages.

The essential thought of Hebrew prophesy was the reign of absolute justice in all creation; above--through the "Righteous one of the Universe," who holds in his hand the category of justice and judges all his creatures with righteousness; below--through man who was created in the image of God and who is obligated to imitate his creator and to help him, as it were, in the conduct of the world in the ways of righteousness. . . . Righteousness is beauty, is good, is wisdom and truth, and without it--all is vanity.

. . . In far greater measure than is the case among other nations, prophesy rested in Israel in ancient times, not as an accident or as a temporary phenomenon but continuously over a period of many generations, as if it were an essential quality of its being, bearing the stamp of its national spirit.¹

The "national spirit" reveals itself not only in cultural institutions, but in morality as well. In contrast to Christianity, the ethics of Judaism are based upon justice rather than love, an objective criterion ultimately much more conducive to human welfare. This is in keeping with

¹ Jacob B. Agus, Modern Philosophies of Judaism (New York: Behrman, 1941) excerpt from Aohad Ha'am "Priest and Prophet," p. 45,46.

the Biblical insistence upon the elimination of images which limit the ideal, both in the religious concept of God as well as in morality.

If the heathen of the old story, who wished to learn the whole of the Torah while he stood on one foot, had come to me, my reply would have been: "'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image of any likeness'---that is the whole Torah and the rest is commentary." What essentially distinguishes Judaism from other religions is its absolute determination to make the religious and moral consciousness independent of any definite human form, and to attach it without any mediating term to an abstract incorporeal ideal.² . . . And this basic tendency of the Jewish people to rise above any image in the religious or moral life, is seen not only in respect of the religious and moral ideal, but also in regard to the goal. . .having no limited sensual image.³

Achad Ha'am focused attention upon another aspect of Jewish religion,--its corporate character. Fulfillment is gained through the group and nation. The individual's reward is found in the general welfare. Such was the religious promise as long as Israel was a nation in its own land.

. . . Judaism conceives its aim not as the salvation of the individual, but as the well-being and perfection of a group of the Jewish people, and ultimately of the whole human race. . . . The aim is always defined in terms of a collectivity which has no defined and concrete form. . . . Judaism had no clear ideal of personal immortality or of reward and punishment after death. The religious and moral inspiration of the prophets and their disciples was derived. . .from the conviction of their belonging to "the chosen people" which had. . .a divine call to make its national life the embodiment of the highest form of religion and morality.. Even in later times. . .the highest aims of Judaism still remained a collective aim.⁴

It follows that the revival of nationalism and the identification of the individual with the destiny of his people is in harmony with

²Achad Ha'am, trans. Leon Simon (Oxford: East and West Lib., 1941) from "Jewish and Christian Ethics," p. 128.

³Achad Ha'am in Jacob B. Agus, op. cit., p. 46.

⁴Achad Ha'am, op. cit., p. 130.

original religious tenets. Its rootedness in and attachment to prophetic ideals of justice are mandatory. Spiritual depth is prior to numerical scope and political slogans, if the Jewish character and promise of Zionism is to be preserved.

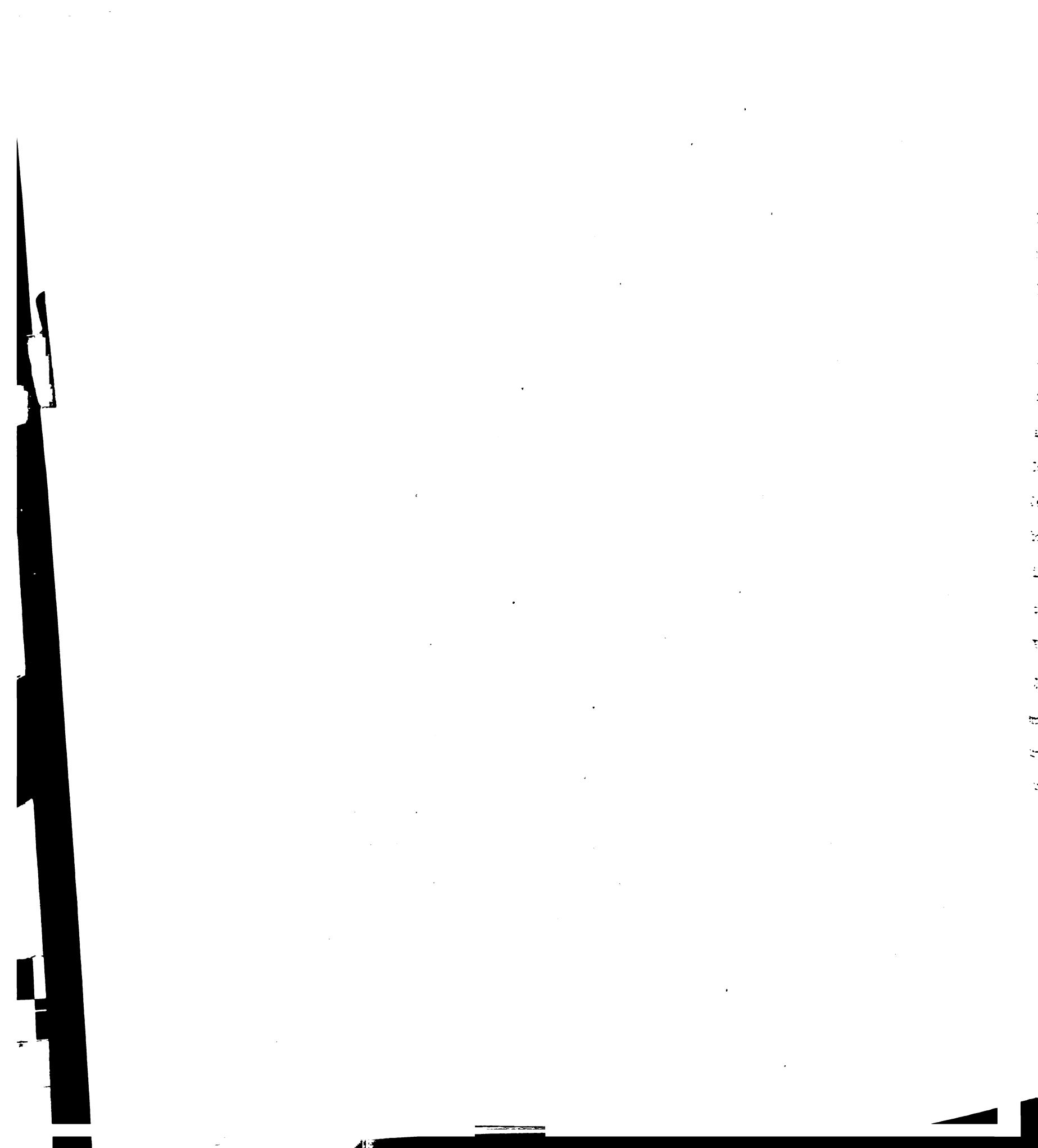
Two composite premises important for education are logical derivations from these views of Achad Ha'am.

(1) The aim of Jewish education in inculcating the highest human and universal ethical values can best be served by educating within the spiritual context of the Hebrew cultural tradition.

(2) Authentic Jewish education leads to identification of the individual with the group to the extent that the individual attains fulfillment in the aspirations, ideals, and achievements of the Jewish people.

These principles indicate how a philosophy of Judaism is fraught with implications ancillary to the nationalistic Zionist education originating in Europe and transplanted in Palestine. It bridges the gap between group and universal values, establishes the indispensability of Hebrew as the vehicle of the spirit and charges the educational process with the mission of the Jewish renaissance. These concepts are reinforced and elaborated by the views propagated in Achad Ha'am's treatment of Palestine in the Jewish scheme of things.

It is the enigma of Zionist history that the westerner, Herzl, living in comparative freedom and security, should be primarily concerned with the physical plight of Jews, while the easterner, Achad Ha'am, residing in an environment of hostility, repression and mob violence, should direct his energies toward the alleviation of the spiritual plight of Judaism. Upon further analysis it is evident that



the one whose spiritual roots were deeper and environment more intensely Jewish, should place the problem of assimilation before anti-Semitism. To Herzl, Zionism offered the solution to Jewish homelessness; Achad Ha'am regarded it as an answer to spiritual disintegration. With the crumbling of the ghetto walls of medieval orthodox religion, the nation lost its spiritual immunity and became subject to the lure and mirage of foreign culture. Dispersed throughout the globe without a centrifugal force, groups of Jews are bound to be molded by local influences, with the resulting fragmentation into territorial segments and ultimate disappearance in accordance with known sociological processes of social integration. Confronted with this new challenge, not previously faced by an insulated Jewry which was fortified by a way of life totally apart from its neighbors, the Jewish people seeks new cohesive forces and creative sources in its "will to live," a moving force for thousands of years. The threat of assimilation does not suggest segregation as an escape. In Thomas Wolfe's phraseology, one cannot come home again, and Jews cannot return to the ghetto. There is an alternative which avoids the evils of both extremes. In healthy relationships between groups there is a fruitful interaction. The reciprocal influences exerted, evoke creative imitation in the fostering of cultural values and institutions. What has been borrowed from an alien setting is recast in the image of the group, to suit its purpose and express its spirit.

We have gone through two successive periods, a long one of complete segregation and a short one of self-effacement. . . We are coming to recognize that salvation lies along neither of these two roads but along a third road that lies between them: that of the enrichment of our national individuality by means of imitation of the competitive kind.⁵

⁵ Ibid., p. 73.

Examples of this are a modern national literature, music, art, institutional and organizational forms and social customs adopted and adapted accordingly.

Achad Ha'am postulated a "will to live" as an essential component of his theoretical structure. Influenced by Darwinian biological concepts, he applied the "struggle for survival" of biological evolution to national history, suggesting the existence of a corporate national will operating overtly and covertly through the chain of events. To nourish this "will to live," which has recently become dormant, is the function of the national movement. The individual egotistical interest, merging with the group survival interest, is a renewed value initially propagated in ancient Jerusalem.

Thus Palestine rebuilt as a national home will serve two significant ends indispensable for survival:

(1) A national environment without detracting influences will enable a reconstituted Jewish majority to embark upon a spiritual revival as a link in the golden chain of a historic heritage.

(2) A Vatican-like spiritual center from which will emanate books, ideas and cultural values in the Hebraic spirit and tongue, will create a bond between the outlying parts of a vast periphery, materially assisting the center, and spiritually benefitting from it. The creative unity of the Jewish people will once again be assured.

A center of our nationality implies that there is a national circumference, which, like every circumference, is much larger than the center. . . . The majority...in the future [will be] scattered all over the world, but no longer broken up into a number of disconnected parts. . .because Palestine will be a centre for them all and make them all into a single, complete circumference. When all the scattered limbs of the national

body feel the beating of the national heart, restored to life in its native home, they too will once again draw near to one another and welcome the inrush of living blood that flows from the heart.

Spiritual means that this relation of center and circumference between Palestine and the lands of the diaspora will of necessity be limited to the spiritual side of life. The influence of the center will strengthen the Jewish national consciousness in the diaspora; it will give to our Judaism a national content which will be genuine and natural, unlike the substitutes with which we now try to fill the void.⁶

The Zionist debate was three-cornered. Herzl championed political action directed toward the establishment of an independent state. A. D. Gordon called for economic reconstruction and individual rehabilitation in the formation of a new society. Achad Ha'am concentrated upon education paving the way to a spiritual revival. Though not exclusive of each other, one approach has frequently been emphasized at the expense of the others.

Cultural Zionism, as Achad Ha'am's views became known, originally demanded a reorientation of Zionist effort from mass propaganda advocated by the political exponents, to the slow process of education, "preparation of the hearts," recommended by Achad Ha'am. He suggested that idealism and self-sacrifice be embedded in the heart instead of false hopes and superficial enthusiasm capturing the imagination. He asked for the total commitment of the few endowed with the persistency and perspective required for pioneer initiative in the new land. Critical of the various colonization projects dependent upon Baron Rothschild's handouts, he urged a concerted effort at instituting schools, publications and genuine educational enterprises geared toward a sounder Jewish and national consciousness. Under his influence, the Chovevei Zion of

⁶ Ibid., p. 204.

Russia supported the new schools in Palestine colonies, and the Zionist congresses, after 1902, included educational projects on the agenda.

An interesting controversy raged between Achad Ha'am and contemporary authors on the function of literature. When the latter attempted to "broaden" the horizon of Hebrew literature by using the language for articulating theories and values alien and contradictory to Judaism, he vigorously opposed them on the grounds that the national revival must have its spiritual roots in the collective heritage and experience of the Jewish people. The new literature must be Hebraic in content as well as in form.

Translated into educational goals, these ideas suggest the following principles:

- (3) The primary aim of education in Israel is to be spiritual and intellectual, shying away from the narrow political and often chauvinistic frame familiar to smaller embattled nations.
- (4) The new education is to express historic continuity rather than break with the past, in spite of its secular orientation. (The apparent platitudinous character of this statement disappears in the light of vociferous pronouncements to the contrary by other spokesmen of Israel intelligentsia.)

According to Lachover, author of a definitive history of modern Hebrew literature, Achad Ha'am achieved complete integration of ancient Judaism and twentieth century pattern of thought. "Without retreating from any fundamental Jewish concept, he redefines them in social national terms of a general universal context compatible with a modern cultural

perspective."⁷ Whether religionists will agree with this evaluation is questionable. Yet the fact remains that for secular Jews he bridged the gap between tradition and modernism, the Jew and the world. In the never ending discussion of Judaism versus humanity, he clearly demonstrated that the universal reveals itself through the national forms, and that Judaism represents the noblest in both, without inner contradiction. In the final analysis, the universal elements in the Jewish heritage elevated it to a world religion.

It is understandable that Achad Ha'am had much to say on inter-faith relations. The attitude of the Jew to the alien environment impinged upon his relationship, mental and articulated, to himself, his religion, and people, reaching into the nethermost depths of his personality.

Mention has previously been made of the German-centered reform movement launching an overall remodelling of the Jewish way of life. The New Look streamlined to suit the tastes of the times necessitated the removal of all furnishings, and their replacement by imitations of the Christian sanctuary and home. The Russian Haskala concentrated upon a superficial dusting and refinishing job in making the house of Israel more presentable. Both were moved by the desire to make the grade and be accepted. In contrast, Achad Ha'am was primarily motivated by considerations of authenticity of inherent values in Jewish sancta, and their logical setting without regard for outside approval. This to him

⁷F. Lachover, History of Modern Hebrew Literature, vol. II, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1937), p. 192.

was the path of dignity trodden by free men.

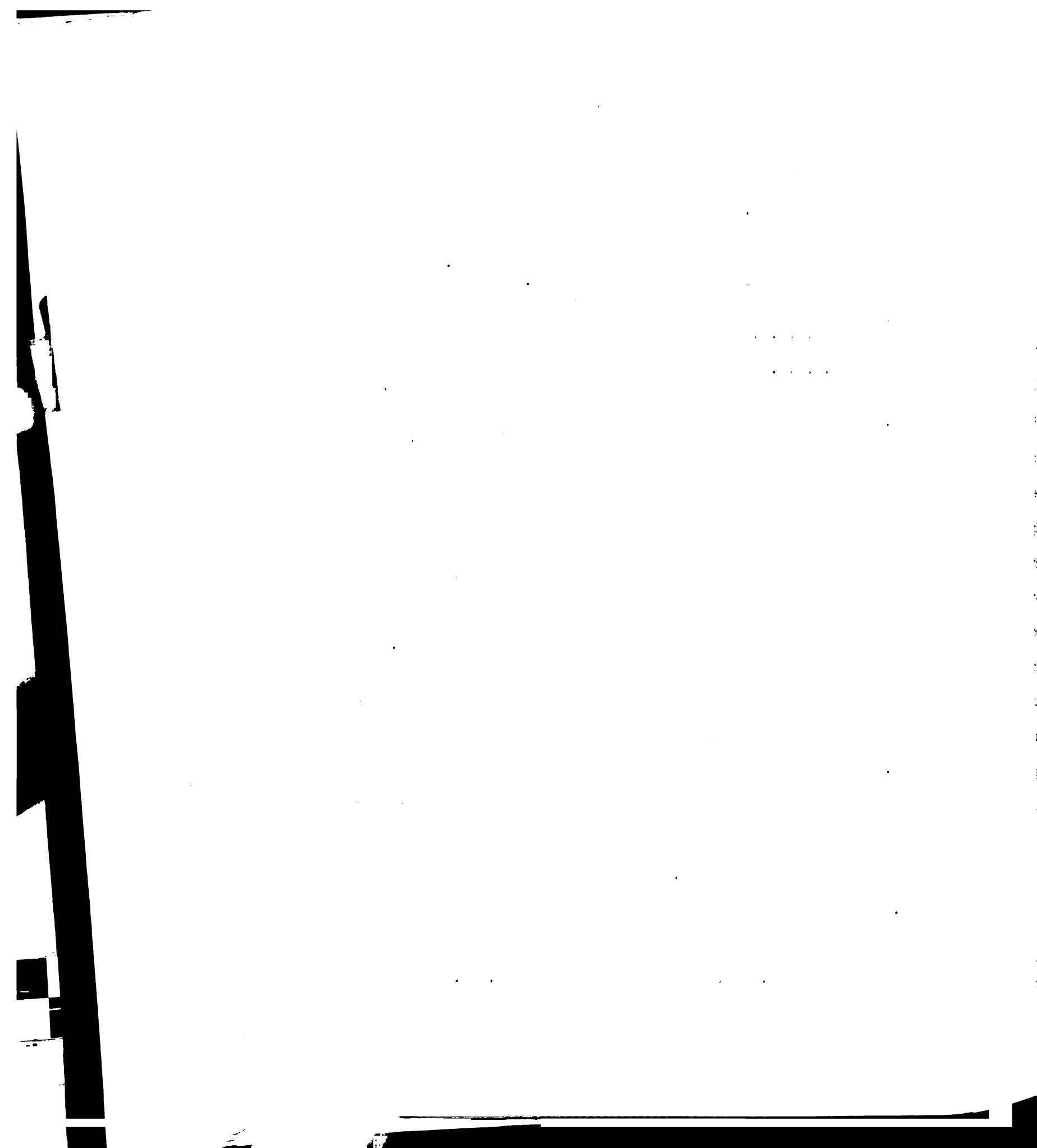
Terrible indeed is the backwardness, the degradation and the poverty that surrounds me here in Russia; and well may I look for comfort across the border, to the land in which there are Jewish Professors and Members of Academies, Jewish generals and statesmen. But when behind all the grandeur and the glory I discern a twofold slavery, moral and intellectual, I ask myself whether I envy these Jews their civil rights; and in truth and sincerity I answer "No, a thousand times no!" I will have none of them. I have no civil rights. I can proclaim aloud my feeling of kinship with my fellow-Jews, wherever they may be, without having to defend it by far-fetched and unsatisfactory excuses. . . . I have no need to idealize my people and to pretend that it is superior to all others in order to justify its existence. . . . I can even adopt "the scientific heresy that bears the name of Darwin" without any danger to my Judaism. In a word, I belong to myself, and my opinions and feelings are my own. And this freedom of the spirit--scoff who will--I would not exchange or barter for all the civil rights in the world.⁸

This is an eloquent plea for a position which in educational application would read:

(5) Jewish education is to endow the individual with the psychological traits of self-acceptance and independence comprising truth, freedom and human dignity, without an inferiority complex in relation to others and with the ability to react in equanimity to imposed humiliation.

A philosophy of such dimensions encompassed all of Jewish life, psychological and intellectual, individual and collective, in Palestine and abroad. It was geared to a projected Jewish renaissance in the twentieth century, expedited by the establishment of a spiritual center in Palestine, with the political and economic conditions necessary though not sufficient for its realization. This was to be ushered in by the new education. The exponent of spiritual Zionism

⁸ Achad Ha'am, op. cit., "Slavery in Freedom", p. 18.



saw the national movement as the later stage in the long evolution of the Hebrew spirit. . . . A great national ideal... can grow. . . where the Hebrew spirit can assert itself freely unhampered by foreign influences. Zionism is therefore synonymous with Judaism itself.⁹

Ultimately Palestine would become "not merely a state of Jews, but a Jewish State."

To what extent are Achad Ha'am's ideas reflected in Israel education today? The Hebrew University in Jerusalem aspires to become that reservoir of spiritual values, feeding the tributaries of the world Jewish community as Achad Ha'am envisaged. The Weizmann Institute in Rehovoth (Ch. V) in its partial dedication to pure science and scientific pioneering is a further extension of his views. Universal compulsory education, the gradual broadening of educational opportunities, the emphasis upon Bible and Hebrew literature, the sense of continuity with the ancient past, the reinterpretation of the hallowed texts in a contemporary intellectual frame of reference, the psychological identification with the world Jewish community--these are all products of the master's blueprints. Israel teachers are exported abroad; American institutions of higher Jewish learning are insisting upon residence study in Israel; numerous publications flow to all parts of the world; great Hebrew encyclopedic projects are now under way (Universal, children, Jewish, Biblical, Talmudic, biographical and linguistic encyclopaedias); ancient and medieval texts are being edited; and many other ventures in creative scholarship are among the practices and processes making Israel

⁹ Hillel Bavli, "The Modern Renaissance of Hebrew Literature," The Jews, ed. Louis Finkelstein, vol. II (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1949), p. 579.

the spiritual center of an international Jewish periphery.

On the debit side, the constant jeopardy in which the nascent state finds itself and the economic and social pangs of birth in absorbing incoming masses, have obstructed the translation of some of Achad Ha'am's noble, human, and universal sentiments into educational operation. (Further analysis of the existing values in the educational scene are found in chapter VII.)

It was Achad Ha'am's cherished dream to compose his magnum opus on the Ethics of Judaism. This was designed to be a comprehensive work presenting in an orderly fashion a philosophy of the Jewish renaissance and serve as a contemporary summation parallel to ancient and medieval anthological restatements. He never achieved it. But the bricks for this projected construction are strewn about his numerous essays over a period of thirty years. They are still useful material in the rising national structure of the new Israel.

CHAPTER XII

MICHA JOSEPH BERDICHEVSKY

In the chorus of voices heralding in the new national era there is one note of discord in the cry for individualism uttered by Micha Joseph Berdichevsky, noted novelist, essayist and scholar. Known as the great dissenter of Hebrew thought, this Polish born brilliant and sensitive soul who spent his mature life in Germany, was the life-long ideological opponent of Achad Ha'am and his school of cultural Zionism. The latter's ideas, he vigorously challenged while retaining a respectful recognition of his person and position. Thirty-five years after the death of Berdichevsky, his non-conformist negations reappear as outspoken assertions by numerically insignificant but articulate elements in Israel society.

He was born in 1865 in southern Poland to a rabbinic family tracing its associations with Chassidic sages for many generations. Three factors in his childhood proved potent in the molding of personality later reflected in the form and content of his literary expression and mental constitution. The Chassidic atmosphere of poetic inspiration unleashing religious emotion fed his unbridled spirit soaring into ethereal heights and human depths of mental probing and emotional unfolding. The acquisition of an unsympathetic step-mother at the tender age of eleven aroused conflicts that scarred his personality, making him as an artist extremely sensitive to the inner world of the individual. Landing on the "wrong

side of the tracks" in the crowded Jewish neighborhood removed from the spacious homes and green gardens of the gentile populace which possessed a special attraction for the tender child, fostered as aesthetic hunger which pervaded his writings in later years. These were the three pillars of Berdichevsky's philosophical and artistic structure: emotion, individualism, and aesthetics, in contrast to his famous adversary Achad Ha'am who established his world on reason, nation, and ethics.

Growing up in an environment of study, Berdichevsky partook extensively of Jewish lore and secretly branched out into Haskala literature. Married at sixteen he continued his studies assiduously, economically supported in the customary fashion by his father-in-law. Discovered reading an unauthorized book, he was driven out of the house. He pursued his studies at the famous rabbinical school of Volozhin and soon published scholarly and belletristic articles. At the age of twenty-five he went abroad to German and Swiss universities where he received his Ph.D., the thesis dealing with the relationship of ethics to aesthetics, a point of departure for fruitful thought in later life. By this time he had made a break with his orthodox religious background, following the university crowd in becoming a disciple of Nietzsche.

Berdichevsky appeared on the Jewish literary horizon as a productive writer of fiction and author of thought-provoking essays in Hebrew. He also wrote short stories in Yiddish. As a man of great erudition he produced scholarly and philosophical works in German, delving especially into the vast reservoir of legends originating in the off-track side-paths of Jewish history outside of normative Judaism. He emerged as the spokes-

man for the younger "rebels" who sought to broaden the intellectual and literary perspective of Hebrew literature. They rejected the accepted values not only of the traditionalists but of the modernists as well, - those of Achad Ha'am's persuasion seeking to recast the religious tradition in a contemporary secular mold. He died at the age of fifty-six.

An authoritative analyst of modern Hebrew literature in a recent work states: "No understanding of the miracle of present day Israel is possible without some understanding of the world of Berdichevsky."¹ He was the great rebel of Hebrew thought, the questioner par excellence whose doubts, heresies and restlessness in fiction and essay have made him a commanding figure in a revolutionary age. His protest and dissent served as a basis for important affirmations in the Zionist synthesis. Steeped in Hebraic lore--he was one of the most erudite personages in modern Hebrew letters--he engaged in a life-long controversy with Achad Ha'am and his school, utilizing Hebrew literary periodicals as vehicles of expression. Personally, he remained aloof from parties, platforms and programs. A polemical writer of wide scope he was yet always the individual artist creating works of fiction and social theory in the privacy and seclusion of his study.

The Zionist movement rebelled against contemporary conditions in the name of historic ideals. Negating the aberrations of Jewish life, provoked by the abnormal status of a permanent minority without adequate opportunity for security and wholesome living, Zionist theo-

¹Simon Halkin, Modern Hebrew Literature: Trends and Values (New York: Schocken, 1950), p. 91.

reticians appealed to spiritual values emanating from the cumulative experiences of a people deigned to fulfill its destiny in its ancient abode. In the final analysis, Zionism represents continuity rather than severance of the historical thread. It seeks to interpret and channel Jewish aspirations into historically determined, religiously dictated and pragmatically required avenues of operation. His main adversary, Achad Ha'am, divorced as he was practically from the religious discipline of orthodoxy and removed intellectually from its frame of reference, yet accepted its spiritual demands and attempted to reveal, analyze and affirm their relevance. Not so Berdichevsky. With all its modernism, the prevailing mood of cultural Zionism was a positive Yes to Jewish values. Berdichevsky uttered an emphatic No.

A further distinction. The architects of Zionism deplored the crumbling structure of Jewish society. They criticized the inferiority status, resented the crippling passiveness, challenged the parrot-like acculturation. But they owed their allegiance to the inspired ideals of prophets and sages in the heritage of Israel. Berdichevsky questioned the very spiritual foundations of historical Judaism. He did it, however, as an insider committed to preserve the physical unity and entity of Jewry, thereby remaining the great dissenter instead of becoming the renegade which many another lesser talent proved to be.

Berdichevsky was obsessed with the burden of the past, desiring to be relieved of it. Dominance of the past dictated the people's mode of life in the present, depriving it of creative originality. The conventionalists were not alone in being tied to the past; the modernists too were bound to its spirit. To Berdichevsky the history of the

Jews in exile presented a sordid view of enslavement to yesterday and estrangement from today, subject to a self-imposed predetermination of behavior and events by an age that was no more.

We are an ancient people, submerged by a heritage that is altogether too rich, by a deluge of thoughts, feelings and values transmitted to us, so that we no longer can live in our pristine simplicity, just being, essentially being. Our egos are not our own, our dreams and our thoughts are not our own, our will is not the one implanted in us; everything we were taught long ago, everything, has been handed down to us. Everything is defined and designated within set limits and boundaries, measured and weighed, ruled and legislated; so that those among us who crave to know themselves are forlorn. . . they never can find their own self.²

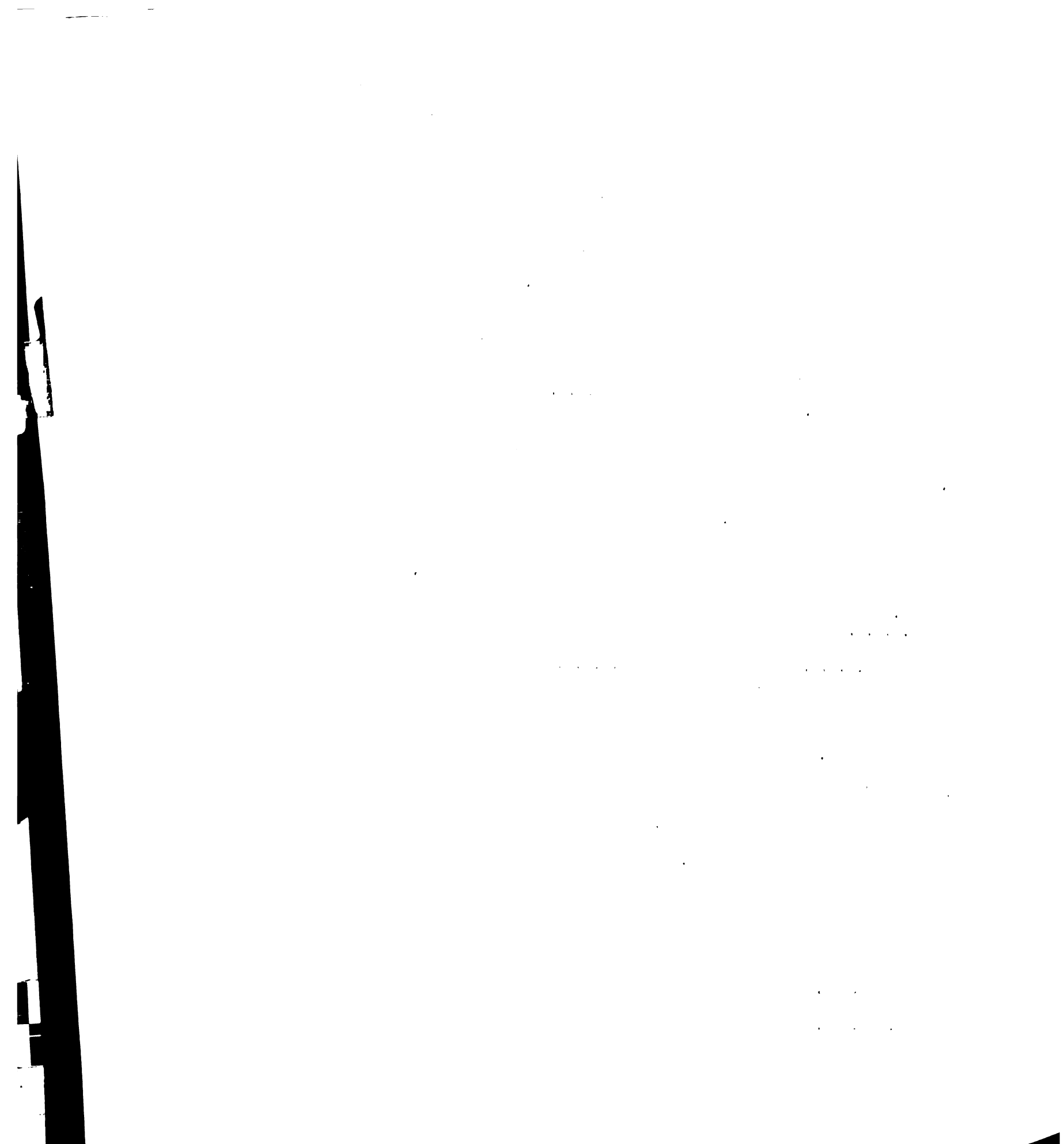
Thus our individuality is subdued in the process of worshipping the past. A choking atmosphere engulfs us making it impossible to breathe the refreshing air of a free day.

We do not consider the heritage of the past as an ancient culture with sufficient room for our own activity and new life. For we are the slaves of our memories, the slaves of our inheritance. We are mummified by the transmitted and limited thoughts. . . . The past has pushed out the present taking away from us the treasures of today, and making us carriers of heavy burdens. . . . We are tired of it. . . . New needs and desires awaken within us.³

Berdichevsky sees no need for continuing in the role of porters of bequeathed burdens. A total break with the past is possible and desirable. It isn't necessary for us to be heirs; we can make our own fortunes and choose enterprises at will. This we accomplish by discontinuing to be the People of the Book. The Book, from the Bible to all of the vast literature of legalistic and pietistic commentaries and

²Micha Joseph Berdichevsky, Collected Essays, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1952), p. 35.

³Ibid., p. 36.



super-commentaries, has received too much attention down the centuries. This has led to an over-intellectualization and over-spiritualization at the expense of observing, enjoying and living life itself. The book has blocked the view of life, separating us from reality. The emphasis was upon ideas rather than people, and "Jews were replaced by Judaism."

Our human form has been diminished to the extent that our political and national forms have been reduced... and we became people who only stand and look at the book, see and turn reverently to the holy script. . . . All the noble feelings, the great thoughts of will and desire, all that beats within a man's heart to the degree that he is a man, a thinking, feeling and willing being--all of life in its ramifications--everything, everything has been silenced by the weight of the book.⁴

It has been claimed that Jewish ethics have been translated into life upon the inspiration of the literary tradition. Berdichevsky rejects the entire view of a unique Jewish morality warranting our continued loyalty. The historic record is replete with episodes and personalities approximating standards that are objectionable simply because they do not comply with that quality which we esteem above all - compassion. In contrast acts of physical courage, aroused human pride, reliance upon the sword, have a respectable genealogy in Biblical annals. There is no common spiritual heritage shared by all generations. "A concept of Jewish ethics is wishful thinking without foundation, as transient as all religious values."⁵ He rejects the abstract spirituality, which, in his opinion, Achad Ha'am foists upon the Jewish people.

You have chosen a gracious and prepossessing Judaism, by dint of which we presumably exist, and by dint of which only we are allowed to exist; but we do not need the kind of existence whose merit is the cultivation of a sublime

⁴ Ibid., p. 34.

⁵ Ibid., p. 38.

system of law and life. The Jewish people is a vital event, not the summation of some circumscribed abstract world.⁶

Such a revolutionary appraisal calls for a re-evaluation of Jewish history. To Berdichevsky the heroic acts of martyrdom in defense of religious convictions were futile gestures; the spiritual fortitude in face of danger was often a subterfuge for physical cowardice; and the brave odyssey of centuries in exile was a tragic error of a people whose powers for action were paralyzed into inactivity, unable to make a last stand, recover its lost geographic position, or make a dramatic exit. The ideals of the Bible, in themselves, are of dubious validity. Monotheism, with its philosophic monistic ramifications, he regarded as a delimiting value inferior to the Greek pluralistic attitude to the world. Ethics in its prophetic uncompromising aspect was barren, consisting of negations to police human relations. Heathen aesthetics, on the other hand, contained an unfolding appreciative receptiveness to life. Judaism as a religion was an historical error, and Jewish life was often reprehensible in its narrow horizon, its denial of the opportunities of living. The Jewish mission idea in both assimilationist and nationalistic versions, is a deception. "In vain to we champion a noble ethical culture destined to be the light of nations when it is dark in our tents and cloudy in our lives."⁷

Domination by the past and enslavement to the Book, combine to relay an unsalutary spiritual affectation of life, completing the vicious circle of abortive existence by the suppression of the individual in the

⁶ Berdichevsky, translated in Simon Halkin, op. cit., p. 94.

⁷ Micha Joseph Berdichevsky, op. cit., p. 40.

Such a revolutionary appraisal calls for a re-evaluation of Jewish history. To Barabshinsky the Jewish world of yesterday is before us in face of danger was often a substitution of political expediency for the grave urgency of centuries in which the Jewish people as a people whose power for action was paralyzingly low. Inevitably, Jewish as well as a last stand, recover its lost center in reality, we have a dramatic exit. The ideals of the Bible, in fact, are not at all their validity. Homogenism, with its philosophic-moralistic rationalism, is regarded as a defining value in Jewish life. The Jewish people, as a people, the world. Within in its proper dimension, the Jewish people, consisting of negations to political expediency, Jewish as well as on the other hand, contained as it did, the Jewish people, to life. Judaism as a religion was at its crisis, error, and Jewish life was often reprehensible in its Jewish spirit, the denial of the opportunities of living. The Jewish people, in its Jewish spirit, its and nationalistic versions, is a tragedy. It is said to be a tragedy, a tragic ethical culture destined to be the last of nations when it is back in our tents and among its own people.

Conclusion by the poet and scholar on the book, entitled to say an unending spiritual resurrection of life, completing the vision of absolute existence by the suppression of the individual in the

Barabshinsky, translated in Simon Halpern, op. cit., p. 24.

Barabshinsky, op. cit., p. 40.

interests of the collective. Thus runs Berdichevsky's criticism. Advances in the long history of Jewry were always scored by individuals whose accomplishments were largely not because, but in spite of the environment and the collective. The "gleichschaltung" in Judaism, the homogeneity of behavior, the weight of tradition, left little room for individual differences and personal expression. The very quality of historic Judaism accorded by Achad Ha'am--its corporate nature and blending of individual and collective needs--Berdichevsky turned into a fault. He considered it as frustrating and dwarfing the image of man seeking to free himself from the shackles of custom and group. The spiritual tradition deadened the sense of beauty and closed the eyes to nature. In becoming spiritual beings they were transformed into emasculated men. Regarding this as the overpowering inheritance of catholic Israel, Berdichevsky "battled for the right of the individual Jew who must free himself from the fetters of a narrow rabbinism and must regain freedom and self-assertion in all forms and phases of productive life."⁸ The fact that he borrowed much from Nietzsche did not in any way deter him, for the indigenous character of ideas had little to do with their genuine quality of his pattern of thought.

The transition to a positive philosophy of Zionism was at this point of individual emphasis.

I saw that we built for ourselves too many castles in the air, that we are spiritual people more than required, and that the spiritual consumes the physical in our people and makes us powerless. Then I developed the concept of a change of values in all that we have. I thought of destroying the spiritual

⁸Joseph Heller, The Zionist Idea (New York: Schocken Books, 1949), p. 198.

kingdom and to crown the physical, to restore the strength and courage so that we would be human beings who know life and not only priests in the tabernacle. And then I saw that man is not alone; that one family cannot pave its way. . .that there is no people without a land. I denied the condition of exile and dedicated myself to bring about the unification of a people with its ancient homeland. . . .⁹

The first demand was for a change of focus from religion to people, from group to individual, and from the spiritual to the temporal. Self-interest is the basis for group interest. Recognition by the individual of the factors that militate against his own security and expression in the land of exile, will compel him to seek personal fulfillment in Israel. Assimilation is not an answer because it means running away from oneself and again submerging one's ego in the group culture. Zionism is the only solution to the personal problem, pointing to an opportunity for men to live freely and fully without sacrificing the individual altruistically on the altar of the collective good. In this fashion the Zionist goal is attained by approaching it from another angle, that of individual self-interest. The result is not a rugged *laissez-faire* competition but harmonious blending of personal and social interests.

This is not a circumvention of the problem in order to arrive at the same Zionist solution. The "change of focus" from the group to the individual is a major philosophical premise. "Man is the eye of the universe. Man's will is the God of the universe. The will of the individual is king over all propensities, the sum total of all potentialities."¹⁰ This is a far cry from the spiritual tradition. Zionism

⁹ Micha Joseph Berdichevsky, op. cit., p. 375.

¹⁰ Berdichevsky, quoted in Simon Halkin, op. cit., p. 92.

predicated on this anthropocentrism, becomes unequivocally a secular and secularizing movement.

It would aim to establish anew the house of Israel on secular foundations. . . .emancipating the people from the dictatorship of the Law. . . . Zionism should stand up and say No to everything accepted hitherto. That which in exile apparently seemed to be of a supporting and preserving power, would be reversed in the new land. . . . The fallacy of Zionism was to link the new with the old. . . .¹¹

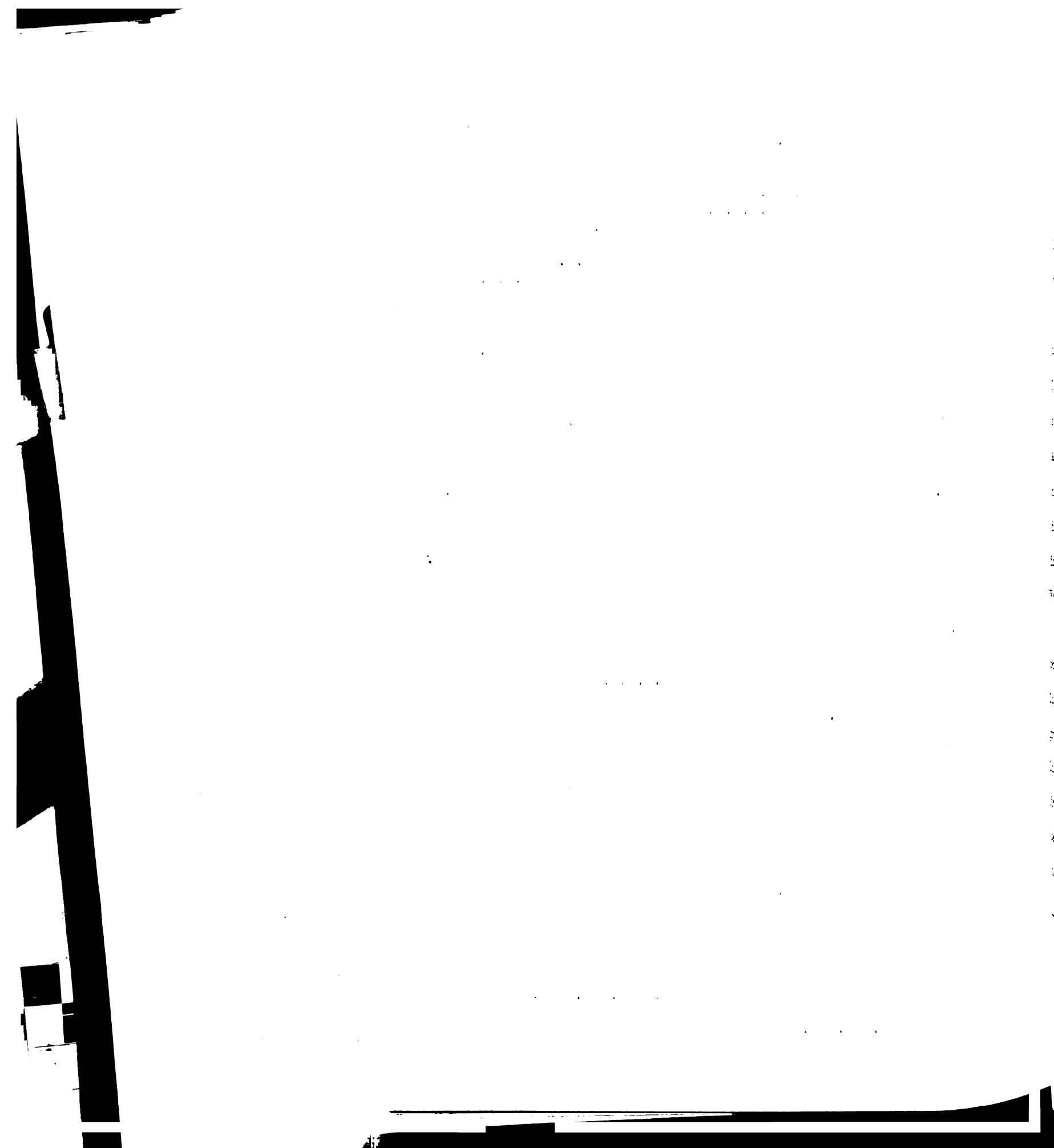
The new man, Berdichevsky envisaged, motivated by considerations of personal enhancement, would seek a new life in Palestine. Freed from the inhibitions of a religious culture, he can entertain any theory without regard to its Jewish antecedents or parallels. He is receptive to nature, appreciative of its phenomena, inwardly enriched by contact with it. He accepts all people, insensitive to any distinction. Yet the Jew of tomorrow speaks the Hebrew language, for he must have some medium and it might as well be his own in which he was brought up. He lives in his own country; in other respects he is a citizen of the world.

It is possible to begin once again after making fundamental changes in our lives and our hearts. . . . There is no construction without preceding destruction, and there is no being without ceasing.¹²

The individualism of Berdichevsky led to nationalism that required the Hebrew tongue and the land of Israel. His opposition to spiritual speculations and cultural programs was in consonance with the total dedication of Herzlian Zionism to the political goal of establishing a Jewish State. There was also agreement with Achad Ha'am that Zionism required a change of spirit, but it was a revolt against

¹¹ Micha Joseph Berdichevsky, op. cit., p. 382.

¹² Ibid., p. 36.



the spiritual rather than re-enforcement of it, that he advocated.

Needed were changes, not improvements.

I give you your thoughts and opinions, your doctrines and regulations, . . .and you give me the body of ancient Israel, his nature and simple life. . .give us back our youth.¹³

His was a romantic longing for pristine beauty and simplicity, in some respects remindful of Rousseau.

Removing barriers, lifting controls, allowing life to take its natural course--these are values to be reflected in literature as well. The creative writer owes no obligation to any ethnic tradition. His spirit is not to be curtailed by the restrictions of a national culture. Achad Ha'am's attempt to create a literature in the spirit of the historic destiny of Israel was an anathema to Berdichevsky. His novels depict the conflict of individual passions and drives with the frustrating norms of public pressure. "We have room for all ideas and opinions. We may bow or refuse to bow to any deity of our liking."¹⁴

Yet with all his unbridled individualism, Berdichevsky--to borrow a term from Stalinist vocabulary--was no rootless cosmopolitan. So deep were his roots that he found it extremely difficult to transgress the ritual restrictions of Judaism. "When a Jew has given his life for the sake of a minor commandment, his blood cries out to me from the earth; when I transgress it, the image of this martyr rises before me."¹⁵ There was an ambivalence within him, simultaneous detachment and involvement in Judaism. Anguish is vividly manifested

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 43.

in confessions that abound. He is aware of the paradoxes that in themselves are the products of the particular circumstances of Jewish life.

A Jewish sadness raps upon the portals of my heart. I sit in my room and hear the restless moaning of the Jewish people, its protracted grief, hoary with age. . . . Within my being, I feel the pain of my heritage, the aching of a life and a soul banished from their paradise; I cannot break down that which I want to break down. . . . I crave unification, I want to create a new people--new human beings, and yet I am torn in my own soul. We are ripped to tatters forevermore.¹⁶

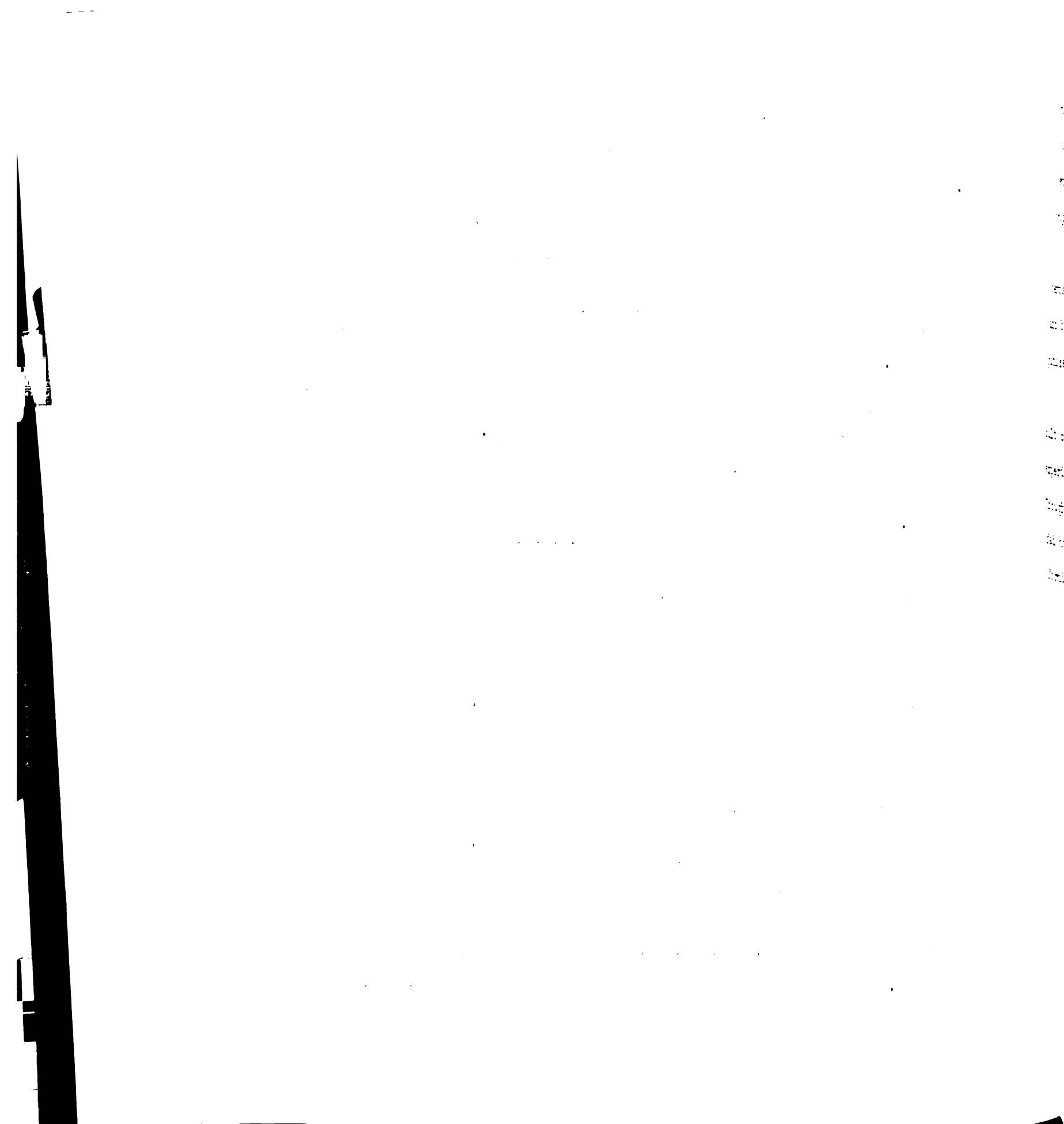
The sorrow of a nation is forever evident in his work, a sorrow of disturbing questions, aching problems, and uncertain answers. He was the spokesman of a bewildered age.

He fought for the new but his soul was caught between two worlds. An ancient heritage was alive and moving in his heart even at the time when he fought it bitterly. . . . He was among the select few whom fate has decreed to give form and expression to a generation in transition, in its being and becoming, its direction and destiny.¹⁷

What lessons for education are derived from Berdichevsky in Israel today? More than anyone else he is the champion of secular education, released from all dogma, religious or otherwise. Emphasis upon the individual's needs and abilities, academic freedom and aesthetic development are some of the positive implications of his thought, honored in breach or practice. An important concept of dubious significance is his negation of Jewish life and values in exile. Segments of Israel society in its early stage of pre-State days adopted a

¹⁶ Simon Halkin, op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁷ M. Glikson, Works, in Hebrew (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1941), p. 270.



critical attitude towards the diaspora, denying it the right and the possibility to survive. Frequently there is an attempt to discount Jewish spiritual growth beyond Biblical and Talmudic times. The catastrophe in Europe has modified this reaction.

Berdichevsky's individualism spelled out Zionism in personal terms. This was subsequently given deeper meaning by other personages and became a major foundation in the ideology of the pioneer youth organizations.

Most recently a group of native Israeli have flirted with the cult of Canaanism. It consists of a denial of the totality of Jewish experience in an effort to recapture ancient Hebrew pagan culture. Though not drawn directly from Berdichevsky, the exponents of the new fad have found considerable support and stimulation in his non-conformist views.

critical attitude towards the church, because it is the right and the
possibility to survive. Frequently there is an attempt to discuss
church spiritual growth beyond physical and material things. The church
troops in Europe has modified this reaction.

Orthodoxy's traditionalism applied to church in general.
forms. This was subsequently altered because of the church's
and because a major foundation in the history of the church would be
elimination.

Most recently a group of church troops have lifted with the
out of Germanism. It consists of a group of church troops of various
experience in an effort to recognize the church's own growth and
though not drawn directly from Germany, the elements of the new
had have found considerable support and interest in the church-
troops' views.

CHAPTER XIII

A. D. GORDON

Zionism as a political movement was founded by Herzl. The cultural renaissance was spelled out by Achad Ha'am. The Hebrew language was revived by Ben Yehuda. The man who, more than any other individual, is identified with the social and spiritual foundations of modern Israel, was A. D. Gordon.

. . . the Prophet of the Second and Third Aliyoth. . . , his words have been eagerly read, discussed, interpreted, and misinterpreted, and have served Jewish youth as criteria for their deeds and thoughts.¹

Aaron David Gordon merited this distinction by virtue of his preachment and practice during the formative years of Israel society, among the young men and women of pre- and post- world war immigrations (Aliyoth). A combination of fructifying ideas, forceful personality and selfless behavior converging in one individual, placed him as the key figure in a pioneering generation. The principles expounded by Gordon have become indigenous to the Israel socio-economic and educational environment.

Jewish life in the State of Israel differs radically from its counterpart elsewhere. As an autonomous society, constituting the majority population, it is easily distinguishable from Jewish minorities in the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. The accoutrements of national

¹Reuben Wallenrod, The Literature of Modern Israel (New York and London: Abelard-Schuman, 1956), p. 92.

and territorial independence in the form of government, language, social structure, and legislation, present a flourishing civilization without foreign infringement of authentic self-directed growth. That is to be expected. Less obvious, but of equal if not greater significance, is the difference in values not necessarily ethnic nor religious in origin. Standards for living and attitudes towards economic pursuits and personal happiness are at variance with those of co-religionists in other countries. They relate to nature, labor, agriculture, and the content and aim of education. The historically dominating spirit of Israel points to rural rather than urban living as the normative. Physical work is often by choice rather than necessity. Industrial arts take precedence over white collar professions in the hierarchy of gainful employment. The farmer is held in high esteem and may generally partake of a richer cultural diet. Apparently geographic transplantation has been accompanied by social transformation as the new twentieth century Jew emerges on his native soil.

In this metamorphosis, Gordon played a leading role through the inspired meditation of his heart, the effective articulation of his mind, and the dedicated work of his hands.

Born in Poland in 1857, Gordon led an uneventful life in comparative economic and intellectual ease, without the stresses and strains, material and spiritual, characteristic in the rise of other luminaries on the Jewish horizon of his day. He was employed as a land clerk and devoted his spare time to study and the furtherance of the Zionist ideal in his own community. Then, at the age of forty-eight Gordon experienced

a deep intellectual crisis, effectuating a turning point in his life. In spite of age, family, and position, he was moved by the power of his convictions to depart for Palestine. The remaining eighteen years were spent as a farm laborer in various settlements in the Holy Land, passing on in 1922 at the age of sixty-five. It was during this period that Gordon became the mentor and symbol of the generation that brought about the great Zionist revolution redirecting the course of Jewish history.

Herzl diagnosed the Jewish problem in political terms of national statelessness; Achad Ha'am feared assimilation in the abandonment of a historical culture; Gordon saw it in the economic rootlessness of the individual and his complete urbanization. Upon arriving in Palestine he rejected offers to teach, determined to be a night guard and farm laborer. Without necessary training and conditioning, he made the difficult transition from the desk to the plough as he set out to live by his own faith.

What he saw, disturbed him: Arab labor tilling Jewish farmland, Arab guards protecting Jewish property. To Gordon, removal from direct contact with the soil through its cultivation, disqualified the legal proprietors from becoming the real owners. Certainly on the national scale, the land belongs to those who till and guard it by themselves. This applies to industry as well. The country is theirs who build it by the sweat of their brow.

If we do not till the soil with our own hands, the soil will not be ours--not only not ours in a social, or in a national, but not even in a political sense. The land will

not be ours and we shall not be the people of the land. Here, then, we shall also be aliens just as in the lands of the diaspora where, too, there are Jews who rent land, who buy fields, gardens, orchards, and traffic in the fruit of the labor of others. It is only to the degree that we here possess settlements and farms in which the work is done wholly by us that we shall become citizens and natives of the land.²

The reasoning is in line with the Marxist concept of ownership. Yet it is nonetheless valid in the reclaiming of a lost homeland. The very absence of Jews from heavy industry and agriculture, historical factors notwithstanding, had made the Jew in Europe vulnerable to the cry of "foreigner." Residence in Palestine without changed conditions will not remove the stigma. In order to possess the land there must be a "conquest of labor." This calls for willing employers and available employees--not too common phenomena in the early years of the twentieth century. The arrival of hundreds of young idealists, mostly intellectuals, tipped the scales in favor of Jewish labor. The actual rise of an agricultural labor class was a long drawn-out battle against competitive cheap Arab labor, employers' distrust, and their own physical and vocational unfitness. Among its participants are men who lead the State of Israel today, including Premier Ben Gurion and President Ben Zvi.

Gordon was not necessarily the only spokesman for this movement. What distinguished him from the others was his seniority in years and his commitment to this strenuous life in spite of limitations of a frail and aging body. Reminiscences of a leading contemporary stress his dedication to physical work.

When his efforts to work at digging ditches in a grove proved beyond his strength--he managed to dig three a day,

²A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, trans. Frances Burnce (New York: League for Labor Palestine, 1938), p. 60.

while some of the others did fifty--the young farmers of the colony offered him the position as assistant to the colony clerk, but he refused.³

The challenge of the moment can evoke great sacrifice for a worthy end. To sustain the sacrificial effort over a lifetime, the means in themselves must become worthwhile. Responding to the call for work over a limited period of time is not unusual when youth is faced with the challenge of an attractive cause. Patriotic sentiments are aroused for any momentary heroic act even to the extent of jeopardy to life. But dedicating one's entire future to seemingly unprofitable and tedious toil, involves more than courageous behavior in the face of danger. Physical work itself has to assume a new meaning, becoming spiritually rewarding and continuously replenishing.

It seems clear that a half-hearted urge to work just because there is nothing to lose, to work merely for the purpose of carrying on a national existence without the powerful inner conviction of the importance of this life is so unstable, so narrow an aim as to be ineffective in transforming a youth that would like to be healthy but finds it very difficult to acquire health. We must, in spite of ourselves, seek another road.⁴

This other road was illuminated with a glowing light on a new route from the prosaic routine of work to a cosmic "religion of labor."

A. D. Gordon laid the philosophic foundation for the change in the Jewish estimate of the worth of labor. . . . For Gordon, . . . labor is not a curse upon one cast out from the paradise of idleness, an inescapable evil of civilization, but rather an ideal, a blessing upon him who has found favor in the eyes of the Lord.⁵

³ Moshe Smilansky, "Aaron David Gordon," Sound the Great Trumpet, ed. M. Z. Frank (New York: Whittier Books, 1955), p. 81.

⁴ A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., pp. 71, 72.

⁵ Shalom Spiegel, Hebrew Reborn (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), pp. 410, 11.

There are two standard views of physical work; Gordon introduced a third. In a normal situation, work is accepted as matter-of-fact--a necessary component of economic reality. In the Jewish group--the transient state of its existence compelling it to rely on portable and flexible means of livelihood--even skilled labor was regarded as a liability detracting from the dignity of the individual. Gordon evolved a thesis of the spiritual powers of man. To work is to worship, as suggested by the Hebrew term shared by both functions. Labor is endowed with an inherent nobility elevating man beyond the animal. Its productive and creative processes strike a responsive chord in his soul. Released is a wealth of thought and feeling reinforcing, ennobling and gratifying.

You will derive pleasure from every task that you undertake, from every deed that you do--a pleasure like that which you derive in eating and drinking.

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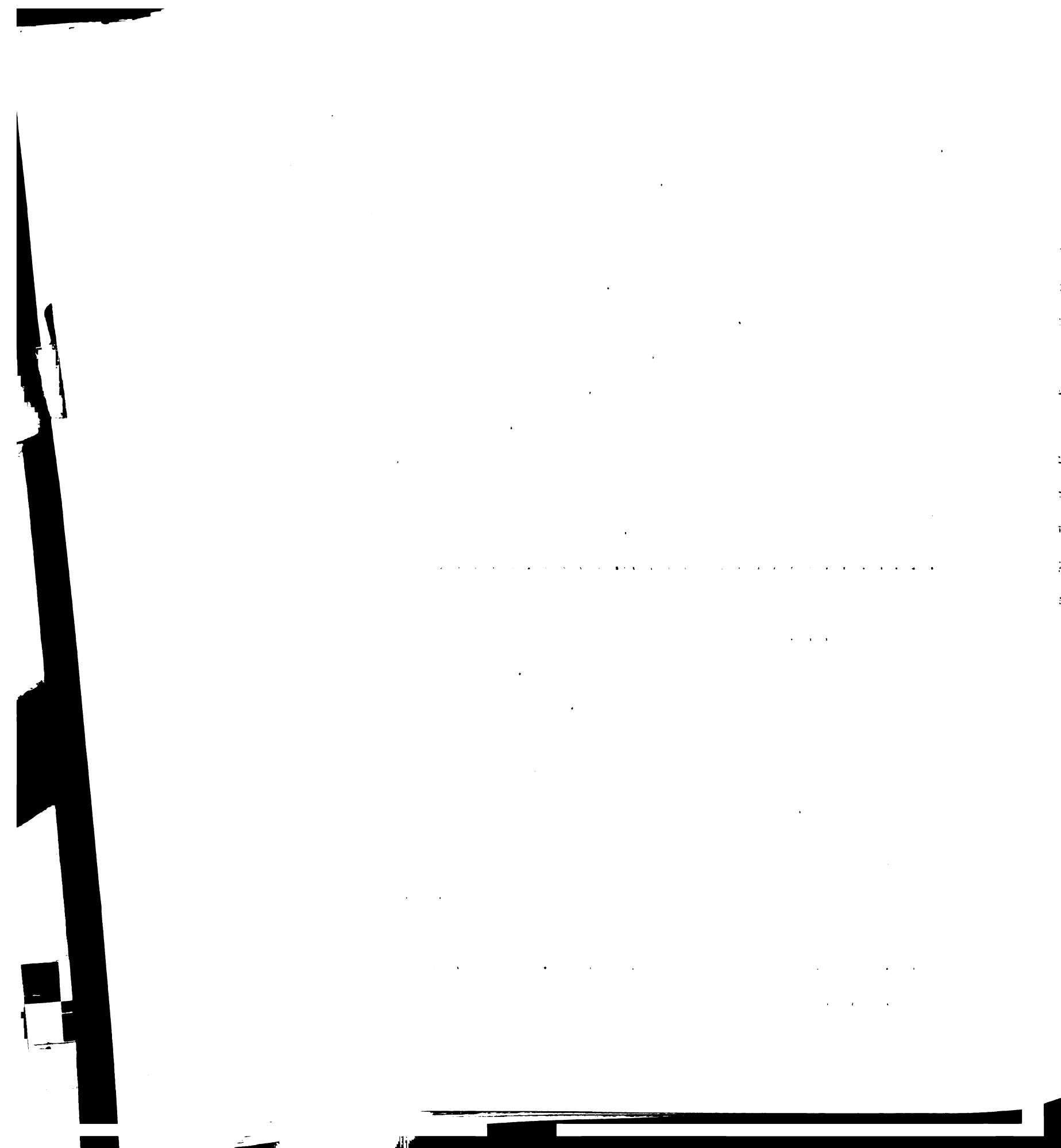
You will then know and consider in your heart that there is in work such a spiritual wealth of which you can see the bearest fringe; . . .⁶

The Jewish people stands in need of this wealth. Its impoverishment in exile lies in this very realm of endeavor. Return to Palestine is of little consequence unless it involves abandoning the conditions of the previous environment and creating a new situation in which life can be completely different.

When you will utterly abandon the life that was created by others, given it up as completely as you have given up their land, you will come to create here a new life, a life of your own, then the glowing ember will again be rekindled; . . .⁷

⁶ A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., pp. 250, 251.

⁷ Ibid., p. 2.



Productive labor is the new requirement. The regenerative force of work will revive the nation and restore the individual to his full human stature. The psychological gratification derived, stems not only from the indispensable use of constructive labor in the rebuilding of the homeland, but in its self-contained healing potency. "The reward of labor is inherent in the work; otherwise it falls short of its innate nobility."⁸ It is therefore incumbent upon the individual to change his "mode of life . . . to make it conform to the ideals of labor."⁹ And Gordon did it, setting the example for others.

On the surface a similarity with the Marxist dialectic of labor may be detected. The difference however is impressive. To Marx, economic value is created by labor and no other value exists. Gordon was concerned with its spiritual force. He ascribed to it a mystic power bringing man closer to the cosmic, attuning him to the divine, spelling out a life in another dimension. The Jewish people needs it

not only as a force tying man to the earth and acquiring the earth, but also as an essential force in the creation of a national culture.¹⁰

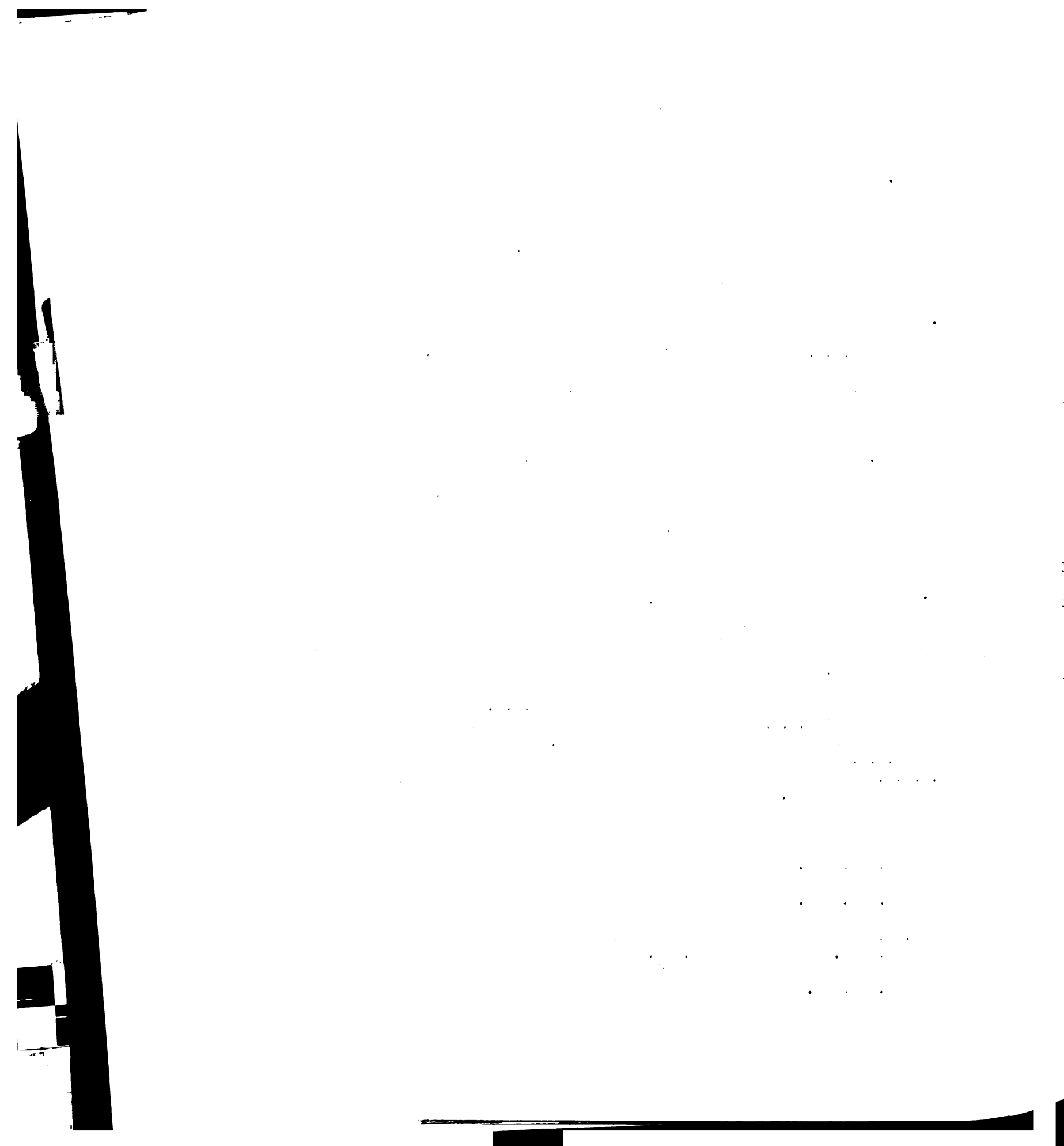
Not an academic culture do we come to create today. . .but the culture of life. . .the beliefs and opinions of life, the art in life, poetry in life, ethics in life, religion in life, . . .the living link between the present and the past. . . . Our goal is to make with our own hands those things that make life.¹¹

⁸ Ibid., p. 111.

⁹ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁰ A. D. Gordon, The Writings of A. D. Gordon (Tel Aviv: Hapoel Hatzair, 1928), vol. I, in Hebrew, p. 95.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 97.



Thus shall Israel prove different from the dispersion, unique, authentic, and valid.

We strive to create in the land of Israel a new Jewish nation, not a colony of the nation in the diaspora, not a continuation of the diaspora in a new guise.¹²

The individual will find salvation, and the people redemption in a mutually beneficial engagement where the one is not offered on the altar of the many.

Labor is one side of the coin in Gordon's ideological currency.

Nature is the other. Return to Israel is to be a return to Nature.

And when, O Man, you will return to Nature, you will open your eyes on that day and you will gaze straight into the eyes of Nature, you will see therein your own image, and you will know that you have returned to yourself, that when you have hidden from nature, you have hidden from yourself.¹³

Then the Jew will again be himself, for rustication is not escaping; it is coming home again.

Contact with nature uplifts the spirit and enriches experience.

Man is more human when he senses the beauty of nature in all its majesty, unhampered by the restrictions of city civilization. Deriving a liveliness in the cultivation of the bounties of nature is salutary to the spirit, purifying to the emotion, releasing to the mind, and ennobling to the person. The broadened vision, the refined and overflowing feeling, the stimulated thought, add to the capacity for getting the most out of life. Without it we only survive; with it we are continuously revived.

¹² A. D., Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 41.

¹³ Ibid., p. 247.

Thus shall I have proved from the dispersion, unigen, and
and will.

We strive to create in the land of Israel a new Jewish
nation, and a colony of the nation in the Diaspora, and a
continuation of the Diaspora in a new state.
The individual will find salvation, and the people redemption in a
mutually beneficial engagement with the one in not attached on the
side of the many.

Labor is one side of the coin, and the other is the spiritual currency.
Nature is the other. Nature is the source of the spiritual.

And when, O man, you will return to Nature, you will
open your eyes on that day and you will see the world as it is,
the eyes of Nature, you will see the world as it is,
and you will know what you have returned to yourself, and
when you have taken from Nature, you have taken from
yourself.

Then the law will again be given, the revelation is not escaping; it
is coming home again.

Contrast with nature uplifts the spirit and enlarges experience.
Man is more human when he senses the beauty of nature in all its majesty,
unhindered by the restrictions of his individualism. Deriving a living
hood in the cultivation of the beauty of nature is akin to the
spirit, purifying to the emotion, releasing to the mind, and ennobling
to the person. The broadened vision, the refined and overflowing feeling,
the stimulated thought, and the capacity for feeling the most out of
life. Without it we only survive; with it we are continuously revived.

"For we of today are far, and are continually moving farther away from the source of life, from nature."¹⁴ To reverse the process, enables us to lead the good life. Then do we transcend ourselves and attain the harmony and unity of a higher way of existence. "Pure, natural life, . . . amid nature and with nature . . . expressing the sense of higher unity and higher responsibility--this is true religion."¹⁵ The landscape of Israel with its historical associations and illusions is all the more charged with the appeal for human responsiveness.

It seems as though here the fullness of divine abundance emanating from all the cosmos into the soul of man, and especially into the soul of the Jew, . . . is altogether different than in the lands of the diaspora. In the language of the soul, . . . I would say that the essence of the infinite, the essence of truth, holiness, beauty, courage, the essence of all divine emanation is conceived by the soul in a different manner. . . . Here each one of the multitude of feelings, inclinations, desires, and powers of the soul receives a different illumination. . . . than in other lands.¹⁶

Thus nature beckons to us to approach it, unveiling itself for those who choose to embrace it.

How is the gap between the Jew and nature to be bridged? Not intellectual comprehension of the phenomena of nature, nor the aesthetic perception of its grandeur, but man's establishment of his domicile in it, was Gordon's intention.

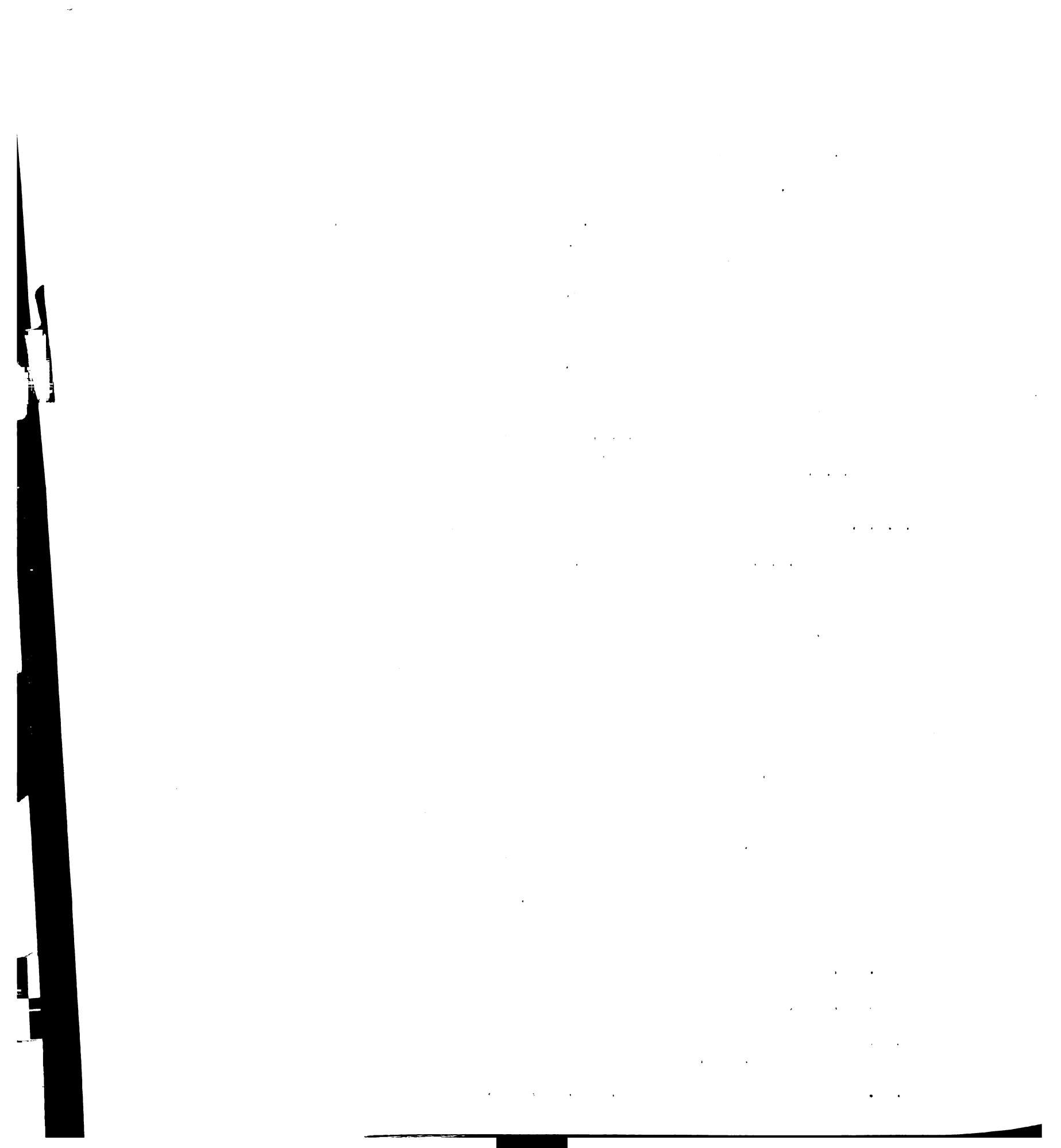
The categorical imperative of the spirit of man, therefore, does not lie in the glib phrase of the culture of today: "Know nature and love it!" Rather is it to be found in the wordless notes, inaudible in our culture, of the voice that coos like a dove in the searching soul, that beats like the wings of a bird in its narrow cage: "Live Nature!"¹⁷

¹⁴Ibid., p. 179.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁶A. D. Gordon, Nation and Labor (Jerusalem: Histadrut Tzionit, 1952), in Hebrew, p. 497.

¹⁷A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 181.



Gordon believed that cities retard human progress. The ills of mankind, the social conflicts and the moral deterioration are caused by concealing the munificent blessings of nature and labor. To embark upon a life of labor in close contact with nature is a way to combat the "conventional lies of civilization"¹⁸ and ameliorate the complexes and complexities of modern times. Man's quest for freedom, his desire for untrammelled and creative expression, his search for wholesomeness and harmony, are found at the threshold of nature. At this juncture are his potentialities realized and consciousness refined. He acquires a sense of belonging by becoming a citizen of the universe in addition to being a member of humanity and a son of his people. "The sum of all this lies here; to educate, to regenerate the Jew one must begin at the beginning--with man."¹⁹

Gordon was undoubtedly influenced by Rousseau and Tolstoy, being a great admirer of the latter. Yet what he adopted, he adapted with the stamp of his originality. To Rousseau return to nature meant decontrol, loosening the bonds of behavior. To Gordon it was a higher discipline spelling out greater and not lesser spirituality. Tolstoy's anti-technological "return to the primitive"²⁰ was a far cry from Gordon's attempt to formulate a "religion of labor drawing from primary religious sources, from the source of a natural religious perspective, cosmic and ethical."²¹ Much closer is the transcendentalism of Thoreau, but Gordon

¹⁸ The title of one of Max Nordau's books.

¹⁹ A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 78.

²⁰ Lewis Mumford's characterization in The Condition of Man.

²¹ F. Lachover, Poetry and Thought (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1953), in Hebrew, p. 151.

was not acquainted with his writings.

How is the new society, as Gordon envisaged it, to be achieved? Not in the conventional manner: "Our national regeneration is not restricted to the establishment of a new social order or even to a renewed social spirit."²² The individual begins with himself. He is to change his mode of life to conform with these ideas. Living in Israel, and speaking Hebrew is one form of Zionism inadequate though accepted in official quarters. To mold one's life in consonance with the ideals of labor is the sine qua non for immediate fulfillment. There are no half measures. "For such an achievement in general, and for our nation in particular, one rule must govern: either there is a complete achievement or none at all."²³ Obviously the college student turned farm-hand can hardly experience the joys of creative labor if he remains a wage earner in the employment of others. "Such an attitude cannot be expected from the so-called proletarian who is deprived of the right to enjoy the actual fruit of his toil and to stand in direct personal relationship to what he creates."²⁴ Independent farming makes this possible. In Israel it took another course of great promise. Economic necessity, topographic and climatic inhospitality, security considerations and common ideology, all brought into being the agricultural collective. Though not directly its prime mover, Gordon influenced the Israel Kibbutz (collective) as it blossomed forth in the post war

²² A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 4.

²³ Ibid., p. 14.

²⁴ Shalom Wurm, The Kvutza (New York: Habonim, 1942), p. 23.

was not acquainted with his writings.

Now is the new society, as Gordon expressed it, "the new society" not in the conventional manner: "Our national responsibility is not confined to the establishment of a new social order or even to a new social order." "The individual begins with himself, he is there his mode of life to conform with those laws, living in Israel, and speaking Hebrew is one form of living, independence being required in official quarters. To mold one's life in accordance with the desire of labor is the aim for Israelites, and there are no self-measures." "For such an achievement, however, the new action in particular, one must prepare. It is not enough to be a mere soldier-man or more at all."²² Obviously the soldier's training furnished him with hardly experience and loss of freedom for him to render a wage earned in the employment of others. "What an attitude cannot be expected from the so-called proletarian who is deprived of the right to enjoy the actual fruits of his toil and to stand in direct personal relationship to what he creates."²³ "The soldier's training makes him a proletarian. It takes it took another person to create. Economic necessity, geography and climate, technology, security considerations, and common sense, all provide him with the explanation collective. Though not directly the same matter, Gordon influenced the latter *Kibbutz* (collective) as it blossomed forth in the post war

²² A. D. Gordon, *Selected Essays*, pp. 212, p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁴ *Shalom Wurm, The Kibbutz* (New York: Schocken, 1948), p. 22.

decade. It proved to be a chief factor in the upbuilding of Palestine and a successful social experiment, concretizing Gordon's ideas on man, nature, and labor. "Thus the ideas of labor and the collective became inseparably fused."²⁵ Gordon joined the first collective when it was formed in 1909. A world-wide youth movement educating toward collective life in Israel bore his name.

The religion of labor with its metaphysical overtones is joined to a socio-cultural perspective directed at a nation in the making. The individual's search for an expressive and bountiful self in communion with nature while engaged in labor, is bound up with the emerging character of the Jewish people. Rejecting assimilation, Gordon objects to Berdichevsky's imitation or even Achad Ha'am's emulation. Genuine self-dictated expression is his goal.

We are looking for ourselves and our own way of life. Not a sponge drawing in everything with nothing of its own except its sponginess, and not life translated from others or patterned after the cliches or the spirit of others, but independent personality--national for the group and individual for the person--living in its own spirit and creating a life of its own. . . ."²⁶

Socialism too he opposes, especially in its class struggle format, considering it a foreign growth but affirming simultaneously "labor, national ownership of the soil, and the means of production."²⁷

His opposition to Marxism stems from his concern for the individual. Dielectics of history are unpallatable to one who places

²⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

²⁶ A. D. Gordon, the Writings of A. D. Gordon, op. cit., p. 255.

²⁷ A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 48.

... It proved to be a chief factor in the spreading of Palestine
and a successful social experiment, summarizing Gordon's ideas on work,
nature, and labor. "Thus the ideas of labor and the religious become
inseparably fused."⁸⁶ Gordon joined the Jewish settlement when it was

formed in 1906. A world-wide youth movement, embracing Jewish religious
life in Israel, bore its name.

The religion of labor, which the Jewish settlement is joined
to a social-cultural perspective, is a religion in the making. The

individual's search for an answer to the question of life is common
with nature while engaged in labor. It was the aim of the settlement

character of the Jewish people, to create a new Jewish settlement, Jewish
to Jewishness's mission or even when Jewish settlement, Jewish

self-directed expression is his aim.

We are looking for ourselves and our way of life.
Not a space drawing in every direction, but a space of its own
space in the settlement, and not a space of its own space, but
or perhaps after the ideas of the Jewish people, but
independent personality--and for the Jewish people and individual
for the person--living in the Jewish people and creating a life
of its own."⁸⁷

Individual too he opposes, especially in his close struggle toward, con-
sidering as a Jewish growth in the Jewish settlement, Jewish, national

ownership of the self, and the name of "Jewishness."⁸⁸
His opposition to Jewishness is his own for the in-

Michael, Michael's of history are inseparable to one who places

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

⁸⁷ A. D. Gordon, The Prince of A. D. Gordon, op. cit., p. 50.

⁸⁸ A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 52.

the unfettered human spirit above dogma. "Man is not sacrificed, even on the altar of the nation."²⁸ The individual is not a spoke in the wheel of historical necessity. His fulfillment, physical, social, intellectual, artistic, and religious is primary. Man is an end in himself. In this Gordon leans on Jewish tradition.

We are the goal per se. . .the goal or chain of goals begin with us and in our own lives from the day that we come to the land of Israel and commence to work. . . .²⁹

A land-labor framework is the ideal setting for the blossoming forth of man's potentialities. The stereotype peasant, with his provincial outlook and limited horizon, was as remote from Gordon's goal as the urban merchant.

In exile, our life is not real living. . .since there is no room for achieving the goals essential to us in themselves. . .a life which is spiritual and material, national, universal, and individual simultaneously.³⁰

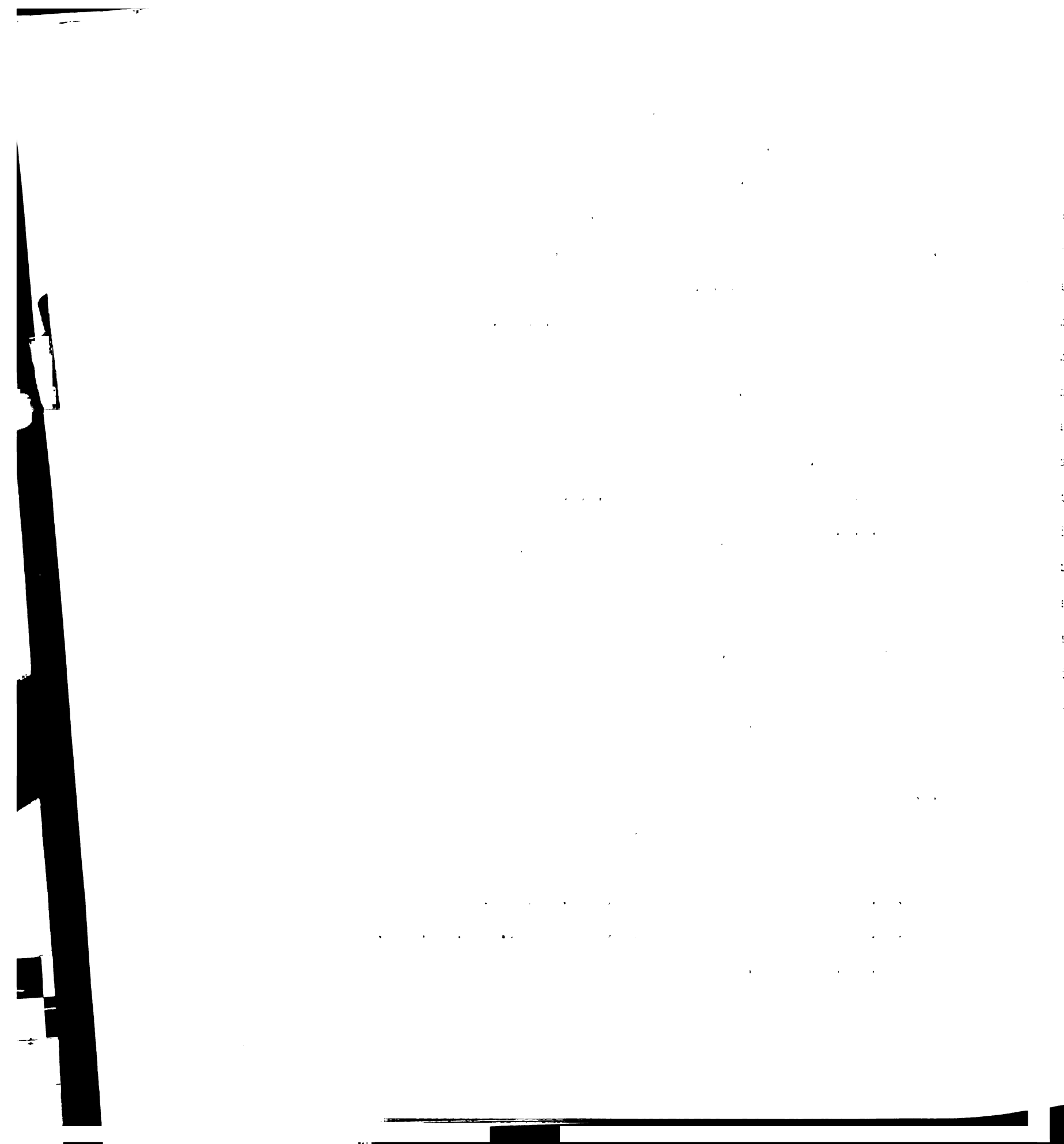
We have been describing, without identifying, the third pillar of Gordon's philosophical structure--personal fulfillment exhibited magnificently by his own person. This became the rallying slogan of a pioneer movement whose members converged on the homeland from all continents, America included.

The dream of restoration was born when the state was crushed in 70 A.D. The Zionist movement in the nineteenth century is the political formulation of a religious aspiration. It fired the imagination

²⁸ A. D. Gordon, Nation and Labor, op. cit., p. 366.

²⁹ A. D. Gordon, the Writings of A. D. Gordon, op. cit., p. 250.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 249, 250.



of a people unwilling or unable to bear further the blows of prejudice or the demands of emancipation. A generation liberated from the intellectual shackles of the ghetto sought in the emerging Jewish nationalism a substitute for the religion of their fathers. That meant hope for personal salvation. Gordon reinterpreted Zionism in personal terms in answer to this need, transferring a platform into a faith and a goal into a promise. Zionist action was no longer altruistic self-negation in the service of a noble and distant aim. Zionism was rewarding self-fulfillment, a realization of the spiritual powers of the individual in a new life, heroic but satisfying, difficult but romantic. A challenge had become an opportunity. The Jew was to be saved as the man in him drew from his untapped strength, regaining his lost stature. A nation's destiny became an individual's career. The lines of demarcation between nationalism, humanity, and individuality were blurred, and the three separate entities merged into one force. The national mission, the social gospel, and the personal interests, are parallel lines running in the same direction, meeting on the horizon. This was Gordon's achievement, and youth throughout the Jewish world followed his lead. Many could truly repeat after him: "The Land of Israel has given me much life, as much as I can hold, to the fullest capacity of my enjoyment of that life."³¹

To see the light entails being aware of the darkness. There can be no acceptance of a new faith without rejection of a previous one.

The simple truth is forgotten or dimmed, that the basis of creation is the revolt of man against existing conditions,

³¹ A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 129.

the aspiration of man to create life in his own image and to undergo a process of regeneration that does not stop for a single moment.³²

A recognition of the unnatural and unwholesome state of existence in the diaspora precedes the embarking upon a new life in Israel. The ills and evils of existing society are to be diagnosed before the prescription for another is drawn up. We witness "how poor, limited, and narrow are human relations in society, how little room there is for life of universal breadth and depth."³³ The inferior lot of the Jew, caused not necessarily by the accident of faith as by the choice of environment and pursuit of livelihood, will be eliminated automatically in the rehabilitation of the individual leading to the remaking of society. Proletarianization and ruralization are conducive to lessening of inter-human strife and eventually, national hostilities. Reality can approximate the cherished ideals of humanity.

We must create a new nation, a human nation that has a brotherly human relationship toward other nations. . . .³⁴

We must direct it toward the development of the human spirit, toward the search for truth and righteousness in its relation with other peoples and with all mankind.³⁵

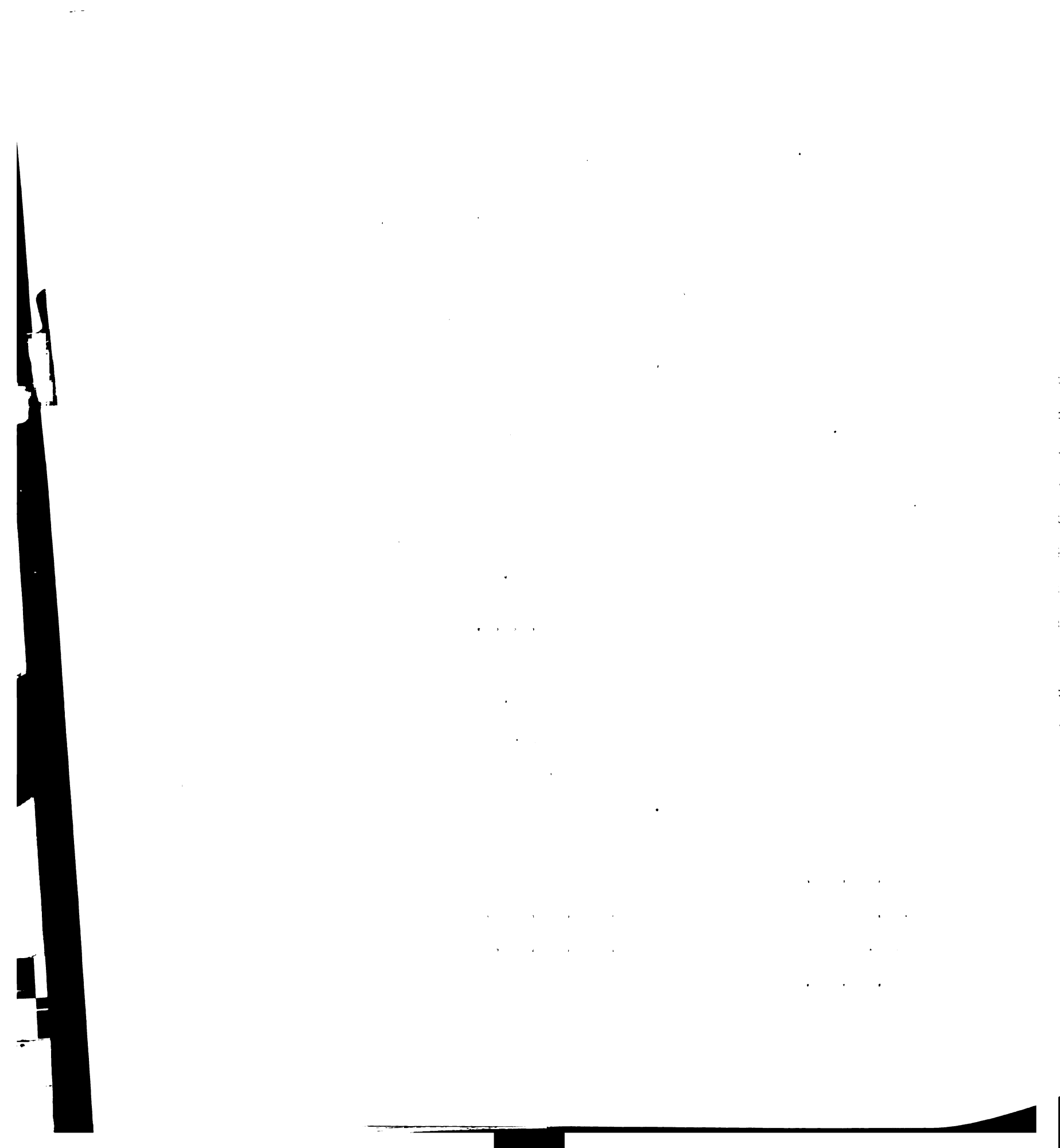
Individual fulfillment in these terms brings inner peace and dynamic reorganization of the forces of personality. Man finds a new self as he escapes from his former self.

³²Ibid., p. 87.

³³A. D. Gordon, Nation and Labor, op. cit., p. 367.

³⁴A. D. Gordon, Selected Essays, op. cit., p. 39.

³⁵Ibid., p. 13.



Here in infinite expanse everyone will find himself a wide course, as wide as the course of the sun and the stars. Here will the son of man be bound to his brother with celestial bonds.

The primary reform that the life of labor in the midst of nature institutes within man, is perfection. The perfect unity, the complete participation and unification of all the spiritual forces within him, in every aspect of life. Perception, emotion, instinct, physiological powers and physical powers of the body--all partake simultaneously and harmoniously. . .in the combined vastness of life.³⁶

Gordon's influence on the intellectual climate of Israel and the philosophy and curriculum of its educational system is profound. The Land-Labor ideal retains its pioneer attraction and pervades the public school, both secular and religious. The goal of self-fulfillment is operative in the lives of large segments of youth as they make their homes in desert settlements and frontier outposts. Premier Ben Gurion personally dramatized this movement when he withdrew from government office a few years ago to live as a shepherd in a southern desert colony.

In this universe of discourse, the good teacher is only the one who gives the lie to the old adage "they who can, do; they who cannot, teach." He teaches by example, thereby communicating effectively to his students.

The teacher as educator--if he really is prepared for his profession--must first of all be a philosopher with a full, individual world-outlook; that is, before he can educate man, he must know man; he cannot know man except through his own inner world. He must, too, be a son of nature, for his task is not alone to train man as a social and a national product, but, primarily, as a cosmic phenomenon, for as far as the pupil is concerned, his world is

³⁶Ibid., p. 373, 374.

within himself, Education is not attained through books or through oral instruction. The educator must be the book or the living image, so that the student without any instruction from the educator must see and realize what the educator has created and creates of himself and of his talents.³⁷

To Gordon self-education is a key to human progress. The panaceas of isms, the promises of ideologies, social reforms, and political programs are secondary to man's re-education of himself. Redemption begins from within.

Let the wise and practical men say what they will.
Let politicians, let socialists bring redemption to the world through the class struggle, class education. . . .
Redemption will come to the world, rejuvenation to life, and salvation to man only through self-education as man is renewed through labor, renewing life and creating the spiritual bonds between men, with life and with reality. . . .³⁸

It was Gordon's privilege to lay the foundation for a model aspiring society by remodelling himself and others in his orbit. His was an attempt to get the most out of life while giving the most to humanity through his own people.

A popular song of Israel, accompanied by a folk dance, runs: "We come to the land to build and to be rebuilt." On the centenary of Gordon's birth, the melody is still a "hit" in the parade of a nation on the march to a brighter future.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 95.

³⁸ A. D. Gordon, Nation and Labor, op. cit., p. 584.

CHAPTER XIV

NACHMAN SYRKIN AND BER BOROCHOV

Two ideals fired the imagination of Jewish youth at the turn of the century, illuminating the path of Jewry for over fifty years. Zionism and Socialism, commanding the loyalties of large segments of a rising intelligentsia and aroused masses, began at loggerheads with each other as the First World Zionist Congress in Basle and the Jewish Socialist Bund in Warsaw were both convened in 1897. The interaction and integration of divergent ideas along with the combination of forces of opposing camps, supplied the main power for the forging of the new state of Israel. National revival and social revolution have been the two banners under which have rallied the rebellious forces of a persecuted people, the marching columns meeting on the horizon of a new dawn in the ancient homeland. The blending of the two ingredients, nation and class, economic and ethnic, materialistic and spiritual, was accomplished by Nachman Syrkin and Ber Borochov. Their creative polemic writings and organizational leadership gave impetus to a movement which played a dominant role in the prenascent stage of Israel's destiny. Syrkin was a man of prophetic zeal and inspired vision while Borochov was an original thinker endowed with a scientific analytic mind. The result was the synthesis of Socialist Zionism, an ideology still adhered to by the controlling powers in the government of Israel and exerting a lasting influence on

CHAPTER IV

NATIONALISM AND THE STATE

Two ideas fired the imagination of Jewish youth at the turn of the century, illuminating the path to a new era of Jewish history. Zionism and Socialism, commanding the imagination of Jewish youth as a rising intellectual and aroused passion, found its expression in each other as the first World Zionist Congress in 1897. The Zionizing and Socializing in Jewish youth were both concerned in 1897. The Zionizing and Socializing of divergent ideas along with the realization of Jewish state of Israel, supplied the main power for the formation of the state of Israel. National revival and social revolution were the two banners under which have rallied the Jewish youth in the twentieth century. The founding of the two movements, Zionism and Socialism, were the two main pillars in the Jewish state. Zionism and Socialism, materialistic and spiritual, were established by Herzl and Ben-Gurion. Their creative political writings and organizational leadership gave impetus to a movement which played a dominant role in the present state of Israel's destiny. Ben-Gurion was a man of prophetic soul and inspired vision while Herzl was an original thinker endowed with a scientific analytic mind. The result was the synthesis of Zionism and Socialism, an ideology still shared by the controlling powers in the government of Israel and exerting a lasting influence on

its educational philosophy.

Socialism and Zionism sought an answer to the Jewish problem, each in its own way. Marxism with its dialectical materialistic interpretation of history, ascribed the plight of Jews solely to the economic factor in a capitalistic system. A proletarian society, having eliminated the bourgeois classes, will remove the cause for national antagonisms and thus wipe out the persecution of minorities. The Jewish Socialists of the Bund, distinguishable from their assimilationist companions, were beginning to advocate separate but equal status for the Jewish proletariat, joining forces with others in bringing about the world revolution. They were opposed to emigration, confident that the approaching era will bring relief to the Jewish people in Eastern Europe without necessarily compelling it to shed its ethnic plumage. Though deprecating nationalism as a regressive force, the Bund utilized Yiddish as an internal vehicle of expression to expedite the class struggle, and soon began to affirm the innate value of Jewish group survival. Territorialism¹ generally, and return to Palestine particularly, were regarded not only as unworthy sentimentalism, but a desertion of the class struggle and an impediment to the wheels of revolution. In turn, Zionism deplored the hold of Marxist dogma over increasing numbers and the diversion of corporate energy from the promising front of national redemption to the arid field of social conflict. Universalistic socialism, even more than Marxism, along with assimilationism, loomed forth as the arch enemies of the Zionist movement.

¹The idea of settling Jews in an undeveloped territory, other than Palestine, with the ultimate purpose of establishing a Jewish autonomous society.

I

Nachman Syrkin (Russia 1867--New York 1924) was the trail-blazer in undertaking a synthesis between Socialism and Zionism. Nearly contemporaneous with the organization of the world Zionist movement, Syrkin, younger leader of Russian Jewish emigres in Berlin, issued a treatise entitled The Jewish Problem and the Jewish Socialist State. In contrast to other Jewish Socialists, he opposed assimilation; as a good Zionist he advocated a socialist state in Palestine as the only answer to the Jewish problem. His numerous publicistic efforts in Yiddish, German and Hebrew established him as the spokesman for the Poalei Zion party--Socialist Labor Zionists--which soon came into being. Thereafter his intellectual influence and force of personality were deeply felt in Labor Zionist circles in Europe, Israel and America, the latter becoming his home for the last decade and a half of his life.

Syrkin approaches nationalism and Socialism from ethical premises. The same moral considerations of equality and freedom underlying Socialism apply to nationalism. Any attempt to foster universalism at the expense of the interests of any ethnic group is a violation of Socialist principles and inimical to true internationalism.

The Socialist movement staunchly supports all attempts of suppressed peoples to free themselves. . . since emancipation is an organic part of the ethics of Socialism.²

²Dr. Nachman Syrkin, Essays on Socialist Zionism (New York: Young Poalei Zion Alliance of America, 1935), p. 18.

The Socialist reconstruction of society has become necessary owing to the default of Liberalism. The latter, originally dedicated to the fostering of freedom in its individual as well as its national ramifications, soon discarded its ideals in the struggle for economic power. Freedom of competition inevitably led to conflict and wars including persecution of the Jew. Socialism, however, with its projected economic reshuffle, will remove the cause for friction and oppression from civilized peoples and increase the opportunities of cultural intercourse, paving "the way for internationalism." A true understanding of Socialism, therefore, affirms the right and duty of the Jew to self-determination.

The social revolution and elimination of class conflict will destroy the basis for anti-Jewish bias, nourished as it has been by the ills of capitalist society. Self-interest therefore dictates to the Jew to join the ranks of the conscious proletariat aiming at a new social order.

Until now the Jew was the torchbearer of liberalism, but since the bourgeoisie which was responsible for Jewish emancipation in the old society, has betrayed its principles, the Jew must become the vanguard of Socialism.³

Socialist and Jewish national goals merge on the Jewish scene and join forces in the international class struggle.

Such rapprochement between Jewish nationalism and Socialism was a novel and moot point at the turn of the century. Zionists regarded Socialists with suspicion. Jewish Socialists were rabid opponents of the new movement. The assimilationist tendencies of the

³ Ibid., p. 16.

upper class fringe of Jewish society were shared by the Socialist intelligentsia parading under the banner of universalism. Syrkin's effort at a synthesis was an attempt to achieve within the Jewish camp what had already been developed among many European national minorities. Following contemporary examples, Syrkin called upon the Socialists to become the standard bearers of the Zionist movement.

He believed that inevitably

Jewish Socialism will sooner or later remove all assimilatory tendencies from its ranks. . . . As a protest movement against Jewish suffering, Socialism may become the common possession of all Jews, because Jewish sufferings affect the Jewish proletariat as well as the intelligentsia, the Jewish middle class as well as the upper bourgeoisie.⁴

He thus envisages a Socialism embraced by non-proletarians as well, since it is designed to eradicate religious and racial persecution by removing the economic ills.

What was this Socialism advocated by Syrkin in its operational context of Jewish national revival? He was not a Marxist. Admitting that "class struggle is the main driving force of history," he yet insisted that "it is not properly conceived to solve all our social problems. Creative activities are realized not through the class struggle, but in spite of it."⁵ He affirmed spiritual values in his quest for economic reorganization of society, recognizing the historical aspirations of the Jewish people.

As to Socialism's answer to the Jewish problem, he distin-

⁴Ibid., p. 20.

⁵Ibid., p. 27.

guishes between long-range and immediate solutions. Unquestionably, the ultimate establishment of the new order will end discrimination, but that is to be achieved in the remote future. The middle class position of the Jews and the absence of a large proletariat, places the Jewish group among the least to benefit from a Socialist upheaval. The economically unstable middle class merchants and professionals, the small tradesmen, peddlers, and independent artisans of the lower class, have little to gain in the immediate aftermath of a social revolution. Consequently, emigration is the only solution. Palestine, as the historical homeland, is the logical haven. There, a new economic structure based on sound rational and productive foundations, will avoid the evils of capitalist society. The new Jewish State "must adopt as its ideal justice, righteousness, social planning and social solidarity. . . . [Then] the hope for a Messiah will be converted into political fact."⁶

Syrkin's conception of a Jewish state contain the elements of prophetic Messianism inspired by the Bible, combined with modern political and economic theory. It was unaffected by Marxian dialectical materialism and the all-pervading revolutionary class struggle. It blended readily with romantic nationalism, marshalling the allegiance of idealistic youth inspired by Jewish historical experience and provoked by existing grim realities in Europe. He lashed out against the prevailing Socialist distortion of Jewish interests, and pleaded for considerations of human dignity eliciting self-respect as a foundation

⁶Ibid., p. 28.

for identification with Jewish national interests.

The assimilated Jewish Socialist, and on account of him, the non-Jewish Socialist as well, regard the Jewish people as a means, a commodity of no value per se, except insofar as it serves the interests of others. . . . They have not the courage to declare that since anti-Semitism is injurious to the Jew, they are obligated to combat it as Jews.⁷

A change of attitude to their own people will be reflected in their behavior toward the challenges of the non-Jewish environment as well, particularly anti-Semitism. The result will be added stature in coping with the environment. Then shall they fulfill "the dictate of our life, and the dictate of our honor, human and national."⁸

This fusion of international Socialism and Jewish nationalism was a great pioneer venture, coming as it did in the early formative years of the Zionist movement. In the immigrant student circles of Berlin, young Syrkin's dynamic personality and fervent espousal of these ideas, exerted a decisive influence. The endless discussions on the nature of the Jewish group and the solution of the Jewish problem, were veered toward a positive Jewish consciousness by the pathos and brilliance of Syrkin's elucidation. His brochure developing this thesis, The Jewish Problem and the Jewish Socialist State, appeared in 1898 only two years after Theodore Herzl's epoch-making little volume, The Jewish State, and one year after the first Zionist Congress was convened, launching a world Zionist movement. In the following decade, the seemingly novel ideas took root and blossomed forth into the

⁷ Nachman Syrkin, Writings, vol. I, in Hebrew (Ein Harod: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, nd.), p. 246.

⁸ Ibid.

ideological formulation of an organized party. These were further crystallized in a restatement attempted by Syrkin some twenty years later in a booklet published in 1917 entitled National Independence and International Unity.⁹

The author surveys the history of nationalism in its dichotomous role as a regenerative and abortive force. Nationalism has frequently contributed toward oppression, aiding the more powerful to despoil the weaker nation and impress its culture upon the subdued. Among the mighty, nationalism is transformed into a reactionary power source in defense of the status quo and obstructive to progressive change. The conquered, however, draw from nationalism liberating and dynamic stamina, reinforcing human values and universal aspirations. Suppressed peoples express in their nationalism the quest for political freedom, group solidarity, cultural development, equity and equality in the family of nations.

Nationalism has a dual meaning and diametrically opposite tendencies. . . . To the ruling elements. . . suppression and negation of foreign nations, inflation of their own value, stagnation and petrification of national culture, and sanctification of traditions. . . . The nationalism of oppressed elements is a recognition of the principle of equality . . . [seeing] in its own nation not only an end in itself but also an instrument for the good of humanity.¹⁰

Needless to add that Socialism must choose the latter brand and that this becomes the Jewish type.

⁹ The analysis of Syrkin's contributions are presented in a chronological order departing from procedure in previous chapters. A systematic discussion of Syrkin's thought without regard to stages of development, fails to take into account the impact of early theories in a particular historical setting. Syrkin's theories of 1898 may lack the depth and comprehensiveness of his mature thinking of 1917, but make up in their originality and epoch-making forces they set into motion.

¹⁰ Nachman Syrkin, Essays on Socialist Zionism, op. cit., p. 37.

National entities have characters of their own. The national forms--through the culture--express the social and spiritual life, refined and molded in the accumulated experience of ages. Each nation has a "mission" dictated by the historical sequence of events. "History has found its highest expression in the abundance of nations, and celebrates its triumph in the varieties and colors of the national cultures."¹¹ The highest types of national culture contain universal elements incorporated in the heritage of the human race. "Nationalism and internationalism, people and humanity, individualism and universalism, are in the final analysis, complementary terms."¹²

This has been the achievement of Judaism as well as of the Greek and Roman worlds. The Jews have not lost their authentic and distinct attributes when they were deprived of sovereignty and territory. The desire for national redemption, though sometimes dormant, was never dead throughout the dispersion. The rise of Zionism, fanning the flame of national redemption, is a valid testimony to the vitality still driving the Jewish people to heroic efforts at reconversion to a normal national existence. As such, they cannot be ignored by international Socialism which, by the end of the world war "fully recognized the historical truth that each nation had a right and a duty to determine its own path in history."¹³ As Socialists abandon their naive idea of cosmopolitan and uniform humanity, they are bound to accept the Jewish group as well.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 41.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., p. 53.

National self-determination for the Jewish people entails the right of unhampered cultural life and social organization. For a palliative, this is desirable. As a permanent cure, the measure of national self-determination granted to others--territorial independence--is the only prescription.

There are two roads in the historical solution of the Jewish problem. First, the awakening of revolutionary political instincts of the Jewish masses, with the Jewish social democratic movement and the proletariat in the center, and the remaining masses in the periphery. Secondly, the redirection of a chaotic emigration of the eternally wandering Jew toward a territory, for the purpose of forming a Jewish State on Socialist foundations. This territory is ancient Israel.¹⁴

Syrkin had great faith in the ability of the Jewish proletariat to achieve these goals. He was convinced of the spiritual force revealed in Jewish history to be recharged in the fulfillment of a greater destiny.

A free country for the Jewish nation is not a contradiction, but the fulfillment of Jewish Socialism. It is also the logical conclusion of Zionism that the independent Jewish homeland is to be built on higher social foundations. . . . Whoever believes in the powers of the Jewish proletariat, cannot deny the power of the Jewish nation; and whoever hopes for the revival of the Jewish people, cannot conceive it without the leadership of the proletariat.¹⁵

Syrkin's theories predicted the facts of history. Jewish labor preceded Jewish capital in the reclamation of the land and development of industry in Palestine. The unparalleled determining role of organized labor in Israel's economy today, and its unchallenged leadership in government and society, is the actual realization of Syrkin's vision a half century ago. That he was not alone in creative inspiration, has

¹⁴ N. Syrkin, Selected Writings, in Yiddish (New York: Poale Zion, 1925), p. 37.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 271.

been sufficiently demonstrated in this paper. Moses Hess¹⁶ preceded him in the blending of Socialist and Zionist ideology, and Syrkin readily admitted to this in his writings. That others are responsible for the actual unfolding of national and social reconstruction, is again unquestionable. Gordon's¹⁷ practical social idealism had a greater impact on the course of events. But the theoretical formulations in the synthesis of non-Marxian Socialism with nationalism generally and Zionism in particular, was Syrkin's leading contribution. It is interesting to note that subsequently Otto Bauer and other authoritative central European ideological architects, in bridging the gap between Socialism and nationalism, gave belated recognition to the Jewish complement.

II

A thorough analytical reconciliation of Marxist Socialism and Zionism was achieved by Ber Borochov (Russia, 1881-1917). Within a relatively short creative life, he built an ideological structure of sufficient magnitude to reach beyond the Jewish intellectual horizon. Borochovism became a platform of an organized Jewish political party, as well as an official designation of a program adopted by non-Jewish Socialists in the Ukraine. Like Syrkin, his field of operation encompassed Eastern and Central Europe and a few years of activity in the United States. On revisiting Russia after the revolution, in the capacity of the spokesman of Socialist Zionism, sudden illness brought

¹⁶ See Chapter VI.

¹⁷ See Chapter XIII.

him untimely death. Unlike other founding fathers of Zionism, he never set foot in Palestine.

Borochov's doctrine was the first successful marriage of nationalism and dialectical materialism. He coined new terms to accomplish this task, such as "conditions of production" and "stycho process," to interpret historical and sociological phenomena. The result was a system of thought embracing nationalism generally and Zionism, in an analytically firm hold of Marxian dialectic. An important, though decreasing segment of Israel's labor movement still adheres to the initial Borochov doctrine.

Borochov applies Marx's explanation for the class struggle to the problem of national conflict. Since Marx had pointed to the clash between the forces of production and existing relations of production, Borochov suggested that the forces of production of a nation come into conflict with its conditions of production, the latter including geographical and historical factors related to other groups as well.

The conditions of production. . .are geographic, anthropological and historic. The historic conditions include both those generated within a given social entity and those imposed by the neighboring social groups.¹⁸

As society develops, the social and historical conditions of production assume a greater importance than the natural conditions. "This feeling of kinship, created as a result of the visioned common historic

¹⁸ Ber Borochov, Nationalism and the Class Struggle: A Marxian Approach to the Jewish Problem (New York: Poale Zion, 1937), p. 137.

his untimely death. Unlike other founding fathers of Zionism, he never set foot in Palestine.

Horodkov's doctrine was the first successful marriage of nationalism and dialectical materialism. He solved two tasks: to accomplish this task, such as "conditions of production" and "types of process," to interpret historical and sociological phenomena. The result was a system of thought embracing nationalism generally and Zionism, in an analytically true but at certain classic. In its content, though decreasing amount of Zionist's labor movement still adheres to the initial Horodkov doctrine.

Horodkov applies Marx's explanation of the class struggle to the problem of national countries. While this has pointed to the class between the forces of production and existing relations of production, Horodkov suggested that the forces of production of a nation come into conflict with its conditions of production, the latter including geographical and historical factors related to other groups as well.

The conditions of production... are geographical, ethnopolitical and historical. The latter conditions include both those generated within a given social entity and those imposed by the national social groups.¹²

As society develops, the social and historical conditions of production assume a greater importance than the natural conditions. This feeling of kinship, created as a result of the shared common histories

¹² See Horodkov, Nationalism and the Class Struggle: A Marxist Approach to the Jewish Problem (New York: Jewish Labor, 1937), p. 13.

past and rooted in the common conditions of production, is called nationalism."¹⁹ This supplies the frame for national struggle and a purely materialistic approach to the national question. Class conflict is conducted, not for intangibles, but for the means of production, "the material possessions of the classes. So too with the national struggle."²⁰

Nationalism differs in content from upper to lower classes. For the landed aristocracy, the territory is valuable in terms of the income it supplies. The bourgeoisie consider the territory home-plate for playing the commercial field. The middle class regards it as a market for consumer goods, and is therefore interested in a unifying language and culture. For the proletariat too, the national territory assumes special significance.

One should not accept the wide-spread misconception in believing that the proletariat supposedly has no connection with the national territory and has, therefore, no national sentiments. . . . The territory is valuable to the proletariat as the work-place.²¹

This is its initial function. In addition, the territory becomes the "strategic base" for conducting the class struggle. The national sovereign territory, serving as the base of operations for releasing the social forces in economic conflict, is an indispensable factor in the ultimate triumph of Socialism.

Borochov parallels Syrkin's concept of the divergent role of

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 144.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 140.

²¹ D. B. Borochov, Labor Zionist Writings (New York: Poale Zion, 1920), I, p. 67, in Yiddish.

nationalism among dominating and dominated nations. The former is reactionary, obscuring the class struggle in the desire for expansion at the expense of others, and necessitating class collaboration. The latter compels true overlapping of class and national interests; the striving of a subjugated people to eliminate foreign control of its territory, is paralleled by the effort of the proletariat aiming to establish a strategic base for the class struggle. The latter is possible only in the free interplay of economic forces, unhampered by overbearing outside control. The nationalism of a suppressed nation is more authentic as it is channelled into the preparation for the class struggle. Borochof further distinguishes between types of nationalism along historical lines, as nationalism changes its function in the advent of modern times.

Marx was quite correct in saying that proletarians have no fatherland. In his day, healthy, progressive nationalism had hardly yet peeked its way out from its bourgeois liberal shell. But since then, progressive nationalism has become a unique historical phenomenon.²²

The Jewish workers, belonging to a landless nation, suffer a double disability as Jews and as proletarians. As foreigners, they are being expelled from primary economic pursuits (agriculture and heavy industry) to secondary occupations (commerce, light industry and white collar). In further stages of development, the native population begins to compete with the Jewish merchant, professional, and wage-earner of the "secondary" level, with the result that the Jewish minority is bound to retreat from its economic positions. The productivity of the Jewish group is initially relegated to less important areas, and subsequently subjected

²²

Ber Borochof, Nationalism and the Class Struggle, op. cit., p. 113.

to overpowering competition. On account of the diminishing value of its services in the economic system, the Jewish proletariat is prevented from playing its proper social and political role in the class struggle. Under the pressure of the majority, they are forced to emigrate to new lands, and there the cycle begins again in the sequence of capitalistic growth from primitive to advanced stages of economic and technological activity.

We are strangers and nowhere in the world do we have the power to control our own conditions. . . . Our history in exile was never molded by our own strength. Our fate was always dependent on outside factors. Can the rapid pace of progress redeem us from this state of uprootedness and insecurity?²³

Since this is an inevitable process in the perspective of dialectical materialism, Jews must eventually settle in backward countries such as Palestine, where the indigenous population is small enough to allow for large Jewish colonization. Through territorial concentration, the Jewish problem reaches a solution, as the new home passes through the stages of capitalistic development and social revolution. In Palestine "Jewish migration must be transformed from immigration into colonization."²⁴ The majority Jewish population utilizes the homeland as a strategic base for the class struggle, leading to the realization of Zionism simultaneous with the attainment of Socialism. This is a styohic process, inherent in the course of history with existing and evolving conditions assuming their logical and natural sequence.

²³ B. Borochov, Selected Writings (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1944), in Hebrew, I, p. 13.

²⁴ Ber Borochov, Nationalism and the Class Struggle, op. cit., p. 191.

Palestine is the most feasible territory for the fulfillment of Socialism. There a Jewish proletariat can flourish under normal conditions in the struggle for the new order. Palestine fulfills the necessary conditions by virtue of the fact that it is

"1. not close to a cultural center,

2. on the sea-coast,

3. has a nomadic population."²⁵

It is also desirable because of the smallness of the native population; also the difficulty of acclimatization for Europeans and its paucity of natural resources make it unattractive for non-Jewish Westerners. Jewish capital and labor, both at a disadvantage in the lands of their origin, gravitate to Palestine where they come to grips with each other in a setting under their control.

The Jewish worker comes to Palestine with his proletarian revolutionary class consciousness and experience in the class struggle. . . . The Jewish entrepreneur who comes to settle has had similar experience.²⁶

In the new arena, latent productive energy is released and channeled into class conflict, as the Jewish proletariat "improves its strategic base."

Palestine then offers the answer to the economic difficulties of the Jewish masses. Concomitantly, social and political disability, psychological insecurity, and problems of national geographic diffusion

²⁵ B. Borochoy, Selected Writings, op. cit., in Hebrew, I, p. 140.

²⁶ D. B. Borochoy, Labor Zionist Writings, op. cit., p. 289.

Latvians is the most feasible territory for the settlement of Socialism. There a Jewish proletariat and Jewish under normal conditions in the struggle for the new order. Latvians fulfill the necessary conditions by virtue of the fact that it is

"1. not close to a national center,

2. on the sea-coast,

3. [has] a sizeable population."

It is also desirable because of the smallness of the native population; also the difficulty of assimilation for Latvians and the paucity of natural resources make it unattractive for non-Jewish Westerners. Jewish capital and labor, both at a disadvantage in the lands of their origin, gravitate to Latvia where they come to help with each other in a setting under their control.

The Jewish worker comes to Latvia with his proletarian revolutionary class consciousness and experience in the class struggle. . . . The Jewish entrepreneur who comes to settle has had similar experience."

In the new scheme, latent productive energy is released and channeled into class conflict, as the Jewish proletariat "improves its strategic base."

Latvia then offers the answer to the economic difficulties of the Jewish masses. Geographically, social and political feasibility, technological insecurity, and problems of national geographic diffusion

25 D. B. Gorodkov, Selected Writings, op. cit., in Hebrew, I, p. 140.

26 D. B. Gorodkov, Latvian Writings, op. cit., p. 229.

are mitigated. "Zionism is the only movement capable of introducing reason, order, and discipline into Jewish life. [It] is the only answer to the economic and historic need of the Jewish people."²⁷ The automatic unfolding of these processes--the styohic pattern of economic displacement, immigration, colonization of Palestine, transplanted class struggle, and revolution--requires a catalyst to accelerate the tempo. The active aid of human effort is often necessary in order for the historical tendencies to be realized in due time.

Along with the styohic social tendencies, we must inject into the process a conscious tendency. . . . The conscious interference cannot create and improvise styohic processes, but only regulate them, that is, facilitate and accelerate their pace.²⁸

There is a need for an organized Zionist Socialist movement, expediting and reinforcing the historical processes.

Borochov attempted a reformulation of his views at a later period in his life, before his sudden demise. Modifying his Marxian dialectics, he found room in his system for Zionist historical aspirations. "We 'historical materialists' cannot completely ignore the past, especially when it involves the formation of a national ideal."²⁹ Though initially he referred to the settlement of Palestine "by the force of historical necessity,"³⁰ in his final address, he permitted himself "emotional terminology," proclaiming, "The Land of Israel--a Jewish home."³¹

²⁷ Ber Borochov, Nationalism and the Class Struggle, op. cit., p. 74.

²⁸ D. B. Borochov, Labor Zionist Writings, op. cit., II, p. 320.

²⁹ B. Borochov, Selected Writings, op. cit., in Hebrew, p. 86.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 146.

³¹ Ber Borochov, Nationalism and the Class Struggle, op. cit., p. 126.

Borochov perceived in nationalism a force for human dignity enabling the Jew to rise in stature and regain self-respect. He went so far as to declare, "we must understand once and for all that one who has no national dignity has no class dignity."³² In contrast to the non-territorialist Socialist nationalists (exponents of an ad hoc national program without emigration), he expressed his impatience with the wheels of progress.

And they promise us and themselves victory over the reactionaries. . . . But we Jews dare not wait. And we Zionists cannot wait. . . . It is our deep recognition that there is no help for the Jewish people within the exile framework. We do not rely on progress. . . . Progress is a great factor in the accelerated development of technology, science, and possibly even of the fine arts, but ethical advancement is still too remote.³³

Yet he did not advocate or envisage the ingathering of all Jews in Palestine. He recognized that there would always remain large segments of Jewry throughout the world. Though Palestine's absorption of increasing numbers will be a great relief to the displaced proletariat, a constructive program is needed for the protection of Jewish interests outside of Palestine.

Zionism solves only some of the Jewish problems, namely homelessness and landlessness. . . . No matter to what extent Zionism is realized, there will always remain--possibly a majority--dispersed among other nations.³⁴

A program of Jewish rights, cultural and communal, was evolved as a result. Labor Zionism became a potent force in Jewish communities,

³² Ber Borochov, Nationalism and the Class Struggle, op. cit., p. 83.

³³ B. Borochov, Selected Writings, op. cit., in Hebrew, p. 2.

³⁴ B. Borochov, Selected Writings (New York: Jewish National Workers Alliance, 1928), in Yiddish, II, p. 286.

dedicated to local creative endeavor in political, economic, and cultural facets. Identification with the Jewish Proletariat was transferred into an appreciation of the folk tongue of the masses, the Yiddish language. Borochoff and his disciples affirmed the leading place of Yiddish in cultural expression and education, in Palestine and abroad. Syrkin, who drew his inspiration from ancient sources, had championed a Palestine-centered Hebrew oriented platform.

In another category, - to pursue the comparison - Borochoff's economic interpretation of history, compelled him never to deviate from the one logical territorial solution, Palestine. Syrkin, however, for a number of years, flirted with non-Zionist territorialism, pre-occupied with seeking a homeland for the Jewish people elsewhere on the globe.

In the context of present world and Jewish realities, Syrkin's idealism is more consonant with the times. Both have exerted a profound influence on Israel society. Current Israel social thought is more indebted to Syrkin's idealistic Socialism than to Borochoff's dialectical materialism. It must be remembered, however, that for decades, a class consciousness in the spirit of Borochoff was fostered in organized labor, particularly in the agricultural and industrial collectives. The Marxist political orientation, class solidarity, and activism have run their full course. Unlike the American trade-union movement, organized labor in Israel was articulately Socialistic, and its Borochoff-oriented sectors were ostensibly Marxist. Israel economy, more a creation of organized labor and world Jewish philanthropy than of private capital, has established a planned economy and developed a Socialist society within a

society in the plethora of industrial plants, commercial enterprises and agricultural units managed and operated by organized labor. The Yugoslav system of shared profits by workers is operative in all agricultural establishments and in a few industrial ones in Israel. But the numerous factories and services, started and operated by the labor movement, are under centralized control (Histadrut) where the stresses and strains, profits and losses of the various manufacturing and commercial enterprises balance each other to preserve a growing economy. A voluntary type of a Socialist society within the framework of a democratic state has been established, without infringing to any considerable extent in the operations of private capital.

Socialism, as a doctrine, is still upheld and the first of May is a universally observed labor holiday. But for the majority of workers, it is more in the spirit of Syrkin's non-Marxist Socialism with its inspired experimental idealism, than Borochoy's early dogmatism in its dialectic materialistic context. Generally speaking, the banner raised by the two founders of labor Zionism is still held high by Israel labor and intelligentsia, instrumental in determining the future of the infant state and influencing the destiny of an old people far beyond Israel's borders.

Borochoy's doctrine still prevails in leftist Socialist circles, --the Achdut Avodah and Mapam parties--equating all progress with the oncoming New Order and "wave of tomorrow." It is dogmatically applied to areas beyond the economic. Borochoy's early revolutionary enthusiasm still expresses their contemporary mood.

The working class raises the pillar of fire of the new truth and the new culture. . . its own philosophy, ethics, science, and art in new forms and a new spirit. . . . It is a proletarian culture.³⁵

Syrkin's spirit, to a degree, dominates the policies of Mapai, representing the majority of Israel labor. Its social experimentation, political flexibility, and national maturity, occasionally at the expense of narrow class interest, bespeak a responsibility and vision necessary to true leadership in the current maelstrom of world events, and are colored by a characteristically Jewish social idealism.

Above all social, economic, material motives of Zionism, there hovers the idealistic motive emanating from the depths of the human soul returning to it in a beckoning and creative form.³⁶

As far as education is concerned, Socialism was the official philosophy of the labor schools until their dissolution in 1953. Borochov's ideas are still popular among teachers in some of the collective colonies. Identification of class and nation (as in Premier Ben Gurion's formulation in the title of his book From Class to Nation) is accepted by all other educators formerly associated with the labor schools. Though the public schools have been removed from party control, youth movements are still partisan, and Socialist indoctrination is rampant.

³⁵ Borochov Anthology, (Tel Aviv: Poale Zion; 1937) Hebrew, p. 46.

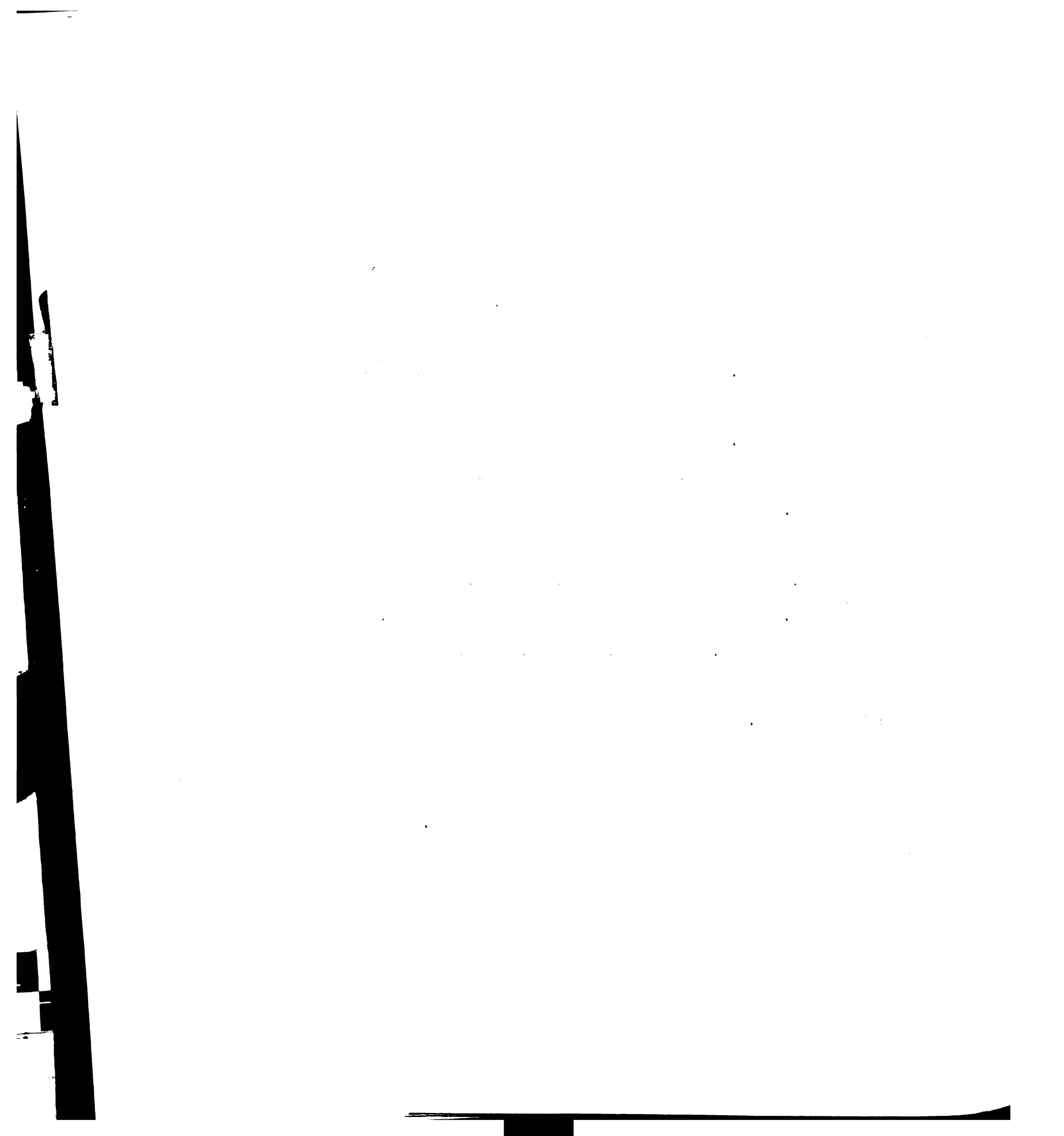
³⁶ B. Borochov, Selected Writings, op. cit., in Yiddish, II, p. 262.

CHAPTER XV

YOSSEF CHAIM BRENNER

In 1890 there was only one organized political group among Jews, exerting an influence over not too large a following. By 1910 there were more than half a dozen parties competing for the allegiance of an alert and conscious youth. In the short span of twenty years, hosts of young people, infiltrated the ranks of Russian and Austrian liberal and revolutionary camps. It was a "sturm und drang" period characterized by emigration of masses, fermentation of ideas, and crystallization of forces. Nearly every important ideological platform still operative on the Jewish scene today received its initial formulation at that time. It was an age of slogans, programs, dramatic gestures and heroic deeds. Its atmosphere was charged with controversy, romance and the pioneering spirit. Statesmen, thinkers, poets, and revolutionaries stirred the hearts of an attentive public sharply divided in their respective loyalties.

There was one man whose piercing eye penetrated beneath the smart uniform to unveil the bleeding wounds of a generation whose cry of pain was choked in the overwhelming din of exuberant verbosity. A full participant in the rushing events of his day, he reflected the shiftlessness and restlessness of an intelligentsia caught in the whirlpool of social and psychological conflicts in a disintegrating



Jewish society. He saw the individual hopelessly emerging from the swamp of yesterday only to be trapped in the quick-sand of today, doomed to failure in his feverish efforts to reach a solid footing. Descending to the hard bottom of disillusionment and despair he made one last effort in planting the seeds of an imperative reaching upward to affirmation and rehabilitation. In this way he offered a new unattractive but compelling meaning to the Zionist definition. He was Yossef Chaim Brenner, novelist and publicist whose life, work, personality, and death, left a deep mark on the mentality of a trail-blazing generation of pioneers.

Born in the pogrom-ridden year of 1881 in Ukraine, Brenner early identified himself with the revolutionary movement, was drafted into the army, suffered imprisonment, and managed to escape to London. His association with radical youth made him sensitive to the clichés and illusory dreams offering little immediate relief to the vexing problems of livelihood and psychological adjustment. His deep seated personality traits tended to blend with a critical attitude to social phenomena.

In London he edited, for a few years, Ha Meorer (The Awakener) which assumed an unusual importance when the Hebrew publications in Russia were closed down in the wave of reaction setting in after the abortive revolution of 1905. At the age of twenty-eight he arrived in Palestine, hoping to find peace for his troubled soul, perturbed by ghetto life as he saw it in Russia and London, and discouraged by the meagre support for the literary venture he unselfishly fought to

preserve.

I will go to Palestine at the end of the year only as a farm laborer.

I want to run away from all these holy and literary matters. . . . I would like to work manually, eat, drink, sleep, and die in the field when my turn comes. That is my one ideal. I need some peace of soul if at all possible.¹

Brenner's departure from Europe made an impression in Jewish quarters. Many periodicals reported about "the famous Hebrew writer . . . who suddenly rose and left the diaspora to go up to the Land of Israel, and who changed into a tiller of the soil."²

But the personal promise of a new life remained unfulfilled for him for a long time. The talented writer proved a failure as a laborer. Responding to the publicity abroad he writes, "would you kindly note . . . that my happy days of work as a farm laborer were no more than six counted days. . . ."³ He took up the pen again and held on to it until he met his death at the hands of Arab assassins in the riots of 1921. In the twelve years of his sojourn in Palestine he came into contact with all strata of society, maintained a close relationship with the labor elements and wrote extensively fiction and on social problems. By dint of his personality and character he exerted a strong influence upon the intellectuals. He was a keen observer and incisive critic of all about him. The fact that he was the only literary figure of stature who made Palestine his home was partly

¹Rab Binyomin, From Zaborov to Kinneret (Tel Aviv: Association of Hebrew Writers, 1950), in Hebrew, pp. 209, 210.

²Y. Ch. Brenner, Collection of Stories (Tel Aviv: Israel Mets Fund, n.d.), in Hebrew, ed. introduction, p. xi.

³Ibid.

responsible for the centrality of his role among the pioneer elements. Seeing only darkness and degradation most of his life, he finally began to discern a little light and ascendancy in the passing of years.

Berdichevsky's indictment of Judaism was followed by Brenner's indictment of the diaspora. To western Reform, dispersion was a privilege, a noblesse oblige in the interests of monotheistic religion. To the traditionalist it was a punishment for ancient sins committed in the Holy Land. To political Zionists it was a calamity depriving generations of territorial and sovereign opportunities. To cultural Zionists it was a fact to be reckoned with in the creative survival of a people. Brenner regarded it as a sin, not in the theological but in the human sense, a condition with little moral justification. His short stories and novels of Jewish life graphically depict the degrading, fanatic, suppressing, unaesthetic, and superficial. He decried the poverty and depravity resulting from it, the economic rootlessness imposed from the outside, and the concomitant economic shiftless and gossamer-like form of existence. An atmosphere of this kind could not breed healthy social relations and adjusted individuals. Mere liberation from the confines of traditional authority does not automatically release powers constructive and remedial in themselves. The modern Jew may be intellectually removed from the ghetto, but that does not endow him with the social environment, economic condition and psychological pattern interacting to form a healthier person. The young intellectual presented a gloomy sight of conflicts and complexes, spouting of clichés, addiction to isms, shot through with basic maladjustments

requiring radical treatment.

I realized that his present life [of the Jew] is no life. . . . I always understood his unfortunate role, impossible to bear. My first and last cry was for another foundation. . . . Then can we be saved from the shame of our existing life.⁴

Brenner was not bothered by political disabilities, social discrimination, cultural assimilation or religious repression. These were impositions deeply felt by other Zionist spokesmen. He was primarily sensitive to the psychological traumatic effects and economic influences as they took their toll from the individual. Berdichevsky had stormed against the crushing burden of spiritual values, which had been inhibiting individual expression in the physical and aesthetic dimensions. Brenner conveyed the pain and confusion of man adrift in the muddy waters of the contemporary Jewish scene, polluted by the abnormalities accruing from minority status. To him, the pious slogans of diversified ideologies had little appeal. He dared to utter atheistic doubts about Zionist hypotheses in both the political and cultural phases.

. . . I the Zionist am not talking about revival, spiritual revival, the Hebrew national spiritual revival, but only about exodus, the desire to leave the ghetto. "Renaissance, revival," these are magic words but we have no room for them. . . . My Zionism asserts: the time has come for the element within us most adaptable to life, to discontinue residing with others and ascribing everything to the viciousness of others.⁵

He did not therefore resent gentile hostility; it was a fact to be recognized. World Jewish dispersion was the source or at least the framework of all evil and no one else was to be blamed.

⁴Y. Ch. Brenner, Works, vol. I. "From Here and There" (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1946), in Hebrew, p. 215.

⁵Ibid., p. 186.

This explains his quarrel with the Socialists and Cosmopolitans,--not on nationalistic grounds, as was the case before him. Concerned as he was with grim reality, he never lost sight of the individual fumbling to find some anchorage in this "big buzzing confusion" (to borrow a phrase from James). Grandiose ideas and eloquent generalizations left him cold. There was an existentialist strain in his impatience with the beautiful phraseology and high-sounding verbosity of the political panaceas flourishing in restless but educated circles. The class struggle of the socialists could not apply to a nation of petty storekeepers struggling to stay alive. International universalism ignored the problem of the little man beset with frustrations, befuddled with conflicts and taxed by pressures brought about by historical and contemporary factors. Behind all the fine terminology of these all-encompassing humanitarian programs, he discerned a basic Jewish inferiority complex among their devotees, a self-subjugation and overwhelming awe before the gentile, a frightened self-deceiving Jew coveting approval and acceptance in an unfriendly environment.

Thus Brenner was not moved by a great vision of anticipated glory, universal or nationalistic in scope, as were the statesmen and visionaries of his day. His was a negative approach. He was running away from something when he left Europe, rather than running toward something when he arrived in Palestine. As one of the heroes in a novel calls out: "I understand, in your case, the whole matter to be based on negation, a negative attitude to our life over there without seeing nor accepting anything positive here in Palestine."⁶ Then

⁶ Ibid., p. 261.

follows the shocking accusation: "You don't accept the entire Jewish people, isn't that so?"⁷

Herein lies the tragic enigma of Brenner's soul--an ambivalence toward his own people. The master, Berdichevsky, may have disliked Judaism, but he loved the Jew and fought to relieve him from the shackles of the past in order to partake of the pleasures of secularism. The disciple, Brenner, who lacked the teacher's deference for European civilization, chose to share lovingly the lot of his brethren, simultaneously resenting the deformed Jewish personality, revolting against organized Jewish life, objecting to the *saneta* and the secular without distinction. His perspective took in only suffering, ugliness and deterioration everywhere. Jewry had been tried and convicted.

In his scrupulous honesty, Brenner never mistook a gesture for the authentic act. Even the Zionist community in Palestine was a terrible disappointment.

. . . . If it wouldn't be so painful. . . this old community and especially the new, similar to the old. . . . These "Negators of the Diaspora" of ours, who come here and make a new diaspora. . . .⁸

In Palestine nothing had changed. Achad Ha'am had visualized the spirit of Zion overflowing to Jewish communities abroad. Brenner found the stifling air of the ghetto infecting the land of the fathers.

The Palestine reality frightened him into a cry of despair. "Why shall I then cling to the corners of the devastated altar." The diagnosis was clear. "Our crisis is one of a people lacking the talent to live. . . properly. Our farmers are pseudo-farmers.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., p. 274.

The Jewish intellectual who comes here eager to live a different life, in its fulness, physical work, scent of the field, soon discovers that he is unqualified for any labor Our crisis, of our colonies and their workers, of the Jerusalem ghetto filled with invalids, paupers, and fanatics, is only part of the great national crisis. Before us is a destruction of a people in its simplest terms."⁹

Brenner's pessimism was far-reaching. There was a sense of the ominous in him. He stands alone among the personalities of his generation in the distrust of the twentieth century. Seeming to anticipate the cataclysmic events of the Nazi era resulting in the annihilation of a third of world Jewry, he saw "darkened lands, great nations, many peoples, and among them a wandering sheep, scared flock heading for slaughter."¹⁰ He felt a tense atmosphere and often spoke of the "last Jews." Writing a "long letter," he sets out to prove that only disaster is in store for the weak stranger caught in the tentacles of blood-thirsty mobs. Born in the notorious year of 1881 which was marked by anti-Jewish riots, Brenner regarded himself as a child of the pogroms and was haunted by it throughout. The sense of catastrophe accompanied him. Yet there is a clinging to life for all its worth, a strong urge for a little sunshine and cheer. The defeated but uncrushed hero of his last novel, prays to God: "Father of orphans, be good to me. Send me the rays of the sun, and I, the orphan of orphans, will accept your gift in gratitude, love and hope. . . ."¹¹

What is the solution to these tragically perplexing problems?

⁹ A. Oronovsky, History of Modern Hebrew Literature (Tel Aviv: Israel, 1950), in Hebrew, vol. II, p. 435.

¹⁰ Y. Ch. Brenner, Works (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1946), vol. I, in Hebrew, "About the Focus," p. 115.

¹¹ Y. Ch. Brenner, Works, vol. II (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1950), in Hebrew, "Calamity and Failure," p. 290.

For all intents and purposes, it adds up to a hopeless situation.

Yet, on the crumbled foundations of despair, a positive philosophy was established.

His very denial of God, religion, and history, his social and personal conflicts, he had to make into inspirational sources for continuity and survival. . . . Brenner's atheism comes to cancel all accounts, cancelling at the same time disappointments, faults, aberrations, and falsifications in the individual and in society. . . in the long run, cancelling itself out.¹²

Zionism may not be the solution, but it has to be. There is no alternative. Everything else had been tried and failed. "Zionism is the belief in the possibility of the impossible." The Jewish people has reached the end of the rope. Palestine is the last station in the trek of ages, the point of no return.

Brenner did not invent this mood but reflected it. Much of this attitude, that of pessimistic positivism, prevailed to make Israel what it is today. In the War of Liberation following the establishment of the State in 1948, the Israelis were said to have been in possession of a secret weapon. This they called "no alternative," which made victory the only remaining choice in place of total destruction.

The analogous rationale of existentialist thought warrants mention at this point. The anguish of man, his helpless existence in a strange world befriended neither by nature nor by any transcendental force in the cosmos, places a great burden of responsibility and maturity on his shoulders. Man in his loneliness can rely on no one else except

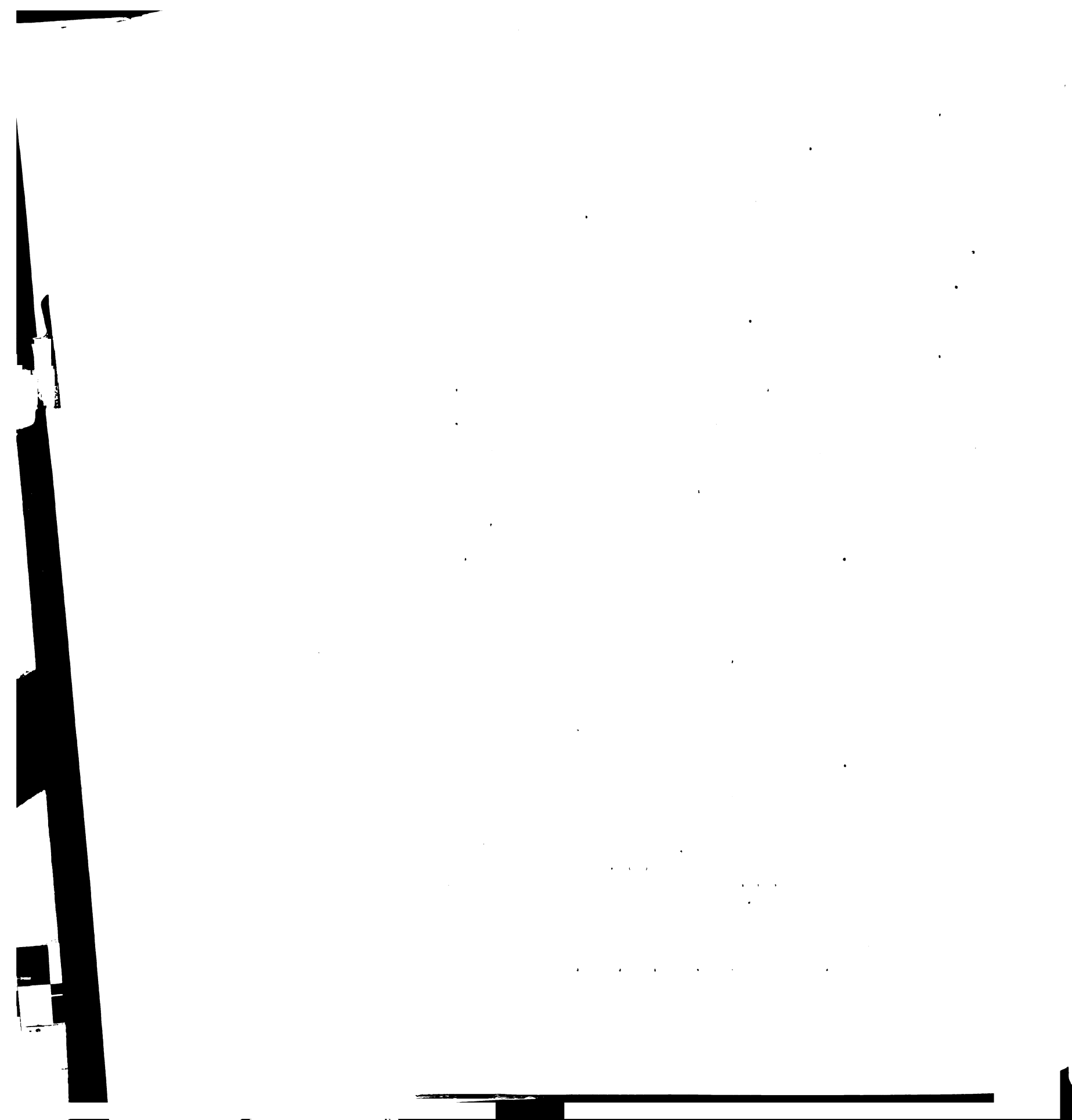
¹² I. Rabinowitz, Temperament and Creativity (Tel Aviv: Bialik Institute, 1951) in Hebrew, p. 249.

himself. A negative philosophy becomes the basis for a constructive call to responsibility.

It would be wrong to claim that Brenner's argument was based upon a stubborn clinging to the impossible alone. He also pointed the way. The road to salvation was to be found in the realm of physical labor. Only by being a humble servant in the house of God, can one sit in the seat of the mighty. He himself had attempted to become a laborer. The fact that he failed did not deter him from re-emphasizing its innate significance. In this he was influenced by A. D. Gordon, prophet of the "religion of labor," (discussed in Chapter XIII). Labor was not to be recognized only as an expedient form of activity necessary for the reclaiming of the land. It was endowed with a healing power of therapeutic value to the ailing Jewish personality. Physical work is productive. It is continuity, purifying and pacifying. It represents an authentic expression of the economic man making for rootedness and stability, proving a kind of occupational therapy for the neurotic Jewish personality. Interaction in the processes of production presents a creative experience emotionally satisfying in the operational as well as the culminating stages. This is especially true in farm labor. Assuming the editorship of a labor monthly entitled Ha Adama, (The Earth) he states:

"The earth" means not only land and country (agriculture and statehood) but something else. "The earth" is our aim for rootedness in all aspects of life. . .recognizing the foundations of reality. . .the pull to the source of renewal, the source of human truth.¹³

¹³ Cited in A. Oronovsky, op. cit., p. 436.



In the final analysis, the novelist Brenner offered a depth psychology alien to the context of an emerging nationalism. Brenner the analyst reveals an anti-Jewish bias unexpected in a resurgent nationalism. He focuses attention upon the individual, a strange emphasis in political nationalism. These elements make the Zionist formula so intriguing and unique, substantially different from other nationalistic programs acted out in the world arena.

Labor serves another worthwhile purpose in Brenner's scheme of things. It is an antidote to the ills of anti-Semitism. Exilic life after the expulsion from the homeland some two thousand years ago has become essentially unproductive. The "de-proletarianization" of Jewish masses caused anti-Semitism. Universal hatred was planted in the hearts of the nations toward a people eking out a livelihood from ungainful employment.

An eternal hatred was planted in the hearts of nations against those who came and used the fruits of their labor . . . yet separated themselves from them.

The question of Judaism is the question of the lack of productive labor for the masses of Jews who have become like floating dust, unable to work.¹⁴

The revulsion against centuries of Jewish history coincided with the Zionist rebellion against life in exile. It made the rejection of the diaspora complete, negating it in all existing manifestations. Palestine restored becomes a categorical imperative without which the history of the Jews comes to an ignoble end.

¹⁴Y. Ch. Brenner, Complete Works, op. cit., vol. VII, p. 185.

In the light of these negative affirmations, Brenner's role in Zionism is more clearly defined. Already in the London stage he published the periodical The Awakener, designed to awaken the individual from the accommodating acceptance of the given and uncritical espousal of popular causes. While some were battling traditional isolationist forms, and others were berating assimilationist trends, Brenner was challenging the current Zionist claims and demanding a deeper, penetrating definition of Zionism with a brutal frankness in its ex-
crutiating logic. The insights, doubts, conflicts, and glimmers of hope crystallized into a three phase position which can be considered as a summary of Brenner's numerous gropings.

1. Honest self-assessment to the point of complete negation and total rejection devoid of positive characteristics.

2. A nevertheless attitude regarding the Land of Israel as the last station, and Zionism as a daring experiment to conceive a fundamental revolution among the last Jews in a last ditch effort to make them the first in the building of a new nation.

3. Individualistic Zionism pointing to a personal alignment with the Zionist program in terms of changing one's mode of life to comply with the principles of immigration and proletarianization.

His attitude to Jews and Judaism merits further elaboration. Pride in the values and institutions of Judaism was unjustified as far as Brenner was concerned. Survival under adverse conditions was not brought about by spiritual courage but was more of a by-product of weakness, cowardice, and the talent of adaptability. Martyrdom never achieved the purpose of inciting rebellion against the exilic form of

existence and was of dubious holiness. There was therefore little inspiring in both Judaism and Jews. The past, acclaimed as a heroic and spiritual odyssey, was to him "a bitter error, exaggerated pride, and deception."¹⁵ Had Brenner stopped at this point he would have been no more than an interesting case for psychiatrists as was another Jewish genius, the philosopher-psychologist Weiniger, whose hate of Jewishness compelled him to commit suicide. Brenner's negations, however, led to affirmations, as has already been previously adduced, with the hate sublimated into love. He said:

With a thousand threads am I tied to my people Israel. . .
My life is linked with a strong bond to its life. . . . I
love the Jewish masses and would therefore like to dedicate
to them my whole life, work, energy, and talents. . . .¹⁶

He was encouraged by the few examples of a new type of Jew rising in the Land of Israel, whose rejection of existence in exile was combined with a restoration of personality through the redeeming process of labor on the soil of the homeland. Such personal realization of Zionism was to make it a living and working faith.

Brenner not only preached but practiced. Unlike other men of his age, he did not live apart but with the people. He influenced as much by his personality as by his writings. The author was one with his artistic creation.

More than the grief, pain, and calamity of the heroes of the stories, was felt the grief, pain and misfortune of the

¹⁵ Ibid., vol.VII, p. 109.

¹⁶ Cited in A. Oronovsky, op. cit., p. 434.

author himself. One sensed a full identification of the creator with his created. One felt a great truth, the person of the author as a man of stature and distinguishing features. A personality calling, demanding, lacking personal peace and disturbing the peace of others, an ethical personality. . . .¹⁷

He was a man of uncompromising honesty, a prophetic spirit committed to indivisible truth, motivated by a fanatic devotion to its dissemination. A follower of Tolstoy doctrines, he pursued the life of an ascetic subscribing to vegetarianism, denying himself luxuries, and serving as a true friend to all who came into contact with him. The scope of his immediate influence was consequently considerable, especially among the workers. A labor leader of Palestine referred to him in 1922 as "

our master and teacher, about whom it could be said, 'Surely our distress he did bear,' who suffered our pains and had the power to open our wound mercilessly, and through whom we were educated.¹⁸

In spite of these pacific forms of behavior, he was torn asunder within, always beset by doubts, never attaining harmony. He was too loyal a son of these people not to be shaken by the plight of his brethren. The individual and national reckoning blended in him to the point where the line of demarcation disappeared. This, in essence, became his philosophy.

It is obvious that Brenner's intellectual brooding and emotional outbursts, disguised and uninhibited in fiction form, are prone to be

¹⁷ David Shimoni, Reminiscing Chapters (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1953), in Hebrew, p. 245.

¹⁸ Berl Katznelson, Writings (Tel Aviv: Hapoel Hatzair, n.d.), vol. I, in Hebrew, p. 285.

misapplied. Anti-Semites may find authoritative support for defamatory charges. This accounts for the fact that Brenner is probably the only major Hebrew or Yiddish author of fiction whose work remained untranslated even in part.

In summary, Brenner contributed toward:

a critical attitude to life in the diaspora, the shortcomings of which are to be traced largely to economic malformation;

a searching and groping for new content;

an introspection, intellectual and emotional, ultimately a basis for renewal and reconversion;

a nationalism without suppression of the individual and an individualism coordinate with nationalism;

an affirmation of labor;

a realistic pessimism serving as the foundation for a no alternative reconstructionism.

These insights and values still potent in Israel, were crystallized in the stream-of-consciousness fiction, essays and polemical articles, and a life of dedication of a sensitive and talented, personality.

CHAPTER XVI

RABBI ABRAHAM ISAAC KUK

Competent observers of the Jewish scene, viewing Zionism in historical perspective, have regarded it a factor for both continuation and change in the course of national events. Pioneers of Zionist thought have alternated between conservation and revolution, as the leitmotif of their intellectual speculations on the Jewish problem. All of the eleven creative minds whose contributions have been discussed in this thesis, were either strangers from afar who returned with new ideas, or rebels from within who set out toward new horizons for their people. In their combined efforts, they attracted largely the peripheral elements consisting of the secular, idealistic, and disillusioned who had already been liberated wholly or partially from the confinement of the ghetto. The masses of Orthodox pious, subject to the ritualistic regimen and mental discipline of the erudite and uncompromising rabbinate, hardly felt the positive impact of the Zionist movement. If anything, Orthodoxy responded with suspicion and opposition to the national ideal. A handful of recognized rabbis were favorably inclined toward Zionism at its inception, and some were among its founders. These, however, were not the leading figures, the widely accepted legal authorities and sages of their respective generations. It was Abraham Isaac Kuk, Chief Rabbi of Palestine, who commanded the stature necessary for successful and fruitful fusion of Orthodoxy and

Zionism, developing a philosophy firmly grounded in the religious heritage, and simultaneously embracing the national ideal in complete consonance. He elevated religious Zionism to spiritual heights in the path of historical continuity, charging it with the power to galvanize large segments of traditional Jewry in behalf of the reclamation of Palestine. Without negating the political, cultural, and economic ideas of the secular minded theoreticians of Zionism, he encased them in a religious setting in perfect blending of contemporary and conventional values. This was an undertaking of singular importance, bridging the gulf between embattled ramparts, each jealously guarding its own domain. The accomplishment was made possible by a fortunate combination of circumstances insofar as a saintly personality was placed in the exalted central position of Chief Rabbi of Palestine, and an original mind was engaged in creative deliberations producing literary works of lasting value.

The Orthodox position vis a vis Zionism is best comprehended in retrospect in the light of education in Israel today.

The unified school system includes a network of government supported religious schools, catering to a substantial minority of the population. These schools combine a general education with training in the observance of ritual and in the transmitting of the religious tradition. Not all like-minded parents enroll their children in these schools. The ultra-Orthodox element, comprising about 30,000 pupils, is in the Chinuch Atma'i (Independent Education) system receiving limited financial backing from the government. These differ, not in ritual practice, but

in the attitude toward educational and national values cultivated in the public schools. To this group, Zionism in the past was an anathema, though after the birth of the State, it is no longer a moot question. Co-education, along with much that pervades the modern curriculum, has been unpalatable to the "Independent" backers.

For all intents and purposes, Israel education offers two parallel religious school systems, public and semi-private, in addition to the general public school. They are distinguishable from each other more by their respective attitudes to the secular environment of state and society, than by loyalty to particular religious dogma or adherence to ritual requirements. There is a tradition of competition and even hostility among their sponsors and originators, going back to the time when Zionism was a controversial issue. The Independent system aims to approximate the East European traditional school, unchanged for centuries. It is under the auspices of the separatist Agudat Israel (Union of Israel), an Orthodox party founded before World War I in opposition to Zionism.

The overwhelming majority of the religious population subscribes to a program which is a synthesis of Orthodoxy and modern nationalism, a philosophy reflected in the government sponsored religious school. Its forerunner was the school system launched by the Mizrachi, the Orthodox wing of the Zionist movement, organized in 1902. Over the decades, it succeeded in gaining the loyalty of increasing numbers among the Orthodox masses of Europe and America. The prevailing sentiment in Eastern Europe however, was unsympathetic to political Zionism in the communities controlled by conservative rabbinical authorities. The acclaimed spirit-

ual leader of religious nationalism, whose influence reached the entire community of Palestine, was Chief Rabbi Kuk.

Understanding more fully the ultra-Orthodox position, would enable us to appreciate Rabbi Kuk's contribution.

The entrenched religious officialdom was opposed to Zionism on psychological, theological, and practical grounds. There was an inherited intransigence in relation to all new movements of messianic inclinations, due to historical precedents having resulted in formation of heretic sects often seceding from Judaism. There was also inertia and stagnation reacting against anything different, especially when it represented any departure from a two thousand year pattern of survival. Existing leadership and vested interests were suspicious of new elements rising to the forefront, mostly from non-conformist quarters. The traditional theology was committed to patient anticipation of the Messiah, instead of independent initiative directed toward immediate redemption from exile. Restoration of statehood through human instruments and natural forces, was tantamount to blasphemy. In Palestine the "old settlement," centered in Jerusalem, objected to the self-sufficient economic mode of life advocated by the new settlers, challenging the parasitic reliance upon charity from abroad. A vicious circle was thus created: Orthodoxy opposed to Zionist colonization, leading to the predominance of liberal young people among the new arrivals, who in turn antagonized the former by their modern ideas. Not the least of all was the transvaluation of Jewish life contained in the Zionist program, fostering a new outlook toward physical work, business, recreation, and many other

vital areas, all in conflict with the inherited prejudices, attitudes and accommodations. To cite one example among many, reference should be made to spoken Hebrew, which was regarded as an outright desecration by the unadulterated traditionalists who revered it as a holy tongue designed exclusively for sanctified usage. Though not all rabbis necessarily subscribed to all of this, many of the great sages living in isolation and the articulate spokesmen of the traditional camp reflected this antagonism in word and deed.

Abraham Isaac Kuk was born in Latvia in 1865. He was recognized as a prodigy and ordained at an early age. His studies included not only the Talmud (code of jurisprudence), but also Kabbala (mystic lore), and secular knowledge. The then unusual curriculum did not detract from his faith and piety. After serving a number of communities, he accepted a call to Jaffa, Palestine, arriving there in 1904. Except for the interlude of war years during which he found himself stranded in Europe, temporarily occupying a pulpit in London, Kuk lived in Palestine until his passing in 1935. After 1919 he held the exalted position of Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi community (European), the Sefardi congregations having their own Chief Rabbi, owing to the varying traditions of ritual and religio-ethnic culture.

In his student years, Kuk came under the influence of the Mussar movement, a religious revival aiming at ethical perfection through ceaseless self-examination, austerity and meditation. The Zionist dream was then in its embryonic stage. In the rabbinical seminary at Voloshin, Russia, where Kuk attended, a secret Zionist society was organized, in

which he participated. It was the Zionist motive which subsequently moved him to accept a post in the Holy Land in spite of the pressures brought to bear against depriving Russian Jewry of his spiritual leadership. In the meantime he had blossomed forth a great scholar and sage, a saintly personality, revered at home and abroad. He had also taken up the pen to popularize his Zionist ideas, and worked out an original and pervasive philosophy of religious Zionism.

In one of his first essays, "The Mission of Israel and Its Nationhood," Kuk sees no conflict between nationalism and religion. They are complementary to each other, each inadequate in itself.

The central thought in Kuk's essay is the assertion that Jewish nationalism with all its modern tones and overtones is the expression of a Divine endowment in the soul of the Jew. Not only the external assets of nationalism, such as the Hebrew language and the land of Palestine, but the dynamic creative urge of the nation that perpetually assumes new forms and creates new values is holy in the highest sense of the word.¹

Nationhood was an integral part of Jewish religion. Its fountain-head fed the streams of Jewish consciousness whenever the sources of piety were depleted. Thus the nationalistic motif could induce Jewish loyalties when religious inspiration weakened. Throughout its long trek the Jewish people lost some of its national attributes and sentiments, becoming spiritually the poorer for it. Kuk went so far as to suggest

that the lack of national feeling was indeed a grievous fault, productive of many vicious consequences, for we thereby missed

¹ Jacob B. Agus, Banner of Jerusalem, The Life, Times and Thought of Abraham Isaac Kuk, the late Chief Rabbi of Palestine (New York: Bloch, 1946), p. 57.

the help of a great and splendid natural force that leads men on to great perfection.²

Nationalism generally is therefore a positive factor making for spiritual progress. "The beauty and magnificence of the Shekhinah³ can be revealed only in a people that lives a fully rounded life on its own land."⁴ In the present day, an opportunity for replenishing Jewish spiritual strength is available in the upsurge of national sentiment. The Jewish people could thereby share the potentialities with which this movement is fraught, in terms of human progress and moral advancement. Within the religious frame of reference, the new nationalism must occupy an honored position.

It is for us to concern ourselves with the task of fostering and deepening the national motive and to make room within the sacred precincts of tradition for the consequences of Jewish nationalism. . . . It is impossible to reach the level, of moral perfection without the wholehearted love of one's nation.⁵

What is the nature of Jewish peoplehood? Kuk affirms that Israel has fused a union between physical kinship and lofty idealism. The Divine has endowed the union with a holiness contingent upon the preservation of this condition. This was a unique contribution of Jewish genius. The task begun by Judaism at the dawn of history has not been completed. Recreating the original setting within the confines of the Holy Land paves the way for finishing the job.

² Cited in ibid., p. 60.

³ Divine Presence.

⁴ Cited in ibid., p. 82.

⁵ Cited in ibid., p. 60-61.

The inner feeling, so strong within us, in striving for the preservation of Judaism in its . . . corporeal and territorial aspects flows from the general public recognition that there is still much to be finished in what we have begun. We began to say something important to ourselves and the world, and we have not concluded saying it yet.⁶

Thus Jewish nationalism is elevated to universal significance.

To Kuk, deeply attached to his faith in all its depth and potency, the universal message of messianic Zionism was not a beautiful poetic phrase bandied about with ease. To him it was of literal seriousness and inevitability. Mystic that he was, he ascribed an innate sanctity to the people of Israel.

The community of Israel is the essence of all existence. In this world the essence flows directly into the Israelite nation; into its materiality no less than its⁷ spirituality; into its history no less than into its faith.

The Zionist movement is not merely a humanitarian undertaking designed to create a haven of refuge for homeless wanderers. Kuk's Zionism draws from the springs of Divine inspiration. It is an unfolding of a predetermined eternal pattern of a cosmic process.

The source of Zionism is that supreme sacred source, the Holy Writ, which imparts to it the depth and glory of tradition. It is fitting that we restore this eternal movement to life. Zionism is not the response of a people hated in the world, setting out to find for itself a refuge from its persecutors. Rather is it the fact that a Holy Nation, the choicest of peoples, the lion-cub of Judah, is awakening⁸ from its long sleep and is returning to its rightful habitat.

The surface appearance of enthusiastic chauvinism notwith-

⁶ Kuk in J. Becker and S. Shpan (ed.), Selected Hebrew Essays, (Tel Aviv: Gazit, 1945), in Hebrew, p. 259.

⁷ Abraham Bick (ed.), Kuk in Exponents and Philosophy of Religious Zionism, (Brooklyn: Hashomer Hadati of North America, 1942), p. 39.

⁸ Ibid., p. 38.

standing, Kuk's love for humanity was unparalleled in its universal encompassment. In the footsteps of a medieval Jewish philosopher, he attributed an inherent sanctity to the soil of the Holy Land and the soul of the people. Palestine offers a geographic imprint upon local activity, penetrating and far-reaching in spiritual manifestations. The beneficent effects are indirectly enjoyed by all men, as the spiritual forces emoted in the Holy Land are channeled into the turbines of cosmic power propelling human destiny.

It is impossible to grasp the essence of the unique holiness of the land of Israel by any rational human effort, but only through the divine spirit in the nation at large, in the inherent spiritual casting in the soul of Israel sending forth its natural colorful rays toward all facets of experience in nature.⁹

Furthermore, the effect of the "Holy Spirit absorbed in the land of Israel is permanently operative even when one leaves the land involuntarily."¹⁰

Thus, the Jewish faith can flourish best in Palestine. Israel, the people and the land reunited, offers optimum conditions for maximum growth and creativity. Living in Israel is therefore a religious obligation in tune with a universal melody and in keeping with the Divine Will. At the same time, it is a "sin for Israel to continue to dwell in the Diaspora."

The difference between the life of the spirit in Palestine and that of other lands is both of degree and kind.

In Palestine the flow of the Holy Spirit bursts forth ready to invade the minds of the scholars. . . . But the

⁹ I. Z. Zahavi (ed.), Kuk in Anthology of Jewish Thought and Ethics: from Saadya Gaon to the present, in Hebrew, (Tel Aviv: Avraham Zioni, 1954), p. 283.

¹⁰ Ibid.

kind of sweetness and light of holiness that is offered in Palestine is not found at all in other lands.¹¹

The author maintains that he himself can testify to this fact. As a mystic, he experienced personally that which he articulated frequently in word and script, enmeshing the intensity of his pious intoxication in a modern mood. Yet, in his mystic nationalism, he veered clear of narrow particularistic tendencies. The idea of munificent blessings to mankind, realized by Israel redeemed, was pivotal in his philosophy. Kuk's own horizon encircled all of humanity, his heart moved by a genuine love for all nations.

I love all. I cannot help loving individuals, all peoples. From the bottom of my being I wish the glory of all, the perfection of all. My love for Israel is deeper and more glowing, but my inner wish spreads the might of my love over all. I do not have to force myself to this feeling of love; it issues directly from the sacred depth of wisdom, from the divine soul.¹²

And so we have a sense of loyal and dedicated world citizenship emerging from a powerful but elevated attachment to ethnic aspirations.

Kuk's influence can be traced directly to the philosophy of the official religious school system. To a lesser, though not inconsequential degree, it reaches into secular circles. In summation: (a) Religiously, Kuk attempted to adapt a two thousand year tradition of a people in exile to the new realities of a nation on its own soil. The process is far from having run its course as yet. In the integration of religious heritage and modern life, it called for a remolding of the

¹¹ Kuk in Jacob B. Agus, op. cit., p. 69.

¹² Kuk in Abraham Bick, op. cit., p. 40.

latter and a re-interpretation of the former. Thus, in its current setting, religious authority and free speculation can flourish in peaceful co-existence in a society where there is no marked separation between Church and State.. (b) Kuk's nationalism, embedded in the religious situation, is transcending in its universal ramifications and spiritual overtones, spelling out human love and understanding. (c) From his mystic piety there emanated a jois de vivre, nourished by a deep faith that makes for the individual's dynamic and joyous involvement in the process of national reconstruction. The new life in Palestine becomes a link in the chain of historic continuity in the sense that the "old is renovated and the new is sanctified." In essence it provides an antidote to an abrasive secularism, surpassing the latter in its humanistic and humanitarian thrust.

PART III

CHAPTER XVII

THE ZIONIST DEBATE -- A SUMMARY

Nineteenth century events in Jewish life paralleled, in an accelerated pace, four centuries of European developments. The modern age in Western civilization is marked by religious reformation, scientific discoveries, geographic expansion, economic reorganization, rise of secular literature and awakening of national consciousness. Similarly, but in a quarter of the time that it took Europe to pass from supposed medieval darkness to the blinding illumination of modernity, European Jewry, representing quantitatively and qualitatively the major segment of a world-wide people, rushed through the same stages. Religious reform in Germany was followed by scholarly research in Jewish history, religion, and institutions; mass emigration from Eastern Europe leading to the emergence of new Jewish centers in North and South America, South Africa, Australia, and Palestine; economic transformation from shiftless ghetto economy to advanced commerce and labor; growth of a modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature, press, theatre, and music; and a dynamic nationalism directed toward reconstitution of scattered Jewry on its ancient soil.

The last stage, which culminated in the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, initially brought forth creative theoretical speculations, many of which crystallized into party platforms and institutional programs, supplying the ideological foundations for the

social and cultural values of existing Israel society and the official as well as inherent goals of education. The major contributions have been analyzed in the preceding chapters, consisting of the essential and influential ideas of twelve political, literary, and scholarly personalities, selected from the galaxy of Zionist luminaries. The choice of names for inclusion in this study was made after proper consultations with academic authorities, both in America and Israel.

The Jewish problem as it appeared to Jewish intellectuals in the period between 1865 and approximately 1925, was seen in political, economic, psychological, cultural, and religious perspectives. Twelve men sought a solution, and as in the case of the classic elephant, each touched a different part of the body under investigation. In retrospect, none was wrong, nor completely right. A subsequent generation of unoriginal but practical men, gathered the diversified elements into an all-inclusive pattern. Or was it the natural interaction of the processes of life that formed the synthesis?

In seeking a solution, the fertile minds under consideration were influenced by their own milieux, under the impact of which, they acquired insights into contemporaneous conditions, offered appraisals of historic phenomena, and arrived at formulae for a projected future. Intellectuals and professionals of Western and Central Europe, breathing the air of conflict in the political arena and inhaling the atmosphere of civil liberties, were uppermost in advocating an autonomous state, taking its place among the nations of the world. East European thinkers and writers, steeped in the indigenous rich culture of compact Jewish masses and fearful of the sweeping tide of assimilation inundating the ghetto

walls of Jewish spiritual isolation, were turning to Zion for possible reinforcement to bolster the diminishing ranks of cultural creativity. Searching souls caught in the wave of mass emigration, detached from the moorings of age-old traditions, but yet without anchor adrift in the turbulent waters of various isms, were groping for salvation for their troubled spirits. Deeply religious personalities, ablaze with the flame of religious fervor, gravitated to the Holy Land, seeking inspiration. Lost sons returning home sought renewed meaning in ancient aspirations. And Palestine was the common focus, alight in the different colors of the spectrum, in accordance with each line of vision.

The spiritual pioneers who planted the seeds, the produce of which is still harvested in Israel, were as varied in their origin as they were in their thinking. They came from different countries, were active in even more, wrote in different languages, and expressed themselves through different genres. Geographically, two (Hess and Herzl) were born and raised in Central Europe, while the others came from areas under Russian domination such as Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, and Russia itself. Linguistically, their Zionist theories were expounded largely in Hebrew (seven); some in German (three: Hess, Herzl, and Pinsker); Yiddish (two: Syrkin and Borochoy), and Russian (one: Borochoy). As to their literary classification, three were novelists (Smolenskin, Berdichevsky, and Brenner). One was a rabbi (Kuk), and the others were journalists and social analysts. Their creative writing took place in Israel (four), Russia

(three), Austria (two), Germany (one), France (one), and America (one). Three lived for some time in the United States (Ben Yehuda, Syrkin, and Boroohov), and five never saw Israel.

What they all shared was a preoccupation with the problems of the Jewish people, crystallizing in a conviction that the minority status was at the root of all evil, and that Israel offers the ultimate, if not the total solution. Much of what they thought and said has not withstood the test of time. Yet a good deal of their fertile thought spread forth into blossoms with fragrance that has not evaporated from Israel's atmosphere today. We shall attempt in the ensuing pages to record these contributions in value categories operative in Israel society and related particularly to its educational philosophy.

To grasp the Jewish Problem in its intricacy and entirety, one must divest himself of American concepts, and enter into the social and intellectual climate of pre-World War I Europe. Homogeneous ethnic groups with common geographic, historic, linguistic, and--to a degree--religious ties, comprised the majority populations of various nations. In this setting nineteenth century Liberalism held out the promise of freedom for the individual. Extension of democratic privileges to the individual was considered in these circles to be highly commendable, providing that he operate within a national religio-cultural setting. Its application to the group was inconceivable. Thus, pluralism in the American democratic sense was, to say the least, unappreciated. Cultural, if not religious abdication is the price the minority pays for the majority acceptance

of its individual members. Characteristic of this attitude is the statement of one of the leaders of the French Revolution, pleading for equal rights for Jews: "To Jews as a nation--nothing; but to Jews as human beings--everything."¹

(a) A century after the French Revolution broke the shackles of medieval subordination of Jews to inferiority civil status, the Jewish Problem was no less severe than before. Anti-Semitism was as rampant in advanced Western Europe as it was in the retarded Russian Empire. Jewish separatism in the latter and increasing assimilation in the former, elicited prejudice and animosity. Nothing short of total dissolution of Jews as a group could eliminate bias and its concomitant effects.

Whence this anti-Semitism? Hess regards it as instinct, embedded race hatred, accentuated by religion and cultural factors. This biologically rooted racial conflict is characteristic of some nations, particularly Germany,--an observation corroborated in the World War II era.

Pinsker diagnoses it primarily as a psychosis, "Judeo-phobia," with political and economic ramifications. It is a Platonic hatred aroused by the abnormal condition of the Jews as a national walking skeleton among living peoples reacting with fear and suspicion. The general distrust of aliens is therefore aggravated by the unnatural circumstances of Israel's survival in the midst of nations.

¹Claremont-Tonnerre at the National Assembly, 1789.

Hess' anthropologic-psychological explanation of anti-Semitism, and Pinsker's socio-psychological analysis, is followed by Herzl's political conclusions. Herzl realizes it to be not merely religious intolerance or social prejudice (as Smolenskin previously believed) that can be eliminated or at least mitigated by education. It is a national problem requiring a political solution offered by an awakened world opinion.

Syrkin is cognizant of the historic clash of values between Jew and Gentile, greatly intensified by the stratification of national social entities feeding the fires of hostility toward Jews. The enterprising spirit of the Jewish entrepreneur runs the gamut from favorable acceptance to hostile competition in the field of labor, with the Jewish proletariat inevitably removed from an effective role in the class struggle antecedent to a new social order.

A Jewish state is therefore the answer for those Jews unable or unwilling to remain subject to the scourages of anti-Semitism, whatever its origin. Furthermore, the creation and existence of such a state, removes the stigma of homelessness (Pinsker) and national inferiority status (Ben Yehuda), and serves as a haven of refuge (Herzl) and economic safety valve (Syrkin), or strategic base for the class struggle (Borochov) in alleviating the pressures--psychological, social, political, and economic--upon the remaining masses of Jewry in their adopted homelands.

(b) Simultaneous with the response to the threat of anti-Semitism, thinking Jews were formulating an answer to the challenge

of assimilation. The Jewish Problem was expressed by other men of thought, in cultural rather than physical terms. To them it was essentially a question of how to retain Jewish distinctiveness in its authentic and creative forms, amidst engulfing conformity. It was more the revival of Judaism than the survival of Jews, that pre-occupied them. Acclimated to the political and economic disadvantage of Jewish life in Eastern Europe, and consciously moved by an abiding faith in nineteenth century hopeful liberalism, they beheld apprehensively the crumbling walls of an age-old pattern of living, exposing the rising generation to the beckoning breezes of alien cultures.

Smolenskin at first conceived of a "spiritual nationalism" differing in kind from ethnic nationalism, expressed in spiritual values (which he did not enumerate) and acting as a cohesive and protective factor for Jewish survival. Its channelization into literary Hebrew was accepted by Achad Ha'am, who defined the permanent values in modern terms and projected their revitalization in a "Spiritual Centre" in Palestine, with its resulting centrifugal force penetrating and unifying scattered Jewry. Ben Yehuda, whose concept of nationalism was unhesitatingly removed from spiritual considerations, established in theory and practice the condition of a living Hebrew tongue as a major force in Jewish unity, providing the linguistic form for the cultural content fostered by others. Kuk restored to cultural nationalism and its unorthodox spirituality, the traditional religious frame, charging it with the ineffable, though nonetheless real power of individual, national, and universal salvation. Achad Ha'am had concluded that

a two thousand year old religious civilization had ceased to operate effectively as the cementing force of Jewish survival, and is therefore to be remodelled in intellectually more acceptable forms, emanating from a spiritual power-centre in Palestine. Kuk, without objecting to the diagnosis, prescribed the conventional diet recharged in increasing potency through its relocation in Palestine, with its salutary effects reaching abroad and reinforcing the retreating tradition against the onslaught of assimilation.

The common denominator in the secular and religious formulations is one of spiritual rebirth. A Jewish society in Palestine, flourishing without restriction in a free and favorable climate, will strike root and produce a living culture of institutions and values, linked to the past and operative in the present. The rejuvenated culture is to be spiritual in character, intellectual in content, Hebrew in form, national in scope, and universal in focus.

(c) The political and cultural foundations of Zionism, revolving around the physical and spiritual revival of Jews and Judaism respectively, were complemented by the psychological motives stemming from a concern for the wholesomeness of the personality of the Jew as an individual. Keen observers of Jewish life in European "Exile" were conscious of the emotional pressures, mental aberrations and social maladjustment of the individual Jew inhaling the infected atmosphere, partly of his own creation. To them, Palestine was the control situation, offering therapy for the disturbed Jewish personality.

Berdichevsky put the blame on a dust-ridden bookish heritage,

overladen with pietistic and moralizing cargo. Opening the windows to Europe, casting off the antiquated yoke of ages, reducing the ethical overemphasis, responding to the aesthetic in art and life, preferring brawn to brain,--these were the actual rejections and affirmations of Berdichevsky as he envisaged a "normal" Jewish personality, restored to its human form, as it once flourished in ancient times on its own soil.

Bremer groped more deeply into the inner pain of the Jewish soul. He experienced the frustrations of mere existence as a member of a despised group. He took account of the psychological toll resulting from rejection and humiliation in an alien world. He hated the intellectual sophistry, the moral distortion, the social maladjustment, the emotional confusion, the economic unproductivity and uprootedness, adding up to a sick, delinquent Jewish personality, diminished in its human dimensions. And a Jewish society in Palestine was the last hope for any recovery.

A. D. Gordon prescribed the formula for the soothing balm relieving the ache of pseudo-life in the Diaspora and its juxtaposition in Palestine. A life of labor in the bosom of nature will open fountains of psychological strength, providing the necessary therapy for the disturbed Jewish soul. The salutary effects of harmony, security, and fulfillment, with the accruing benefits of character building, soul enriching and emotionally gratifying experiences will redeem the individual from the creeping dehumanization paralyzing his being.

The individual motif in Zionism, incisively introspective in focus and pragmatically oriented in formula, blended with the political program and cultural theme in an all-embracing challenge of Jewish redemption. Palestine was to become the social laboratory for renewed and emerging values operative in the social, economic, and psychological realms.² Let us define these attitudes crystallized in the modern Israel milieu³ as they relate to vital issues in Jewish life, tracing their origin among the authoritative thinkers under analysis in this thesis. Subsequent to the enumeration of these attitudes in the ensuing summation, I shall attempt in the following chapter to establish their existence, or at least their normative espousal in the educational philosophy of the State of Israel, as reflected in official documentation.⁴

(a) In the hierarchy of social values in regards to the pursuit of a livelihood, physical labor occupies an exalted position.

²"A new face, thank God, to the Jewish community. . . . Only then will Zion be Zion."

Theodore Herzl in Old-New Land, op. cit.

"Zionism offered a totally new scope beyond the borders of village, province and country. . . . It discovered and developed the Land-of-Israel-man whose deliberations and powers were directed toward change in the general situation. . . . It brought forth in the open the Jewish personality embracing nation and world."

Berl Katznelson, Davar, (daily) in Hebrew, Tel Aviv, Nov. 3, 1941.

³" . . . they set out defiantly and enthusiastically to turn themselves into manual laborers instead of city-dwellers, into producers instead of middlemen, into agriculturists instead of financiers, into warriors instead of shopkeepers. . . ."

Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, abridgement of volumes VII-X, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 178.

⁴Chapter IV contains a general preliminary discussion of the major Zionist premises.

The Marxist, Borochoy, accepts it as economic necessity but was compelled to place a higher premium on heavy industry because of its potential role in the class struggle. Gordon glorified labor, elevating it to a religion. In the life of labor the spiritual powers of man are released as he related himself to the cosmos, society and self. Brenner perceived in physical work a preventative and elixir for the ills of mind and psyche of the modern Jew.

Lifting physical work from its humble footstool to the seat of glory was a philosophical proposition bolstered by political and economic necessity, making for balanced occupational differentiation in Israel economy. Menial work and its technical and specialized operation enjoys status above "white collar" and commercial employment in reverse to the scale of merit in vogue for ages. That this is nourished by the pioneer spirit of idealism, needs no elaboration. It is consciously cultivated by the highest echelon, as demonstrated by Premier Ben Gurion's literal return to the plough after (what turned out to be temporary) retirement from office in 1954.

(b) In advocating the importance of "productive" labor, Zionism set a premium on agriculture as the most desirable. Brenner, and specifically Gordon, rhapsodized over rural life and farming as a livelihood. Urbanization was largely at fault for many of the problems of the Jews, spiritual and economic, social and psychological. Reconstitution of a segment of Jewry in Palestine into an agricultural class was a political necessity, an economic requirement, and a spiritual indispensability. Decades of such orientation have effected a situation

where youth of the highest calibre, morally and intellectually, have turned to pioneer farming in fulfillment of aspirations toward service and career.

(c) Proletarianization and agrarianization of merchants and professionals are inseparable from social idealism and experimentation with national ramifications. Hess had related Jewish national revival to the revolutionary movements of the age, envisaging a society built on Socialist foundations including specifically land nationalization. Thus, the Jewish National Fund which was organized in 1901 as the land purchasing agency of the Zionist movement, financed chiefly by small subscriptions throughout the world, continues to hold title to large cultivated industrialized and settled areas in Israel. Herzl contemplated a seven hour work-day as exemplifying social progress. Achad Ha'am made social justice the cornerstone of his philosophical structure. Syrkin bridged the gap between Zionism and Socialism, hoping for a new society in Palestine on Socialistic foundations. Borochov projected a Communist society. Gordon identified himself with the Kibbutz movement, consisting mostly of rural settlements operating on the local communistic principle of collective ownership of property and consumer goods, combined with bold experimentation in group living. Brenner is still regarded as founder of the Histadrut, the general labor federation of Israel. And Rabbi Kuk surprised the Orthodox world in offering religious sanction for workers' strikes.

What the diverse programs share is a determination to build a new society free from the economic ills of European economy. They all

aim toward economic reorganization without exploitation of labor. The formulators of various platforms draw from the ethical gospel of the Prophets, the social ideals of the Jewish code of law, idealistic liberalism and contemporary Socialism.

Within this ideological context, and as a result of local historical conditions (including the fact that labor and national collective enterprise preceded private capital) Israel is partly a planned economy, controlled by organized labor with a collectivist sector largely in agriculture. Social consciousness is very keen, the labor movement in particular being imbued with a sense of mission beyond its trade union interests. Social idealism, in economic terms, is more than altruistic behavior for the elite; it is a national trait cultivated and superimposed--with both the positive and negative connotations of the latter term--on an emerging economy.

(d) Israel, which came into being through the combined efforts of Jews in Palestine and abroad, is inexorably bound to the far-flung Jewish settlements throughout the world. On the one hand, it looks beyond for continued support of the nascent State, for a favorable political climate, increased economic aid and investment, and augmented and untapped sources of immigration. For export, as Achad Ha'am envisaged, are cultural values to cement the unity and retain the integrity of the other eleven million members of the same people, dispersed around the globe. While Achad Ha'am was concerned with Israel-inspired content of historical continuity and contemporary

validity in binding Jews together, Ben Yehuda looked to the form of a revived Hebrew tongue for the bond among scattered members of one people. In the final analysis, Jewish life of the future was to appear as a wheel with Israel as the hub and the Diaspora as the encircling rim, with linking spokes to keep it in rotation. The functions may not be equal, with the periphery more subject to outer pressure and dents than the center; but the unity of the whole must be maintained for the wheel to remain in motion.

In such a conception, the Israeli recognizes the partnership--though junior partnership--of the Diaspora Jew in the national revival. The plethora of benefits emerging in the reassembled Jewish nation on its own soil, values which are universal and ethical (Hess and Achad Ha'am), national and linguistic (Ben Yehuda), psychological (Brenner), introspectively spiritual (Gordon), religious (Kuk), and aesthetic (Berdichevsky),--are to be shared to a lesser degree by Jews everywhere. Herzl visualized political legal advantages, and Pinsker had projected improved social status for Jews residing outside of Palestine after the state was to come into being.

Affirmation of extra-territorial Judaism, as a challenge and a comparatively lesser but still undeniable opportunity, is balanced by a negation of Diaspora Judaism. Herzl had conceded, without protest, the deliberate disengagement from Jewish identification of elements choosing to remain permanently outside of the rebuilt homeland. The traditional definition of Diaspora life as a divine punishment for national misconduct in ancient days, is reinterpreted by Brenner as

sinful existence per se, falling short of human measurements. Others, applying various criteria, find it inadequate or inferior by norms of civilized taste and modern standards (Berdichevsky), without the potentiality for spiritual enrichment of personality (Gordon), with diminishing material resources and unbalanced unproductive economy (Syrkin and Borochoy), politically unprotected (Herzl), socially humiliated (Pinsker), and divinely impoverished (Kuk). Under such conditions, the Israeli can respond to the Diaspora Jew either through myopic vision or with the jaundiced eye of upbraiding criticism and invidious comparison.

The two views of exile—shackles of captivity or rearguard of advancing columns--create not an ambivalence but a dichotomy of attitude toward the non-Israeli Jew. Alternately, these reactions harmonize in bolstering the inner security of the Israelis as they face the uncertainties of unrelenting military and economic threats.

(e) The modern Jew has had to re-examine his attitude toward the Gentile. With the transfer from a minority status of weakness to a majority status of power, the normalization of Jewish life required a clarification of relationship to the world at large. What is at stake as a result of such deliberations is not only an attitude reflected in policies toward others; it involves frequently revaluation of oneself.

The selection of Israel is a theological concept which permeates the secularized circles of modern Israel as well. Israel of the past

was chosen by God to be "a light unto the nations." Israel today is to fulfill its destiny by exemplified leadership of a new society founded on and guided by social justice. Jewish nationalism was to embrace mankind in its ethical message and social experimentation. Hess prophesied the spiritual possibilities of Jewish revival, claiming a nationalism that went hand in hand with humanitarianism. Herzl harbored more modest aspirations of social legislation. Achad Ha'am dreamt of the "spirit of Judaism" creating a utopian society, while Syrkin aspired toward Socialism that shall come forth out of Zion. "The cultural Zionists preached the erection of a cultural center in Zion as a great service to humanity at large."⁵ Gordon entertained the vision of the New Man, and Kuk saw him sanctified in the prophetic role of serving mankind.

Israel may have been to Herzl a haven of refuge from European persecution, but it was no escape from European civilization. To avoid the economic and social maladies of European capitalism was one thing; to reject Western culture was something else. Israel, geographically in Asia, was to remain spiritually in Western Europe, adapting what is best in Western civilization to its own needs. Achad Ha'am objected to Europe's invasion of Jewry's spiritual domain. He recommended emulation instead of assimilation as a positive cultural process, fraught with great benefit. Israel society was to be modern

⁵ Baron Salo W. in Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People, Leo W. Schwartz, ed., (New York: Random House, 1956), p. 434.

in form but Jewish in character, taking its place beside the societies of man. This was the conservative approach of an authoritative spokesman for the Jewish revolution.

The radical sector, led by Berdichevsky, felt differently. If two thousand years of Jewish life were a tragic error, nothing short of plastic surgery will accomplish the transformation. Jewish society is to be Western in character, modern in form, Jewish in constitution. As against Aahad Ha'am's Jewish ethics, he raised the banner of Greek aesthetics. Art, music, and drama, unencumbered by historical baggage, will flourish with Hebrew as the vehicle--a nation like all nations.

Time has healed the breach between the ideologies in conflict. A sense of mission inspires men and women engaged in establishing a society founded on social idealism, supported by historical values and elevated by cultural interests. Simultaneously, a desire for normalization of life in the free development of a culture liberated from the chains or the challenges of obligation, characterizes the evolving pattern of Israel values and institutions. Perhaps the Israeli desires neither to resent the Gentile nor adulate him; he just wants to live in a world big enough for both of them.

(f) The role of religion in Israel is a controversial issue, unattenuated even while other problems are reduced in intensity, as a people deepens its stakes in a new land. The relationship of Synagogue and State is a source of controversy in government, society and education. For the first time in millenia, Judaism is the religion of the

governing majority, faced with the opportunity and difficulty of translating a hitherto academic code of law into daily reality. An ambitious all-inclusive jurisprudence, embracing ritual, economic and social behavior--as the Jewish code of law virtually attempts--is unprepared for the exigencies and contingencies of a self-governing society disposed to secularization.

At this juncture, it is important to explain the relationship of Zionist philosophy to traditional Judaism. Nourished by the spiritual heritage of national romanticism, historic messianism, and ethical consciousness, the Zionist movement nevertheless represented a revolt against religious authority and existing pattern of institutions and values. In rebelling against the passive resistance to the pressures of the Diaspora, it espoused norms deviating from religiously sanctioned standards.

Freedom or the quest for it, is an expanding process diffused from the political and economic to the religious. This is true not only of "pagan" Berdichevsky and critical Brenner, but holds as well for the spiritual-center minded Achad Ha'am. The latter, in his devotion to the ethics of Jewish religion and history, never accepted the binding ritual of Judaism with its discipline regulating the individual, family, and group, in all their diversified relations of living. Already the mystic Hess hinted at religious revisions necessary to a revitalization of Judaism when Jewry return to Palestine. The leading Orthodox spokesman of Zionism, Chief Rabbi Kuk, was alone among religious authorities to attempt even cautiously the adaptation of religious law to the needs of contemporary Palestine.

The founding fathers of the State of Israel expediently retained the status quo inherited from the British regime, in the government recognized but autonomous Jewish religious courts (also Mohammedan and Christian), controlling marriage, divorce, Sabbath laws, and related matters. Religious political parties (four in number, recently reduced to three) jealously guard this system and aim for its expansion. Articulate secular forces are aided by the unfavorable reaction to the combination of politics and religion, in advocating complete separation of Church and State. The historic synonymity of Jews as a people with Judaism as a religion, makes such severance problematic if not enigmatic, pointing out once again the difficulty of applying an American standard (regarding Church and State) to Israel realities.⁶

The dichotomy of authoritarian religion and rampant secularism is, in the final analysis, indicative of a society in formation as a cultural lag follows technological and social acceleration. The antithesis of religion versus secularism gives way to processes of co-existence ultimately leading to synthesis. These pangs of growth will cease if Israel is to fulfill its destiny. Already searching souls among its intellectuals and educators are groping for a more spiritual orientation and religious content. The public school curriculum beginning with the 1957-8 academic year has been enriched with a "Jewish consciousness" program of instruction in ritual and religious institutions. That this innovation is more in keeping with Smolenskin's and

⁶ Jewish communities outside of Israel are not beset by the same problem since their minority status makes the bulk of religious jurisprudence legally inoperative and compels religious identification as the only form of Jewish expression. Secular Jewish life once flourishing in Eastern Europe, is virtually disappearing in the Western democracies.

Achad Ha'am's positive affirmation of tradition than with the yoke-breaking aspirations of Berdichevsky, Brenner, and Ben Yehuda, is quite obvious. In time, overtures from the religious camp will eliminate the tension and pave the way for a genuine religious revival.

(g) The ethnic penchant for matters of the mind has been preserved in Israel, though not without considerable redirection. The Zionist preoccupation with productivization of Jewish masses in industry (Borochov) and agriculture (Gordon) was directed more against commercial and clerical employment than against intellectual pursuits. Herzl, however, felt that there was an overabundance of "intellectual mediocrities" within the Jewish group. Personages such as Brenner, exerting a powerful influence in pioneer quarters in Palestine, were derisively hostile to Jewish intelligentsia in its over-intellectualism, economic uprootedness, and psychological maladjustment. Berdichevsky envisaged the robust farmer and laborer leading a healthy satisfied life unaffected by intellectual and moral sophistication.

If the English speaking world created the gentleman-farmer prototype, Israel evolved the student-farmer who combines tilling of the soil with study of the book. He is imbued with a sense of mission, serving in the vanguard of a people on the march. Achad Ha'am's disciple Weizmann (who later became the first President of Israel) was instrumental in establishing the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1925) dedicated to the furtherance of Jewish scholarship, social studies, and science. This was undertaken at a time when such a project appeared a premature luxury.

Israel socio-philosophical and educational norms blend the intellectual tradition of historical Judaism with the practical, physical, and technological needs of a rehabilitated Jewry. They bring together the moral values of the past along with the aesthetic interests of the present. The previously mentioned splinter groups of the religious authoritarian (Neturai Karta) and the isolationist libertarian (Canaanite) may advance their own uncompromising platforms. However, what is generally accepted and officially advocated, reflected in the methods and goals of education, suggest a balance between Mind and Body, intellectual and practical, moral and aesthetic. Comparatively new to the Jewish scene are phenomena such as physical education, competitive sports, extensive agricultural, scientific, and mechanical training, and art schools. These are essentially, though not exclusively, products of the Zionist revolution plotted by the creative visionaries comprising the galaxy of personages, presented in this thesis.

CHAPTER XVIII
LEGISLATION AND CURRICULUM

A

The concluding chapter of this thesis is devoted to an examination of the curriculum of Israel schools, to determine the extent to which the Jewish and universal values analyzed in this study are incorporated in the goals and content of the educational program. Before pursuing the investigation, it might prove desirable at this stage to record some introductory notations:

1. The official curriculum and related literature under perusal are necessarily those dealing with education in the Jewish community which comprises about ninety per cent of the total population. The curriculum of the Arab and other minority schools cannot be predicated on the religious and cultural foundations of the Jewish group, and is consequently not included in this study.
2. The unified public school system was established by the State Education Law of 1953, introducing central government authority in place of the "trend" system in operation for many decades under the auspices of ideological political groupings. Consequently, there is a comparative paucity of literature on the subject of the goals and methods of Israel's state education. At present there is an official curriculum published in two volumes for the elementary school, and "Suggestions for a High School Curriculum," serving as primary references

for this chapter. They are designed for both of the school systems under government auspices--the "general" and the "religious"--with required curricular emendations for each. All quotations from the curriculum are my own rendition into English from the Hebrew original, and are largely taken from the "general" curriculum, it being understood that the page by page accompanying "religious" program offers ritualistic and theological augmentation to the "general" curriculum.

3. The material here presented is based on additional guidance and information procured directly from the Ministry of Education in Jerusalem and in conference with educators, principals and teachers, during my six week visit to Israel in the summer of 1958. A number of important details in the preceding chapters have been altered to conform with these personal findings.

B

A summary of the educational philosophy upon which the Israel school system is founded is offered in the State Education Law of 1953, defining the goals of Israel education as follows:

The object of State education is to base elementary education in the State on values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the State and the Jewish people, on practice in agricultural work and handicraft, on ohalutzic (pioneer) training, and on striving for a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance and love of mankind.¹

Noticeable immediately are concepts that can be traced to the original thought of some of the Zionist theoreticians discussed in this

¹The "State Education Law" 5713-1953. Passed by the Knesset August 12, 1953. Book of Laws, in Hebrew, No. 131 of the 9th Elul, 5713 (August 20, 1953), p. 137.

thesis. This skeleton formulation can only suggest terminological affinity with the conceptual relationship to be demonstrated in approaching the details of the actual curriculum.

The "values of Jewish culture," in phraseology and content, are derived from Achad Ha'am who conceived of values of Jewish culture, literary, historical, humanitarian and ethical.

"Achievements of science," comprising scientific data and technological information as applied in the method of instruction and embraced in its subject matter, may also indicate an appreciation of the valuational ramifications of scientific achievements, in the spirit of modernism advocated by Berdichevsky.

"Love of homeland" and "loyalty to the State" are goals that are generally acknowledged in national education elsewhere, and therefore require no further elucidation. The same does not apply to "loyalty to the Jewish people" in addition to "loyalty to the State," implying the concept of an extra-territorial Jewish people beyond the borders of Israel--a pivotal concept in the philosophy of all Zionist thinkers, representative primarily of Hess, Smolenskin, Achad Ha'am and Rabbi Kuk in their deliberations on the nature of the Jewish people in its historic and geographic dimensions.

"Practice in agricultural work and handicraft" suggests a return to "productive" labor advocated by Gordon and Brenner, to replace the economic pursuits of the Jewish middleman in Europe.

"Pioneer training" denotes the inspired and new Jewish type emerging in Israel, dedicated by personal example to the resettlement

of the land and the revival of the people, as Gordon envisaged and Syrkin and Borochoy planned.

"A society built on freedom, equality, tolerance" reflects Herzl's aspirations for a Jewish State, uninfected by European social maladies, enjoying political freedom, economic equality and religious tolerance.

"Mutual assistance" can be linked to Hess's reformulation of prophetic ideals, Gordon's collectivist and Syrkin and Borochoy's socialist aspirations. "Equality" as an economic term is also related to the Socialism and Marxism of the latter two, respectively.

"Love of mankind" strikes a universal note above and beyond national ties, adumbrated by Berdichevsky and articulated by Rabbi Kuk.

These interpretations, though arbitrary and fragmentary on the surface, are valid within the historic context of Israel's ideological framework, and verified by the existing curriculum of the public schools. The values incorporated in the quoted official statement and implemented in the curriculum,--universal, cultural (including linguistic), social, economic, psychological and religious--constitute a comprehensive philosophy of education, echoing the spiritual challenges of the fathers of Zionism and their coteries in Israel society and education for half a century. It should be further noted that this educational platform was not legislated by a majority political party in power, but by a broad coalition of parties, with the approval of all sectors in Israel's parliament, except for the numerically insignificant at both

political extremities.

Another item of educational legislation was approved by parliament in November, 1955 in the form of a resolution that reads as follows:

The Government will see to it that Jewish consciousness be emphasized throughout elementary, secondary and higher schooling. That the Israeli youth be steeped in the past of the Jewish people and in its historic heritage; that his moral affiliation with world Jewry be strengthened through greater realization of the common destiny and historic continuity which binds Jews all over the world and throughout generations.²

The "Jewish Consciousness" program, encompassing subject matter, teaching methods, and extra-curricular activities, marks a return to the spiritual religious exposition of Zionism. To be steeped in the past of the Jewish people and its "historic heritage" was the goal of Rabbi Kuk. "Moral affiliation with world Jewry" was taught by Achad Ha'am. "Common destiny and historic continuity" in the prophetic sense and spiritual charge, was preached by Hess. The attempt at conscious identification of the new Israel generation within the historic structure and geographic dispersion of the Jewish people in counter-distinction to the separatistic tendencies in some sectors of Israel society, represents a return to the mainstream of Jewish national thought traversed by most of the leading exponents of the Jewish national revival, without negating the contributions of the more radical pioneer thinkers engaged in grafting new ideas on the Jewish weltanschauung.

C

The elementary school curriculum issued at the end of 1954

² Proceedings of The Knesset, vol. XIX, in Hebrew, "The Constitution and Program of the New Government," pp. 243-288.

contains a preface by the then Minister of Education with some interesting observations on the aims of education and their underlying philosophy. Referring to the aforementioned "State Education Law," he declares:

The curriculum must faithfully express these goals and the ways of attaining them. Everything taught in the school should aid the pupil in acquiring these values, prepare for his inner absorption of them, and their emergence as a motivating factor in the crystallization of his person through a process of thought and a way of life. Neither the curriculum nor the school should contain anything in conflict with these goals.³

The accompanying volume of curriculum detail spells it out in the classroom situation. The philosophical frame of reference is herein evident and not only implied, actually implementing that which has been proclaimed.

The basis for the curriculum is the "educational experience of the Jewish school in Israel . . . and the diaspora from the beginning of the (modern) Hebrew school to the present day." Thus the philosophy of State education is considerably older than the State itself, evolved in the Jewish school as it came under the influence of Zionist ideology in Israel and abroad during the first half of the nineteenth century in the formative years of Jewish nationalism.

In listing the subjects, the introductory statement makes reference to gardening as an integral part of the school curriculum, related to "homeland and nature studies." Agricultural training is lifted from its occupational and activity setting and placed within the value context of student achievement in the area of "homeland" subject matter. The stressing of agriculture throughout eight grades and its orientation,

³Curriculum: for the elementary school, State, and State-religious (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, November 1954), in Hebrew.

bespeaks an acceptance of the ideals of labor and nature evolved by Gordon. "Obviously we are to foster not only work skill, but also a positive attitude to labor, its love, accuracy and responsibility."⁴ To impart a wholesome attitude to work in the prevailing spirit of modern Israel, pupils are encouraged to engage in independent study comparable to the project method and activity program of the American schools. But whereas in American education this is essentially a sound pedagogic technique for increasing learning efficiency, Israel educators invest these means with end value related to the philosophical outlook.

The preface attaches special significance to the study of literature in cultivating and refining the aesthetic sense, drawing from the gathered fountains of "Jewish thought from generation to generation" and benefitting directly from creations of modern Hebrew literature. The latter are rich with meaning for young people, serving to "identify young people with specific aspects in the development of the vision and fulfillment of our national revival."⁵ Such ambitions reveal a concern for the aesthetic reminiscent of Berdichevsky, an emphasis upon the accumulated heritage of ages demanded by Aohad Ha'am, and an acute awareness of the long-yearned-for and hard-fought-for national independence inspired by Theodore Herzl.

The area of citizenship training again points to particular

⁴Ibid., p. XIII.

⁵Ibid., p. XI.

concepts indigenous to Israel society. The stated goals are "brotherhood of Israel, love of humanity, mutual aid, equality and tolerance."⁶ "Education for ingathering of exiles" supplies practical realities for translating these concepts. These worthy ends are fraught with particular meaning in the framework of Israel ideas and history. "Mutual aid" is not a voluntary act of kindness but connotes socio-economic theory embracing ideas of welfare state, labor unions, national ownership of natural resources,--the ideational genealogy traceable to Borochof, Syrkin and Gordon. "Ingathering of exiles" is a traditional eschatological concept reiterated by Herzl and Rabbi Kuk.

Virtually all subjects are viewed in the perspective of a national revival charged with the functions of involving the pupil in the noble task of Nation and State reconstruction. Education is seen as the invaluable tool of the State in imparting ideals designed to root the children of an immigrant generation in the regained ancient soil. Most subjects are organized in a manner that will

make it possible to transmit to the students the entire chapter of our striving for the reconstruction of our people and the reformation of our lives. Let them relive the epic of courage and heroism in our struggle for independence. These are decisive factors in educating the man in Israel.⁷

This is education for emotional identification, intellectual comprehension, and overt participation in the realization of a messianic dream, through socio-economic, cultural and spiritual redirection. A

⁶ Ibid., p. XIV.

⁷ Ibid., p. XI.

philosophy of education based on these premises must look beyond subject matter to the total personality and the social order. Since the

essential aim of education is the development of the whole man in these values of culture and society, of the ethical and the spiritual, . . . it is necessary for the curriculum to be viewed as a unity, the organized pattern of a national spiritual heritage to be passed on by the teachers, the guardians of the State, to the growing generation.⁸

Instruction is geared toward "transfer of academic achievement to personalized values" so that the ideals of Israel today (as discussed in this thesis and enumerated in the State Education Law) are creatively immured in the personality of the student.

The spiritual foundations and present orientation of Israel education is formulated by the minister of education in the volume under examination, in phraseology reminiscent of and selected from the utterances of Zionist ideologists.

The time history has allotted to us is not very much. We must therefore strive and work with the greatest speed and maximum intensity toward the great charges placed upon us: to be a working and creative people living on its own labor and creating by means of it; to be a free people in its own country capable of living in freedom and independence and defending it with courage and understanding--to be worthy of the name of Israel, gathering in its scattered sons and continuing with its magnificent culture pattern . . . in preparation for the redemption of tomorrow.

A subject by subject examination of the elementary school curriculum reveals to what extent the official pronouncements of educators are prescribed in the classroom situation. A sampling of subjects with relevance to our analysis is hereby offered, listing in each case some

⁸ Ibid., p. XII.

⁹ Ibid., p. XIV.

of the specified goals and enumerating pertinent details of instructional content and methodology.

a. Bible.

The aim of Bible study is to transmit to pupils the fundamental values of Judaism, . . . the prophetic vision of the future for Israel and mankind, and to transplant in their hearts the striving for implementing these ideals in their own lives. . . . To imbue them with the love of the homeland . . . which gave birth to the Bible, and love for people which created it. . . . To foster an appreciation of the literary and aesthetic values of the Bible. . . . To implant awareness of the original majesty of address, style and language in order to exert an influence on their own speech.¹⁰

Bible study averages five hours a week of a total of thirty-one in the general school, and more in the religious school. Its instructional goals appear to be spiritual, national, aesthetic and linguistic. This linking of the universal and spiritual values of the Bible to the national genius of the Jewish people in non-theological terminology is a cornerstone of Achad Ha'am's intellectual structure. The more theological aspects of this relationship have previously been formulated by Hess and Smolenskin. Concern for the aesthetic content of the Bible emanates from Berdichevsky. Its utilization for enriching the Hebrew vocabulary and expression of the student, is the direct result of Ben Yehuda's singular and successful dedication to the reintroduction of Hebrew as the living language of modern Israel. The blending of patriotic and universal themes--spiritual, psychological and pragmatic motives--in and by means of Bible instruction, is representative of the integration of religious, political, psychological

¹⁰
Ibid., p. XV.

and social ideas achieved in Israel society, drawing upon the diversified though not contradictory theories of the founding fathers of Zionism. Illustrative of this is the curriculum of the eighth grade listing among the Bible topics

The destiny of Israel as a unique people possessing righteous laws, . . . an example to other nations.

Recognizing the social and ethical concepts of the Bible expressing the spirit of idealism in the Jewish people.

The ethical laws of the Bible as a foundation for moral behavior and social justice, personal security and universal peace.¹¹

In addition, considerable attention is directed to Biblical legislation on agrarian equalitarianism and personal freedoms.

b. Language.

Among the various aims of language study there is included "the fostering of loyalty to the Hebrew language and the desire to aid in its development, enrichment and domination over the entire people."¹²

Though Hebrew is the spoken language in Israel, it still cannot enjoy the privilege of unchallenged status without additional exhortation and deliberate propagandizing among the multitudes from abroad who bring with them their own languages. What Ben Yehuda began at the turn of the century must still be consciously pursued if Hebrew is to flourish as the chief medium for Israel civilization. The native tongue, taken

¹¹ Ibid., p. 161.

¹² Ibid., p. XVII.

for granted elsewhere, must of necessity be assiduously bolstered in Israel. An appeal to patriotic sentiment and inculcation of an attachment to the Hebrew language begins in the elementary school.

c. History.

The aims of history study include

to impart the knowledge that our people, the smallest among nations, in two thousand years of exile, preserved its religion, institutions and ideas without succumbing to the culture of large nations and without ceasing to maintain its unity throughout its dispersion. . . .

to impart love for the noble spiritual values of our people and to awaken the desire for acting accordingly.¹³

In both instances, Achad Ha'am's philosophy of Jewish history and destiny is evident. The goals further enumerate those concepts operative in historical Jewish experience which contributed to survival in the face of overwhelming odds. Among these life-saving attributes are listed: prophetic universal messianism (pervading the writings of Hess), the tradition of mass scholarship (Smolenskin), a unified ritual and a sense of Jewish destiny (Achad Ha'am and Kuk), the bond with the land of Israel and faith in ultimate return to it (Ben Yehuda).

Lest there be doubts about the historic intellectual roots of current educational goals, the outline unequivocally incorporates the aim of

fostering the recognition that the establishment of the State of Israel is the product of the yearning and loyalty of generations and the result of the efforts of the great pioneer movement in the three generations of the era of revival.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., p.XVII.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.XVIII.

Listed among the accomplishments of the Zionist movement in the study outline are

rebuilding of the land, ingathering of the exiles, revival of Hebrew language, flourishing of Hebrew culture, return to a life of productive labor and engaging in physical defense of the homeland.¹⁵

These are all present realities which were individually launched as new ideas by the architects of Zionist ideologies. The ideals of the pioneer generation are still potent forces in Israel consciousness, worthy of dedication by Israel youth. Alongside of these nationalistic aims there is the stipulation that Jewish history is to teach

an appreciation of the partnership of nations and the reciprocal influences in the positive elements of cultures.

impart an attitude of tolerance toward other nations, and instruct in the importance of international bodies.¹⁶

Both elements, the national and universal, are aptly developed in the outline of study, as for example in the seventh grade topic list:

The rise of young nations and new states in Europe and Western Asia after the disintegration of the Western world.
 . . . The feudal system and the beginning of cities

combined with

The resurgence of the hope for redemption and messianic aspirations as a result of the Crusade persecutions and the efforts of sages in preparing the people for redemption.¹⁷

d. Homeland.

The unusual circumstances of Israel coming into being, together with the fact that the overwhelming majority of the residents are of re-

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

cent immigration, require unrelenting harping upon the patriotic theme. The curriculum lists "homeland" as a separate entity, organized as an independent subject in the first five grades and combined with geography in the upper three. Examination of the goals and instructional topics conveys the theological tendentiousness of informational subject matter normally classified under "geography." Thus it is explicitly proclaimed that the goal is

to root the pupils in the Land of Israel, the land of our fathers and birthplace of the Hebrew people, where, after two thousand years of exile, the State of Israel has been revived and continues to serve as the object of yearning and aspiration for the entire Jewish people wherever it is found; to transmit information on its landscape and climate . . . the social and occupational structure of its inhabitants in all branches of agriculture and industry, . . . and the recognition that it is our natural habitat, the basis for national cultural creativity in its spiritual and material manifestations; to implant within their hearts love for the homeland, the will to guard it and work in it . . . and improve it; to foster loyalty to the State and readiness to defend it at all costs.

Knowledge of the homeland is obtained by the pupils through organized outings in the environs and observation of the surroundings, . . . visiting agricultural settlements and observing their life and livelihood, . . . through stories of early immigration of the life of the first settlers and their hardships in conquering the desert.¹⁸

Though the logical affinity of ideas may not establish a historically related sequence, it may not be irrelevant to call attention to Ben Yehuda's patriotic zealousness for national territorial aspirations, having provided intellectual and literary precedents contributing to current orientation evidenced in the quotation above. The borders have been widened so that love for homeland is to embrace

¹⁸

Ibid., p. XIX.

attachment to ideals of labor, nature, defense and other values embedded in the mosaic of the people's return to its homeland.

In the teaching of "geography," listed as another subject, similar values are conveyed. Gordon's influence is quite marked in a stated purpose which reads:

To bring about an understanding that the earth is the most important source of livelihood for man, and that it responds to the one who toils and labors and guards it, supplying him with its abundance.¹⁹

Obviously this reflects economic and philosophic theory representative of the thinking of the pioneer generation. This is further developed in the topics of grade six:

Information on man's efforts to adjust to geographic conditions and improve his lot and that of society by intensive agriculture, exploitation of natural resources . . . and recognition that the earth provides abundantly for him who toils in it.²⁰

Here is terminology borrowed from Gordon's writings. Following this is an example of Berdichevsky's universalism, well phrased by the second goal, stating:

To implant in their hearts the recognition that all men on the face of the globe are of common descent; that the members of the various nations and countries differ from each other only by their language and outer forms of living but not in fundamental physical and spiritual endowments; that the uninterrupted progress in economic and spiritual factors of living, increases the interdependence of nations, the need for mutual aid, and the necessity for cooperation based on reciprocal understanding and peaceful relations.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., p. XX.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 87.

²¹ Ibid., p. XX.

The internationalism of Borochov is apparent in this reference. The study outline, striking against any form of isolationism, spells out international interdependence in terms of "communication, commerce, science and culture,"²² reminiscent of Herzl's utopian cogitations.

e. Nature and Agriculture.

The Department of Education of the Israel Government has estimated that 21.3% of the instruction time in the elementary school is devoted to agriculture and work activity.²³ Such a high percentage does not denote a vocational emphasis but rather a philosophical attitude to physical work generally and agriculture particularly.

Brenner had attributed a parasitic existence to East European Jewry and advocated a reorientation toward "productive" physical labor. Gordon experienced the salutary effect of contact with nature, and stressed agriculture as the ideal occupation not to be denied in some form even to those engaged in other pursuits.

Borochov had differentiated between "primary" and "secondary" industries, indicating a shift to heavy industry and agriculture, of "primary" and strategic importance in the emerging Israel society. In this context, the aims of "Nature and Agriculture" studies are readily appreciated:

To transfer work information and skill in all branches of agriculture, arranged according to age. . . . To implant in their hearts an intimate relationship to their own cultivated plot of land and to the domestic animals under their care,

²²Ibid., p. 89.

²³Zalman Oren, Educational and Cultural Endeavor in the State of Israel: a report of the Minister of Education and Culture, in Hebrew, (Jerusalem: Department of Education and Culture, 1958), p. 8.

and to foster the aim toward agricultural work and rural living as a form of life desirable for its inherent salutary value both physically and spiritually, and for its opportunity of chalutzic (pioneer) realization in the up-building of the homeland and the strengthening of the State. To root the feeling that agriculture is the most important foundation in the economy of the State and the life of the people, and that it is essential in the resurrection of our people as a normal nation on its own soil.²⁴

The means employed for teaching these values include gardening on the school grounds, outings, surveys, camping, botanical exhibits, animal care, and close contact with children of the same age levels in rural areas. In the fifth grade, for example, pupils are taught

to be ready for emergency voluntary work duty in agricultural establishments; . . . ability to prepare the soil for planting and the skill to carry out all functions related to cultivating; . . . the ability to plant various vegetables and flowers and care for them; . . . the skills of soil-turning, fertilizing, aeration, hoeing, etc.²⁵

The syllabus allows two hours of the weekly schedule for handicraft and an additional five to six hours for nature and agriculture studies, adding up to an impressive time allocation in the total thirty-two to thirty-three classroom hours.

f. Arts and Crafts.

Drawing and the plastic arts are intended to

cultivate the aesthetic sense and the inner desire to observe the beauty of nature and enjoy works of art; to develop free creative powers within the student; to train him in organizing his environment aesthetically and motivate him to participate actively in that undertaking . . . recognizing thereby its importance in enriching the content of life.²⁶

²⁴Curriculum, op. cit., p. XX.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 40-41.

²⁶Ibid., p. XXI.

These are values fought for by Berdichevsky. At the same time previously mentioned goals are reiterated under the rubric of arts and crafts "designed to develop an inclination toward a proper life of labor, cooperative effort, mutual aid, and collective effort"--phraseology pervaded with collectivist and socialist ideas of Syrkin and Borochov, in addition to Gordon previously mentioned.

In the same vein, the syllabus presents music education, stating the need for "accepting art as an important foundation in the life of the individual and a faithful means for social communion, as an excellent complement to the work of man and the changing phenomena of life."²⁷ Placing music education in a context of such import represents a point of view leaning heavily on ideas advanced by Berdichevsky.

The syllabus undertakes to carry out the aesthetic goals of art in ambitious terms. To cite one example, in art for the seventh grade, refinement of artistic taste is regarded as one of the goals, as is indicated by the anticipated "ability to distinguish to a certain degree between good and inferior or degenerate in art."²⁸ Nor are practical considerations ignored, for students are taught to appreciate "proper color combinations in dress and home."²⁹

g. Citizenship.

Instruction in citizenship is officially entitled "Education for Society." Not forming a separate unit but integrated in the total

²⁷ Ibid., p. XXII.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 145.

²⁹ Ibid.

school pattern, there are the specific values normally contained in the school program of a democratic society, emphasizing human relations in the political and social arenas, proper personal habits and ethical behavior. These are also imparted by means of the usual facets of curricular and extra-curricular activities enacted in the school situation and the interplay of social forms and forces characteristic of the adult environment. Above these accepted standards, the Israel curriculum provides for the special conditions of life in Israel and its prevailing climate of opinion. Students are, therefore expected to

report for work duty in the school plant and perform all tasks of labor, whether easy or difficult, pleasant or unpleasant, regular or novel, . . . and to carry them out responsibly and faithfully.³⁰

Singling out work experience in citizenship education and spelling it out on such a large scale, reveals the emphasis in Israel's ideology.

Other unique features previously elaborated upon in this chapter are reiterated in the special mention of such devices as "cooperative meals," and "reconverting school grounds to athletic courts,"³¹ and concepts of "mutual aid . . . collective responsibility . . . and respect for one's own work and that of others."³²

These attitudes are transferred to the demands made outside the school in the challenges of home obligations, social responsibilities and child relationships. The activities of the classroom reach out beyond its borders to

³⁰
Ibid., p. 60.

³¹
Ibid., p. 62.

³²
Ibid., p. XXIII.



help weaker students in their class work; assisting a friend in his work chores at home; a cooperative fund for the needs of the group and the individual; a day's work to aid in agricultural settlement; helping out in the nearby immigrant camp.³³

The realities of present day Israel with its agricultural orientation and "ingathering of exiles" commitment are concretized on the child's level by the last of the aforementioned projects. Two Zionist tenets--the one expounded by most and the other affirmed by all philosophies of Zionism--are thus clearly and directly woven into the fabric of Israel's education. In the final analysis, however, the stamp of originality in the curriculum, distinguishable in these formulations, lies in their emphasis rather than in their wording.

D

In examining the educational goals of the Israel high school curriculum we should remember two pertinent facts: secondary education is not compulsory; there is no government sponsored high school system. The curriculum therefore is more in the form of recommendations than requirements, presented in the Suggestions for the High School Curriculum, published in 1956.³⁴

The present situation is widely recognized as far from optimum. It is the opinion and anticipation of educational and lay authorities that the government school system should and will eventually extend to the secondary level.

³³ Ibid., p. 60.

³⁴ Suggestions for the High School Curriculum (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1956), in Hebrew.

No one in the country--even the most extreme--believes that secondary education is essentially the private affair of parents and that its sponsorship and support are not the obligations of the State. . . . There is no essential difference between elementary and secondary education as far as government responsibility is concerned. This is true even if secondary education is voluntary rather than obligatory. . . .³⁵

In the introduction to the 135 page publication, reference is made to an issue of vital import during the Zionist debate at the turn of the century, affecting the Hebrew high school.

General human culture and the particular national heritage placed side by side, have frequently competed for respective roles without always achieving the necessary synthesis. Secondary education has not usually been recognized by a clear and deliberated program.³⁶

The equivocation between the universal and national, the secular and spiritual, has often in the past led to indetermination and oscillation. The dichotomy of universal and Jewish values frequently aired in the Aohad Ha'am-Berdichevsky controversy, has been reflected in the structure of the high school curriculum. "One could say that for three generations there has been an uninterrupted struggle on the question of our historical heritage; what to include and what to exclude."³⁷ Now, however, the battle is over and an understanding has been reached.

In the arrangement of subject matter there is to be a blending between established cultural values crystallized

³⁵ C. Merchaviah, Frontiers of Education in Israel (Jerusalem: Aohiasaf, 1957), in Hebrew, p. 211.

³⁶ Suggestions for the High School Curriculum, op. cit., p. 10.

³⁷ Deepening Jewish-Israeli Consciousness: (Jerusalem: Government Printer, December 1957), in Hebrew, p. 12.

throughout the ages and emerging contemporary values, taking into consideration the actual needs of society.³⁸

The realities of a society which is molded by national forces from within and universal forces from without, have brought about a synthesis of their own, the elements of which are traceable to conflicting ideas in their embryonic stage at the cradle of the Jewish national movement. The Israeli of today, with the imprint of the school upon him, emerges into maturity as a harmonious individual not torn asunder by the inner contradictions of humanity and Jewishness, prevailing a generation ago. The wholeness and wholesomeness of personality pathetically groped for by Bremner and assiduously sought after by Gordon may have been achieved in Israel education. In this fashion the Israel student is normalized, differing only in kind but not in degree from his counterpart in other societies.

The recommended curriculum is predicated upon goals and focused on values similar to those embodied in the elementary curriculum, geared, of course, to the secondary level. With the subject-by-subject breakdown superfluous at this juncture, attention should be drawn to elements that enrich and augment the elementary program.

The aims of Bible study, among others, are to include the "recognition of the unique place of Israel among the nations" and an attempt "to inculcate the ideals of religion, ethics, society . . . love of man and motherland expressed in the Bible by its heroes."³⁹ This is an example of the fusion of the particular and the universal

³⁸ Suggestions for the High School Curriculum, op. cit., p. 12.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

so painstakingly dwelt upon by some of the aforementioned thinkers.

In Language and Literature study the elementary school aims are reformulated, expanded and adapted to the secondary school. The same national-universal, ethical-aesthetic balance is reflected in goals listed as b, c, and d, reading:

To foster good literary taste . . . and the distinction between a lasting work of art and the spurious. . . .

To open the window to human culture and literature and to its universal human values as well as to the creations expressing the genius of particular peoples. . . .

To bring the student into contact with controversial issues and trends of thought of various ages and with the realities, processes and the way of life of our people in its historical course.⁴⁰

The prescribed reading in Literature includes the essays of Smolenskin, Achad Ha'am, Brenner, Berdichevsky, Rabbi Kuk,--all of them major contributors to Zionist ideology discussed in this thesis (part II), while the others are well represented in the History and Social Studies outlines.

The ideological slant is borne out in the History syllabus with its added emphasis on

the strengthening of the feeling for a common Jewish destiny . . . and tightening the inner bonds with the people as a whole . . . to imbue the student with the understanding of the importance of the State of Israel for assuring the biological survival and historical continuity of the Jewish people.⁴¹

These are aims based on the Zionist premises of Herzl and others regarding the indispensable role of the State of Israel, beyond the

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 35.



immediate interest of its own citizens, for the total ultimate welfare of the dispersed Jewish communities abroad, placing the State within a historical and philosophical setting. At the same time, the broader horizons are set forth in the stated objective of "preparation and conditioning for proper insight in and judgment of social problems and their possible solutions arrived at by independent critical thought."⁴²

The beginning of the Zionist movement and the ideas of its leading exponents are prescribed for the History course in grades 11 and 12. There are units of study devoted to Hess, Pinsker, Theodore Herzl, Achad Ha'am, Ben Yehuda, A.D. Gordon and others.

In Social Studies is included the History of Socialism generally, and Syrkin and Borochoy's theories on a Socialist State in Palestine.

There is another unit on "Constructive Zionism in the Land of Israel" and "A. D. Gordon and the Collectivist Movement." Of special interest is the outline of a course entitled "History of the Jewish National Ideal."⁴³ Featured are the men and ideas presented in this thesis. The importance of this subject is indicated by the fact that it merited such a detailed outline. A cursory reading discloses the following titles and sub-titles, reminiscent of the personalities and subjects of this thesis.

The apostles of the modern Zionist ideal.

The Jewish national problem within the framework of universal redemption--Moses Hess.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 127.

Pinsker and the causes of anti-Semitism; Auto-Emancipation.

Herzl and the political solution.

Achad Ha'am--the problem of Jews and the problem of Judaism; the question of world Jewish unity; a geographic center for historic and spiritual function; concept of a spiritual center; the debate with Berdichevsky.

The synthesis of Zionism and Socialism in Syrkin and Borochoy.

Brenner and personal realization.

Gordon and the creative factor in national life.

Teachings of Rabbi Kuk: the modern national interpretation of the "chosen people" concept.⁴⁴

It should be noted in passing that four hours a week are devoted to this subject. Indirectly, the same concepts pervade the instruction in other areas, as previously indicated. This applies to Hebrew Literature with a five to six hour schedule per week,⁴⁵ Geography and Citizenship.

E

At the international Conference on Jewish Education held in Jerusalem in 1955, an Israeli educator read a brief paper on "The Curriculum of the Israel Elementary School." With reference to the aims of education he had the following to say:

Throughout the world there is not so much preoccupation in defining the aim of education, since the national aims have already been attained--organized society, industry, commerce, pattern of culture. . . . But in our State the goal has not been reached. . . . It is therefore necessary to formulate clearly our educational aims and to place them constantly before us as long as we have not fulfilled the objective incumbent upon our generation.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 127-129

⁴⁵ World literature is taught separately in the eleventh and twelfth grades.

⁴⁶ M. Abigail, "The Elementary School Curriculum in Israel," in Foundations for Hebrew Education in the Diaspora, edited by N. Nardi (Israel: Jewish Agency for Palestine, 1958), in Hebrew, pp. 59-63.

Explaining the need for closer attention to educational ideology, he establishes the underlying premise of education in Israel in terms of

yearning for national redemption and ideological preparedness directed toward this redemption; . . .

aspiring toward a revamped social structure, along with a recognition of the existing facts of the sovereign State of Israel, including the realities of ingathering of exiles, ethnic integration, practical orientation for the new life in agricultural colonies, etc.⁴⁷

In enumerating the areas of instruction, M. Abigail stops to emphasize the phenomenon of physical labor in the school representing "a translation of the pedagogical aim into a patriotic obligation," relating it to the social, economic, political and intellectual revolution innovated by Zionism, implemented by the Jewish community in Palestine and consciously pursued through the official educational objectives of Israel. He then justifiably refers to the "inspired vision" of the culture of Israel and--we might add--the mission of its school system.

⁴⁷
Ibid.

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