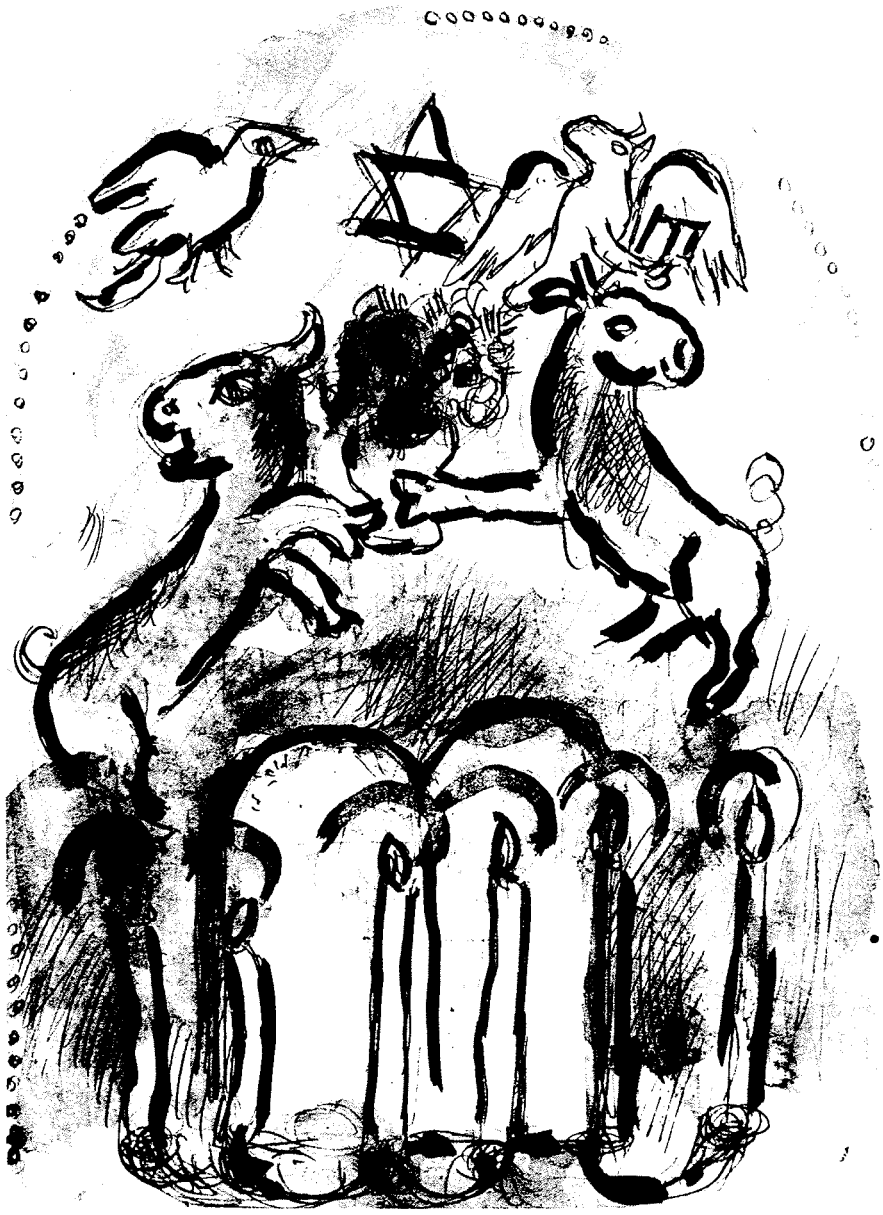

Marc Chagall, "Tribe of Levi," Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center, Jerusalem. Copyright by A.D.A.G.P., Paris, 1982.

Sketch by Marc Chagall for stained-glass window in Jerusalem depicting the priestly tribe of Levi. A dying Moses blessed the 12 tribes of Israel as they prepared to re-enter the Land of Canaan—sometime during the 13th century B.C. Then as now, security was a paramount consideration: Initial settlement was in the rugged eastern mountains, impervious to enemy chariots.

Israel

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." Zionist leaders, intent on regaining their ancient homeland in Palestine, cited that biblical injunction in rejecting Britain's offer (1903) to establish an "autonomous Jewish colony" in Uganda. Fixity of purpose paid off in the establishment of the new state in 1948. Yet today, 35 years later, Israeli society is divided as never before. Israel's economy is in disarray. Its Arab neighbors, Egypt aside, still harbor deep hatreds. No longer do the pioneer values of earlier days permeate national life—the proud austerity, the moral vision, the communal altruism. "Israeli society still treasures a Sleeping Beauty," the writer Amos Oz has noted. "Will the beauty wake?" Here historian Shlomo Avineri reflects on the nation's origins; political scientist Don Peretz surveys the current scene; and journalist Lawrence Meyer looks to the future.

THE ROOTS OF ZIONISM

by Shlomo Avineri

On May 14, 1948, as a bagpiper skirled "The Minstrel Boy," the British High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir Alan Cunningham, left the Haifa dockside on a launch bound for the cruiser HMS *Euryalus*. The 26-year-old British Mandate over Palestine was due to end at midnight. On the same day, under white flags bearing a pale blue Star of David, David Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv proclaimed "the establishment of the Jewish State in Palestine, to be called Israel." Those words marked the end of one chapter in Jewish history and the beginning of another.

With expiration of the British Mandate, Israel became the world's newest nation—but also a successor to one of civilization's most ancient polities. Three thousand years earlier, a Hebrew-speaking Israelite nation had inhabited the strip of hill and fertile plain along the southeast corner of the Mediterranean. A kingdom, with Jerusalem as its capital, arose around 1000 B.C. under David and Solomon. Though subjugated intermittently by invading Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks,

and Romans, the Jewish people also knew epochs of independence and imperial glory, of literary creativity and moral fervor.

The disastrous Jewish rebellion against the Roman Empire beginning in 66 A.D. marked a turning point. The Roman response was brutal; its goal was to erase the identity of the Jews as a nation. Jerusalem was captured and razed by Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian. The temple on Mount Moriah was burned, most of the Jewish population was exiled, and the name of the country was changed to *Palaestina* after the coastal nation (by then extinct) of the Philistines.

Emancipation

Yet a distinct Jewish identity persisted in the Diaspora (Greek for "dispersion") despite the absence of a homeland. Jews reconstructed their lives around their families, their houses of learning and prayer, and the *kehilla,* the religious community. When Jews found themselves persecuted in any given country, they tended to move to another one. Over two millenniums, the focus of Jewish life moved from the Mideast and the shores of the Mediterranean, which had been the original areas of Jewish dispersion, to Europe and later to America. By the mid-19th century, most of the world's 7.5 million Jews were concentrated in central and eastern Europe (especially Russia and Poland), the so-called Jewish Pale of Settlement.

While they continued in their prayers to hope for a return to Palestine, this hope was more passive than real, a yearning for otherworldly redemption. Jews might pray three times a day for the deliverance that would transform the world and transport them to Jerusalem, but they did not emigrate there; they could annually mourn the destruction of the Temple on *Tish'ah be-Av* and leave a brick over their door bare as a constant reminder of the desolation of Zion, but they did not move there. Even so, this link with the land of their forefathers, nebulous though it may have been, singled the Jews out from the communities in which they resided. It was because of this that Jews were considered by others—and considered themselves—not only a minority but a minority *in exile.*

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"Next year in Jerusalem." The Passover prayer was fulfilled for some when Britain's Sir Moses Montefiore purchased farmland near the ancient capital in 1856 to encourage Jewish resettlement.

From The New Jerusalem: Planning and Politics *by Arthur Kutcher; published by Thames and Hudson, Ltd. and the MIT Press, © 1973 Thames and Hudson, London.*

In the medieval world, which defined itself predominantly in religious terms, a special identity was not difficult to maintain. To be sure, until the French Revolution, Jews in most Christian societies were excluded from public life. They could not hold public office, were excluded from the feudal bond of fealty, and were relegated to the society's periphery. If they accepted their marginal and subordinate position, however, they could in most cases survive and practice their religion. Outbursts of religious fanaticism and persecution did shatter Jewish life from time to time in one place or another. Jews were persecuted under the Visigoths and Byzantines, massacred during the Crusades, expelled from England, France, and then, traumatically, from Spain, forcibly converted in Portugal and Persia alike, made to wear distinctive clothes and barred from holding public offices in Christian Italy and Muslim Morocco. But during 2,000 years of exile, the Jews always managed to find safe haven *somewhere,* even if the price of safety was inferior social status—being in, but not of, the local society.

The egalitarian ideas of the French Revolution and the Enlightenment were supposed to change these conditions — to allow absorption of the Jews as individuals into the body politic. "No man should be molested for his beliefs, including religious beliefs, provided that their manifestation does not disturb the public order established by law"—those words are contained in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* promulgated by the French National Assembly in August 1789. As a result of what would

come to be called the "Emancipation," discriminatory legislation was gradually repealed, first in western European countries and later (and less consistently) in eastern Europe. Schools and professions were opened to Jewish applicants. Throughout Europe, the 19th century witnessed an unprecedented amelioration in the status and position of the Jewish people.

The results were dramatic. If around 1815 the Jews had had little impact on European society, by 1900 it would be inconceivable to write the history of any aspect of European culture—politics, diplomacy, and finance, the arts and philosophy, medicine and science, literature and music—without mentioning the contributions of massive numbers of people of Jewish origin. A corollary (and indeed a condition) of this change was the exodus of Jews from the hinterland, from the *shtetls* of the Pale of Settlement and rural districts like Hesse and Alsace, to Europe's great cities. Prior to 1815, few European capitals had any significant Jewish population. On the eve of World War I, Berlin and Vienna, Budapest and Warsaw, and, to a lesser degree, London, Paris, and Odessa were home to large numbers of Jews. It could be said that no other group benefited as much from the industrial revolution, and from the ideas of the Enlightenment, as the Jews.

Nationalism and Identity

This was the new environment that produced Zionism, and that it should have done so is at first glance perplexing. Why did the quest for a national culture and for political sovereignty—and ultimately for a return to *Eretz Israel*—develop among the Jews precisely when European society seemed finally ready to shed its worst prejudices, to emancipate itself from overt religious bigotry, and to treat the Jews more or less as equals, as *citizens*?

The answer, ironically, is that the forces behind Emancipation gave rise to something else as well: Just as the ideas of the French Revolution were gaining acceptance, those same ideas encouraged the emergence of nationalism. New nationalisms were asserting themselves, and old nations, long dormant, were awakening. The emergence of modern Greece and its heroic struggle for independence against the Muslim Turks (1821–31) became a symbol for the new Age of Nations. The people of central and eastern Europe—Serbians, Germans, Italians, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Romanians — were rediscovering their roots, salvaging a national culture from half-forgotten memories and sometimes slim and disparate historical evidence. The pre-

sumption that the West was united in Christendom, shattered first by the Lutheran Reformation, was now finally stripped of the remnants of its credibility.

The newly emancipated and secularized Jews coming out of the ghettos all over Europe now faced a problem. While their ancestors had been clearly distinct, as orthodox Jews, from the surrounding Christian (or Muslim) society, what were *they*, once they had been accepted by Christians as equals? Could they be both Jewish *and* Polish or German or Russian? Were the Jews merely Germans (or whatever) of the Jewish—or "Mosaic"—faith? If they lost their Jewish faith, could they be viewed simply as Germans or Poles? Or did their Jewish ancestry, and the fact that they had been estranged from their own religion, make them slightly different from their non-Jewish neighbors? When French children learned in school that their ancestors were Gauls, could a Jewish child truly identify with Vercingetorix, and would his schoolmates truly view him as a descendant of the ancient Gauls?

These were not merely philosophical questions. They intruded on the daily life of every Jew. Take, for example, the case of a Jewish parent living in one of the centers of Jewish life in eastern Europe, in Wilno, once part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and, in the 19th century, part of the Russian Empire. Imagine this parent wishing to give his children a good, modern, "European" education, and hence unwilling to send them to the orthodox Jewish *heder* and *yeshiva*. To what school should he send them?

Reviving a Language

The state school was, of course, Russian, inculcating in its students (in Russian) the values of Russian culture and heritage. But because most of the population in Wilno was Polish and was continually agitating for its political and cultural rights, there existed a Polish-language school as an alternative. The highly educated Baltic German minority in the region, proud of its own heritage, maintained a German-language school. And the newly awakened Lithuanian self-consciousness of the peasant population gave rise to the beginnings of a Lithuanian school system. So the Jewish parent hoping to burst out of his own "tribal" Jewish traditions and wishing to give his children a "general" education was really faced with the problem of choosing whether to give his children a Russian, Polish, German, or Lithuanian education.

No wonder then that he, and other Jewish parents in similar

A CHRONOLOGY, 1882–1982

1882–1903 First *aliyah:* 25,000 eastern European Jews emigrate to Palestine.

1897 Theodore Herzl organizes first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland.

Theodor Herzl (1860–1904)

1904–14 Second *aliyah:* 40,000 eastern European Jews emigrate to Palestine.

1909 First *kibbutz* (Deganya) established; Tel Aviv founded.

1917 Great Britain, in Balfour Declaration, supports creation in Palestine of "National Home" for the Jews.

1919–23 Third *aliyah:* 35,000 Jews emigrate to Palestine.

1919 *Ha'aretz,* first Hebrew newspaper in Palestine, begins publication.

1920 Founding of Histadrut (General Federation of Labor) and Haganah (Jewish defense unit).

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922)

1923 League of Nations confirms British Mandate over Palestine.

1924–28 Fourth *aliyah:* 67,000 Jews, mostly middle-class Poles, go to Palestine.

1925 Hebrew University opens in Jerusalem.

1929–39 Fifth *aliyah:* 250,000 Jews, one-quarter of them refugees from Nazi Germany, pour into Palestine.

1932 *Jerusalem Post* founded.

1936 Arab riots and strikes protest growing Jewish population.

1938 Philosopher-theologian Martin Buber emigrates to Palestine.

1939 Great Britain issues White Paper on Palestine, curbing Jewish immigration and land purchase.

1941 First Nazi death camp (Chelmno) established in Poland; in Palestine, creation of Palmach, the permanently mobilized striking force of the Haganah.

From The Auschwitz Album *A Book Based Upon an Album Discovered by a Concentration Camp Survivor, Lili Meier. Copyright © 1981 by Peter Hellman, Lili Meier, Beate Klarsfeld. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.*

Jewish inmates at Auschwitz

1945 Germany surrenders; estimated Jewish death camp victims: 5,820,000.

1946 Irgun, Jewish military underground, plants bomb in Jerusalem's King David Hotel, killing 100.

1947 Arabs oppose UN plan to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states; discovery of Dead Sea scrolls.

1948 State of Israel comes into existence (May 14); total Jewish population is 650,000; Arab neighbors invade new nation.

1949 First Knesset (parliament) convenes, David Ben-Gurion is Prime Minister; armistice agreements signed on Rhodes, between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria; Jerusalem divided.

1951 Jewish migration to Israel since independence: 684,000.

David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973)

1955 Arab terrorists (Fedayeen) step up attacks on Israeli settlements.

1956 Suez Crisis: Egypt nationalizes canal and closes it to Israeli shipping; Israel invades Gaza and Sinai as French and British land at Port Said, then withdraw under U.S. pressure.

1962 Adolf Eichmann, former operations officer in the Reich Security Head Office, hanged in Israel for war crimes.

1964 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) created at first Arab summit conference in Cairo, Egypt.

1966 Total U.S. military aid to Israel since independence: $47 million; poet Shmuel Yosef Agnon awarded Nobel Prize for Literature.

Golda Meir (1898–1978)

Wide World Photos (Associated Press).

1967 Six Day War (June 6–11): Israel launches pre-emptive strike against Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, gaining control of the Sinai, Gaza, Golan Heights, and West Bank; Jerusalem reunited.

1968 First Israeli settlement on occupied West Bank established at Kefar-Etzion.

1969 Golda Meir succeeds Levi Eshkol as Prime Minister.

1970 PLO, during "Black September," driven out of Jordan into southern Lebanon.

1972 PLO terrorists kill 11 Israeli athletes at Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany. Total Israeli population: three million, of whom one-sixth are non-Jews.

1973 Syria and Egypt attack Israel on two fronts (Oct. 6); after initial reversals, Israelis threaten Damascus and push across Suez Canal; OPEC oil embargo begins.

1974 Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" yields disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt, Syria; Yitzhak Rabin becomes Prime Minister. At Rabat, Arab leaders declare PLO sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

1976 Israeli commandos free 110 airline passengers held hostage by Palestinian terrorists at Entebbe Airport in Uganda; Syria occupies strife-torn Lebanon.

1977 Likud coalition leader Menachem Begin becomes Prime Minister, ending dominance of Labor Party; Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visits Jerusalem.

1978 Israel invades southern Lebanon to root out Palestinian guerrillas; UN buffer zone created. At Camp David with President Jimmy Carter (Sept. 5–17), President Anwar Sadat and Prime Minister Begin agree to conclude peace treaty within three months; Sadat and Begin awarded Nobel Prize.

1979 Knesset approves Israel-Egypt peace treaty; Israeli inflation rate: 111.4 percent.

1980 Israel begins phased withdrawal from Sinai; second invasion of Lebanon provoked by renewed terrorist attacks.

1981 Israeli air force destroys $275 million Iraqi nuclear reactor near Baghdad; Knesset votes annexation of Golan Heights.

1982 Israel again invades Lebanon, routing Palestinians and Syrians; siege of Beirut ensues, resulting in evacuation of PLO supervised by Italian, French, and American troops; massacre of civilians by Christian Phalangists.

Wide World Photos (Associated Press).

Camp David agreements, September 17, 1978

situations all over central and eastern Europe, began to think that perhaps the way out of the dilemma should be to give their children a modern *Jewish* education. Thus, we see secular Jewish schools established in the 19th century, modeled on the German gymnasium, but teaching Jewish history and Hebrew literature.

The revival of national languages and vernaculars in central and eastern Europe contributed to a Hebrew linguistic renaissance in the 19th century. Down through the ages, Hebrew had continued to function as a kind of "Jewish Latin"—a common language of prayer, theological writing, and learned discourse. Now attempts were being made to write stories and poems and feuilletons in Hebrew—a development that was anathema to some rabbis, who saw in it a desecration of the Holy Tongue. Romantic novels set in biblical times, in which kings commanded and shepherds sang in the language of the prophets, began to appear. The Hebrew Haskala or Enlightenment was born, and the most famous of its writers was Lithuanian-born Abraham Mapu (1808–67), whose two novels, *Ahavat Zion* ("The Love of Zion") and *Ashmat Shomron* ("The Guilt of Samaria"), became the most popular Hebrew novels of the period.

A Sense of History

Urbanization, education, and improved means of communication (the telegraph, the modern printing press, the railroad) gave impetus to the Hebrew language revival. So long as Europe's Jewish communities, separated by distance, were out of touch with one another, the need for a common language was not acutely felt. Conditions also varied greatly from one country to another; there was little sense that the Jewish people faced common problems. That all changed, however, as Jews began to travel, to publish, to congregate in cities. When attempts were made by Jewish modernizers, most of them secularized intellectuals, to found Jewish periodicals, they soon realized that, if they wished to reach a universal Jewish public, only Hebrew could transcend political frontiers and cultural barriers.

Historical research flourished as well. Between 1853 and 1876, a German-Jewish scholar, Heinrich Graetz, published his *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, an 11-volume history of the Jewish people that was soon translated into many languages. Orthodox Judaism, like early Christianity, cared little for the precise recording of events: Revelation, not history, was what really mattered. But now, in the volumes of Graetz, modern educated Jews had before them,

for the first time, a body of scholarship about their own roots.

Whatever the achievements of the Haskala, and they were considerable, one Jewish scholar at the time, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922), complained of what he perceived to be inferiority in the quality of the Hebrew literature in eastern Europe. The reason for that, he argued, was that while a lot of people were *writing* in Hebrew, no one was really *speaking* it. (Could one imagine writing modern poetry in Latin?) A first-rate Hebrew literature, Ben-Yehuda argued, would be able to thrive only if Hebrew became a medium of daily intercourse rather than an intellectual *jeu d'esprit.*

Returning to Zion

For obvious reasons, Jews living as a minority in non-Jewish societies would never be able to develop Hebrew as a language of daily life. Only in one place could a Hebrew-speaking population emerge—in Palestine. As Ben-Yehuda put it: "We will be able to revive the Hebrew tongue only in a country in which the number of Hebrew inhabitants exceeds the number of Gentiles. There, let us increase the number of Jews in our desolate land; let the remnants of our people return to the Land of their ancestors; *let us revive the nation and its tongue will be revived too.*"

True to his convictions, in 1881 Ben-Yehuda emigrated to Jerusalem. There he prepared the first modern dictionary of the Hebrew language and coined many new words. Until the work of Ben-Yehuda and his successors brought Hebrew up to date, the language had lacked such terms as *statistician, oxygen, artillery, traffic light, philatelist, cinema,* and thousands more. The absence of even common words greatly constrained the first generations of Hebrew writers. Commenting on the works of Russian-born Peretz Smolenskin (1842–85), a novelist-publicist who composed in Hebrew, Ben-Yehuda once observed: "Has any of the readers ever felt that in all of the circumstances of the different events that this very capable author brought into his stories, he never mentioned for example the simple common act of tickling?" In Hebrew, there was no word for it.

The first Zionist thinkers were troubled not only by the precariousness of Jewish life and by the contradictions inherent in Jewish existence in a modern, secularized world. They also deplored a further anomaly of Jewish life in the Diaspora—the skewed Jewish social structure. Most Jews in 19th- and 20th-century Europe could be found in various strata of the middle classes. There hardly existed a Jewish proletariat, and there was

Swindlers like the one at left (the 1885 drawing is from a Hebrew newspaper) profited from the first Jewish migration to Palestine. According to the paper, the man was "collecting money for the Jewish settlement 'the Seed of Israel' in Gaza. This settlement never existed."

virtually no Jewish peasantry. Modernizing Jewish life—*normalizing* it—would mean having more Jews involved in primary production, in agriculture, in industry. But how could such a transformation occur under European conditions? Obviously, it could not. A return to the land would be possible only if it went together with the Return to the Land—so argued members of the associations of Hovevei Zion ("Lovers of Zion") that sprang up all over eastern Europe during the 1880s and 1890s and were instrumental in helping set up the first Jewish villages in Palestine.

This was a tremendous (and unique) social revolution. Middle-class Jewish students and ex-merchants were not only leaving Europe for the Land of Israel; they were also deliberately aiming at becoming peasants and workers. Of all the great migration waves of the 19th and 20th centuries—of Italians, Germans, Irish, Slavs—the only one that had a conscious and articulate ideology of *downward* mobility was the Zionist immigration to Palestine. This ideology was sustained by the important socialist wing of the Zionist movement. As writers like Moses Hess foresaw, a Zionist commonwealth would be based on public ownership of the land and of the means of production, which would be organized on cooperative and collective lines. Many came to see Zionism and socialism not as two separate elements that might be welded together but as two sides of the same coin. Such ideas found ready expression in Palestine in a variety of institutions—*kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, various cooperative and collective industries, the paternal labor federation

Histadrut—aimed at bringing about radical social change.

The cultural and linguistic revival in central and eastern Europe—not the outbreaks of anti-Semitism in late 19th-century Europe—paved the way for the idea of a return to the cradle of the Jewish people. To be sure, the Russian *pogroms* and the anti-Semitic policies of the tsarist government prompted almost three million Jews to emigrate between 1882 and 1914. But fewer than one percent of these immigrants went to Palestine. Most went to America. The fact that an avant-garde minority opted for a return to the Land of Israel cannot be explained just by the *push* which drove them out of Europe. There was also a *pull.* Those who went to America were attracted by the promise of personal liberty and advancement. Those who went to Palestine had a vision of a national and social renaissance. Upon arriving, many of them shed their European names. (Ben-Yehuda—"Son of Judah"—was originally named Perlman.) Others went to the length of exchanging their European clothes for Arab *abayahs* and *kefiyas.* Snapshots of early Jewish immigrants to Palestine show groups of people who could be mistaken for bedouins if one were to judge from their clothing.

'If You Will It . . .'

Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), the Viennese journalist and playwright, is generally considered to be the founder of modern, political Zionism. It was certainly due to his efforts that the first Zionist Congress was convened in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland, and the World Zionist Organization established. (The Zionist Organization would be responsible for coordinating Jewish emigration from Europe to Palestine.) Herzl's memorable words, scribbled in his diary after the Congress, were given prophetic significance after the founding of Israel in 1948: "In Basel," he wrote, "I have founded the Jewish state. Were I to state this publicly today, the answer would be a general outburst of laughter. But in five years, in *fifty* years, everyone will acknowledge this."

Viewed in historical perspective, however, Herzl's effort was nothing more than the culmination of earlier efforts, undertaken by many individuals and groups. Herzl's idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine had been voiced by people like Hess and Leon Pinsker, whose pamphlet, *Autoemancipation,* published in 1882, was perhaps the most far-reaching critique of the failure of Emancipation to solve the twin problems of Jewish security and identity. Jewish villages were established in Palestine decades before Herzl took up the cause.

What Herzl added to these efforts was not simply organization and direction. Owing to his public-relations acumen, Herzl was also able to bring the quest for Jewish national consciousness to world attention. What had hitherto been discussed in obscure Hebrew journals in Odessa and Warsaw now became front-page news. What motley groups of unemployed Jewish intellectuals had been arguing about in obscure discussion groups in eastern European *shtetls* now became fashionable talk in cultured salons in central and western Europe.

Every movement needs such a person—the *grand simplificateur,* the popularizer, if not vulgarizer, of a complex idea. While Herzl's two books—the programmatic *Jewish State* (1896) and the utopian novel *Old-New Land* (1902), both written in German but widely translated—became best sellers and spread the Zionist gospel, most of Herzl's ideas were neither new nor particularly profound. But he was blessed with the gift of tongues, the light pen of the trained journalist, the ability to coin the catchy phrase ("If you will it, it will not be a fable") and to strike the dramatic pose. Even his appearance—the combination of a well-bred Victorian gentleman (top hat, white gloves) with the visage of an exotic prophet from the Middle East—greatly contributed to his success.

The Balfour Declaration

The beginnings of the Jewish resettlement of Palestine (financed by such groups as Hovevei Zion and by Jewish philanthropists like Baron Edmond de Rothschild in Paris) were very modest, and it must have been the minuscule scale that was responsible for the initially mild reaction of the local Arab population. Few Arabs in pre-1914 Palestine (then part of the decaying Ottoman Empire) were sensitized to the stirrings of modern nationalism. Moreover, Palestine had always had a relatively high proportion of non-Muslim inhabitants due to its Judeo-Christian associations. By the mid-19th century, for example, Jews—largely pious, ultraorthodox Jews who had trickled in to live and die in the Holy Land—were already a majority in Jerusalem. As Karl Marx reported in an article published on March 18, 1854, in the *New York Daily Tribune,* "the sedentary population of Jerusalem numbers about 15,500 souls, of whom 4,000 are Mussulmans and 8,000 Jews."

When the first tentative moves of Arab nationalists surfaced during the 1880s, they were naturally aimed at overthrowing the oppressive Ottoman regime. The existence of a few Jewish agricultural villages in Palestine was not then considered a

Some 25,000 Israelis now inhabit settlements on territory occupied during the Six Day War in 1967. As of last June, 103 of these new communities were located in the West Bank, 11 in Gaza, and 35 on the Golan Heights (which was formally annexed by Israel in December 1981). Israel's phased withdrawal from the Sinai, stipulated in the peace treaty with Egypt, was completed on April 25, 1982.

major issue. Before the outbreak of World War I, the Jewish population in the Turkish provinces which made up Palestine was only about 100,000, out of a general population of about 800,000. Until 1917, the whole Zionist enterprise remained relatively minor in scale.

In 1917, Great Britain, looking for friends in the war against Germany and its Turkish allies, helped and encouraged the Arabs in the Levant to rebel against the Turks. In a similar effort to rouse support, Britain declared in 1917 that "His Majesty's Government views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people." This statement, known as the Balfour Declaration, was later endorsed by the League of Nations when it granted Great Britain a Mandate over Palestine in 1923 and directed Britain to encourage "close settlement of Jews upon the land." In actuality, the Mandatory Administration, trying to steer a middle course between conflicting claims, ultimately pursued an erratic course. As Arab riots, strikes, and terrorist attacks proliferated during the 1920s and '30s in response to continued Jewish immigration, the British took steps to limit the inflow and restrict land sales to Jews. Even so, the Jewish population in Palestine by the mid-1930s had surpassed one-half million.

Unfinished Business

In 1947, with the grim memory of World War II and the Holocaust still vivid, and following the influx of hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Europe, the United Nations General Assembly proposed the partition of the British Mandatory territory into two states, one Jewish and one Arab. The Jewish community in Palestine accepted this truncated homeland. The Arabs of Palestine and in the surrounding Arab states did not. Within hours of David Ben-Gurion's proclamation of the State of Israel in May 1948, troops from seven Arab nations attacked the new nation. The Israeli Defense Force stood its ground. The clash of Jewish and Arab nationalisms has not yet been resolved, although the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt is no doubt a first step in the right direction.

By any conventional standards, Zionism has been a success story. A Jewish state has been established in part of what was the ancestral homeland of the Jewish people. It has integrated, albeit not always with total success, emigrants and refugees from more than 70 countries, half of them fleeing from Arab nations—Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt—where Jewish life had become intolerable. And Hebrew

has been revived as a modern language. Theodore Herzl once remarked that the Jews returning to their ancestral land would not return to their ancestral tongue: "Who among us," he asked, "can ask for a railway ticket in Hebrew?" Israeli railways are nothing to write home about, but El Al pilots communicate with ground control at Ben-Gurion Airport in Hebrew, just as Israeli children bicker with one another and Israeli scientists discuss their latest discoveries in the language of the prophets.

More important, Israel has become the public focus of Jewish existence. In the pre-Emancipation period, as I have noted, religion and the *kehilla* played this role; being Jewish entailed being a member of a community. Emancipation changed all that, but the State of Israel has put the public dimension back into Jewish life around the world. Without this having ever been defined or decided upon, the fact remains that to be Jewish today means feeling some link with Israel. That link was forged at first by concern among Jews for the new nation's very survival, threatened in four wars. In the long run, however, it can only be maintained by the *content* of Jewish life in Israel, by the cultivation of qualities there that do not exist in the Diaspora.

The founders of the revolutionary Zionist society in Israel realized from the very beginning that independence, sovereignty, and self-determination involve not only a flag, ambassadors, and the pomp and circumstance of state occasions. Independence means first of all the existence—or creation—of a social and economic infrastructure to sustain a more or less self-supporting society. The question for the founders of Zionism never was only how many Jews would live in the Jewish state and what its boundaries were going to be. It was also the quality of life and the kind of society they would establish. This is the unfinished business of the Zionist revolution.