The Settlers

This page intentionally left blank

The Settlers

*And the Struggle over
the Meaning of Zionism*

GADI TAUB

Yale

The English edition of this book is dedicated
to Mark Lilla

We are free to choose the symbols we wish to fight others with,
but the symbols we use make their own demands.
—FOUAD AJAMI

Contents

Acknowledgments

The Settlers

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

Yisrael Harel, an influential figure among religious settlers, the first head of the Yesha Council[1] and the founding editor of the settlers' monthly *Nekuda,* explains the whole controversy over settlement, as he sees it, with a simple hand gesture: two palms held parallel, then moving apart in opposite directions. One hand represents Israel and the West; the other represents Judaism, Zionism, and settlement. Israel is becoming a faint replica of the decadent West, Harel believes. It is materialistic, hedonistic, and spineless; it is stricken with guilt where it once had determination; it has drifted from its original Jewish worldview, first to universal values then to postmodern relativism; it is losing its very self.

The hand that signifies Judaism, Zionism, and settlement collapses the first two into the third. For Harel settlement in the West Bank and Gaza distills the meaning of Judaism and Zionism in our time. The settlements are, he believes, an anchor, literally stuck in the earth of the Holy Land. This anchor

still chains some Israelis to the faith, the heritage, and the national identity of the Jewish people. It is what keeps them from drifting off into the Western void.

I heard all this from Harel early one Shabbat morning in the spring of 1997. We were sitting in the living room of Harel's home in the settlement of Ofrah. The shades were half drawn, and the rest of his family was still asleep. It was quiet inside the house and outside it. Harel served coffee and apologized for not serving cake. It was two days before Passover, and the house had already been cleaned of *hametz.*[2] Harel is, like most in Ofrah, like most religious Zionists, modern Orthodox.

I spent that Shabbat in Ofrah as part of a project for the daily *Yedioth Ahronoth* to mark the fifteen-year anniversary of Amos Oz's book *In the Land of Israel.*[3] The newspaper had sent younger writers to the places Oz had documented back then. The late 1990s were the days of the Netanyahu administration. The Oslo peace process was teetering. Both sides, the Israeli and the Palestinian, were dragging their feet, even sabotaging its implementation. Ofrah seemed to me at the time to be a good place to feel the pulse of religious settlers. It was where the elite of the movement resided.

Oz's chapter on Ofrah in that book was made up of two separate essays. One laid out the view of the settlers as he heard it from them, and the other is a talk Oz himself gave, answering them and laying out his own view. In that second essay Oz analyzed the heart of the political rift between religious settlers and mainstream Zionism, a rift which he was among the first to understand fifteen years before *In the Land of Israel.* Just two months after the Six-Day War, in a brief article in the daily *Davar,* Oz described precisely the line that would divide Israeli

politics in the coming decades. The war presented Israel with two possible interpretations of Zionism, he wrote: Zionism as the liberation of people and Zionism as redemption of land. If Israel chose the liberation of people, it would have to give up the newly acquired territories. If it chose redemption of land, it would end up enslaving people, because there was no way to absorb the huge Palestinian population of the territories except under a permanent occupation regime.[4]

Harel was among the people Oz spoke to in 1982. Fifteen years later, on that Shabbat morning, Harel reminds me that he told Oz the exact same things. He made the same distinction between "Israelis" and "Jews." "Of all that I said to Oz," he says, "this—that Israeliness is just a satellite of the West—was what provoked the greatest anger. But I don't take it back. On the contrary. I'm just becoming more and more certain I was right." He gestures with his hands again to demonstrate the divergence. "What's at stake here," he says, "is not just the future of Judea and Samaria. The future of Judaism, the future of the Jewish people, that is what is in danger." Because not only in Israel are Jews losing their identity. In the United States and in the Diaspora in general, they are also gradually being assimilated into the West. Jews are everywhere losing touch with their origins, their texts, their confidence in the right to the land of their forefathers. And without that, Harel says, Jews are floating rootless and lost in a material world without spirit.

Later that day I tell Rabbi Yoel Bin-nun—a controversial figure among settlers, but an important one nonetheless—about this conversation with Harel. Rabbi Bin-nun waves his hand to dismiss the pessimistic views of his neighbor: "There are those

who believe," he says, "that our clinging to this place is the last stronghold not just of settlement but of Zionism, Judaism, humanity, and the whole cosmos."

Rabbi Bin-nun is full of contradictions, and his manner is expressive, dramatic, and sometimes bewildered. He can be ironic, even mischievous at times, the diametric opposite of the grim, morose Harel. For Bin-nun, unlike Harel, not all facts and political developments strengthen his previous views. Many of them unsettle him. His dream, and here too he is far from Harel, was always an alliance with the dovish left. The tendency to describe "the left"—shorthand for all those opposed to settlement—as modern-day Hellenized Jews, as neo-Athenians, is, for Bin-nun, a form of anesthesia. It is the drug that religious Zionists are administering to themselves so that they can ignore the danger: they themselves are at risk of turning into an armed Sparta, a Sparta that calls matter spirit. And this Sparta is in danger of drifting apart from the rest of Zionism without giving itself an account of it. This confidence, this dual hand gesture where one hand is all good, the other all bad, Rabbi Bin-nun fears, is not a way out of the crisis religious Zionism is facing. It is just a way to deny it. To stake everything—Zionism, Judaism, humanity, and the whole cosmos—on a peg stuck in the earth of the territories is a dangerous thing to do. Earth by itself, even the earth where the ancestors of Judaism gave birth to the nation, is not in itself spiritual. And Zionism, let alone Judaism, cannot be reduced to redeeming land. Rabbi Bin-nun reached out for an alliance with the left because he believes that the left too has an important Zionist argument. The problem of the occupation, which Amos Oz was among the first to clearly articulate and

on which the left insists, is by no means marginal. What to do with the Arab population of the occupied territories is not only a problem for the left, it is a problem for Zionism as a whole. And if the settlers wish to remain Zionists, it is also their problem. It is in fact, Rabbi Bin-nun believes, first and foremost the settlers' problem. It is they who insist on permanently holding the territories, so the burden of proof lies with them.

Levy Eshkol, prime minister of Israel during the Six-Day War and its aftermath, used to say in his Yiddishistic, ironic manner that the results of the war are like a wonderful wedding. The dowry is great. The only problem is that we don't want the bride. Rabbi Bin-nun believes that if the settlers want to persuade Israel to hold the dowry—the territories—they and not "the left" must also show that they have a workable plan for living with the bride—the Palestinian population of the territories. In any case, they cannot afford a rift let alone a conflict with her. Insisting that the bride is evil will do them no good because there will be no way to divorce the bride and keep the dowry. Massive expulsions are out of the question; even if some settlers wish for them, Israel at large will never acquiesce. Leaving this huge population permanently devoid of citizenship is also impossible because this marriage has to be explained to the state, not just to the rabbinate, and the state is democratic. Giving it full citizenship would eventually make Jews a minority. For Rabbi Bin-nun the fact that the state is both Jewish and democratic is important. For him universal humanistic values are not a creature of a "decadent West"; they stem from the heart of Judaism. It was Judaism, after all, that taught the West that all humans were created in the image of

God. Rabbi Bin-nun arrived at the Jewish and democratic formula via religion and the Torah; nevertheless, it is the same formula at which political Zionism arrived from the secular point of view.

Still, Rabbi Bin-nun lived in Ofrah in 1997. How could he reconcile his humanistic beliefs with his own contribution to making the occupation permanent? I asked him about it back then. We were sitting on the ground-level porch at the back of his house on the outskirts of Ofrah. What I got in response was less of an answer and more of a midrash about how the marriage could have worked. He squinted at the glare from the bare hills beyond the fence that marked Ofrah's limits and evoked the ghost of Moshe Dayan, the legendary general and revered minister of defense in the Six-Day War. Rabbi Bin-nun's Dayan is not just a strange mixture of vision and greed, recklessness and profound insight. He is a much stranger hybrid. He radiates the metallic glitter of modern military arrogance, Israeli-style, yet he is also wrapped up in a biblical shroud, with the scents and colors of ancient Canaan. He is Elijah the Prophet with military brass on his shoulders. This is the midrash Rabbi Bin-nun told about the occupation that could have been:

A dispute broke out between neighbors in the newly conquered Sinai peninsula, the Israeli settlers in Di-Zahav and the Bedouins of Dahab. The dispute heated up because one of the Israelis slapped one of the Arabs on the face. Had he punched him it would have been just another fight. But a slap is more humiliating. A slap, Rabbi Bin-nun says, is for a woman or a child. In the eyes of the Bedouins, or at least the Bedouins as Rabbi Bin-nun describes them, a slap to a man is tantamount

to a declaration of war. The Bedouins demanded that the slapper be handed over to them. The Israelis refused. Tempers flared. One of the Israelis fired a shot in the air. The Bedouins retreated but promised to come back.

The Bedouin sheikh, however, was wiser than both the hot-blooded young settlers and the men of his own tribe. He called Moshe Dayan on the telephone, taking him out of a cabinet meeting. Dayan took a helicopter down to Dahab immediately, to mediate the dispute personally. His verdict was one of poetic justice: the Jews should pay the Bedouins a fine of five sheep, symbolizing the five fingers of the open slapping hand. He then boarded the Israel Defense Forces chariot of fire and headed back to the cabinet meeting.

This is Bin-nun's idea of an alternative history, the history that could have been the story of settlement. In this manner, with unwritten rules, with respect for native culture and unspoken understanding, with empathy and sensitivity, Israel could have been generous and wise and could have peacefully remained, if not in Sinai, then at least in Judea and Samaria.

Here is the political scaffolding behind the midrash: "We could have founded," Rabbi Bin-nun says, "a de facto confederation between Israel and Jordan, in which Palestinians would have been residents of Israel and citizens of Jordan."

Dayan of the midrash is not incidental here. This was Dayan's vision in the early days of occupation, known as the "functional compromise"—as opposed to the "territorial compromise"—because it would divide, allegedly, the functions—residence from citizenship, economy from politics—and not the land. The whole idea was, in fact, never more than a fantasy because it offered Jordan nothing: Jordan would have lost

the land and still been asked to give power and influence to a citizenry it was never happy to have. (Jordan has a large Palestinian population that threatens the stability of the Hashemite kingdom.) In the spring of 1997, long after Dayan's fantasy was relegated to the dustbin of history, long after Jordan cut all institutional ties with the West Bank and renounced any demand to take it back, Rabbi Bin-nun still dreamed about it. He painted a picture where a mix of haphazard local arrangements along with a direct telephone line to the Ministry of Defense could have prevented, or so he believed, the rise of Palestinian nationalism as well as the rift between religious Zionism and secular Zionism and the sharp demarcation of the Green Line (the international border that separates Israel proper from the occupied territories). It would have made religious settlements a more direct continuation of the early, pre-state settlement days. Israel could have lived a combination of modernity and mythology, folklore and bureaucracy, as biblical Land of Israel and modern nation-state.

But this romantic kind of orientalism isn't the voice of the sober, pragmatic, khaki-pants-clad Labor Zionism. It is also not the voice of the utopian, socialist Kibbutz movement, nor the voice of the republicanism of Theodor Herzl or the liberalism of General Zionists (in Hebrew, *hatziyonim haklaliyim;* the liberal party that, unlike mainstream Labor Zionism, believed in free-market individualism). It is, rather, the voice of Rudyard Kipling and nineteenth-century British colonialism. And this was a very strange voice to hear in Ofrah at the end of the twentieth century. Zionism flirted with such romanticism here and there, and many Zionists also spoke of the blessing of

progress that European Jews would bring to indigenous peoples. But for the most part, especially after the Arab rebellion of the 1930s, political Zionism didn't see Arabs as noble savages. It saw them as bitter enemies. Dayan's plan was, perhaps, the single most notable exception: with himself in the role of Lawrence of Arabia, he imagined an enlightened occupation based on economic integration that would prevent partition and facilitate constant material improvement. Under such conditions the inhabitants of the territories would be content to live where they did not have equal rights (under Israeli rule) and to have (limited) rights where they did not live (Jordan). This was never a political solution. It was a fantasy in which none of the parties involved—Palestinians, Jordanians, and Israelis—really wanted to take part.

Rabbi Bin-nun's dream about the occupation-that-could-have-been is, at bottom, an unrealistic solution. But it is an unrealistic solution to the right problem. Rabbi Bin-nun saw clearly that the problem was acute and in the here and now. The belief in the near coming of redemption, which is supposed to solve the dilemma of the occupation at a metaphysical level, has become a means for ignoring it on the plane of human affairs. Redemption, as a prominent national religious rabbi, Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, put it, places settlements "above moral-human considerations"[5] and will, in the final analysis, justify the occupation too. But even if so, in the meantime the occupation separates religious and secular Zionism. This meantime, Rabbi Bin-nun feared, was growing so long that it might be too late to heal the rift. Rabbi Bin-nun wanted to reconcile the occupation and political Zionism here and now, so that

the religious and secular parts of the movement could merge again. But Rabbi Bin-nun's plan turned out not to be any more earthly or realistic than waiting for the messiah is.

The desire to solve the problem of the occupation and return to the alliance with Labor caused Rabbi Bin-nun himself to skip over the years from one surprising position to another, all of them attempts to square the same circle: from the early enthusiasm of the movement that placed settlement above any other consideration and trusted redemption to solve all contradictions, to Dayan's fantasy, to a bold flirtation with the idea that perhaps redemption was advancing not through settlement but rather through a peace process, to the opposition to unilateral withdrawal on the grounds of human rights, and finally to the support of Kadima headed by Ehud Olmert—a party that was founded on the platform of unilateral withdrawal—in the elections of 2006.

Rabbi Bin-nun's views may have fallen short of a solution, but they did not lose sight of the fact that as things stood, settlement in the occupied territories was on a collision course with the rest of Israel. It was easier to say that "the left" had lost all its values than to see that what the settlers were up against was deeply rooted in the values of democracy; it was easier to say that the settlers' opponents had deserted Zionism than to see that it was Zionism itself that must ultimately oppose them.

This looming clash between Zionism and settlement was too frightening to admit. It is what Harel's hand gesture was designed to deny in the first place: Zionism and settlement were signified by one hand. There wasn't, there could not be, in his view, a difference between them. If Rabbi Bin-nun tried to square the circle, Harel declared the circle already square.

But both denied that the clash between Zionism and settlement is, at bottom, inevitable. It was this denial that became the imperative around which a whole ideological world would revolve.

A few months before Disengagement—the unilateral evacuation of the Gaza settlements in 2005—Rabbi Avi Giesser, rabbi of Ofrah, told the following story in an interview to the daily *Yedioth Ahronoth.* A student of the Ulpana Yeshiva High School for Girls in Ofrah approached him. She was, he said, bewildered and distressed. "I have realized just now, in civics education class," she told the rabbi, "that I don't live in territory that's fully part of Israel. I've just understood that the territories have a unique standing, that they have a different legal status than the other parts of Israel, and that my home is not the same as other homes, such as those in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv." For this student, said Rabbi Giesser, "this came as a complete surprise. The younger generation has grown up here [in the settlements] with a sense of peace and tranquillity, and this crisis [of Disengagement] has suddenly forced them to face up to their unequal and unnatural status in Israeli society. . . . This shook part of the world in which she had grown up."[6]

Rabbi Giesser's student, then, had reached the age of sixteen or seventeen in a highly ideological environment, in an educational system that the settlers are very proud of, without a clue about the meaning of the struggle she was taking part in. She grew up without any idea that the territories, where Arabs are subjects, not citizens, are any different from Israel proper, where all residents, Arabs and Jews, are full citizens. She had no idea that this situation creates a problem for Zionism and

its ideal of a Jewish democratic state. She had little, if any, knowledge of what democracy means and why Zionists should care about it. Democracy has disappeared from the political equation, and this too is implied by Harel's hand gesture. One hand holds "values": Judaism, Zionism, settlements. The other hand is empty: it holds only Western decadence and something called "universal values," which is but a prelude to total relativism. Democracy, presumably, is somewhere in there, as part of the transition from empty universalism to empty postmodernism.

The surprise of Rabbi Giesser's student is not incidental ignorance. It is a product of carefully cultivated denial, because the controversy over the territories is in the air Israelis breathe. In fact, no dispute has divided Israeli society more deeply. And the division is not only political— because the question was never only one of policy; it has divided Israel culturally and socially as well as ideologically. It is a struggle over Israel's moral identity.

For many years, public discourse in Israel framed the dispute over settlements as a struggle between doves and hawks, left and right, the "peace camp" and the "national camp." For many years, these terms overlapped with the political division into parties. But such classifications eventually collapsed. Among those who oppose settlement there are not only doves, peaceniks, and people whose view is predominantly shaped by a concern for individual human rights. Since 2000 there is also a large and growing centrist group that opposes settlements based on deep pessimism regarding the prospects for peace. Many of them are not doves by any stretch. They are, rather, supporters

of Ariel Sharon's policy of unilateral withdrawal. They base their arguments on what many of them have perceived to be a clear "nationalist" concern that the settlements might cause Zionism to be swallowed up by a binational state with an Arab majority. In their view, it is precisely because peace is not likely that Israel has to extract itself unilaterally from the occupied territories. But the "nationalist" view, though it may be less sensitive to human rights, is not indifferent to democracy. The so-called demographic problem—the fear that if Israel stays in the territories Jews will become a minority in Israel too, as they are everywhere else—is also the democratic problem; those who worry about demography worry about it only because they do not dream of changing Israel's democratic character. In the long run, they reason, annexing the territories would force Israel to make a choice between two options, both of which will be an end to Zionism: a Jewish apartheid, where the Arab majority is barred from voting, and a democracy where the Jewish character of the state would be voted down by that Arab majority (it is far from clear that this alternative would remain a democracy). This is why hawks, even arch-hawks like Ariel Sharon, turned their backs on settlements.[7]

On the other side of the spectrum, many religious supporters of settlement were never simply hawks. Many of them adopted a national-security rationale for settlement only after the fact. In the early stages of their struggle, and in many respects to this day, they viewed themselves not as the bulwark of Israel's security but rather as the protectors of the state's Jewish character (as they understood it). In fact, their transition to the use of security arguments was traumatic. A few months before Sharon's Disengagement was implemented, Ze'ev Hever

(nicknamed "Zambish"), an energetic activist of the settlement movement, explained to *Haaretz* journalist Ari Shavit that the turning point that led to the uprooting of the settlements in the Gaza Strip occurred when Sharon "stopped talking about our right to the land." In Hever's view, "our claim to the land was gradually replaced with security rationales, ultimately leaving us with 'We will never do anything to harm Israel's security.'"[8] Hever diagnosed the transition correctly, and he was right too in pointing out its gravity. He was wrong, however, about the timeline and in singling Sharon out. The problem did not begin on the eve of Disengagement, nor was it Sharon's personal lapse of faith. The settlers themselves had begun to justify their project by using security-based hawkish arguments many years earlier because they deemed them most effective with a secular audience, and they themselves were mindful of just how dangerous that strategic shift could turn out to be. From the outset, in their view, settlement came before security; it had inherent value, which far exceeded any pragmatic considerations. For many of them, the security argument, as settler Menachem Felix put it in the late 1970s, "neither adds nor detracts."[9] Originally, the inner faith-based circle of religious settlers perceived the state as but an instrument for the fulfillment of the commandment to settle the Land of Israel. And the commandment should be carried out regardless of whether it was safe or not, whether it served national security or posed a risk to it.

On both sides, then, the controversy was not over pragmatic political maneuvering. It was a struggle between two kinds of Zionism: on one side stood mainstream Zionism, for which self-determination—the political independence of

Jews as embodied in a democratic national state—was the goal and foundation of Zionism; on the other side stood a religious movement, for which Eretz Israel—the Land of Israel—was the center of the Zionist project. According to the former—a Zionism of state—the settlement of the land was a means for establishing sovereignty, while for the latter—a Zionism of land—sovereignty was a means for settling the land.

The controversy goes on. Because both points of view include both elements, the state and the land, there is a large area where the two visions overlap, and indeed, the two sides often cooperate. Nevertheless, the difference reveals itself whenever the settlers espouse policies that run counter to those of the state's sovereign institutions or when the state decides to evacuate settlements or hand over territory to another country.

The hard messianic core of the settlers, the group that unequivocally puts the commandment to settle the Land of Israel above all others, has always been a minority, even among the settlers themselves. But in the early years following the occupation of 1967, this minority led and shaped the path of the movement. As time passed, though, its influence became diluted, less focused, and certain factions of the movement were shunted to the sidelines.[10] The result was a hybrid: most religious settlers could not turn their backs on the alliance with mainstream secular Zionism, but neither could they cut themselves off completely from the view of the state as an instrument of redemption, a tool for fulfilling the commandment to settle the land. Holding the two positions together became the party line early on. This required turning a blind eye on the differences between a Zionism of state and a Zionism of land. Indeed, the settlers' political leadership and their whole educa-

tional system chose to deny any such differences. Hence the shock of Rabbi Giesser's student: not only did her upbringing fail to prepare her for a clash between the two worldviews, but it willfully taught her to deny that there are, in fact, two of them.

One of the prices denial exacted is the absence of shock absorbers. Lacking a clear set of concepts with which to make sense of a possible clash between religious settlement and secular Zionism, the response could be only one of utter shock. The idea that anyone could make a *Zionist* argument against settlement was, in the eyes of Giesser's student, wholly incomprehensible.

The shock that reemerges at every major juncture of this long political struggle looms around the corner in day-to-day life too. Here is one small example. Moti Sklar, a religious Zionist and settler who at one time served as the director general of Israel's Second Authority for Television and Radio and who is currently the director general of the Israel Broadcast Authority (IBA), produced a documentary film in 1997 called *Travelogue.* He chose five religious Zionist teens and took them on a journey throughout Israel. One of the places they visited was Kibbutz Sde Eliyahu, where they met with one of the founding members. They asked him if he agreed that what they were doing in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza was the continuation of what the kibbutz movement had done in its early years. Not at all, he said. Two of the young visitors burst into tears.[11] These were the same tears of disbelief that became collective weeping during the evacuation of Gaza, and this was the same shock that in Gaza turned into an earthquake.

The shock was not limited to the youth. It encompassed

the whole movement, and it was deeply rooted in it. The whole movement taught itself to ignore the fact that the other side, those who oppose settlement, had a coherent set of values on which they might insist. Yisrael Harel's hand gesture is a late variation of an old adage of religious Zionism: It is said that when the Hazon Ish, Rabbi Abraham Isaiah Karelitz, met David Ben-Gurion, he compared the two forms of Zionism, the religious and the secular, to two carts (or wagons). According to the Talmud,[12] he told Ben-Gurion, when two carts meet head-on on a narrow road, the empty cart must yield to the full cart. The implication was clear: religious Zionism is the full cart, its secular sister the empty one. Religious Zionists were brought up on this. They were taught that secular Israel, especially "the left," does not have *other* values, it has none. It first lost its religious faith, then its loyalty to the Land of Israel, and finally the bonds that tie it to the Jewish people. This notion would become, as we shall see, central. The description of the opposition as non-Zionist was one more way to deny the difficulty of reconciling Zionism and the occupation.

Contrary to its image as a frozen form of fundamentalism, the religious settlers' movement repeatedly wrote and rewrote its own ideology and its history in the service of this denial. It was easier to rewrite history, to shift ideological grounds, than to admit that settlement was heading for a clash, not with a decadent, relativistic, lazy hedonism, but with Zionism itself.

The story of the ideological struggle to reconcile the settlers' view with mainstream Zionism, which this book details, can be roughly sketched as follows. In the beginning a clash was

not yet on the horizon, and admitting the differences did not seem like admitting a fundamental incompatibility between a Zionism focused on political self-determination and a messianic view focused on redeeming land. When the movement of religious settlement began, soon after the Six-Day War, its leaders spoke a clear language of redemption, one that actually underscored the difference between their own view and the view of secular Zionism. This is not to say they thought they would part ways with the mainstream. Quite the contrary: they assumed that their secular sister would soon become part of the redemptive process. A religious awakening was, they believed, under way.

But when both awakening and redemption were delayed, when it turned out that the Jewish state persisted in its refusal to subordinate its sovereignty to a religious view, the settlers realized they would have to justify their endeavors in earthly terms. Here denial of incompatibility between the two views turned to denial of difference, and the settlers began to describe their own enterprise as a direct continuation of the old creed. Increasingly they drew closer to the hawks and based the rationale for settlement on Israel's security needs: conceding the right of Jews to any part of the land would signal to Israel's enemies that it had gone soft and would concede more under pressure; withdrawing from Judea and Samaria would leave Israel's narrow waist vulnerable to invasion; leaving the territories would turn them into a base for terrorism; and so on. For some two decades such arguments were the bulwark of the settlers' propaganda. But as faith in the near coming of the messiah waned—redemption kept being delayed, and Israel moved gradually toward peace—dependence on hawkish ar-

guments deepened. What began as tactics, which covered up a religious agenda, became an article of faith.

And then the security arguments turned against settlement. A growing number of Israelis began to fear that settlement would endanger the heart of Zionism, which was always self-determination, not land. Settlement now seemed like a danger to Zionism, threatening to drown the Jewish state in binationalism. The scales tipped when Ariel Sharon, staunch hawk and longtime patron of settlement, moved for unilateral withdrawal from Gaza. But at this late point the settlers could find no way back to the old religious confidence. Trapped in the realm of earthly justifications, they attempted an astonishing dialectical reversal. When their opponents snatched the security argument from them, they adopted their opponents' old weapon against security-based reasoning: the liberal-democratic worldview. Evacuating settlers, they claimed, violated their human rights. From the outside looking in, this appeared to most Israelis as surreal, if not outright cynical. The idea that one can justify a regime of occupation on the basis of democracy and human rights seemed like more than a slight stretch of moral logic. But the ideological flip-flop, as we shall see, was not just cynical, nor was it only a last-ditch attempt to halt unilateral withdrawal: the newly adopted liberal-democratic discourse began to serve as a means or a medium for making internal sense of the clash that was never supposed to have happened between redemption and secular Zionism. Along with this newly adopted democratic discourse, a search for a revised theology also began. The settlers now needed a way to revise their own brand of Zionism so that it would be able to incorporate the Gaza evacuation, and further withdrawals, without

turning their backs on the state of Israel itself. It seemed that they would have no choice but to gradually replace a narrow territory-centered view with one that ceded the center to political independence. Otherwise, acquiescence to withdrawal would be an ideological and theological dead end.

But the search for a revised theology was halted almost as soon as it began, since the road to further withdrawals—whether unilaterally or through a peace accord—seemed blocked after the second Lebanon war of 2006. The immediate threat to settlement in the West Bank had been lifted. And with it, denial of the fundamental incompatibility, the inevitable clash, returned. With no ideological clash on the horizon, a new theology also became less urgent.

But future clashes are still inevitable. Zionism and the occupation can live uneasily together, as liberalism and slavery did in the United States, but as in the case of slavery in the United States, the two ideologies are destined to collide. It is, to use the famous words of William Seward, an "irrepressible conflict." Israel will not be able to deny it forever or avoid it indefinitely. Because as in the case of America's great convulsion, the Civil War, the controversy goes to the core of the creed.

Israel is not facing anything comparable to the United States' Civil War. The whole population of Jewish settlers in the West Bank numbers (at the beginning of 2008) around 270,000. Many of them (secular as well as Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox) have moved there for reasons that aren't ideological, including cheaper housing and government economic incentives. Only about a third to a half of the West Bank's Jew-

ish population, some 100,000 to 130,000 people, are religious Zionists.[13] This group, then, is less than 1.5 percent of Israel's total population. It is too small a sector to think it could have its way by force in direct confrontation. Nor does it want to. The great majority of the settlers would never dream of taking arms against Israel's army, in which so many of them serve. Still, a massive evacuation can turn violent, and even some small pockets of armed resistance are likely. But nevertheless, this is not the arena where the issue will be decided. And it is also not the focus of this book. The book does not concentrate on political history. It does not offer a blow-by-blow account of who built what and when, who was evacuated, where the budgets for the massive construction projects came from, or what the role of the government, army, or courts was in sustaining the occupation. There is detailed research on these topics, and I have used it to provide context. But the focus here remains elsewhere. It lies with ideas, because settlement has become the issue over which Israel's moral foundations and its identity—its heart and its mind—are contested. Religious settlers have posed a persistent challenge to Zionism, and it is in this sense only that the struggle resembles the American Civil War. As that conflict forced America to redefine its creed and draw its limits, so religious settlement has forced Israel to draw the limits of Zionism. It is not simply a political issue. It is a struggle over the very meaning of Zionism.

In order to see why the two visions, that of secular Zionism and that of religious settlers, could not be reconciled, we need to set the stage first. Before we turn to the origins of religious settlements, the first chapter will deal with secular Zionism

and its democratic foundations. I am well aware that what was once self-evident—that political Zionism is inherently democratic—is no longer so for many. In part this is a result of the occupation and the confusion of the old creed with the ideology of the settlers. We will need to untangle these ideas, and in order to do this it is essential that we clear up some misunderstandings about Zionism. We will then be in a better position to understand how and why the settlers sought to redefine Zionism to make it accommodate their own view.

I
Political Zionism

Zionism, as it sees itself, is application of the universal principle of self-determination to the Jews. As Israel's Declaration of Independence states, it is "the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign state."[1] Jews have this right not because they are different but because they are "like all other nations."

The Land of Israel was thus not the point of origin for the movement founded by Theodore Herzl. It is rather its (necessary) conclusion. The point of origin was the drive for liberty, which many European Jews came to believe would be impossible for Jews as Jews to realize in Europe itself. To end the two-millennia-long subordination of Jews to others, they would need to become political, so that they could defend their political rights. And since they found they could not do so effectively or safely as individuals within the nation-states of Europe, they would have to do it collectively. Where Emancipation—the gradual liberation of Jews as individuals—

failed, collective auto-emancipation seemed like the most valid alternative.

Herzl's was not the only plan for Jewish autonomy. There were others, which conceived of the solution in terms more modest than statehood: limited self-rule in multinational states, self-defense groups and paramilitary training, training in physical professions considered "truly" productive (farming, construction, etc.) in order to make the Jews economically independent, and much else. Herzlian Zionism, however, followed this logic to its end and pointed the way to full independence for Jews in a state of their own.

Jews have been immigrating to the Land of Israel all throughout the period of exile. The yearning to return to Zion has always been in their daily prayers. Anti-Semitism too was ever present. But none of this produced a full-scale national liberation movement. That only happened when the new met the old. When the drive for liberty met the yearning for Zion the spark was ignited and the effort took shape. To understand Zionism as an idea, then, one must follow the story of a new drive for Jewish liberty. It is an essentially modern drive, and its history is embedded in the larger context: the gradual emergence of a modern democratic self-determination.

Eighteenth-century European political thinkers were not optimistic about the prospects for democracy. In the fashion of Montesquieu's 1748 *The Spirit of the Laws* it was commonly assumed that republics could not survive except in the smallest of states,[2] such as the ancient Greek polis and the Italian city-state of the Renaissance. Only such small republics, it was believed, could educate their citizens to transcend petty egotistic passions and acquire the republican virtue that would

make them prefer the public interest to their private good. Jean-Jacques Rousseau went so far as to argue that only "a very small state, in which the people may be readily assembled" could maintain a proper democratic form of government.[3] Such republics would also be capable of creating an intimate political community bound by solidarity; they would have a small public sphere in which the impact of public decisions on private affairs would be directly felt, and in which such abstractions as "the public good" would be more or less clear to the common citizen. None of this could exist in large states. What, after all, would make a farmer in Bordeaux understand, let alone take into account, the interests of a shoemaker in Paris? What would make uneducated masses, untrained in politics, overcome both their egotism and their ignorance and use their political rights wisely? The Enlightenment therefore staked its hopes of civil liberty at first on restricted governments, where kings and parliaments coexisted in a fragile balance, or else it hoped that enlightened despots, educated by philosophers, would protect liberty.

Few imagined at the time that republicanism awaited just around the corner of history, and that philosophers were actually worried about the wrong thing. Making people care about the public good was not the problem. They already did. Not because "the masses" are "enlightened" and place their "reason" over their "passions," nor because they see a rational connection between their private interest and the public good, but rather because they are bound by emotional attachment to the body politic. In other words, most eighteenth-century thinkers failed to foresee the immense force of modern nationalism. Politicians, rather than philosophers (and sometimes politician-

philosophers, such as some of the founders of the American republic), were the first to grasp this. Revolutionaries on both sides of the Atlantic seized on it instinctively. Their rallying cry was "Patriot!" For such politicians the logic that tied republicanism and nationalism seemed clear: the patriot, the lover of his country and people, will defend the liberty of his fellow citizens, and the independence of his country, precisely because he is bound to them by empathy. Nor was patriotism conceived as a collective form of egotism or chauvinism, or, as we would put it today, a negation of the Other. On the contrary, it was assumed that the French patriot was the natural friend of the American patriot and the German, Russian, or Italian patriot. They all shouldered the same burden, the War of All Peoples against All Kings.

The French Declaration of the Rights of Man, adopted by the revolutionary National Assembly in August 1789, is anchored in the recognition of the connection between republicanism and national self-determination. It directly ties "the principle of all sovereignty," which, it says, "resides essentially in the nation," to the sanctity of individual rights by making the nation the vehicle for citizens' bringing their will to bear through the power of legislation.[4] On similar grounds Thomas Jefferson reasoned that the "honest patriot" is the most tenacious keeper of the laws that guarantee his (and later, her) rights and enable all to exercise sovereignty.[5]

It was from the heart of this national-democratic logic that Zionism would eventually emerge, and Zionism followed the history of that logic closely. In a deep sense Zionism was in fact first democratic and only later national.

In the Age of Enlightenment itself, before the emergence

of national democracies, the hope that Jews would share in the blessings of liberty was staked on the idea of a separation of the public and the private. Enlightened Jews were no more optimistic about the prospects for democracy than were their Christian counterparts. They thus hoped that if Jewish identity was seen as a private affair and Jews were seen as citizens like all others, discrimination against them would dissolve and the lot of Jews would be the same as that of gentiles. Thinkers such as Judah Leib Gordon (Yalag, in the Hebrew acronym) and Moses Mendelssohn taught that one should be a Jew at home and just "a human being" outside it. But anti-Semitism refused to disappear, and the reconceptualizing of the Jew as abstract citizen, as cosmopolitan human being, seemed only to make matters worse. With the emergence of nationalism, when it became clear how the republican form of government was dependent on patriotism and on the nation, cosmopolitanism became a flaw. If Jews were only abstract human beings in the public sphere, then they could not be real patriots of any nation, and once again they were strangers, a subversive element. Anti-Semitism changed its colors: formerly based in religion, it assumed a new nationalistic form. Cosmopolitan Jews, who belonged to no nation but resided in all of them, were suspected of harboring an international Jewish conspiracy. This was the idiom behind such anti-Semitic literature as the forged *Protocols of the Elders of Zion.*

The gradual emergence of a modern national order required, therefore, an updating of the formula by which Jews could be granted liberty and equality. The emancipation of Jews depended on transforming the formula so that Jews were not to be Jews in private and abstract citizens in public but

rather to be Jews in private and English, French, German, or Russian patriots in public. Under this formula the Jews were granted rights, in different measures, in constitutional monarchies (England), liberal empires (the Austro-Hungarian Empire), and republics (France) and in a far more limited way under despotic regimes (Russia). Now Jews would be French men and women of the Jewish faith, English men and women of the Jewish faith, Germans of the Jewish faith, and so on.

This too failed, and the failure is commonly attributed to the tenacity of anti-Semitism. The Jews remained, in the eyes of gentiles, a malignant foreign element. The paradigmatic case is the Dreyfus affair, the late-nineteenth-century cause célèbre at the heart of which was the Jewish French army captain Alfred Dreyfus. Dreyfus was tried and falsely convicted of betraying France by selling its military secrets to the Germans. The case became and remained such a powerful symbol of the failure of Emancipation for several reasons: first, Theodor Herzl said (misleadingly) that it was Dreyfus who turned him into a Zionist;[6] second, France was the model of Emancipation in that, at least in theory, it gave Jews as individuals full rights and fully equal treatment; and last, Dreyfus was a prime example of a patriot. Here then was a case of a true patriot and lover of his country who was nevertheless considered, because he was Jewish, subversive and treacherous. Leon Pinsker, author of the influential pamphlet *Auto-Emancipation*[7] (1882) and a former exemplary Russian patriot, physician, and decorated soldier of the Russian army, was another early Zionist who after the pogroms of 1881 despaired of the Jews ever being truly accepted in Europe. Pinsker's proto-Zionism concluded that Jews must emancipate themselves rather than beg gentiles

to grant them rights. The pain of humiliation in this proud man, immortalized in the powerful text of his short treatise, connects in a striking way the failure of Emancipation, anti-Semitism, and the drive to Jewish national self-determination.

Yet the external pressure of anti-Semitism is not the whole story behind Zionism. There was also a powerful internal force that drove it. Zionism emerged not only because the Jews were rejected and shunned. It also sprang from the fact that they were finally, at least partially, accepted.[8] The ghetto deprived Jews of much and kept them subordinated to gentiles, but it also secured their identity against assimilation. Once the ghetto walls crumbled, especially in Western Europe, and many doors were opened, they discovered that the price of this acceptance could well be giving up Jewish identity altogether. A Jewish boy going to a gentile school in Germany could not observe the Sabbath because the day of rest in school was Sunday, not Saturday. He could not eat with the other students because the food was not kosher. Even if he was not an observant Jew, his school would teach him that his ancestors were barbarians who had invaded the Roman Empire. Accepting this heritage—this narrative, as we would say today—would mean abandoning his own, the one about his ancestors' exodus from Egypt. A fully German identity would mean forsaking one's Jewish narrative for another, while preserving the story of the exodus would mean being less than fully German. The choice was thus between liberty and Judaism. To be truly emancipated, to partake in the progressive march of liberty along with their fellow Europeans, Jews would need to fully assimilate into the emerging European national order.

In other words, the separation of private and public

broke down: one could not be privately Jewish and publicly French or German or English because Jewish identity had a public dimension just as French, German, and English identities had a private one. Jews thus seemed to stand, as Moses did, on the brink of the new promised land, the democratic order where human beings were truly free and had true, sovereign power over their own lives, but they were unable to enter it. Or at least not as Jews. The march of moral and political progress was about to leave them behind.

It was at this point that Zionism began to take shape, for if liberty depends on popular sovereignty, and if popular democratic sovereignty "resides essentially in the nation" and depends on it for its realization, and if Jews as Jews would never be part of European nations, there was but one option left for those who strove for true liberty: Jews would need to form a nation of their own. The inauguration of the movement was the direct expression of this line of thought. Herzl explains in his diary what he believed was his greatest achievement at the first Zionist Congress: he convinced the delegates of the congress, he says, that they were the national assembly (he used the same German term, Nationalversammlung, used to describe the revolutionary assembly of France).[9] The voting mechanism, which was open to every Jewish man (and as of the second congress, to every Jewish woman as well) who paid membership dues, created a democratic nation even before there was a territory and a functioning national society that could form an actual state.

Early Zionism, then, focused on democracy before it focused on Zion. Indeed, in the early stages, the question of where self-determination would take place seemed secondary.

Herzl's *The State of the Jews*[10] and Pinsker's *Auto-Emancipation* both consider the Land of Israel as but one option. Many other territories were considered by others, virtually all over the world, in North America, South America, the Crimea, Madagascar, Argentina, and Uganda, to name a few.

This is not to say that Zion was a marginal thing for the movement, as Herzl was to discover. One after another, suggestions for alternative territories failed. The members of the movement rejected them because Zion awaited at the end of this chain of logic: if the liberation of Jews turned out to be dependent on a national democracy that would preserve their identity, then that identity made no more sense without Zion than French identity would make sense without France or English identity without England. Preserving the narrative of the exodus meant not only remembering where one came from but also where one was going. If the problem from its inception was how to make Jews free without their having to give up their heritage and their collective narrative, then that narrative could not ignore the centrality of the Land of Israel for Jewish identity. Jews can live in many places. A Jewish state cannot. It must be, as the British Empire recognized in the Balfour Declaration, in—*in* though not necessarily *all over*—the Land of Israel.

The extent to which Zionism ignored the fact that there was an Arab population in the allegedly deserted old homeland has been greatly exaggerated.[11] Herzl's book *Altneuland,* though it did not foresee a Palestinian national movement (few if any in Europe or in the Arab world foresaw a Palestinian nation at the time),[12] took the question of the Arab minority, and minori-

ties in general, very seriously. He attempted to balance his own values, including his insistence on the rights of women, on the one hand, with respect for local Arab culture and identity on the other. He has the president of the Jewish society in the book, on his deathbed, leaving his people with these last words: "The stranger must feel good among us!"[13] Indeed, the political dimension of the plot has an explicitly anti-Arab and xenophobic party lose the elections. Since Zionism was born of the traumatic experience of minorities, it could not ignore the question of minorities in the Jewish national state. This is why Ben-Gurion, Herzl's great admirer, inscribed *collective* minority rights into Israel's Declaration of Independence. This was a reflection of the lesson learned from the failure of Emancipation in Europe: it is not enough to grant the members of a minority individual civil rights alone, forcing them to seclude their identity in the private sphere. Provisions must be made to ensure public collective rights and the ability to preserve the group's identity as a group as well (Europe in fact followed this same path with regard to minorities inside its nation-states and enshrined such principles as described by Israel's Declaration of Independence in the 1995 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities).

Like most democracies Israel has often deviated from its proclaimed ideals. It has done so at times during great emergencies, such as the explicitly genocidal war waged against the young Jewish state in 1948, and at other times under lesser stress, as when it postponed keeping its promise of full civil rights to its Arab citizens until 1966. But by far, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza since 1967 is Israel's most glaring violation of democratic rights and liberal values. The territo-

ries were, from the start, under an occupation that was defined as "temporary." Some Israelis were eager to exchange the territories for peace; others dreamed of annexation. But in the absence of an Arab counterpart who would accept that portion of the land in exchange for peace, the internal Israeli controversy over its future seemed purely theoretical—a fact that played a decisive role in the history of settlement. At times under government initiative and at other times against the government's will, settlement thrived on a political stalemate. But no government, right or left, ever moved to annex Judea, Samaria, and Gaza or change the status of the occupation from "temporary" to officially permanent. Because that would drive a wedge through the very heart of Zionism. It would mean either giving up democracy or giving up the Jewish character of the state; the population of the territories would eventually make the Jews a minority, a condition under which Jewish political self-determination, the very idea of a Jewish democratic state, would stop making sense. So the territories were neither forsaken nor annexed, and democracy within Israel proper, where all, Jews and Arabs alike, have full civil rights, continued to live uneasily with a military rule in the territories, where Jews have rights and Arabs do not.

By reducing Zionism to the redeeming of land religious settlers have sought to bypass this question, diverting attention from the population to the land, and ignoring this crucial difference between the two sides of the Green Line. If Zionism, as they argued, was primarily about redeeming the land, then their own project of settlement was a continuation of the old creed. They hoped in this way to bestow the legitimacy of Zionism on their own efforts.

And they were partially successful. Israel's detractors have accepted the argument that settlement is a continuation of Zionism, but they used it for the opposite reason: to portray Zionism as a whole with the colors of the occupation. In this view—often dubbed "post-Zionism," though "anti-Zionism" would be a more accurate term—Zionism was never democratic, and the very idea of a Jewish democratic state is a mere contradiction in terms.

Both post-Zionists and settlers ignore the depth of Zionism's roots in the democratic worldview, and so, deeply distort it. From the Zionist point of view "Jewish" and "democratic" are not only not contradicting attributes of the state, they are actually complementary aspects of the same thing. Israel is not the state of the Jewish faith; it is the state of the Jewish nation. When the Jews are a majority, the state is Jewish in the same sense that Italy is Italian: because it is democratic. So long as Israel's citizens can vote, the Jewish majority will probably choose the Jewish calendar for their holidays, the Sabbath as their day of rest, Hebrew as their language, and the Jewish heritage will largely shape Israel's culture. In fact, the only way to make Israel non-Jewish is by depriving Israel's citizens of the vote. (Some argue that a Jewish democratic state is distinctly not like an Italian democratic state. They often site issues of church and state, the Law of Return, an "ethnic" or "colonial" nature they attribute to Israel's national identity, the existence of a large minority, and more. For a detailed presentation of these arguments, and why they do not add up to the alleged conclusion that a state cannot be both Jewish and democratic, see the appendix.)

But the concept of a Jewish democratic state *does* stop

making sense if Jews are not a clear majority. And it is for this reason that the project of settlement can't be reconciled with Zionism. This is the circle that the settlers needed—still need—to square, and it is this which makes the clash between the two creeds—that of mainstream Zionism and that of the settlers—inevitable.

Though the differences came to the fore with the onset of the occupation in 1967, they had their roots before the Six-Day War, in the uneasy response of Orthodoxy to Zionism. The clash of creeds was potentially there from the moment a religious Zionism was formulated.

This page intentionally left blank

II
Religious Zionism:
The Politics of Redemption

The relations between Jewish Orthodoxy and political Zionism were complicated from the very beginning. Zionism was an explicitly secular (though not an antireligious) movement. There were other movements of dissent before Zionism, and Orthodoxy frowned on them all. But here was something new, for this secular movement was attempting to realize an old religious vision. Zionism wanted to achieve by earthly means what Jews had been praying for for two millennia: to return to the homeland and resurrect Jewish political independence. This should have been the act of the faithful, not the unbelievers.

Many of the Orthodox considered it a sin. If God had sent the Israelites into the Diaspora as a punishment for their sins, it was up to Him and Him alone to say when the punishment was over. Returning to Zion was tantamount to a rebellion against God's decree. There was an explicit formulation of this in the midrashic literature. According to the midrash,

when the people of Israel went into exile, they made three vows: not to hasten the end of days (i.e., not to do anything to expedite the coming of the Messiah), not to ascend the wall (i.e., not to immigrate to the Land of Israel and reestablish the House of David), and not to rebel against the nations of the world. Zionism violated, or so it seemed, all three.

The many turbulent theological controversies over this subject are too complex to enumerate here (they were laid out in detail by Aviezer Ravitzky in his seminal study of the subject).[1] For our purposes it suffices to mention two central ideological implications arising from these religious disputes, which opened up avenues of cooperation between Orthodox Jews and secular Zionists. Out of these two worldviews religious Zionists emerged.

The first line of reasoning, which was the more common one in the early days, cut through the apparent contradiction by making a separation between the sacred and the profane. This idea gave birth to the Mizrachi movement, under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Yitzchak Ya'akov Reiness. Rabbi Reiness saw Zionism as a primarily political rather than a theological movement. It was also, in his view, a spiritual revival, in the sense that if Jews gathered together and built their own society they would be able to revitalize their culture and tradition. This spiritual revival was relegated, however, to the earthly and human realm. If there were messianic elements in Rabbi Reiness's view of Zionism, they were not pronounced, nor did they become his dominant political legacy.[2]

Another idea, marginal at first, but which would later beget the settlers' movement, was the brainchild of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook. Rabbi Kook, a kind of Jew-

ish Hegelian, saw secular Zionists and their Orthodox opponents as two complementary parts of a higher synthesis of which none of them was yet aware. Hegel's cunning of history was replaced here by the cunning of God. When these two counterparts of the higher truth merged, they would bring about a merging of sovereignty and halacha.

The problem of the three vows dissolved since Rabbi Kook did not see secular Zionism as a purely human endeavor. In his view the secular pioneer was responding to a divine call, although he was not aware of who was calling him. Religious Zionism was no "empty cart" but rather a deep religious awakening, the role of which in God's larger plan would become apparent only later.

In addition, in Kook's view, redemption was a process, not an event. This conception left room for human initiative. Though human beings did not determine the path of redemption, let alone bring it to its climatic conclusion in the coming of the Messiah, they could nevertheless have an active role in it. The state to which Zionism aspired was therefore not the conclusion of the process, but only its beginning, the "first flourishing of our redemption" and an earthly tool that would serve as a vessel to hold something far more sublime than itself. The actual state would be a stepping-stone on the path to the ideal state, which, according to Rabbi Kook, would be the "foundation of the throne of God in the world." Rabbi Kook endowed the tangible earthly state, which could be founded by human means, with a measure of holiness, not by virtue of its own merits, but rather because it was an intermediary stage on the way to something beyond it: a truly holy state.

This vision was part of a larger conception of human

history. Rabbi Kook's mystical, holistic philosophy sought to explain many other developments of his day.[3] His vision had universal dimensions in which the rise of democracy, the awakening of other nations, had important, often surprising roles on the way to the redemption of the whole world.

Two aspects of this theological view are important here. First, Rabbi Kook still made room for the anticipation of redemption; the path was not entirely in view, and the coming of the Messiah was still shrouded in the clouds of an unknown future. Redemption was one step closer but still mainly in divine, not human, hands. Second, the sacred dimensions that the state acquired paved the way to making sovereignty a value in its own right. Sovereignty, not necessarily settlement of land, gained religious sanction.

The Mizrachi movement (which later gave birth to the National Religious Party), the political organ of religious Zionism, allied itself to Mapai (later Labor), the dominant party in the Zionist movement. The alliance seemed natural because Rabbi Reiness's pragmatism dovetailed with the realistic, practical turn of mind so characteristic of Mapai.

The disciples of Rabbi Kook could also see themselves as part of the shared enterprise, since their mentor had allowed for ambiguity regarding the exact political plans of God. Rabbi Kook's followers did not attempt to derive specific policies from his views, and so they were able to reconcile their beliefs with Zionism as a whole and not just with a particular interpretation of it. The political and religious realms were sufficiently separate, and only modest religious demands were made of the state. Mainstream political Zionism was also content with this arrangement. It was an imperative from the days of Herzl

onward to make room in the movement for believers. Ben-Gurion may have been more determinedly secular than Herzl, but he never dreamed of shutting the observant out of the movement either.

The Merkaz Harav Revolution

Rabbi Kook's son, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook, changed the meaning of the partnership between secular and religious Zionists. Rabbi Kook the father died in 1935, in the Land of Israel, and in the three decades that elapsed between his death and the Six-Day War, his son labored at reinterpreting the original vision. He brought redemption and politics much closer. By editing his father's writings, he derived a far more detailed political plan from theology. The difference was crucial. The messianic belief and the anticipation of redemption, as Ravitzky has observed, were replaced by a messianic confidence and positive knowledge of the future.[4] To put it more crudely than Ravitzky, redemption was lowered from the sphere of the state to the level of a political party. It was stripped of theological ambiguity and turned into a political platform.

The human reserves for the younger Rabbi Kook's political platform were found in the Kfar Haroeh Yeshiva High School.[5] Founded by Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriya, the Yeshiva High School sought to provide religious Zionist youth with a framework that could prevent a de facto rift between their Zionism and their faith. Up until its founding, serious Torah education was provided only by ultra-Orthodox yeshivas, and studying there meant distancing oneself from the actual pioneering life of secular Zionism. In contrast, those who chose to

take part in the efforts of Zionist pioneering found themselves drifting away from the world of higher religious learning. Rabbi Neriya's Yeshiva High School created a new kind of religious Zionist youth, proud of its piety and patriotism alike. They would be free of their sense of inferiority to the ultra-Orthodox for their learning and to the secular Zionists for their pioneering work. This situation served as a sociological complement to the theological vision of Rabbi Neriya's mentor, Rabbi Kook the father. It is therefore no surprise that Rabbi Neriya's students turned later to Rabbi Kook the son, head of the Merkaz Harav Yeshiva, as their preferred theological authority.

The spark that ignited the messianic fire and turned this group into the ideological spearhead of the settlement movement was the extraordinary victory of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in the Six-Day War. The war had demonstrated conclusively to Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook the outline of the path of redemption. At this point the political language of redemptive religious Zionism took shape and acquired force. The "miracle" of the lightning victory created a sense that not only were Zionists not hastening the End of Days, but rather, as Rabbi Zvi Yehuda was fond of saying, it was the End of Days that was hastening "us." Redemption was no longer at its beginning; it was well under way, and the way it would proceed had become plain for all to see.

About a month before the war, on the eve of Israel's Independence Day, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda gave a sermon to his students in which he asked, with extraordinary excitement and on the verge of tears, "Where is our Shechem [Nablus]? Where is

our Hebron?" Against the backdrop of this speech, the "miracle" of the Six-Day War appeared to be the fulfillment of a prophecy, with Rabbi Zvi Yehuda a near prophet. The sermon was disseminated among his students after the war and given the name "The Nineteen Psalm" (it had been Israel's nineteenth anniversary). The road map of redemption was finally in human hands, and Rabbi Zvi Yehuda left no room for doubt as to what it said: settlement, the redemption of land, was the holy path,[6] and the state too must be committed to it. Earthly sovereignty became subordinate to a higher politico-theological plan for which it was but an instrument. "The Almighty has his own political agenda, according to which politics down here are conducted," the rabbi said. "It is dictated by divine politics and no earthly politics can counter it."[7]

Since settlement is a direct commandment of "divine politics" it stands not only above and beyond earthly politics but also "above moral-human considerations," as Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, head of the religious Zionist Yeshiva Ateret Cohanim, put it (he referred to the rights of other nations).[8] It is also above the rights, and even the lives, of individuals. "The commandment to settle the land takes precedent over the value of individual life," explained another prominent settler and student of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda, Hanan Porat. It takes precedent to such an extent that the extension of Israel's control over territory in the Land of Israel, as Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriya put it, "supersedes lives."[9] The expression "supersedes lives" is weighty in Judaism. According to Jewish tradition there are only three sins that supersede lives, meaning one must die rather than commit them: idol-worship, incest, and murder. Any other mitzvah can be deferred if lives are at stake.

That the mitzvah to settle the Land of Israel should be granted so high a status is far from trivial. In fact the very idea that it is a mitzvah at all is a matter of controversy. Maimonides, who composed the canonical list of mitzvahs, did not count it among his 613 commandments. Nahmanides, who suggested amendments to the Maimonides catalogue, composed a supplementary list that included seventeen "positive commandments that the rabbi forgot," as he put it.[10] Of these, the fourth, known as "mitzvah dalet" ("dalet" being the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet) says that "We were commanded to take possession of the land which God gave to our fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and we must not abandon it to any other of the nations or leave it in desolation."[11] This then is the origin of the notion that settling the land is a religious duty.

Nahmanides glorified the status of the Land of Israel more than any other major Jewish philosopher before him, an opinion that was controversial in his own day and has remained so since.[12] His view became crucial for Rabbi Zvi Yehuda and his followers. Mitzvah dalet became the central theological grounding for their whole settlement enterprise. It was the prism through which they read all biblical references to the Land of Israel.[13]

Accepting Nahmanides' view without reservations was unusual, as was the sublime status Rabbi Zvi Yehuda gave mitzvah dalet. This was a revolutionary revision of the view of his father, who, contrary to religious Zionist folklore, never sanctified settlement itself as a specific mitzvah. When Rabbi Yehuda Amital reminded his peers in Rabbi Kook's Merkaz Harav Yeshiva that nowhere in the vast body of Rabbi Avra-

ham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook's writings, despite his many references to the Land of Israel, did the rabbi mention mitzvah dalet (with a single exception, in a letter to ultra-Orthodox colleagues), a general uproar of protest ensued. But when the protesters went to look for references to the mitzvah, they found none.[14] For the elder Rabbi Kook the settling of the land was not a commandment in the narrow sense, to be observed seperately, but rather a part of the larger process in which the spiritual awakening of the Jewish people could not be reduced to any single imperative. The elevation of the commandment to settle the land to *the* supreme mitzvah, and a basis for a whole way of life, was, then, a theological innovation, part of a revolutionary redemptive theology conceived by the younger Rabbi Kook. It is from its central role in the process of redemption that settlement was elevated from the status of a mitzvah after the fashion of Nahmanides, to the status of *the* mitzvah in Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's theology.[15] And after the "miracle" of the Six-Day War, belief in the near coming of redemption made settlement a pressing task. The intensification of messianic tension thrust settlement "above moral-human considerations." Ordinary moral imperatives could be deferred since settlement led directly to a higher, more complete metaphysical justice in the form of redemption.

The theological revolution brought about by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda had far-reaching consequences. It may seem that he only added another facet to his father's view and charged it with new enthusiasm. No longer only a vehicle for a future religious entity, the actual state of Israel was now one step closer to the ideal, and it had already begun to shine with the light of holi-

ness. The sanctity that had been obscurely located in the future was becoming a reality in the present. But whereas the elder Rabbi Kook had opened the door for sovereignty to become a positive value, his son, who sanctified settlement, in fact subtracted from the state's lofty status. Sovereignty became conditionally holy. So long as it served to promote the commandment to settle the land it was holy. But it could turn profane, even sinful, the moment it deviated from God's politics of settlement. As Ravitzky put it, while Rabbi Zvi Yehuda bestowed laurels of holiness on the ideal state, he in fact removed them from the head of the actual government.[16] Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's sanctification was, in this sense, a degrading of sovereignty.

The turn was dramatic. Rabbi Kook the father created a possibility of cooperation between religious and secular Zionism, based on the centrality of sovereignty, but his son, by shifting the center of gravity decisively to settlement, created the possibility of collision between the two creeds. Any diversion from "divine politics" would delegitimize the state and potentially release believers from any commitment to it. "We are commanded by the *Torah,* not the government," Rabbi Zvi Yehuda said.[17]

From Individuals to Movement

The euphoria that erupted in the aftermath of the Six-Day War was not limited to the disciples of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda. It was a wider phenomenon, which swept most of Israel. In the euphoric cloud that gave politics the aura of mythology, the differences between the territorial messianism of Rabbi Kook the

son and secular Zionism were easily blurred. The government of Israel could not make up its mind to what extent the newly acquired territories were a bargaining chip in future peace negotiations, and to what extent it wanted to expand Israel's borders.[18] Moshe Dayan, minister of defense, famously declared that "we have returned to the holiest of our places in order to never part with them again." So long as the cloud of euphoria, of military confidence and breathless nostalgia, engulfed everything, most Israelis and most Israeli politicians remained unaware of the brewing conflict between secular Zionism and its newly energized messianic offspring.

The early beginnings of settlement in the West Bank, the return to Gush Etzion, in 1967, is a striking example of how each side could interpret settlement in the light of its own view. The operation was launched by two Rabbi Zvi Yehuda devotees, Rabbi Moshe Levinger and Hanan Porat. But the government soon chimed in. Under international law, settling occupied territories was forbidden, but setting up army posts was not. Therefore, to prevent international pressure, the Levi Eshkol administration declared that the newly populated village was an army post.[19] The government thus cleared the way for this trailblazing enterprise.

In more than one sense the repopulation of Gush Etzion seemed like a "return home." Gush Etzion had been taken by the Jordanians in the War of Independence, so Israel had now returned to a place that was a clear outpost of modern Zionism. It was also a return in the biblical sense, to a portion of the land promised to the ancestors of the Jewish people. And for Hanan Porat it was a return home in the most personal sense,

too: he was a paratrooper in the Six-Day War, but as a small child he had been made to leave his home in Gush Etzion along with the rest of the women and children who were evacuated from it in 1948.

In addition, Gush Etzion was *the* symbol of the bond between secular and religious Zionism. Of all religious Zionist communities this one had the misfortune of paying the highest price in blood during the War of Independence. It was its terrible fate to prove that Orthodox no less than secular Jews could transform themselves into New Jews: no longer submissive and weak, but rather brave and tough, masters of their own fate. This "return," then, clearly belonged simultaneously to modern Zionist history and ancient biblical tradition; it could be equally explained in terms of secular political resurrection and in reference to religious redemption. Here more than anywhere else could those who were caught up in nationalist euphoria and those who were caught up in religious redemptive enthusiasm ignore the differences between them.

Less than a year later, in April 1968, when a band of religious enthusiasts, led (again) by Rabbi Levinger, rented rooms in the Park Hotel in Hebron to hold a seder, they were beginning to look less Sabra-like and more messianic. But the intoxication of victory was still very much in the air, and those filled with teary nostalgia for the good old Palmach (the elite units in the War of Independence) could still embrace religious messianism without bothering to recognize the difference between it and the nationalist cause. Rabbi Levinger obtained a permit from the military governor that allowed the group to stay in Hebron for the duration of the holiday. But they stayed there after the permit expired and eventually re-

ceived permission to remain. This return, though it had a clear religious scent, could still be understood in both biblical and modern terms. Hebron too had a modern bridge between the ancient and the current. The Jewish community of Hebron had been wiped out in a pogrom two decades before Israel's birth. Returning and renewing, modern politics and God's promise, seemed close enough.

From the very first days of occupation there were many secular supporters of the Greater Israel ideology, which also contributed to blurring differences. (These supporters included prominent public figures such as Natan Alterman, Shmuel Yosef Agnon, Yitzhak Tebenkin, Shmuel Tamir, and Uri Zvi Greenberg. They and many others came from almost all quarters of Israel's elites: Beitar members and Palmach veterans, kibbutzniks and moshav members, Tel Aviv bohemians and Jerusalem scholars, poets and novelists, politicians and activists.) The Merkaz Harav Yeshiva devotees might easily have seemed like just another group among many caught in the general wave of enthusiasm. It would take time for them to stand out.

There were Greater Israel sympathizers within the ruling Labor Party as well. In fact Labor was, at the time, a strange mixture of hawks (such as Golda Meir, Yisrael Galili, Moshe Dayan, and Yigal Allon) and doves (such as Aba Eban and Pinhas Sapir), and this too made distinctions ambiguous. Labor hawks had many different plans for the territories. Some demanded that Israel hold onto the middle section, the mountain ridge,[20] against future invasions and future attempts at territorial compromise—all of which would be prevented, allegedly, by a "functional compromise" (Dayan). Others put

forward an opposing plan to settle around the mountain ridge which was densely populated with Palestinians, especially in the Jordan Valley, so that a future territorial compromise would add more territories and fewer Palestinians (Allon).[21] Still others demanded that Israel settle all its new territories, including the Golan Heights, Judea and Samaria, Gaza, and the Sinai Peninsula, in the name of expansionism after the fashion of Yitzhak Tebenkin's Greater Israel vision. Doves, who grasped the potential danger of settling the territories, did not do much. Nor could they. After the September 1967 Arab League summit in Khartoum ruled out any peace negotiations and any recognition of Israel's right to exist, dovish plans were all put on hold. Possible schemes—for a Palestinian state, a plan that the military and security establishment tried to promote shortly after the war; or alternatively, for a return of the West Bank to Jordan, from whom it had been seized, in exchange for peace; or even for an Israeli-Jordanian confederation—all became purely theoretical solutions. There was no one to negotiate with. Doves were thrust into a passive and defensive role, unable to initiate a policy of their own. The most they could do was to try to stop settlement. That too was not easy, since it was hard to wage effective resistance against a policy that was never clearly articulated. Settlement just seemed to creep in. And since hawks could take the initiative unilaterally, they had the upper hand.

The Levi Eshkol administration, and later, after his death in 1969, the Golda Meir administration, initiated settlements in the Golan Heights, in Sinai, in the Jordan Valley, and—though more hesitantly—in Judea. After beating around the bush for a long spell, and wavering between evacuating Rabbi Levin-

ger's group from Hebron and letting them stay, the Ministerial Committee on Settlement suggested the creation of a Jewish neighborhood on the outskirts of Hebron. The plan was approved in the cabinet, owing to Allon's active support, and later in the Knesset too. The Kiryat Arba settlement was born.

It was hardly considered a triumph of religious Zionism at the time. It was a triumph for hawks, and secular hawks still believed they could harness the young religious enthusiasts to their own purposes. The young religious enthusiasts, however, believed that their secular allies would soon be swept along by the near coming of redemption.

The Yom Kippur War of 1973 changed the basic terms of this cooperation. The attack took Israel by complete surprise and shook its confidence to the core. Six short years after Israel thought it proved itself invincible, it was pushed, or so it seemed, to the brink of destruction. Egyptian and Syrian forces swept into the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights, and for a while it seemed that the IDF was helpless to stop them. The war continued for three weeks, during which Israel managed to turn the tide, but it all seemed like touch and go. The massive blow caused Israel to plummet steeply from the heights of euphoria to the harsh ground of Middle Eastern political reality. The feeling that anything was possible—that the Bible and Mapai, God and government, rabbis and soldiers, force and justice, and halacha and military orders had all united to finally balance the moral account after two thousand years of suffering—abruptly evaporated. The differences between the political pragmatism of Labor Zionism and the boundless optimism of messianic settlers suddenly came into sharp focus.

The two sides reacted very differently to this realization. Religious settlers, like all Israelis, were shaken. The blow Israel sustained did not fit in with their conception of the highway to the End of Days. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda began to speak of "complications" to allow for such a traumatic experience in what was supposed to be a straight course to redemption. The war was interpreted as labor pains preceding the days of the Messiah. After the initial recovery from the shock of the war Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's disciples redoubled their efforts to awaken the People of Israel from their spiritual slumbers. If the war was a wake-up call, it was their duty to translate the call into action and persuade the rest of Israel to trust in the near coming of redemption.

But confidence in providence was the last thing on the minds of Labor ministers and the majority of Israel's public. While the religious settlers were carried further away on messianic wings, a grim realism and a sharp awareness of the limits of Israel's political and military power set in among the rest of the public. These different reactions brought to the surface what had formerly been ignored: the deep ideological difference between the messianic settlers and Labor Zionists.

During the time of euphoria hawkish Labor power brokers could look at Rabbi Levinger, somewhat condescendingly perhaps, as an eccentric, exotic, and maybe even wild but nevertheless constructive member of the great big family of *shivat tziyon*—the return to Zion. Religious settlers were an incidental curiosity within a political struggle that mainly took place elsewhere, in the cabinet and the Knesset, between hawks and doves. Rabbi Levinger's band looked like folklore, not like politics. But the Yom Kippur War was about to change that too.

Not only were the settlers increasingly understood as a breed apart, but they also began to see themselves differently. Now they organized politically, and in an effective way.

In contrast to Rabbi Levinger's solo performances the settlers formed a movement in 1974 named "Gush Emunim"—Block of the Faithful—to coordinate all their efforts.[22] The Gush was formed in direct reaction to what the settlers perceived as Israel's weakness in the face of postwar shuttle diplomacy, led by American secretary of state Henry Kissinger and designed to set in motion a process that would eventually lead to peace in exchange for large territorial concessions.

It was the prospect of territorial compromise that worried the settlers most and moved them to action. They were no longer content to be cheerleaders, sitting on the sidelines and waiting for the state, or Zionism at large, to finally understand its role in the process of redemption. They were not content even just to prod it here and there in the right direction. They wanted greater influence. The Gush was not a political party. It was a movement. But it was formed in order to apply pressure on the political system from without. It was also the organ that would strategically plan and execute further extralegal settlement.

The Labor Party was, at the time, in disarray. It was not only torn between hawks and doves and by power struggles but also severely weakened after a war it had not been ready for. This weakness created a crack in the political façade of the ruling coalition through which the settlers attempted to sneak in. After Prime Minister Golda Meir resigned under public pressure, which demanded she take responsibility for the war, and the young Yitzhak Rabin was appointed in her place, the

settlers sought to force Rabin to enter into a coalition with the hawkish Likud. This could be achieved, they thought, if they pressured the National Religious Party, the party of religious Zionism, to give Rabin an ultimatum: if Likud is not let into the coalition, the National Religious Party will not enter it either and will make it difficult for Rabin to put together any coalition at all.[23] The National Religious Party was traditionally dominated by moderate Orthodox Zionists of the Rabbi Reiness persuasion and was a longtime ally of Labor. But now the growing force of Rabbi Kook's students was gaining momentum, and Gush Emunim wanted to bring it to bear on the party. The vanguard for this maneuver was to be the radical young faction within the National Religious Party itself.[24]

The attempt to force the Likud on Rabin ultimately failed. But Gush Emunim was in many other respects a great success. It turned the sporadic efforts of many settlers into an effective force in the political arena.

Though the Gush was a political movement, its founding manifesto spoke a clearly religious language. The manifesto ringingly described the Gush as "a movement for the renewal of the Zionist endeavors," which at first might suggest an attempt to frame its identity along the lines of secular Zionism. But the document also made clear what it meant by "Zionism." The purpose of the Gush was, the document said,

> to create a great revival movement in the Jewish people in order to realize the full scope of the Zionist vision, based on the understanding that the source of the vision lies in the Jewish heritage and

the roots of Judaism, and that its goal is the complete redemption of the Jewish people and the entire world.[25]

This was not a definition of Zionism its secular adherents would have recognized. And in the early days the founders of the Gush saw no reason to hide the differences, as Rabbi Levinger before them did not bother to disguise his redemptive views. True, the members of the Gush often spoke of "continuity" and of themselves as the heirs of the Labor movement pioneers of old,[26] but they freely admitted that the vision of secular Zionism was but a phase in the much larger, much deeper, much more important process. "The illumination of the Jewish heritage firmly embedded in the foundation of the return to Zion," said Gush Emunim's manifesto, "imparts another, inestimably more profound dimension to the entire Zionist idea, embodying the meaning of our obligation toward the Land of Israel, through immigration and settlement, nurturing the message of Redemption that will shine steadily until the time is right."[27]

Here, then, was the crucial difference that put secular Zionism (and, in an important sense, Rabbi Kook the father) on one side of the divide, and religious settlers (and Rabbi Kook the son) on the other: "our obligation towards the Land of Israel," not the state of Israel. It was the redemption of land, not the establishment of political independence, that was for Gush Emunim the heart of Zionism.

Secular Zionism, thought the founders of the Gush, had more or less finished its duty, or at least achieved its main goal, with the creation of a state. And now it should understand its

partial, subordinate role in the larger process of redemption, and it should put to use the political instrument it had honed for advancing the program of redemption through settlement. The belief of secular Zionists that the object of their enterprise was normalization of Jewish life in an earthly national state was met with contempt by the Gush. It was a gross misunderstanding of this momentous moment in history. "There is another Zionism, a Zionism of redemption," wrote Rabbi Yehuda Amital back then. "It is not here to solve the Jewish question by founding a Jewish state, it is rather an instrument of Providence to prepare Israel for its redemption. . . . Its inner thrust is not normalization of the people of Israel, making it a people like all others," as secular Zionism mistakenly thought, it is rather "to be a holy people, a people of the live God, whose center is in Jerusalem and the temple of the King within it. . . . The time has come for Zionism to make way for a Zionism of redemption in our minds as well."[28]

This is why the manifesto poured torrents of moral rage against "contemporary Western culture with all its attitudes [sic], its materialism, its violence and decadence." Self-realization and the pursuit of an "easy and comfortable life" had dwindled the spirit of the people of Israel, who now believed that they had reached their destination and place of rest. But it was a grave mistake for "the generation of resurrection" to "imagine it had achieved its goal and that the realization of Zionism is complete with the founding of the state." It should know that "its mission today is to bring the idea of Zionist realization [sic] which is now *at its early phase* to its full destiny, which includes the redemption of the people, of the land, the

full redemption foretold by the prophets of Israel and for which the nation has yearned from ancient times."[29] (Emphasis in the original.)

Based on this messianic confidence the manifesto recommended, shortly after the Yom Kippur War, that Israel embark on an aggressive military initiative,[30] and though the Gush manifesto urged the strict observance of "humane treatment of enemies under any possible conditions," it also demanded that the military "not flinch because of 'moral' and political considerations."[31] (Quotation marks in the original.) Gush Emunim did not doubt, then, that working toward redemption through settlement overrode moral-human considerations (as Rabbi Aviner put it). There was, however, no need to breach the dictates of ordinary morality when it was not necessary for the holy cause.

It was out of this theological confidence that the document was also strikingly generous toward the "the Arabs of the land of Israel" (note that this phrase blurs the distinction between Arab citizens of Israel and Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories). They all deserved, said the manifesto, the "full private and legal rights which every human being deserves." This might well have included full political rights: the manifesto suggested that "granting Israeli citizenship" should be considered for those who did not wish to leave (with Israel's financial assistance), on condition that they agreed to serve in the IDF (!) or accept some other form of national service.[32]

The near coming of redemption permitted Israel, then, to be aggressive and cruel if necessary but also generous when possible. It enabled Israel to do what in the eyes of secular

Zionism would put the very existence of the Jewish state in dire danger—to annex and naturalize a huge Arab population, which might eventually result in the loss of the Jewish majority. Such a proposal of citizenship was not repeated by the Gush in the following years when this unbridled optimism regarding the near coming of redemption weakened. From here on religious settlers mostly preferred to pass silently over the question of the Arab inhabitants of the territories, as if it had little to do with their own enterprise.

This silence would eventually distance the settlers from the mainstream of Israeli politics. While most Israelis would become increasingly worried about the possibility of binationalism into which the occupation was leading them, the settlers would continue to behave as if they were only idealistic pioneers, while the consequences of their pioneering endeavors, the moral and political problems it created, were none of their business. But the silence that distanced the settlers from Zionism was also what enabled them to deny the rift. The more their theological confidence waned, the more they would need to blur the difference between their own creed and that of the mainstream.

The efforts to awaken the spirit of Israelis concentrated on the material aspect. The settlers now set out to populate the area that the Labor government had been careful not to penetrate: the densely populated mountain ridge of Samaria. This task was undertaken by the Elon Moreh group. Menachem Felix and Benny Katzover, residents of the Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron, closed the Talmud books, as Katzover put it, and decided to act. They formed the Elon Moreh group, which as-

sembled as a future community ready to settle. Their messianic enthusiasm was pronounced against the background of the generally depressed public mood. Early overtures met with Golda Meir's absolute refusal to let the group settle in Samaria. But this was the twilight of her government. After Rabin took power the group decided to move ahead with the plan, with or without government approval, and settle in Hawara, near Shechem (Nablus). While the settlers were getting ready to go, in June 1974, Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook personally intervened and asked them for time to try and get government approval after all. Shimon Peres, the newly appointed minister of defense, refused, and the settlers were dispersed in their assembly area without moving out to their designated destination.

But they were far from despairing. They tried again in July, this time not in Hawara but in the deserted old train station of Sebastia. They were evacuated again. They tried again and were evacuated yet again. At this stage differences between Labor Zionism and settler messianism turned to outright rivalry. Pictures of IDF soldiers evacuating knitted-yarmulke-wearing, bearded young settlers became commonplace in the press. The settlers' signature chant also became familiar to TV viewers throughout Israel: "Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand—for God is with us."[33]

The Elon Moreh group kept trying to settle in Samaria, by detours that bypassed both the law and the army roadblocks set up to stop them. On foot, in their own private cars, at night, in convoys, individually, or in groups they attempted to determine "facts on the ground." The group tried seven times before it was successfully able to determine such facts.

The opportunity came in 1975 after the UN resolution that branded Zionism a form of racism. This was a major triumph for Arab diplomacy, and it came about just as the settlers managed to set up their tents yet again in the old Sebastia station. The Rabin government was in a bind. While Jews around the world were protesting the UN resolution, the young prime minister did not want pictures of the IDF evacuating yarmulke-wearing Jews to appear in the news, lest it seem that Israel was surrendering to the UN resolution. Rabin decided to wait before evacuating the settlers. The episode ended in what became publicly known as the "Sebastia compromise." The so-called compromise, brokered by the minister of defense, Shimon Peres; the prime minister's adviser, Ariel Sharon; and the poet Haim Gouri (who was there accidentally, covering the event as a journalist), fell short of approving a new settlement. It authorized thirty individuals (according to the settlers' version, thirty families) to stay for the time being, though not at the station but at a nearby army camp named Kadum. This eventually became the Kdumim settlement.[34]

At about the same time, but without the fanfare and the publicity of the Sebastia affair, the settlement that would become home for the elite of the settlers' movement, Ofrah, was established. The founders of Ofrah turned to the age-old Zionist method: the "work brigade."

The "Mount Baal Hatzor work brigade" offered its construction services to a private contractor who was building an army camp nearby. The brigade was to build the fence. It was not long before the members of the brigade asked to stay near the construction site overnight. Although the army refused to grant permission, Defense Minister Peres gave his approval for

the time being. He ordered the army to supply the brigade with an electricity generator. Soon families joined the working men. The brigade turned into a camp, and the camp gradually turned into a permanent settlement. Settler folklore has it that Ofrah is not a settlement that built a fence; it's a fence that built a settlement.[35]

The increasing activism of settlers, and the increase in extralegal and illegal activity, aggravated the already tense relations with Labor. Even the settlers' allies in the party, Yigal Allon and Yisrael Galili, who helped, sometimes initiated, and often encouraged settlement activity, began to lose their patience. Forcing the government's hand through "facts on the ground" was not their idea of how the enterprise should proceed.[36]

The Consolidation of Camps

As the rift between religious settlers and Labor deepened, the settlers' alliance with Labor's hawkish rival, Likud, grew stronger. Likud's leader, Menachem Begin, often joined the settlers on the hills and protested with them against Labor policy. The alliance seemed natural given the militaristic outlook of Likud and its traditional demand for expansion. It was also buttressed by the traditionalist side of Begin's views and his warm attitude toward the Jewish faith, which stood in stark contrast to Labor's secular socialist heritage. This apparent affinity should have been yet another reminder that settlers' style of religious Zionism was not a continuation of the old Labor Zionism. The old and bitter rivalry between the Herut movement (which later became the dominant part of Likud)

and Labor was not incidental. Herut had some of its roots in a different tradition: that of the radical nationalistic right in Europe. Its founder Ze'ev Jabotinsky was an admirer of Italian Fascism. Herut had shades of blood-and-soil nationalism, which Labor eschewed.

This is not to say that Labor governments did not violate the principles of their own universalistic views, based as they were in the right of all peoples to self-determination. But the Labor Party could not make such violations into a political principle without undermining its own political and moral foundations. Even Yigal Allon, who helped the settlers so much, was constantly aware of the question of the status of the Arab population and of the necessity for a Jewish majority under Israel's rule.

Herut also accepted the principles of democracy and liberalism, despite its old affinity to Fascist role models. But it was far less sensitive to such issues. It conceived of Zionism less as a normalization of Jewish life, and more as part of a permanent struggle to preserve the unique national character of Jews against the rest of the world. The tone of Herut propaganda, especially of Begin's oratory, could sound at times strikingly like the settlers' religious conviction that the Israelites were a chosen people, holy and apart from the rest of the world. This stance made it easier for Herut, and for the settlers, to ignore the rights of others. Both groups put, at least to some extent, settlement above "moral-human considerations," and both strove to fortify the spirit, suspend compassion, and wield the sword with determination.

Still, the fact that Herut was for so long a marginal faction in the Zionist movement did not register with the settlers

as indicative of the difference between their own enterprise and that of the old Labor. Nor did it testify, in their view, to their drifting away from the mainstream. To the contrary, the farther they drifted from the mainstream the more they emphasized the notion that they were its heirs. The traumatic clashes with Labor and the move toward Likud were increasingly explained away as the fault of Labor: it was Labor, not the settlers, that departed from the original creed.

Such an interpretation depended on a rewriting of history so that Zionism was reduced to the act of settling the land. There was much in Zionist folklore that could easily lend itself to this kind of propaganda. After all, Zionism emphasized the need to create a new, rooted Jew: no longer a drifter, a submissive person, dependent on the mercy of others, but a proud human being, a soldier, a worker, and, above all, a farmer. This agricultural romance with the land could easily be taken out of context and converted to suit the new rhetoric. The message was simple and catchy: the settlers are the new pioneers. "The pioneering of the '80s," declared *Nekuda,* the settlers' magazine, "does exactly what the Labor movement did in the days when it gained its enormous credit" in the building of the homeland. Labor's opposition to settlement was nothing more than the envy the old and weary harbor for the young who take the torch of leadership from them. "Isn't this the hatred of the wrinkled old man for the reflection of his young countenance looking back at him in a magic mirror? Why should the mirror be shattered in a fit of rage?"[37]

The question of sovereignty was marginalized, and the criticism of settlement labeled irrational. Few things are so revealing of the depth of the rift, however, as the ease with which

the settlers equated the facts-on-the-ground tactics of Labor in the pre-state days with their own. Labor did so under the noses of Turks and Brits, subverting their governments in the interest of establishing Jewish sovereignty. The settlers were doing the same under the nose of an Israeli government, subverting the sovereignty of the Jewish state.

The alliance with Likud, though first and foremost founded on the fact that Likud supported settlement, fit into this shift in rhetoric. Having failed to sweep the nation with their messianic vision, the settlers used Likud as a contemporary secular alibi. Likud spoke of a "right" of Jews to settle anywhere in the Land of Israel, and though it did not base this right on theology, it did seem like a secular version of the same view. Zionism could thus be reduced to the redemption of land.

III
The Watershed:
From Gush Emunim to
the Yesha Council

The alliance with Begin's Likud party seemed, at first, stable. Begin gave his first speech as prime minister elect, in 1977, at the Kdumim settlement. As opposed to Labor, which wavered and stuttered about settlement in the occupied territories, Begin was unequivocal: "There will be many more Elon Morehs," he promised the settlers.[1]

Begin kept this promise. The difference between Labor and Likud on settlement was striking. In the first decade after the Six-Day War, under Labor, some 20 settlements were created. When Begin came to power the settlers numbered some 6,000 people.[2] In the next decade, under Likud, an average of 6,000 settlers moved into the territories *annually*.[3] Within the first four years of Begin's administration 35 new settlements were created, and the number of settlers almost tripled, reach-

ing 17,000. In the decade between Begin's taking office and the first intifada, in 1987, 110 settlements were created. By 1992, when Labor came back to power, led by Yitzhak Rabin, the number of settlers exceeded 100,000.

The settlers were happy with Likud's hawkish outlook and its aggressive support of settlement in the territories. But that did not mean that they confused Likud's views with their own. The Likud platform remained, for the settlers, the earthly shadow of a redemptive vision, a political echo of the theological, and the supremacy of redemption over the earthly state remained intact. The settlers did not think they were adopting the nationalistic language of Likud. They thought Likud would eventually adopt theirs.

But Likud seemed close to the settlers in spirit and values, not just policy. The Likud platform insisted that the right of Jews to the Land of Israel, including Judea and Samaria, was "eternal and indisputable," and that settlement was "the focal point of the Zionist effort to redeem the country."[4] The settlers were all too happy to read this right of which Likud spoke as their own mitzvah dalet, the commandment to settle the land. But Likud's right was not synonymous with "our obligation toward the Land of Israel in immigration and settlement," as the Gush Emunim manifesto put it.[5] For settlers it was a duty, a positive religious commandment, and the difference between a duty and a right is, of course, crucial. One may or may not realize one's right. But one cannot evade one's obligation. It soon became apparent that in Begin's view the realization of the right of Jews to settle anywhere in the Land of Israel was always subordinate to a higher value: political independence, the sovereignty of the state. In the early days Herut, Likud's ances-

tor movement, may have been a relatively marginal, indeed dissenting, faction in the Zionist movement, but it still came under the larger movement's umbrella, sharing the same goal of Jewish self-determination. For the settlers political sovereignty was always a springboard, an instrument, for settlement, which would advance the higher metaphysical purpose of redemption. For Herut, as for Labor, the state was the end, while for the settlers it was a mere means. So despite closeness in policy and even ideology, at a deeper level the difference between the settlers and Likud went back to the same divergence between the settlers and Labor. The potential threat that the theology of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda contained also still loomed behind the alliance: if the state rose against redemption, as Baruch Lior wrote in the settlers' monthly *Nekuda,* "it would lose its right to exist."[6]

Begin began to realize the depth of the rift between the language of sovereignty that Likud employed and the language of redemption that the settlers used a few short months after taking office, when he embarked on peace negotiations with Egypt, and the possibility of territorial concessions, the very danger Gush Emunim had been founded to counter, returned.

The settlers were shocked when, in March 1979, these negotiations came to fruition at Camp David, and Menachem Begin signed the peace treaty with Anwar Sadat under the auspices of American president Jimmy Carter. The agreement included several alarming concessions from the settlers' point of view: an evacuation of the Sinai Peninsula, which would be returned to Egypt; limited self-rule to Palestinians in the occupied territories (popularly dubbed the "autonomy plan"); and a three-month freeze on settlement activity.[7]

In protest the settlers set out to establish new facts on the ground, at the original destination of the Elon Moreh group, Hawara, near Shechem. Begin was still at Camp David, but he backed his deputy and acting prime minister, Yigal Yadin, who forcefully evacuated the settlers. The settlers tried again, and this time the IDF stopped them on the road to Shechem. Despite the winter cold, they refused to be evacuated and camped in tents by the road. Begin was softer than Yadin. He persuaded them to leave, on the strength of his promise that the Elon Moreh group would be able to settle in a place, and at a time, mutually agreed on by the government and themselves. Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon and representatives of the settlers began searching for a site in the vicinity of Shechem.

One problem with the site they finally chose was that it partially overlapped with privately owned land. Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Yadin, Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan, and Minister of Defense Ezer Weizman objected to the whole plan, which involved confiscation of private property and the creation of a new settlement in the midst of an area densely populated by Arabs. But the cabinet passed the decision nonetheless. Sharon postponed the confiscation order till the morning of the actual arrival of the bulldozers, so as not to leave the landowners time to appeal to the Supreme Court and thus perhaps postpone the whole project. Elon Moreh was created.

The Elon Moreh Supreme Court Decision

The owners of the land had no choice but to appeal to the Supreme Court after the fact, when the settlement was already in

place. The settlers and the government did not believe the court would pose any real obstacle. In earlier appeals that had to do with confiscation of privately owned Arab land the court accepted the opinion of the military when it said that a settlement was necessary for security reasons. Such reasons, the court ruled, were grave enough to override private rights. But this time things turned out quite differently. First, the court said, the sequence was not the same as in former cases. It was clearly not the army that had asked the government to create a settlement and then found settlers to do it, but the other way around: the settlers had asked to settle, and then the army's opinion was sought.[8] Second, the military value of the settlement was questionable. Within the cabinet, three prominent ministers—Yadin, Dayan, and Weizman—all of whom had solid military expertise, said so. What is more, the petitioners presented an opinion by former chief of staff General Haim Bar-Lev. Not only would the settlement not contribute to Israel's security, Bar-Lev explained, but the need to protect it amidst a dense Arab population would actually, in the event of a war, constitute a serious military burden.

On top of all this came settler Menachem Felix's affidavit in the name of the settlers. Before the Elon Moreh case the court had refused to allow the settlers to voice their opinion in court. After all, the settlers were not a party to the case; it was the state that issued the confiscation order, and so it was the state that the landowners sued. But this time the court allowed the settlers' opinion to be heard and accepted Felix's affidavit.

Surprisingly Felix dismissed the whole case the state was making on his behalf. He explained that with all due respect to

security, "in our view it neither adds nor detracts" to the justification of settlement. The important thing is that "Elon Moreh is the very heart of the Land of Israel in the deep sense," which is to say that "first and foremost it is the place where this land was first promised to our first father, and it is the place where the deed was first given to the father of the nation in whose name this land is called Eretz Yisrael."[9] Felix backed this statement with references from the Bible.

These were not, of course, reasons the court could sustain. "The divine commandment given to our forefathers to inherit the land," the court said, cannot be grounds for the confiscation of private property. Seated as a court of law in a state where "religious law can only be put into action to the extent that secular law permits," the justices wrote, "we are obliged to uphold the state's law."[10] The language of sovereignty overruled that of redemption. The court sustained the appeal and ordered the settlement evacuated.

Menachem Begin, who was surprised and dismayed by the verdict, nevertheless announced he would act according to the court's order. This was the moment when it became clear that for Likud too, despite its talk about settlement as "the focal point" of Zionism, the right of Jews to settle anywhere in the Land of Israel was subordinate to the higher value of preserving political sovereignty. Likud would not promote settlement in overt defiance of the law. The government, as well as the court, had made it clear to the settlers that it did not speak the language of redemption. This was why the Elon Moreh case became such a watershed for the settlers. It demonstrated and dramatized the fact that earthly politics overpowered divine pol-

itics; sovereignty wrestled redemption to the ground.[11] Such a possibility was never envisioned by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's theology.

At every important junction in the history of the religious settlers' movement one can discern two distinct patterns of reaction to the clash between sovereignty and redemption. One was a messianic radicalization at the expense of sovereignty, and the other an attempt to mend the rift and bridge the gap. I'll refer to those groups that leaned away from cooperation with secular Zionists as "radicals," although behind the term there were many different kinds of reactions and many different kinds of groups. Some saw themselves as a messianic avant-garde, keeping alive the sacred theological flame of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's theology, while others veered in the direction of ultra-Orthodoxy and shut themselves off from their secular brothers and sisters and from modernity in general. Still others would later become what is known as "the youth of the hills," parts of which seemed like a combination of Hasidism and an Orthodox variant of New Ageism, while others were closer to political Kahanism[12] and are better understood in terms of extreme-right politics rather than theology. What they all shared was a reduced commitment to the alliance with mainstream secular Zionism.

From this radical wing, between the Elon Moreh case, in 1979, and the evacuation of the city of Yamit in the Sinai Peninsula (as part of the agreement with Egypt), in 1982, emerged a terrorist cell later known as the "Jewish Underground." The members of the Underground did not think they needed to persuade the state to conform to divine politics. They thought

they could force it to do so. They would impose the language of redemption on that of sovereignty.

The first operation carried out by the Jewish Underground came as a direct reaction to the murder of six yeshiva students by Palestinian terrorists in the city of Hebron.[13] Members of the group planted two bombs, which injured two Arab mayors in the West Bank. One, Bassam Shaka, mayor of Nablus, lost both his legs, and the other, Karim Halaf, mayor of Ramallah, lost one of his legs. No one assumed responsibility for the attacks.

Most settler rabbis said nothing, and their silence was louder than words. Still, a few did protest. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner denounced the attack on "the sovereignty of the people of Israel in its present form." Rabbi Yoel Bin-nun expressed similar sentiments in theological terms: "Sabbateans!" he wrote in his diary, meaning adherents of a false messiah.[14]

The Underground carried out two more attacks, one in the football court of the Hussein School in Hebron at the end of 1982 (two Palestinian youths were wounded) and one in the Islamic College, also in Hebron, in the summer of 1983 (three Palestinians were killed and others wounded). The next attack was supposed to have hit a bus in 1984, but Israel's General Security Service (the state's internal security authority) arrested the terrorists on their way to carry it out. The more ambitious goal of the Underground, which also never materialized, was blowing up the "abomination"—the mosques on the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem.

To be sure, such terrorist activities could not have gained the support of most religious settlers. But contrary to the image many settlers cultivated, of the members of the Underground

as lone fanatics and freelance extremists—"stray weeds" in the Hebrew idiom—the group was not born outside the logic of the settlers' worldview. It came from its very heart.[15] This was the logic that subordinated earthly politics to divine politics and the language of sovereignty to the language of redemption. If the state loses its right to exist when it departs from the path of redemption, then the secular law should bow down before the higher law of theology. Members of the Jewish Underground accepted these premises at face value. Yehuda Etzion, a member of the group, explained after his arrest that "if God has led us hence—then our duty is to turn to the people with courage, and, in essence, found a popular redemptive movement that will guide our people to complete redemption and will lift its spirit."[16] The Underground understood, no less clearly than the Supreme Court, that there was a basic opposition between the Zionist language of sovereignty and the revolutionary language of redemption, and they concluded, consistently, in their own premises, that when the state turns against redemption, redemption should answer in kind and turn against the state.

But the majority of settler leaders reached the opposite conclusion, and they attempted to close the rift and bring the state and their theological views closer together. They concluded that if the state did not understand the language of redemption, then redemption would have to learn to speak the language of the state.

The transition was not an easy one. It began with the decision not to resist the evacuation of Elon Moreh by force and to accept the supremacy of state authority. Some saw this decision as the beginning of the end. Rabbi Yisrael Ariel spoke out

in *Nekuda* against what he dubbed "weakness as an ideology."
The whole Elon Moreh episode, he said, was a "sharp turn
within the leadership" of the settlers. "Elon Moreh created in
our leadership a crisis similar to that which the agreement
with Sadat created for the state's leadership. . . . The whole
move to the redemption of Israel in our generation was
founded on constructive recklessness," but the settlers' leader-
ship had replaced that with petty pragmatism. Moreover, it
was turning compromise into an ideology: "The Elon Moreh
retreat cannot remain in a spiritual vacuum, and demands to
be infused with meaning. After the evacuation of Elon Moreh
we are witnessing ideological disorientation, a total paralysis
of settlement momentum, and a sense of defeat throughout
the settlement movement."[17]

Why the affair was so devastating was clear to Rabbi
Ariel. Acquiesing to the evacuation was a renunciation of the
settlers' most essential tenet—"the commandment to settle the
Land of Israel, which is 'a positive commandment equal in
weight to all the commandments of the Bible taken together'
. . . and, as explained by the Nahmanides, . . . the basis for all
commandments in the Bible." Without "the commandment to
settle the Land of Israel all the commandments of the Bible
lose their meaning," he wrote.[18] Rabbi Ariel demanded that
the settlers remain clear about the theological message they
carried.

What Rabbi Ariel identified as a "sharp turn" was indeed
that, but many disagreed about whether it was also a sweeping
defeat. Under the new circumstances the turn, as the settlers'
political leadership understood it, was not a betrayal of the
most essential, but a tactical shift, designed to prevent a full-

fledged clash of the enterprise of redemption with the institutions of the state. Such a change of tactics was not a surrender of redemption but rather a necessary concession in a new approach that would change the attitude of the state toward the settlements. The leadership against which Rabbi Ariel directed his criticism agreed that the Elon Moreh court case was a turning point, but they saw nothing wrong with pragmatism. Confronting the state directly with a redemptive message, as Felix did in court, as Rabbi Ariel was demanding, was unwise. Evacuating Elon Moreh was not a turn away from the commandment to settle the land but a turn toward a more effective way of fulfilling it, a way that would not ignore the gravity of the state's resistance to settlement. Settler leader Benny Katzover expressed this stance most clearly: "The Elon Moreh verdict did not hurt us [the Elon Moreh group] alone. It pulled the rug from under the feet of [all settlements in the territories]. It ruled, in effect, that all were temporary. Because according to the laws of [the International Court of Justice in] The Hague and [the] Geneva [Convention]—laws that the government of Israel refuses to renounce—it is forbidden to settle in 'occupied territories.'"[19] Those laws made security the only legitimate basis for settlement, and security was a pragmatic rather than a morally substantial justification, and therefore a grounding at once narrow and unstable. Today security arguments suggest it is useful to hold the territories; tomorrow it may not be useful. Security considerations change with circumstances.

The diagnosis was sound, and the conclusion Katzover drew from it was that in order to save the plan of redemption from subversion by the state, what was most urgent at this point in time was not the creation of another settlement, nor

was it a strengthening of settlers' commitment to the religious cause. What was most needed was to disarm sovereignty of its most effective weapon, as revealed in the Elon Moreh verdict. The settlers should come down from their lofty theological heights to the mundane arena of law and do battle there. Others agreed with Katzover. The choice that the settlers faced, said a petition by heads of regional councils in the territories, was between "amending the legal status [of the occupied territories] today, or the annihilation of settlement tomorrow."[20] Those on the side of redemption must dress in secular legal drab in order to counter secular legal arguments. They must shift the struggle to the institutional level of sovereignty, not because they would desert the cause of redemption, as Rabbi Ariel believed, but because they must hone their weapons to match those of their adversary. They should penetrate the texture of the state's legal structure and inject it with the political goals that would serve redemption. They should change the law in such a way as to turn the right of Jews to settle anywhere in the Land of Israel into part of the state's constitutional structure.

The Founding of the Yesha Council

The shift to the language of sovereignty was most clearly signified by the founding of the Yesha Council in December 1980. Gush Emunim never formally ceased to exist, but it stopped being the center of political activity. The council became the new spearhead. While rabbis played a decisive leadership role in Gush Emunim, the council was composed of activists and heads of regional councils in the territories. This was less of a spiritual leadership and more of a political one.

The change in rhetoric was born out of the fear that the alliance with Likud was fraying and out of the need to unite the supporters of Greater Israel against the alarming prospect of territorial compromise, about to be implemented in Sinai. The lessons of the Elon Moreh case were, doubtlessly, part of the initiative. The verdict in that case marked the effective limits of the language of redemption and pointed the way to a secular discourse. Two forms of political language, before and after the verdict, can be clearly distinguished.

In 1978, before the verdict, in the shadow of a forthcoming agreement with Egypt, Gush Emunim still spoke a clear redemptive language. In July of that year it published *Gush Emunim's Master Plan for Settling in Judea and Samaria,* which laid out "the main principles of the movement of return to Zion in our generation." The plan envisioned settling three quarters of a million Jews in Judea and Samaria by the year 2000. The first short introductory note to the document was entitled simply "The Mitzvah to Settle the Land of Israel." This was the duty that was much more than a right. The note quoted mitzvah dalet directly from Nahmanides. The second note, "Political Significance," translated divine politics to earthly ones: the aim of settlement, it explained, was to create facts on the ground the "moral and political weight" of which would make the Jewish hold on the territories "permanent." This plan was based on the recognition "that has always guided the bearers of Zionist realization" that "settlement in the Land of Israel paves the way for political sovereignty."[21] The message was clear: settlement might advance sovereignty, but sovereignty was still subordinate to the higher religious purpose, the mitzvah to settle the land.

Shortly after the Elon Moreh verdict, when it became clear that the state did not see itself as subordinate to the religious commandment to settle the land, and that, in fact, the order of subordination was the reverse—"religious law can only be put into action to the extent that secular law permits," as the court put it—the settlers changed their own discourse accordingly. In 1980, after the Elon Moreh verdict, and in the lead-up to the implementation of the peace agreement with Egypt, the newly created Yesha Council spoke in clear secular terms. The aim of the council, as Yisrael Harel, its first head, explained a few days before its founding convention, was to create "a wide ideological basis for cooperation" among all settlers, religious and nonreligious.[22] But the council did not seek only to galvanize internal support but also to face the state on the state's terms. The document of "Resolutions" produced by the founding convention of the council, unlike Gush Emunim's manifesto or its *Master Plan,* contained no references to mitzvahs, God, redemption, or the Bible.[23] Its vocabulary belonged to earthly politics alone: the main goal of the council, said the document, was the "application of Israeli sovereignty to all regions of the Land of Israel."[24] Accordingly the council would also work to prevent the implementation of the autonomy plan (i.e., limited self-rule for Palestinians in the territories as agreed on at Camp David) and would object to any attempt to give any parts of the Land of Israel over to any foreign sovereign.

Though activists and heads of councils rather than rabbis led the Yesha Council, it is nevertheless a mistake to assume Gush Emunim was based on faith while the Council was not. With all the differences between the 1978 *Master Plan* and

the council's "Resolutions" document, the change was mostly tactical. The first document denied the difference between political and redemptive Zionism in the language of redemption; the second document denied the same difference in the vocabulary of sovereignty. The religious foundations of settlement lay, in fact, not far under the surface of the "Resolutions" of the council. The seemingly secular language was actually an attempt to translate a theological view into secular terms: "The council sees in the enterprise of settlement now taking place in the regions of Eretz Israel [sic]," the "Resolutions" declare, "a crucial stage in the resurrection[25] of the people of Israel on its soil [and] a direct continuation of the Zionist enterprise." The "physical and moral future" of the Zionist project "is dependent on our hold on those regions and a strong stand against all who rise against it [our hold] at home and abroad." The council saw any attempt to "hand over parts of the Land of Israel to a foreign sovereign a denial of the destiny of the Jewish people, of the goals of Zionism and an illegal act."[26]

Not "mitzvah" but "destiny," not a stage in the process of redemption but a stage in the process of "resurrection," not the religious future of Zionism but its "moral future." All this depended on further settlement, the same politics on which the course of redemption was to proceed. But the most striking feature of the document was clearly its insistence that handing over parts of the Land of Israel to foreign sovereigns was an "illegal act." What is the law according to which such an act is illegal?[27] State law forbids settling without government permission, which the settlers often did, but it does not forbid the redrawing of borders. The government has, in fact, done so repeatedly, in war and by international agreements. The law to

which the council referred was, then, not the law of the sovereign state. It was a higher law, mitzvah dalet. By this law illegal settlement was legal, but handing over territory was an "illegal act." The terms were secular, the message messianic.

Still, the document did emphasize the question of sovereignty and made its extension to the territories the council's main aim. Since the centrality of the idea of sovereignty is, as we have noted, the defining feature of secular Zionism, it behooves us to ask what the council meant when it made sovereignty so central. The "Resolutions" themselves elaborated. Clause C under the title "Summary and Resolutions" stated that

> (1) The council demands to fix the legal status of the land in Yesha on the basis of the fact that the Jewish people are not a foreign occupier in its own land.[28]

This was a central demand of the settlers since the Elon Moreh verdict: to declare void the legal definition of the territories as "occupied." This demand had been articulated before the "Resolutions"; in response to the court decision a number of heads of regional councils began a hunger strike to demand that the Knesset change the legal status of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. Only such a legal change, said the strikers, "will prevent the dismantling of settlements" in the form the court "insinuated in the Elon Moreh verdict."[29] The newly formed council stressed this demand too and elaborated its meaning. Clause C also said that

> (2) The Council demands to fix the legal status of the Jews permanently residing in Yesha, as subjects of Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration.[30]

Changing the status of the territory would naturally change the status of its residents. But what clause C(2) underscored was not what was in it, but what it omitted. Because the council clearly demanded that such a change of status be applicable *only* to Jews.

What the status of the Arab inhabitants of the territories would be the "Resolutions" do not say, except to remark in clause C(3)a of the "Summary and Resolutions" section of the document that the council rejected the idea of Palestinian autonomy and self-rule in the territories.[31]

As a "direct continuation of the Zionist enterprise," this is a strange form of sovereignty, or at least a very different one than that of Israel proper. Israel's Declaration of Independence clearly states that Israel will "ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture."[32] The Arab citizens of Israel are therefore legally full citizens, equal in their rights to Jews. The Zionist democratic concept of sovereignty could not include a permanent class of citizens without civil rights. The sovereignty that the council had in mind was not of that kind. It was a demand for Jewish control without granting the Arabs in the territories any part of it, not even in the limited form of autonomy. It was not so much an extension of Israel's sovereignty as a demand to change its form.

Israel's hawkish governments, like its dovish governments, were careful not to make permanent the inferior status of Arabs residing in the territories, as part of the state structure. Even staunch secular hawks in Likud understood that extending Israel's sovereignty to the territories, as opposed to main-

taining the temporary status of these regions, would spell an end to Zionism; it would force the state into a double bind where it would have to choose between a non-Jewish democracy and a Jewish apartheid. The "Resolutions" of the council, unlike the founding document of Gush Emunim, clearly aimed at the second option: a Jewish state that does not recognize the rights of non-Jewish residents. Likud under Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Ariel Sharon, despite repeated declarations that Judea, Samaria, and Gaza would remain forever a part of Israel, never considered such a possibility seriously, and so never moved to annex these territories.

The ease with which the Yesha Council was ready to ignore the question of democracy is a measure of the distance between its religious vision and the sovereignty envisioned by secular Zionism. The concept of Zionism that the council favored not only reduced the Zionist creed to "redeeming" land, rather than liberating people, but also grounded the redemption of land in a vision that was messianic before it was political. The sovereignty of which the council spoke was a mere instrument for further fulfillment of the commandment to settle. According to that view, as settler leader Hanan Porat once aptly put it, "the commandment to settle the land has many aspects, one of which is Jewish sovereignty over the whole Land of Israel";[33] secular Zionism believed the opposite. It believed that sovereignty had many aspects to it, one of which was settling the Land of Israel. This is why when the settlers tried to speak the language of sovereignty they stuttered with a heavy foreign accent, like someone hastily learning to speak an alien tongue. They failed to hear what was so jarring

in their own confident declaration. They saw nothing wrong with their demands. A number of heads of regional councils in the territories, for example, protested the fact that "the Minister of Justice Shmuel Tamir and the cabinet's legal adviser Yitzhak Zamir cannot frame a law which will enable the Jewish people to settle in its own land."[34] It was that simple in their eyes: a question of framing a legal clause. But such a law would have, of course, changed the very idea of a Jewish state at its core.

And so the initiative to change the legal status of the territories failed, and with it collapsed the political logic of the whole strategy. The settlers had shifted to the secular language of sovereignty in order to extricate their enterprise from a narrow dependence on security arguments, which, in the eyes of the law (though not always the government), were the only valid justification for the settlers' presence in the occupied territories. They ended up unwittingly achieving the opposite. Not only did the state refuse to listen to theological arguments, but it refused to write settlement, even in secular terms, into its legal structure. And this left the settlers with no other option but to rely on the very security argument from which they had tried to escape. This, it seemed, remained the sole common ground where divine and earthly politics could still stably overlap. If even Likud refused to subordinate its concept of sovereignty to the right to settle the land, then all the settlers could do was defend their politics less by reference to principle and more by reference to pragmatism. So long as the state could be persuaded that it was in its national security interest to support settlement in the territories, the project could be

defended without making explicit the deep differences be-
tween the settlers' theology and political Zionism.

And so security arguments became the bulwark of denial
and a means to cover up the confrontation that had already
taken place in court. From this point on, the Felix argument
that said security "neither adds nor detracts" disappeared, and
secular hawkish arguments became increasingly central to the
case the settlers made for their enterprise. The shift to secular
language, intended to impose the plan of redemption on the
secular state, had backfired and forced redemption into a sec-
ular arena, where it had to justify itself based on the interests
of the sovereign state.

The shift was not a consciously tactical move for everyone. For
many the jargon of secular hawks answered a deep inner need:
it helped pacify the growing suspicion that there might indeed
be an unbridgeable gap between the realistic interest of the
state and the metaphysical interest of redemption. Still, for
some this shift was nothing more than an effective way to con-
ceal their real messianic goals and to market the politics of
redemption under a guise that was acceptable among the un-
believers. Settler Shilo Gal, head of the Etzion Regional Coun-
cil, explained at a symposium in Ofrah, which summed up the
first year of the monthly *Nekuda,* that for the time being the re-
alistic logic of earthly politics must be adopted: "I don't think
that it's possible to take a public and raise it all at once to
higher levels. *Nekuda,* which is our broadcasting channel, has
to do it in a continuous process. We [religious settlers] need to
project that we are a sober, realistic, rational public in order to
tie wider publics to us. Only after we tie the public to us, could

we raise it to a higher level. I don't know if the time has yet come for that."[35]

The whole capacity for sounding "realistic" now depended on the ability to blur the line between settlement as mitzvah and settlement as hawkish policy. Over time, however, the more the settlers repeated secular hawkish arguments, the more they seemed to believe them. Or at the very least, the weight of such arguments in their own discourse kept increasing. If at first this kind of talk mostly covered up the redemptive vision that burned behind it, the longer redemption delayed, the more the settlers' optimism diminished and secular hawkish arguments gained independent force. It was not only the Camp David Accord and the Elon Moreh case that opened cracks in their theological confidence. What was even worse was that the evacuation of Yamit in Sinai was carried out, despite all theological predictions that something—a political movement, or divine intervention, or both—would stop it in the nick of time. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda, who taught that there could be no setbacks in the process of redemption, died at the age of ninety-one, during the Purim holiday, only a few short weeks before Yamit was evacuated. He did not live to see his teachings sustain this massive blow. His followers, rabbis among them, however, kept promising, in the same spirit and up to the very last moment, that there would not be, that there could not be, such a setback. One should not believe that Yamit would be evacuated any more than one should believe in the existence of demons, taught Hanan Porat. This was not a political edict, the believers recited, it was a higher one; these were "divine politics" which "no earthly politics can counter," as Rabbi Zvi Yehuda had said.

All forces were recruited for this struggle. What was at stake was the whole weight of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's vision of redemption. Yamit put it all to the test. And this is why the failure to stop the evacuation had tectonic reverberations.

From Yamit to Oslo

After the evacuation of Yamit did take place, despite theological predictions to the contrary, the messianic vision was further weakened and the auxiliary security argument gained further strength. The dynamics of the struggle to stop the evacuation of Sinai doubtlessly also contributed to this process because it required the political cooperation of settlers with secular hawks of all shades.[36] The dissenters of the National Religious Party, who were outraged by their party's acquiescence to the peace accord with Egypt, and the dissenters of Likud, who saw the accord as an ideological betrayal, grouped together to form a hawkish party named Tchiya (Hebrew for "Resurrection"). The party was a coalition of religious and secular hawks, and its very existence testified to the extent to which religious settlers had come to rely on their alliance with the radical secular right. This form of cooperation intensified in the aftermath of Yamit because, among other things, Tchiya entered the coalition in the summer of 1982. Begin hoped that the concessions in Sinai would help him strengthen Israel's hold on Judea and Samaria, and the partnership with Tchiya both signified and fortified that policy. The leader of Tchiya, the secular professor Yuval Neeman, was appointed to the cabinet (as minister of science and development) and was put at the head of the Ministerial Committee on Settlement. The

committee immediately embarked on ambitious plans for further settlement.

But contrary to Begin's hopes Israel's hold on the West Bank did not become less contested or more secure. A mere five years after the evacuation of Sinai, the Palestinian uprising, the intifada, broke out. Twenty years of occupation, in which the population of the territories remained more or less peaceful, came to an abrupt end with the spontaneous eruption of massive demonstrations. In Gaza and the West Bank Palestinians confronted the IDF with rocks. The PLO leadership in Tunis, like Israel, was caught by surprise, and both had to adapt to a new reality, as world opinion focused on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with new intensity. In Israel too the problem of the occupation assumed new urgency.

Within a short time the uprising forced the two reluctant sides—the Likud government led by Begin's successor, Yitzhak Shamir, and the PLO, led by Yasir Arafat—into a peace process. The first step was the Madrid Conference of 1991, where Israel and representatives of the Arab nations met face to face, openly, for the first time (the PLO was not officially recognized as a party to the negotiations, but Palestinian delegates were included in the Jordanian delegation and were de facto representatives of the PLO). The talks yielded nothing concrete, but the following year Israel replaced the recalcitrant, hawkish Shamir with Labor's Yitzhak Rabin, and things changed dramatically. Pushed by his energetic foreign minister, Shimon Peres, Rabin soon moved for mutual recognition and a framework agreement between Israel and the PLO. The Oslo Process, initiated in 1993 by an accord signed in Washington under the auspices of American president Bill Clinton, relied on

gradual trust-building measures. It called for a piecemeal ced-
ing of de facto control of the territories to the newly created
Palestinian Authority. It seemed like both sides were moving
decisively toward partition.

From the settlers' point of view it seemed that since the
Yamit evacuation things were only going from bad to worse:
settlements were still growing, but the "facts on the ground"
had failed to stop Israel from drifting from concession to
larger concession, finally reaching the Oslo Accords, which, if
implemented, would spell full-scale defeat for the settlers'
cause. Confidence in Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's theological vision was
bound to weaken further.

This did not mean, however, that the political enterprise
of settlement was seriously reconsidered. The political efforts,
the extralegal tactics, the denial of any divergence between
Zionism as a secular creed and redemption—all continued as
before. What changed changed below the surface. After all, the
commitment to the enterprise itself was not only theological.
Settlement created a whole fabric of life, politically, sociol-
ogically, materially; it constituted a central part in the self-
perception, the very identity, of many religious Zionists. If the
reason that first sent them to the territories had weakened,
the need to find alternative justifications increased proportion-
ally. The National Religious Party's slogans became more and
more akin to those of the secular right. In 1992 National Reli-
gious Party bumper stickers declared, "The National Religious
Party—to Your Right." By 1996 the party was already declaring
that it was more Likud than Likud. The Likud slogan said, "I'm
Secure in the National Camp."[37] The National Religious Party
slogan was a spin-off on that: "I'm Secure in the National

Camp—and Vote National Religious." The implication was clear enough: the National Religious were the real guardians of the hawkish stand.

The alliance with secular hawks was not without its problems: the more the Spartan militarism of Shamir and Netanyahu gained force within the settlers' culture, the more the spiritual dimensions of their vision were weighted with the material. The grim camouflage green of IDF uniforms increasingly replaced the luminous light of redemption.

In the early days of settlement the feeling that redemption was close at hand gave theological sanction to military violence and allowed a relaxation of ordinary moral restrictions in the name of the higher cause. But as redemption seemed to be retreating into the more distant future, violence lost much of its theological justification. And without it, pragmatic security considerations were burdened with the need to justify the vindictive riots of the Hebron settlers, the uprooting of Palestinian orchards, the willful disregard of human rights, and the beatings and occasional murders of Palestinian civilians.

Not that the settlers stopped talking about "values." But such talk veered increasingly to the armed patriotism of the hawkish right. Those who did not see the importance of a Jewish physical hold on the land were, in this view, not patriotic enough. "Values" in this respect was a narrow term, which left little room for moral complexity, for dilemmas, for the democratic heritage of Zionism, for most of the moral assets of Judaism. Talk of a more just society, of the moral tradition of Israel's prophets, of the whole humanistic worldview so central to the Jewish faith virtually disappeared from the settlers' pub-

lic discourse. Along with the secular right the settlers assailed bleeding-heart leftists for the weakening of Israel's national spine, its pride, and its determination. The left, or the left as the settlers saw it, refused to realize the depth of Arab hostility, the ferocity with which Arabs would forever reject a Jewish presence in what they considered their region, and the fact that any small territorial concession was tantamount to renouncing the principle, the right of Jews to the Land of Israel, and would only whet the Arab appetite to further encroach on the tiny Jewish sanctuary.

All this was more Yitzhak Shamir and less Rabbi Zvi Yehuda. For someone like Yitzhak Shamir the real world is a brutal arena where only the strong and persistent survive. Human rights, equality, and liberty are all nice and good, but in this less-than-perfect world the ruthless, not the righteous, will survive.

But if the whole project of settlement was reduced to this logic, where was the spirit that supposedly filled the cart of religious Zionism? In what sense was Shamir's cart fuller than that of "the left"? Rabbi Yoel Bin-nun grasped the gravity of the danger. If everything—Judaism, Zionism, ethics, politics—is reduced to the physical aspect of clinging to land, and if clinging to the land relies on naked brutality alone, then matter will triumph over spirit. Though Rabbi Bin-nun did not say so explicitly, the material reduction was inherent to Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's view from the very start. By reducing the holistic vision of his father to a physical settling of the land, the physical was in constant risk of encroaching on the spiritual. Rabbi Bin-nun rightly feared that the "full cart" would turn out to be full of earth and nothing more. He warned about this

danger even before the Oslo Accords, when he declared on the eve of Rabin's election, in 1992, that "the entire enterprise of settlements is turning into a material success, which would undermine itself in its unbalanced, violent, belligerent, materialistic tendency." In his view "the rift within us [Israeli Jews], and the brutal hostility to the 'leftist' half of the nation, have turned into the main spiritual content" of the settlers' culture.[38] Rabbi Bin-nun understood, in other words, that while the cart was being emptied of spiritual content—its Judaism and Zionism absorbing an alarming dose of violence—it kept telling itself it was full by degrading the opposing political view, which it described as empty. The tendency that began with portraying the Labor movement as losing its vitality and determination, and with an image of the West in general as an empty charade of materialism and hedonism, gained momentum, and while the settlers gradually turned into an armed Sparta, they denied what was happening to them by describing "the left" as succumbing to Hellenization. It was the duty of the determined Sparta to save Israel from hedonistic, soft-spined Athens. This was what Yisrael Harel's hand gesture succinctly implied.

On the margins, others also felt as Rabbi Bin-nun did, and some of them formed a group named T'helet ("Azure") in order to formulate a more moderate national religious alternative to that of the Yesha Council. But these efforts remained on the sidelines. The mainstream of settler leadership went on proclaiming that whoever opposed settlement was no Zionist. They refused even to consider the argument that the occupation tore apart the formula "Jewish and Democratic," and they behaved as if all warnings against the danger of binationalism were only mean-spirited demagoguery. Settler leaders, for the

most part, wanted nothing to do with "the left." Yisrael Harel
attacked T'helet as ideologically bankrupt and attributed to
the left an "irrational," senseless desire to destroy everything
the settlers had built.[39] Denying that the political other, the
left, had any valid arguments, any values, anything whatever to
do with Zionism remained the party line. If the left was "irra-
tional" then what began as a messianic movement could be
publicly presented as the rational, realistic alternative.

Still, though Rabbi Bin-nun's warning went largely un-
heeded, the reduction of the original vision to hard-boiled
hawkish realism fell short of sanctioning the brutality of occu-
pation. Which is why even those religious settlers who hon-
estly believed in the security rational for their enterprise could
not completely forsake the messianic belief without losing
their spiritual world. But, under the conditions created by
Oslo, they also could not return to Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's simple
redemptive vision without cutting themselves off from the
Zionist state. This inability to speak clearly in the language of
redemption without turning their backs on the state became
all the more apparent vis-à-vis the radicals, whose sympathy
for the Jewish Underground was clear and unapologetic. After
all, the radicals could afford to speak clearly in the language of
redemption rather than stutter meekly in the language of sov-
ereignty. Their messianic logic remained consistent and un-
complicated: if the state turns against redemption one must
choose redemption over the state. Was not the choice of extra-
legal tactics for establishing "facts on the ground" under the
nose of the state's authorities testimony that the whole move-
ment thought so? Was that not what they promised each other
when they sang "Take counsel together and it shall be brought

to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand—for God is with us"?[40] And if God is with us, why surrender before those with whom He is not?

The temptation of radicalism was omnipresent, as was the danger that someone would realize its violent potential every time the state deviated from the path of redemption. A decade after the Jewish Underground was exposed, following the Oslo Accords, Israel was reminded of just how dangerous this could be. On February 25, 1994, in the immediate aftermath of the Gaza-Jericho agreement—a part of the Oslo framework—when Israel was about to withdraw its army out of large territories, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a physician from the Kiryat Arba settlement, attempted to stop the evacuation. Shortly after 5 a.m., when Jewish access to the Cave of the Patriarchs is restricted, Goldstein entered the holy site (holy for both Muslims and Jews) amidst a public Muslim prayer. He shot the believers in the back, killing 29 of them and wounding 125 more.

Most of the settlers condemned the act, a few did so half-heartedly, and some refused to condemn it altogether. The massacre, and the absence of a strong response condemning it, left many with a sense that something had gone deeply awry. The movement fell short of taking a clear stand and failed to root out the pockets of extremism where such violence was brewing. This is not because the settlers approved of what Goldstein had done. Most clearly did not. But they also couldn't draw a clear line to separate themselves from him, because the logic behind Goldstein's atrocious act was also the very same logic that gave their whole enterprise its mantle of sacredness and its moral sanction. If the hawkish security ar-

guments were not enough to sanction the occupation morally, it now seemed that the language of redemption, which was supposed to make the enterprise morally acceptable, threatened to make it even less moral. And not because the language of redemption permitted massacres, but because its metamoral and metapolitical arguments could not be abandoned. If redeeming land—the occupation—is "above moral-human considerations," then what are moral and human considerations when stopping the Oslo process is at stake? If redemption had so far sanctified continuous oppression, confiscation of lands, day-to-day brutality, and for some even terrorism, what would stop it from sanctifying massacres too? Where was the bright line that separated the ability to justify a disregard for state laws and ordinary morality from the ability to justify mass killing?

On that Sabbath that I spent in Ofrah, in the spring of 1997, I asked people repeatedly about the Goldstein massacre and the memorial site—a quasi shrine—erected in his dubious honor at the entrance to Kiryat Arba. Most residents of Ofrah did not like that shrine. But they would also not protest its existence publicly. They wouldn't, they told me, because under the conditions created by the Oslo Accords, when the left was pulling the tug-of-war rope in the direction of further concessions, it was no time for internal fights within their own "family."[41] I heard this from, among others, Ofrah resident Naomi Yagel, at a Shabbat lunch in her home. Her husband, Dr. Simcha Yagel, a gynecologist, dissented from that view. If there was a sex shop on that site, he said, it would have been burned to the ground within twenty-four hours.

This was what made the keeping-the-family-together

argument ring hollow. Yeshivas were split over smaller mat-
ters, and internal arguments and even bitter enmities are, in
fact, routine. If moral outrage could so easily be enflamed by
pornography—to use Dr. Yagel's example—but not by a mas-
sacre, then a serious shadow was cast on the settlers' carefully
nurtured sense of moral superiority. Rabbi Bin-nun's warning
that material success was accompanied by the loss of a spiritual
compass, that the cart was being filled with earth while being
emptied of spirit, must have, by then, struck a chord in some
hearts. Such fears, to the extent that they sprouted in private—
they were hardly voiced in the public sphere—may also have
been aroused by the faint echo of the "bleeding heart" argu-
ment of the left, to which the settlers had so effectively shut
their ears, that the occupation was corrupt and corrupting.
The pride that accompanied the project of settlement—pride
in their aspiration to lead the nation, their spirit of self-
sacrifice, their loyalty to the common cause, their dispropor-
tional share in volunteering for combat army service and elite
units—might easily be turned, without its anchor in redemp-
tion, to the flip side. In the absence of redemption the same
traits could easily present a different portrait of religious Zion-
ism: an armed, mindlessly obedient Sparta, which had lost its
heart and soul. The Goldstein massacre raised the frightening
specter that perhaps the bulldozers, the fences, the watchtow-
ers, the barbed wire, the guns, the caravans, the flowerbeds, the
public buildings, and the paved roads were all lifeless matter. It
seemed like there was no way out of this dilemma: if you wa-
tered the flowerbeds and groomed lawns of the settlements
with the water of redemption, violent "stray weeds" would
sprout in them. If you didn't, they'd become dry and wither

away. Could it be that any strengthening of messianic belief would push settlers into Goldstein's arms, while any renunciation of Goldstein would leave them with Netanyahu and without redemption?

The fact that in a place like Ofrah, the explanation for why the settlers did not speak out against Goldstein-worship was pragmatic and political rather than theological was by no means a small thing. It was a measure of the ideological paralysis Ofrah residents found themselves in. Because if they could have spoken the clear language of redemption, they would not have needed to make excuses for the connection to Goldstein's followers, and if they could have spoken the clear secular language of political Zionism, they would not have needed the connection itself. The security arguments were the only means to hold the rope at both ends—redemption on the one hand, the state on the other. On the state's end they could argue that the messianic radicals were still guardians of the state's security interest, and on the messianic end they could argue that the state was still the necessary means—despite Oslo—for carrying out the larger plan of redemption. But the rope kept stretching as the rift between redemption and Israel's actual policy grew wider. The differences that were first glimpsed when Labor began to resist extralegal settlements, that assumed new proportions with the Elon Moreh verdict and the peace accord with Egypt, that became a glaring abyss after Oslo, burdened the security arguments with greater and greater weight. Holding together redemption and secular Zionism became a momentous yoke for what was, after all, a contingent consideration. After one Palestinian uprising, and one traumatic missile barrage from Iraq (in the first Gulf War of 1991), which seemed

to disprove the idea that the territories were an effective buffer against attack, it was not at all that clear that the territories were, or would continue to be, a security asset rather than a security burden.

This reliance on security also had its own internal dynamics. Security arguments belonged strictly to the language of sovereignty. They were reasons of state. And as such, they committed the settlers to the state at the expense of redemption more than the settlers intended. After all, in security matters, the state was far more responsible, better informed, and better equipped to plan and consider than the settlers were. If the arguments based on security were originally intended, as Shilo Gal put it, to "tie wider publics" to the settlers, so as to later "raise" that public to "higher levels," then the tactic seemed to have backfired: the state, or the public, was too heavy for redemption to lift. Rather than pull the public to "higher levels," the security argument dragged redemption down to earth. In a sense, the process begun by Rabbi Zvi Yehuda was reversed: the real state gained weight at the expense of the ideal one.

In this tug-of-war the rope was fraying on the messianic end, and this situation also contributed to the rapprochement with the real state. The slippery slope that had begun with extralegal action without the government's approval continued with actions in defiance of government policy, and then continued from there to actions directed explicitly against the state. The next step, a mortal attack on the head of the state, the murder of a prime minister, was one short step away. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's followers, or the great majority of them, would never have envisioned such an attack. But again, the assassin,

Yigal Amir, carried the messianic logic to its ultimate conclusion: if the prime minster turns against what for the settlers is a commandment that outweighs all others, the essence of their Zionism and Judaism, the holy grail of redemption, should not the believers stop him at all cost?[42]

IV

The Rabin Assassination

On the eve of the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, when it seemed that the Oslo process would continue despite difficulties and terrorism, flirtation with messianic radicalism became more tempting: the state of Israel, the settlers felt, had audaciously betrayed them. Even within the mainstream of religious Zionism there were those who toyed with retreating to the earlier, purer language of redemption. Or at least they looked back on it nostalgically. In a symposium to mark the twentieth anniversary of Gush Emunim, shortly before the assassination, Benny Katzover, Uri Elitzur (former editor of *Nekuda* and head of the prime minister's office in Netanyahu's first administration), and others departed from the party line, which dubbed the settlers the pioneers of our day, and spoke instead of the Gush as a revolution against secular Zionism in the name of religious faith and of the real spirit of the Jewish people.[1] Yisrael Harel warned, or perhaps threatened, in *Haaretz* that the Oslo process was going to breed a new pious

generation that would renounce the alliance with secular Zionism and would be, in effect, a form of "national-religious post-Zionism." These youngsters, Harel explained, might rebel against Rabbi Kook the father and even forsake the idea that the state of Israel was the "first flourishing of our redemption." The warning—or threat—meant that if the state turned against settlement, religious Zionism would turn its back on the state and perhaps even on Zionism as a whole.[2] Some religious Zionist rabbis told their students to stop praying for the state's well-being. The Oslo Accords had made the state profane if not downright sinful. But this kind of radical rhetoric had the ring of a requiem. It was not so much an attempt to resurrect the old language of redemption as it was a mourning over the demise of its former power. The assassination demonstrated this clearly. Because the moment Rabin was shot, such talk ceased abruptly.[3] The way back from the language of sovereignty to the language of redemption was blocked. From here on, as Aviezer Ravitzky observed after the assassination, there was only a "theological silence." "The controversy over the Land of Israel," Ravitzky wrote, "which used to be conducted from a religious and redemptive point of view—is conducted now almost exclusively from a security and political point of view."[4]

Earthquake

The assassination shocked religious Zionists no less than it shocked the rest of Israel. Perhaps even more so, because while most Israelis mourned, religious Zionists had the additional worry that they would now be blamed for the murder.[5] Though

the assassin, Yigal Amir, had not grown up in a settlement, or in the circles of Gush Emunim, he was a religious Zionist and believed, as the settlers did, that giving away portions of the Land of Israel was a sin. Despite Amir's affiliation with the radical margins rather than the mainstream of religious Zionism, he was publicly perceived as one of their own. The public rage, the sense that the settlers were responsible for the assassination, that they were a fifth column, that they were traitors, stood in sharp contrast to their self-image as patriots. Because, Harel's theory notwithstanding, the majority of settlers, including the younger generation, were far from seeing themselves as national-religious post-Zionists. Their youth grew up in an education system that taught them that they were the real Zionists, and they found it incomprehensible that anyone would imagine they would raise a hand against the leader of the Jewish state. The spontaneous public rage shocked them. For a few days, here and there, Orthodox youth were kicked out of shops and spat at in the streets, and religious Zionists—easily identified by Israelis by their knitted yarmulkes and modern attire—were called "murderers" by passersby.[6]

Settler leaders were quick to retort: a whole public—an especially loyal, self-sacrificing, patriotic public—couldn't be blamed for a lone assassin's insane crime. Clearly they would never support, let alone initiate, such an abominable act. It was completely alien to their whole worldview, and it would also be counterproductive to their cause.

The problem was, however, that in the language of redemption, which they could not forsake, there was no clear barrier against political violence. If, as *Nekuda* once declared so confidently, the state, having strayed from the path of re-

demption, would "lose its right to exist," and if, as Rabbi Zvi Yehuda taught, divine politics overrode earthly politics, and if, as the Rabbi himself said, the settlers "are commanded by the Torah, not the government," then how could one assume this logic would be able to stop short of political assassinations? [7]

The reflex reaction of the settlers' leadership was to turn the discussion around and to focus it on how a whole public was being branded. The *Hazofe* daily, closely affiliated with the National Religious Party, was, perhaps, the boldest. Its first editorial after the assassination demanded some serious "soul-searching"—the buzzword of the day. But it was the Labor Party, not the National Religious Party, that needed to do the soul-searching; it was the policy of the "political leadership" (i.e., Rabin and his foreign minister Shimon Peres) that was tearing the people apart, the paper explained.[8] The editorial stopped short, but only slightly, of blaming the murder on the murdered. The next day's editorial was even bolder. It argued that the proper conclusion from the terrible event was to change the political course that had created a "rift within the people, a polarization of right and left."[9] The assassin, it seemed, was to be rewarded, according to *Hazofe,* by achieving the aim of his crime.

The political leadership of the settlers was less audacious than *Hazofe.* They convened in Jerusalem for a "Soul-Searching Conference"—it was actually referred to by that name—four days after the assassination. But in the tense atmosphere in the wake of the assassination, with weighty accusations ringing in the air, the soul-searching conference quickly turned into an exoneration conference. Zevulon Hammer, a prominent member of the National Religious Party and longtime

minister of education, opened the conference. He denounced the murder but then went on to say that "we should not burden ourselves with sins we haven't committed. It is dangerous, and therefore forbidden, to admit to a sin that is not in us. We should not give ourselves over to abuse by political cynics and their supporters, who take advantage" of the "despicable" murder, "to delegitimize the whole religious Zionist camp."[10] Political violence, Hammer added, is out of bounds, and all controversies over policy should be left for the democratic process to decide.

But the banner of democracy was tucked away almost as soon as it was raised. The conference focused mostly on the incitement against religious Zionism, which was being collectively victimized for a sin it would never condone. *Nekuda* published a long exposition of the conference, accompanied by a cartoon of a settler hitting his own chest in remorse while being simultaneously hit by many other fists from all directions.[11]

Rabbi Yoel Bin-nun provided the big drama at the conference, in his usual manner, with much passion and urgency. Rabbi Bin-nun refused to relegate violence to marginal, eccentric "stray weeds." He insisted that mainstream rabbis did bear responsibility: "All those who said *rodef* and ruled *rodef*—I know that there are, that there were in the last half a year, those who said *rodef*—not stray, not weeds, not from the sides, rabbinical authorities—if they don't get up of their own accord and resign from all their rabbinical duties by the end of the shiva, by the end of the shiva—it's an ultimatum—I am going to fight them in front of the whole people of Israel."[12]

He had names, Rabbi Bin-nun said, and if these rabbis did not comply, he would make the names public. This was a

serious threat. Incitement to murder was not just a criminal offence, it also became a hot-button issue. Rabbi Bin-nun's ultimatum—he did not follow through with it—cost him dearly. His peers shunned him, and eventually, after a few years, he left Ofrah for another settlement. But Rabbi Bin-nun, again, touched the heart of the matter, which is probably why it was so hard to forgive him. It was not incitement against religious Zionists, nor was it incitement against Rabin, that was the burning issue. The burning issue was the mixing of theology and politics. Rabbis should not pronounce on politics, Rabbi Bin-nun said. They had no tools for it. The halachic tradition was created in the Diaspora, in a condition of state-lessness, and therefore had no basis in political expertise. A rabbi who begins ruling on matters of state because he is knowledgeable about halachic matters, such as Shabbat or kosher food, Rabbi Bin-nun warned, "is like a dentist who begins to perform heart and brain surgery only because he has a doctor's degree." The politically moderate Rabbi Yehuda Amital, from the Har Etzion Yeshiva, also spoke at the conference and said more plainly and more directly that "it is necessary to stop the use of halacha in political and state matters."[13] The mixing of halacha and politics was indeed the explosive combination that bred the murder.

But the mixing of halacha and politics continued during the conference itself, as did the denial that there could be a divergence, let alone a clash, between them. Hanan Porat explained at the conference that "whoever raises his hand to uproot . . . Jewish settlements from their ground" is in fact "raising his hand against the words of God." But Porat also added, in the same breath, the words of the IDF brigadier who

told him "Hanan, after they [the Israeli army] get out of here, who will pay the bill for all those cells of Hamas and Islamic Jihad which will remain without monitoring?"[14]

Most, like Porat, chose to ignore the issue raised by Rabbi Bin-nun and Rabbi Amital, the issue that should have been at the center of the "soul-searching." The silence of the theologians was not a renouncing of the language of redemption, it was a refusal to revise it and to detach it from politics. It was a refusal to ask what happens when God and the IDF brigadier are not in complete agreement, and in such cases who should have the final say.

But the assassination had stretched the rope that tied the two—state and redemption—one more notch, and something moved and perhaps even came undone. The supposedly self-evident agreement between God and the brigadier was shaken, and the security argument, which still made, or seemed to make, the interests of the state and the project of religious settlement converge—Porat's argument—sounded slightly less persuasive. In the language of redemption it was difficult to denounce the murder, while in that of sovereignty it was impossible to defend it. If the security rationale could still be stretched to give the Jewish Underground some secular justification—the state was not defending Hebron's Jews sufficiently, so they had to take matters into their own hands[15]—and if the retaliatory vandalism binges of Hebron settlers and the Goldstein massacre were still excused as useful in instilling fear in the Palestinians, the assassination of Rabin was an entirely different matter. In the secular world of Israeli hawks, where the state is the end not the means, where a whole Spartan ideology is constructed to protect it, there is no way to jus-

tify an attack on the state itself. Begin, Shamir, and Netanyahu would never have dreamed of taking up arms against the IDF, the cabinet, or the chief executive. Begin used to say that the most important decision of his life was to hold fire in the *Altalena* debacle.[16] You do not shoot at the state. In Begin's view you do not even return fire when the state shoots at you. The wild anti-Rabin rhetoric that Sharon and Netanyahu employed in their struggle against the Oslo Accords was never meant to incite murder.

Neither was the wild rhetoric of the Yesha Council. But so long as politics and theology were mixed to such an extent, the potential for violence was there. On these terms it would make sense to some that if a prime minister betrayed the holy path, he was both a sinner and an enemy. His blood was permitted. Admitting this, however, threatened to collapse the whole ideological edifice the settlers had been building for so many years.

Though the theologians remained silent, though they refused to separate the theological from the political, it seemed that after Rabin's murder, in the midst of Oslo, sovereignty had triumphed over theology. This was not something settlers said publicly, but I heard it privately again and again: when the day came, if it did, they would evacuate peacefully. It was difficult to gauge by private conversations, random for the most part, how many would comply and how many would resist, but there was a public indication of this too: there were no signs that the settlers were preparing for anything like political secession.

Apart from theology and ideology, there was an emotional and sociological dimension to all this. The enterprise of settlement

rectified a long-standing sense of inferiority among religious Zionists. They had always felt that mainstream Zionism relegated them to the margins and often saw them as relics of the Diaspora mentality, shunned by the Sabra and the secular leadership of Labor Zionism.[17] The dialectical structure erected by Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook contained a promise for leadership. In his view anti-Zionist orthodoxy and secular Zionism were two counterparts of a future synthesis. But this was not to be a partnership of equals. The synthesis would take place under the auspices of faith. In a sense for the settlers the future was already here: they already *were* the synthesis.

This was a consoling view so long as religious Zionists felt marginal. But it was a consolation that bred impatience. The leadership was rightfully theirs. And so the temptation of leaping to the forefront when opportunity presented itself in the form of the Six-Day War was too strong to resist. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda offered them a way to realize his father's promise. He not only offered redemption in the near future, he also offered leadership in the present.

And there was yet more, because nostalgia too had much to do with the settlers' frame of mind. The act of settlement was a chance to reenact the days of pioneering glory, which religious Zionists felt they had half missed. Settlement not only looked forward to redemption, it also looked back to the enthusiasm and voluntarism of the original pioneers. There is a lot about the whole settlers' culture that romanticizes the pre-state days, when Zionism was less of a bureaucracy and more of a burning, innocent, idealistic fire. When it was—or so went the myth—a youthful, free-spirited time of "constructive recklessness." At times it would seem that the settlers pined for the Turks and the British, under whom Zionists could be auda-

cious, mischievous, creatively resourceful, and boundlessly idealistic. The old guard of religious Zionism, the Mizrachi, was always too careful, too responsible, too moderate, and never tanned like the Sabra was. With the Turks and British gone, it was tempting to make do with what one had for re-enacting the scene: Israel's sovereign government. The heart yearned more for the romantic pioneer myth and less for what was actually the most momentous, unprecedented achievement of Labor: painstaking, sober institution building, which amounted to an almost full-scale state by the time a state was called for. Zionism worked toward sovereignty, and sovereignty, not settlement, was the key to its success. Labor Zionism was far from being constructively reckless. It was politically sober and practically realistic. In some senses the spirit of the religious settlers remained less like that of Labor Zionism and more like that of the Bnei Akiva youth movement: animated by immense youthful enthusiasm rather than political responsibility, their politics seemed to contain the implicit assumption that there were responsible adults around who would make sure things didn't get out of hand.

The irony in all this is that, as we have noted, the attempt to reenact the days of the pioneers mimicked their means but negated their meaning. In the new context the same acts did not reproduce Zionism; they reproduced the Diaspora. What under the Turks and Brits represented the spirit of the New Jew represented, under Israel's rule, a very old Jew, a Jew who was still unaccustomed to political responsibility and to the idea of sovereignty. The experience of religious Zionists, in this respect, was the experience of a minority, isolated and marginalized. Sociologically too they remained a minority. Despite

their intense involvement in Israel's politics and military, the imperative to preserve an Orthodox way of life, along with the need to buttress their own ideology, created a strong tendency to seclusion. They had not only a separate system of (state-sponsored) schools, some separate army units, and separate institutions of higher learning but also a desire to withdraw into the intellectual world of Orthodoxy, a heritage created, as Rabbi Bin-nun rightly noted, mostly under the conditions of statelessness. Above all, the settlements themselves were more or less homogenous communities, which carefully screened their members. All this largely prevented "assimilation" into the larger secular public, and so preserved a central feature of a frame of mind born in the Diaspora.

As journalist Yair Sheleg—himself a religious Zionist—rightly remarked, there is much temptation in that old Diaspora mentality: sovereignty pulls people into the pragmatic world of compromises and responsibility, where one cannot act on pure ideals alone. The charm of the old Diaspora, the privilege that comes with a lack of liberty and sovereignty, is the ability to give values an absolute standing. In the real world values clash, and one needs to choose among them, observe them partially, make do with much that is murky and ambiguous. Acting on beliefs exacts a price, often in the form of giving up other aims and ends. Turning the commandment to settle the land into an absolute came at the expense of much else—not least a great deal of Judaism's moral heritage. The settlers were not prepared to account for that, much less deal with it. Their remedy, redemption, was also outside the circle of political sovereignty, and beyond the world where compromise is necessary. It was a leap beyond the sovereign state. The

settlers never really reconciled themselves to the fact that in the real political world "the price of devotion to values," without any room for flexibility and compromise, might well be, Sheleg concluded, "a return to destruction and Diaspora."[18]

Religious Zionism, in this sense, never really internalized the Zionist revolution, never made the move from the old Diaspora to sovereignty. It learned to take political initiative but refused to be accountable for it. The fact that its actions threatened to undermine the main achievement of Zionism—a sovereign, democratic Jewish state—and to drag Israel into binationalism and a chronic civil war never, it seems, registered. This side of the dilemma was left to others. So the settlers remained stuck in the middle. They shared the hope of the radicals that redemption would come if they only held fast to the land, and they relied on the hawkish right for political solutions until the End of Days arrived. Real political responsibility was never theirs.

From this position real "soul-searching" isn't possible. Instead of choosing between radical messianism and political Zionism, or to be more precise, instead of forsaking the radicals and declaring allegiance to the democratic state, even at the expense of settlement, the majority of settler leaders and rabbis still hoped that buttressing and adding "facts on the ground" would prevent the state from turning against redemption.

The reaction to Oslo and to the erosion of messianic belief was therefore a redoubling of settlement activity. "Operation Doubling," initiated by Moshe Feiglin, religious settler and later head of the Jewish Leadership faction within Likud, sought to create a new settlement for every existing one.[19] The

settlers also encouraged the roads-for-Jews-only policy. (This is how they are popularly referred to in the press. In truth these are roads for Israelis only, Arab and Jewish. They exclude the Palestinians of the territories.) The roads were supposedly a way to make the commute of settlers to remote settlements safer. It was a government-sponsored policy. But in actuality settlements were created in remote places so that roads could be paved to them.[20] Settlements were placed in such a way as to make the access roads crisscross and block the old system of roads that connected Arab towns and villages. The new network of roads divided the Palestinian population into discrete units, isolated from each other. With astounding political blindness the settlers still strove to prevent partition and push Israel further down the road to binationalism. Many pointed this out. But such weighty arguments were not answered. They were met with sneering contempt and the repeated accusations that the Zionist left was a decadent, Westernized, lazy, hedonistic Athens. Harel's self-congratulation, the idea that Ofrah was the last stand against postmodernism, moral relativism, nihilism, and individualistic hedonism, was easier than weighing the real consequences of settlement.

The Role of "the Left"

The settlers invested a great deal in the portrait of "the left"—all those opposed to the occupation—as post-Zionist, in contrast to the patriotic settlers; materialistic, in contrast to the spiritual yeshiva graduates; individualistic, as opposed to self-sacrificing, as the settlers were, for the common good; and nihilistic, as opposed to moral, which is how the settlers saw

themselves, with their values engraved in stone and anchored in religion.

Much of this description of "the left" was based not so much on knowledge as on ignorance. The religious Zionist system of public education is tightly isolated and encourages the strengthening of faith and the prevention of doubt, and one of its by-products is a lack of knowledge, even at a basic level, of world history and Western political thought, including Zionist thought (except in its religious variants). The perception of the much-vilified "left" seems, more often than not, to be based on what one sees on commercial TV channels, which also supposedly represent Western culture in general. So the Israeli version of *American Idol* and the shopping mall[21] offer catchy metaphors to explain, or rather explain away, the concerns of those who do not support settlement. The fact that religious Zionists are a small minority among Israel's educated classes, and a small minority among college and university students, easily disappears from view, along with the whole republic of Israeli letters, behind the all-encompassing image of Channel 2 (Israel's first and most popular commercial TV channel).

If secular learning plays any role in the settlers' public sphere it is usually the work of post-Zionists that they focus on—the so-called New Historians and Critical Sociologists (along with a host of "postcolonial" adherents of Edward Said and various postmodern academics, mostly bent on delegitimizing Zionism as such). There is, indeed, a growing and very vocal group in Israeli academia for whom Israel is a colonial enterprise, born in sin, which, in accord with the UN resolution of 1975, is inherently racist. This group would probably

not receive the attention it does except Israel's single highbrow daily gives them disproportional attention and support.[22] The settlers made much use of this trend. It made it easy for them to reduce any opposition to the occupation to an opposition to Zionism at large; it helped conceal from view the Zionist arguments against settlement; and it strengthened the reductionist view of Zionism as a physical hold on the holy land. In this view every added acre means more Zionism, and every subtracted acre is less Zionism. The fact that post-Zionists are a negligible minority—there is not one member of the Knesset, with the exception of some in the Arab parties, who subscribes to the views of post-Zionist intellectuals—has failed to make an impression on the settlers. Post-Zionism was just too useful to support all that's implied by Yisrael Harel's hand gesture.

This strategy of reducing "the left" to post-Zionism required a considerable measure of intellectual dishonesty, Harel-style. It ignored the fact that the great majority of Israelis and their political representatives reject the post-Zionist fantasy of a non-national democracy for the very same reason they reject the settlers' view: both violate the principle of self-determination for all peoples, on which Zionism is based. Both the settlers and the post-Zionists ignore the basic distinctions in this contested political terrain: that inside the Green Line Israel is a realization of the right of self-determination, while beyond that line it violates that same principle; that inside the Green Line there is an Arab minority whose size relative to the Jewish population is more or less stable in the long run, while in the Greater Israel territory, between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, the Arab population is fast becoming a majority;[23] that within the Green Line Arabs are full

citizens, while outside it they are subjects without basic civil rights; and that the occupation system is a clear form of colonialism while Israel itself is not.

Post-Zionists, it would seem, have more in common with the settlers than with the Zionist left: the settlers and post-Zionists both strive for a one- rather than a two-state solution, and both reject the idea of a Jewish democratic state. Post-Zionists would give up "Jewish," while the settlers would give up "democratic" (or at least their policy would undermine it). The two visions of a one-state solution may be radically different in theory—post-Zionists aspire to a non-national secular democracy, whereas the settlers envision a Jewish state, some even a Jewish theocracy[24]—but the result would be the same: Bosnian-style civil war, in a binational community where neither people would be able to realize its aspiration to political independence.

Finally, both groups—the adherents of the non-national democracy vision and the settlers—are post-Zionist in the literal sense: both believe they can transcend, or even have transcended, the national-state phase of history, the non-national democracy camp in the name of an abstract liberalism and the settlers in the name of the Messiah. "The left," by now the majority, have remained Zionist in Herzl's and Ben-Gurion's sense of the term. They believe in a Jewish democratic state, dependent, as it always was, on a territory where Jews are a majority. Partition was the original logic of the drive to statehood, and it still is its only recourse.

Beside the settler pundits and polemicists who made sweeping generalizations, there are also those among them who have invested a considerable intellectual effort in demon-

strating that "the left" and "the West" lead to moral bankruptcy and to "the lack of values as the overarching value."[25] Following the well-beaten path of postmodernists they trace this trend from secularization to Kant, sometimes via Western Marxism and the Frankfurt school, and on to post-structuralism and relativism. Without religious faith, they argue, there is no secure knowledge, and consequently there are no secure values.[26]

But though such theories often exhibit a considerable command of formal postmodern arguments and adopt postmodern criticism of modernity, they tend to miss the spirit behind the whole trend. They rightly identify a crisis of values in the West, but they miss the fact that, at least in the United States and Israel, this is not a renouncing of liberal, democratic, and humanistic views (France is a different case[27]). On the face of it postmodernists reject the very idea of universal values. But beyond the formal rejection lies a liberal democratic confidence so vast and secure that postmodernism seems to most of its adherents in the United States, as in Israel, to be a deepening and a widening of those same universal ideals.[28] In this view an equality of people will only be enhanced by a democracy of ideas, which will acknowledge the equal worth of all systems of values.[29] Contrary to the impression that religious Zionists build on, it is not just philosophical skepticism but also a stable moral confidence that gave rise to American-style postmodern tropes.

There is, indeed, a lack of real interest and a considerable ignorance regarding American culture behind much of this talk about the Americanization, Westernization, and postmodernization of Israel. Not least is the assumption that individualism is a morally lax outlook, a form of hedonism that forbids noth-

ing. The whole stern moral side of individualism—its strict sense of personal accountability, its underlying grim Protestant view of solitary human existence—was entirely missed by the settlers' fiery polemics against American values, globalization, and the West.

The meticulous proofs that the West as a whole was on a predetermined course to nihilism did not make an impression on "the left," if they were ever even noticed in those quarters. For the majority among the educated classes in Israel, people who are for the most part liberal and democratic in their beliefs, it is obvious why the occupation is morally wrong, and so the settlers are in no position to preach. For such people Yisrael Harel's cart does not seem full of spirit, not even Jewish religious spirit. In their view Judaism is a humanistic worldview, which has taught that "you shall not murder"—the original Hebrew, unlike some English translations of the Bible, says "murder" not "kill"—and this cannot possibly be squared with the Goldstein massacre.[30] To many educated Israelis the whole thing is too trivial to even discuss, and their lack of interest in the settlers' point of view mirrors the settlers' lack of interest in the actual arguments of "the left." It is clear to many of the settlers' adversaries how overconfidence in belief can lead to oppression, to a neglect of "moral-human considerations," to violence and death. From the liberal democratic point of view the bottom line is the opposite of Harel's: fundamentalism, whether religious or political, is the more common source of moral aberration and has already bequeathed us religious wars, Fascism, Communism, Islamic terror, and much else. The idea that absolute values anchored in God are a guaranty for a more moral world has failed to make an impression on

the Israeli leftists, because for them Goldstein is more like Osama bin Laden and less like themselves.

And if so, why should "the left" bother with answering the settlers when it feels that neither God nor liberalism can support the settlers' armed Sparta? Why should they accept Yisrael Harel's insistence that his sitting in Ofrah is the last outpost of Judaism, Zionism, and morality if increasingly he seems to them to personify the betrayal of all three? For them not only is Harel not defending the physical security of Israel, he actually endangers it. His insistence that Jews have a right to be in Ofrah is not, in the view of "the left," an affirmation of their right to be in Tel Aviv but an undermining of it; he only helps Zionism's enemies portray the whole Zionist enterprise as colonialism and apartheid, as the new South Africa. And finally, why should "the left" bother to answer Harel if the moral and political problems his residence in Ofrah create do not interest him enough to even consider?

This page intentionally left blank

V
Disengagement

The denunciation of "the left" was never intended to provoke an answer from the left. It was yet another construction designed to help deny the coming clash between redemption and secular Zionism. Denial, however, continued to exact a high price, and it was about to get much higher, when not only the idea of self-determination, not only the liberal democratic worldview, but the security-based argument itself would turn against the settlers. The ideological edifice built on denial threatened to trap the settlers under it: the security argument, the only area where the language of sovereignty and the language of redemption could still overlap, where the considerations of God and the brigadier could seem the same, where divine and earthly politics would agree, shrank, and then—suddenly—disappeared altogether.

The change in the role of security-based arguments began at Camp David in 2000, when PLO leader Yasir Arafat and Prime Minister Ehud Barak met, allegedly to finalize a peace deal.

There are different interpretations of what happened there, some of which deny that it was Arafat who broke the deal. In Israel, however, the general sense was that Barak, and then the Clinton Paper—the name that became common for the American administration's outline of a peace agreement— offered Arafat the most he could expect of partition, and Arafat rejected the deal. His refusal to compromise on the "Right of Return"—the demand that millions of Palestinians be resettled in Israel rather than the future Palestine—seemed to confirm this. No Israeli government could ever accept this, because it undermines the whole logic of partition and is tantamount to suicide on the part of Israel. The "Right of Return" would mean binationalism *despite* partition. Demanding to include this "right" in a peace agreement meant, or so it was generally believed in Israel, that Arafat would not accept any form of partition at all. The immediate outbreak of the second intifada, shortly after the failure of Camp David, seemed to Israelis to offer further confirmation of this view. Israelis generally thought they had offered all they could and were answered with war.

On the face of it this was a vindication of the hawkish position. The settlers were relieved. Partition was averted, and if so, then the clash of divine and earthly politics would be averted too, along with the dilemma of having to choose between obeying the state and complying with the mitzvah to settle the land. But the real effect of the Camp David failure was very different. It did not cause Israel to turn away from partition; it made Israel more determined to go through with it. It was the dawn of a new political center, which began to demand unilateral withdrawal even without peace.

Many Israelis saw Arafat's refusal, as they understood it, not as a miraculous rescue of portions of the land from being handed over to others, but as a collapse of the two great theses of Israeli politics. Hawks (or at least most secular hawks) had given up on the full-fledged Greater Israel ideology, and now, without a partner, many doves were giving up on a peace deal in the near future. But this was not all. The presuppositions that underpinned these two positions also collapsed. The Oslo framework was based on the idea that gradual steps would build trust, and then both peoples would be ready for the concessions of a full-scale peace deal. But Oslo ended up creating friction that eroded trust. It offered endless possibilities for leaders to show how tough they were in driving a bargain, and to apply violence as a means of pressure.

The hawkish stance, on the other hand, was based on what was popularly called the "salami theory." The salami theory said that if Israel gave up Ofrah, the Arabs would ask for Jaffa next: any territorial concession was equivalent to admitting that Jews did not have a right to the Land of Israel. Once Jews forsook the principle, slice after slice—hence the salami— their land would be taken away from them. This was where secular hawks and settlers met.

Arafat, however, had taken a very different course, or so it seemed after Camp David, and not because he had given up on Jaffa but precisely because he hadn't. The road to Jaffa, and to full liberation of Palestine from Jewish hands, was not the piecemeal salami way. It was the opposite. If partition cut the salami at the Green Line, in one fell swoop, Arafat would lose Jaffa. He seems to have assumed, and if he did he was right, that leaving the land whole, under Israeli rule, would end

up undermining Zionism demographically. Palestinians would eventually be a majority. Partition would create two stable national states; avoiding partition would create a binational state and give the Palestinians the upper hand in the long run. When Israelis began to believe this was his plan, the tectonic plates of Israel's party system began to shift.

On both sides of the line that divided doves from hawks, among those who were disillusioned with Oslo and among those who were forced to abandon the salami theory, a new strategy—unilateral withdrawal—gradually acquired legitimacy. The very template of political attitudes was overturned. Leaving the territories no longer looked to many like a concession to the Palestinians. It began to look like an urgent Israeli interest.

This was the platform of Labor, headed by Amram Mitzna, in the 2003 elections. Mitzna argued that in the absence of an agreement Israel should pull out of Gaza unilaterally and begin to build a security barrier between itself and the West Bank. This would be the way to move toward partition in the absence of a partner for peace. For the first time unilateralism was the explicit agenda of one of the two major parties. But the extent of the tectonic shift was not yet manifest. Mitzna lost to Sharon's Likud in a landslide (Likud won twice as many seats in the Knesset as Labor).

The settlers' propaganda machine did everything in its power to nip the idea of unilateralism in the bud. Israel should not talk under fire or reward the Palestinians for aggression, they said; giving up land is a concession, even a reward, to terrorists; Israel needs to control the territories to weed terrorists out; Israel should prevent the guns it foolishly gave the Pales-

tinians from being turned against itself. These arguments were old weapons in the arsenal of hawks, the kind that held together the project of redemption and the secular right. But if they were once part of a strategic analysis—keeping the mountain ridge under Israeli control to prevent invasions and not conceding parts of the land or renouncing the Jewish right to it in principle—now such arguments were mostly reduced to tactics in combating terrorism. This was more or less all that was left of the common ground between hawks and settlers that could still be dished out convincingly. And it was too little to marry the national interest with settlements. Sovereignty and redemption were held together by a mere thread.

And then the thread snapped, and the common ground abruptly disappeared. In December 2003 Sharon announced his plan to withdraw unilaterally from Gaza and erect a security barrier in the West Bank, thus separating most of the occupied territories from Israel proper. "Mr. Security," the patron of the settlers, the arch-hawk of Israeli politics himself, had turned his back on settlement. Nobody suspected he did it for reasons of human rights, or out of sympathy for the Palestinian predicament under the occupation. It was clear, as was always the case with Sharon, that security was his main consideration. Partition was the only way to preserve Israel's Jewish democratic character, and it would also reduce the friction between the two populations and diminish Israel's vulnerability to suicide bombers coming from both Gaza and the West Bank. So now security arguments turned *against* settlement.

This was an astounding moment. Sharon was opting for the agenda he had defeated in the elections less than a year

before. The move in favor of unilateral withdrawal turned out to have a steady majority in the Knesset. Public support also ran high, before the move and after it, as the polls repeatedly showed and the 2006 elections confirmed: the party that was based on a unilateral agenda, Kadima, became Israel's largest in the elections that followed the pullout from Gaza (even without Sharon, who lapsed into a coma before election day).

Sharon's plan changed the whole political terrain. So long as partition was considered the ideology of peaceniks and bleeding-heart liberals it was easier to dismiss it as naiveté and oppose it with hawkish "realism." But when Sharon the arch-hawk proclaimed settlements a security burden, it was an entirely different matter.

From the point of view of the settlers, there was a personal side to all this too. The fact that Sharon himself advocated the unilateral policy added insult to injury. It was Sharon with whom, back in the 1970s, settlers consulted on how to thwart international diplomatic attempts to bring about territorial compromise; it was he who walked every hill and valley in the territories, with rolled maps under his arms, planning to populate the awhole landscape with Jews; it was he who helped negotiate the Sebastia compromise (see p. 60); and it was he who flew every official foreign guest of the state over the territories, explaining why Israel needed to hold them at any cost. It was he who pushed settlement the most tenaciously in every cabinet post he held: minister of agriculture, housing, defense, and national infrastructure, foreign minister, and finally prime minister. Though the settlers never forgave him for supporting the dismantling of Yamit as part of his support for the peace treaty with Egypt, they also remembered how effective he was

in the service of their cause. This was the man who, as minister of housing, had planned to populate the territories with 2.6 million Jews by 2010;[1] this was the man who had crushed terrorism in Gaza in the 1970s and planned the strategy of settlement there. For many years Sharon had channeled enormous funds into the settlements, with his characteristic bulldozer tactics and disregard for protocol and procedure. He was unquestionably the greatest political patron the settlers had ever had.

But the injury was nevertheless greater than the insult. The ground was snatched from under the houses that were supposed to have secured it. The whole move to the secular arena, the attempt to support settlement in the language of sovereignty, suddenly looked like a dreadful mistake. The tactic that had joined settlers with hawks against peaceniks now seemed to turn both hawks and peaceniks against settlers. In the language of redemption one can support settlement even in opposition to security arguments, but attempting to support it on the shifting sands of security arguments put the whole project in danger, just as Benny Katzover had warned in the aftermath of the Elon Moreh verdict.[2]

Once redemption was made to rely not on its own merits but on earthly pragmatic considerations, it could no longer escape the grip of worldly interests. After so many years in which the settlers had waved the security banner, after they had said to anyone who would listen that security should never be compromised, how could they now go back to what Menachem Felix had once said to Israel's Supreme Court, that settlement should proceed regardless of security? If the security argument based the policy of settlement on the defense of

lives, how could they return to the older argument that the mitzvah to settle the land, as Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriya put it, "supersedes lives"?

Even the old talk about the "right" of Jews to settle anywhere in the Land of Israel, which once made the Likud sound so much like the settlers, now went bankrupt. Rather than the common ground it now seemed to emphasize the abyss separating secular hawks and religious Zionists. Sharon still believed in the right of Jews to settle everywhere in the Land of Israel, a Kadima document explained. But the "overarching goal" of Zionism had been, and still was, a "Jewish democratic state," and this overrode the right to settle. Zionism required, the Kadima document said, "a Jewish majority in the state of Israel," and preserving such a majority required "conceding a part of the Land of Israel." Such concessions were therefore not an ideological retreat from Zionism, but its realization.[3] The right was still there, but it was subordinate to the higher goal and was therefore impossible to realize.

Unable to retreat to the old and pure language of redemption, and trapped in the realm of earthly politics, there was only one way for the settlers to speak to the state against partition and still be heard: democracy itself. And so came about the stunning dialectical somersault with which the settlers attempted to support the occupation on the strength of civil rights arguments. It was a breathtaking moment.

Democracy

The settlers' struggle against Disengagement was not entirely confined to arguments in the name of democracy. Everything

else was there too: faith, national pride, the right to the land. Security arguments were, of course, central to their struggle against Disengagement, and throughout the country there sprouted bumper stickers, signs, and street banners quoting the IDF commander in chief, who said that Disengagement would encourage terrorists. But all this opposition sounded faint in the face of Sharon's prestige and authority in matters of security.

The Yesha Council also raised another banner, that of unity. Its members and activists warned—under the guise of concern and responsibility—that Israel was on the verge of a civil war. The council members were unable to control the public turmoil, they said, exciting the emotions they claimed to be calming. There would be another Masada, they warned, the IDF would fall apart, and the nation would be torn asunder. But all this was empty talk, and the Yesha Council, which alternated between inflammatory rhetoric and stately responsibility, could not rekindle the old religious enthusiasm, even among its own members, and landed squarely on the side of national responsibility. Rhetoric aside, it held the reins far more steadily than it used the whip.

But there were still the radicals who had never really abandoned the messianic faith and never adopted the language of sovereignty. Others now joined them, out of disappointment or despair, and often out of regret for the attempt to ground settlement in secular arguments, or even out of regret for the alliance with secular Zionism in the first place. There were those who threatened to hand in their government-issued IDs as a symbolical gesture, to show they no longer felt themselves citizens of Israel or accountable to

its laws and policy. There were also the halachic rulings—
rabbinical pronouncements purporting to carry the weight of
the Torah itself—written in the clear language of redemption.
First and foremost among those who issued such rulings was
Rabbi Avraham Shapira, who stood at the pinnacle of rabbini-
cal religious Zionist authority. He was a former chief rabbi of
Israel, and the heir of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda at the head of the
Merkaz Harav Yeshiva. "An order to take part in the evacuation
of Jews from their homes, in order to hand the land over to for-
eigners," Rabbi Shapira's ruling said, "contradicts our holy
Torah faith and it is forbidden to obey it." Anyone who does
"will not be forgiven in this world or the next."[4] This is as stern
a threat as a rabbi can use. Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, second
only to Rabbi Shapira among religious Zionists, declared, even
at this late point in time, a quarter of a century after Yamit and
more than a decade after the Oslo Accords, that Disengage-
ment would never happen. This time divine politics would
thwart the best-laid plans of generals and earthly politicians.
The old rabbis spoke the old language, but, as we shall see, the
old language had lost its force and sounded like a relic from
another time.

Beside all this there was a furious campaign designed to
portray Sharon and his family as corrupt, and this too had a
hollow ring. Not because Sharon and his sons were innocent
of shady dealings—his son Omri Sharon was later jailed for
breaching the laws of campaign financing on his father's behalf
(without his father's knowledge, he insisted). Still, the idea that
Sharon was selling the public interest to divert attention from
his personal conduct did not put a dent in the solid façade of
his patriotic image.

So in the great clamor of political pronouncements in the name of faith, security, and legality only one line of argument, the one that centered on democracy and its values, still seemed like it could carry some public weight. Now the settlers became scrupulous guardians of democratic procedure, the very rules that they had subverted with "facts on the ground" for so long. Now they were the champions of the very values, inscribed in Israel's Declaration of Independence, that they had been undermining, and of the human rights that they had trained themselves to ignore. All these became their new rallying cry virtually overnight. And so opened the floodgates of polemics purporting to support the occupation of Gaza in the name of democracy.

First there was the question of democratic procedure. Sharon, said the settlers, had imposed the evacuation plan undemocratically. This argument had some validity. The way Sharon had behaved radiated disregard, even contempt, for democratic norms. In the same bulldozer manner that he used to push settlement initiatives, without attempting to give them even a veneer of proper governmental procedure, he went about pushing his Disengagement plan. But this accusation had limited force for two reasons: first, it came from the very people who had been Sharon's allies in such endeavors for many years, and second, though Sharon may have disregarded the spirit of democracy when he advanced his plan, he did not actually break any laws. True, he fired cabinet ministers who disagreed with his views. Unlike in presidential democracies, in a coalition system like Israel's, this is problematic, but certainly not illegal. And he also held a referendum among registered Likud members that he said he would respect, but then

he shamelessly ignored it when it rejected his plan. This was very jarring, but in such a referendum he was accountable to his party, not to the Knesset or the law. It is also true that Sharon was implementing the very policy he had been elected to thwart. But that was hardly against any law, and many democratic leaders had done it before him. Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt both made campaign promises to keep the United States out of world wars, for example, and both led their country into them. Sharon's reliance on members of the opposition in the Knesset to compensate for those within his coalition who rebelled against him was awkward; nonetheless this too was legal. As the Hebrew idiom goes, it was kosher, though stinking. Still, the majority in the Knesset as well as the press and the public were willing to ignore the stench if this would end Israel's occupation of Gaza.

In addition to protesting on the grounds of procedural democracy, the settlers also argued, more strikingly, in the name of liberal democratic values. They suddenly became the guardians of human rights, while "the left"—along with Sharon—had betrayed them. It was "the left," argued Rabbi Yoel Bin-nun in his usual passionate, shrill manner, who now approved of what they had always declared morally unacceptable: expulsion, transfer. "The settlers have no human rights," cried Rabbi Bin-nun in an interview to *Haaretz:* "There is only one sector in Israel to whom human rights don't apply, and that's the settlers. And now this truth is exposed in broad daylight. Now it turns out that all the rhetoric of human rights was a bluff. One big lie. An absolute fallacy. Because if there are human rights, they are indivisible. That is why I, for example, am against ex-

pelling people from their homes by force, in all cases. Be they Jewish or Arab. But I'm in a negligible minority."[5]

There was more than a slight dissonance in Rabbi Bin-nun's strange call. It was a product of the same attempt to square the circle that had once led him to sound Rudyard Kipling's voice in the heart of Samaria. Rabbi Bin-nun spoke as if the occupation regime could be justified based on the same human rights it violated, as if the moral world of liberal democracy could be turned on its head so that settlement became a defense of human rights and the democratic state their enemy. As if, after many years during which democracy had put the settlers on the defense, after years during which they refused to accept the legitimacy of laws that called them guilty, they could now prove by the same laws that it was the court that was really guilty all along. The temptation was just too great, even if the price was accepting the principles by which the occupation was indefensible. The possibility of a tactical victory was too alluring to reject even if it entailed the strategic ideological defeat of making human rights binding. And embracing human rights seemed almost a relief, brought about by a release from the constant need to deny the problem of the occupation. Too much effort had been invested in this denial, and too much determination to shut out any admission that there might be something problematic with holding a whole people under occupation, or that politically it was pushing Israel down a dead end. Now it was possible to voice the arguments the settlers had shut themselves off from for so long.

Mostly, though, there was bewilderment, astonishment, and tremendous distress, because the settlers nurtured a deep sense of righteousness, based not just on faith but also on sheer

devotion to what they told themselves was the public good. The volunteering spirit, the self-sacrifice, and the tenacious hold on the land—a hold for which the theological justifications had cracked and the security arguments had withered away—were still there. But this sense of righteousness could not find a language other than that of democracy in which to say "justice" and sound convincing in the face of Israel's public. The enterprise into which so much blood, sweat, and tears had gone was pushed back in its search for justification until it was forced to retreat into the very language that denied its legitimacy.

Rabbi Bin-nun was not alone this time. The whole settlers' community rallied to the cause and blasted "transfer" and "expulsion" in the name of humanism and civil rights. A few days before the actual evacuation of Gaza, a piece in *Nekuda* compared the settlers' youth—"The Children of Summer 2005," as the title put it—to the flower children of 1968. In a surreal reversal of political logic *Nekuda* printed an anti-imperialistic poster of the American student movement. Now the struggle of Students for a Democratic Society against the war in Vietnam, and the protest of the flower children, were somehow supposed to be akin to the settlers' attempt to stop Disengagement.[6] And if that was not enough, Martin Luther King also became a role model for the defenders of the occupation. Now the civil rights movement too was suddenly on the side of settlement. Another piece in the same issue of *Nekuda* expressed disappointment that the settlers had failed to produce a Martin Luther King of their own who would stand tall against the oppressive forces of the state running roughshod over the settlers' human rights. There was also

much talk of civil disobedience after the example of the American civil rights movement.[7] Others called the evacuation a war crime. Overnight, human rights became a defense of the Greater Israel ideology.

This upside-down logic was testimony to the depth of the crisis and its far-reaching consequences. The dam that had been erected to hold apart settler-style Zionism from democracy, to deny the democratic basis of the whole Zionist enterprise, finally burst at the seams. Harel's hand gesture, the story that the settlers told themselves in which Zionism and Judaism were on their side and "Israeliness" and the West on the other, gave way. The constant debasement of democracy, designed to protect an occupation, and the whole theory that the West upheld "the lack of values as the overarching value" fell away in the face of a growing sense that in the rift between settlement and democracy, Zionism would remain on the democratic side. Because in the eyes of most Israelis the heart of Zionism was seated in an institution, the Jewish democratic state, not in the earth of the holy land. Zionism was in the middle of a tug-of-war, with democracy and redemption pulling it in two opposite directions. The weaker link, it turned out, was between Zionism and redemption. Zionism and redemption would separate, while Zionism and democracy could not. At least this is what most Israelis believed.

The settlers now tried to appropriate Zionism to their own cause by attempting to convince Israelis, themselves included, that Ofrah represented not only Judaism and Zionism but also democracy and its values. If there was no Zionism separate from democracy, then settlment was the last stronghold of democracy as well. Ofrah carried not only the torch of Herzl

but also that of Martin Luther King. Strange as all this may sound, this new tack did have a measure of internal logic. From the moment they dragged settlement from the metaphysical sphere of redemption to the earthly realm of pragmatic national security grounds, the settlers were trapped in the language of sovereignty. And when national security arguments turned against them they were left with no other choice in the realm of earthly politics, and democracy became their refuge. It was a tactical lesson born of experience. For many years the settlers had clung to security, and human rights had been invoked to counter their stance, but when security switched sides they seized, as if by reflex, the argument that they knew was best suited to confront security considerations—human rights. This was how the bewildered cry in the name of human rights came to erupt from their midst.

"Evacuation-Compensation"

The drama that led to that latest stand, the whole history of the settlers' search for a political language, repeated itself in miniature fast-motion form before the Supreme Court, because the settlers, who petitioned the court, tried all their previous justifications along with the new democratic ones. In the deluge of pleas to the court there were arguments about the security risk Disengagement entailed, about Jewish heritage and Zionist continuity, and there were the old attempts to smuggle the message of redemption into the language of national interests—everything except the pure theological argument, which the settlers knew by now the court would not hear.

But this time the court refused to hear many of the other

arguments as well. Security considerations were summarily dismissed; the state knew better than the settlers in such matters, and the court had no reason to intervene. The attempt to smuggle theology into the settlers' argument via secular terms also failed. The settlers could not say "mitzvah," nor could they say "divine promise." But they could say that the government of the Jewish state should not act against the destiny of the Jewish people and the goal and values of Zionism. Destiny and goals and values, in their view, boiled down to settlement. But in the secular language of the state, which they were forced to speak, the goal of Zionism was a Jewish democratic state. Disengagement was consistent with that kind of Jewish destiny. Because for secular Zionism settlement was just a means, and the end remained democratic statehood. It made no sense to demand that the end bow down to the means. Attempting to argue in that vein was tantamount to asking sovereignty to renounce its own authority. There was just no way to reproduce the divine promise to inherit the land out of Israel's legal structure. The only recourse was Israeli law itself, and the law did not include any prohibition, the court reminded the petitioners, against redrawing borders. If the state could expand them in war, it could retract them in peace. If the state believed that to defend itself, its sovereignty, and its national and democratic character it must withdraw from Gaza, then the only way open for the settlers to try and prevent that was not to argue for their interpretation of the collective destiny but for what could, in some circumstances, limit the collective interest, namely, individual human rights. Israel's semiconstitutional "Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty" and "Basic Law: Freedom of Occupation" (along with other Basic Laws[8])

can serve as a basis for judicial review, and these laws were indeed the last resort that the language of sovereignty could offer. This is what led to the strange judicial specter of defending an occupation based on the very rights it violates.

But from the settlers' point of view there was another absurdity here, and an opportunity to point it out. In their view their arguments in the name of human rights were not only a pragmatic move designed to save the Gaza settlements but also a chance to call their detractors' bluff and thereby justify their own cause. The settlers suspected, as Rabbi Bin-nun pointed out, that the human rights argument was just spite disguised as righteousness. It was in the name of human rights that Elon Moreh was dismantled, that so many of their own endeavors were thwarted, that so many pundits attempted to delegitimize the Jewish right to the Land of Israel. Well and good. But what would happen when the table was turned and the settlers' human rights were breached? It was a dare. Would the court dare to deny the very moral grounds on which it had opposed settlements? Or would it be honest enough to defend the settlers' human rights as it had defended the rights of Palestinians?

The court took the challenge seriously. Of all the settlers' pleas it accepted only the argument that human rights were being violated by Disengagement. But now, when the issue was framed this way, a whole barrage of legal precedents rained down on the settlers. The court explained, with didactic patience, the entire meaning of the controversy. The huge 320-page verdict in the Evacuation-Compensation case[9]—as it became known (after the law that granted compensation to those who would be evacuated from Gaza)—is a history book of the legal and political struggle over settlement, and in this sense it

is also a history of the clash between the language of sovereignty and the language of redemption. The bottom line of the 320 pages is this: you cannot justify settlement because critical national interests override private rights and then object to evacuation because private rights override critical national interests. Not only is there no moral ground on which to justify occupation in the name of human rights, but there is no legal ground either.

The court reminded the settlers that confiscation of land for settlement (in a territory which according to international law is under "belligerent occupation") was possible in the first place only when it served vital security interests.[10] In precedent after precedent the court had demonstrated how its own rulings gave priority to pressing national interests over the rights of individual landowners.[11] So how could the court now turn its back on the very same logic and give priority to individual landowners' rights over national interests? The court did not change its opinion, it said. To the contrary, it sought to stand by its old views. National interests still overrode the property rights of individuals.

The language of earthly law, in which the court spoke, left the settlers with no way to counter this logic. In the language of redemption one can say that a Jew has a God-given right that an Arab does not; but in the language of human rights there is no such argument. In the language of redemption one can say that above the court's legal considerations, and beyond Zionism's sovereign state, there is a divine promise to inherit the land, or there is the coming of the Messiah, which is advanced by settlement; but one cannot submit a petition to an earthly court in the language of redemption.

The settlers were bereft. From their point of view, redemption made huge sacrifices when it bowed its head down to the state's secular authority, when it offered the state a partnership of equals. Now instead of returning the favor, instead of making reciprocal concessions, the state took advantage of settler flexibility and wrestled redemption to the ground.

If in court the human rights argument failed to save settlement, it was only proof, in the eyes of the settlers, of the hostility of "the left" to their enterprise. But exposing the bluff was not the only result of the whole maneuver, because, again, not everything was cynical and tactical. Some, it seems, were on the level with their democratic arguments. And as with security, so with human rights: what started as tactics turned into belief. The passionate calls against "expulsion" must have penetrated beyond the surface. It was striking this time how fast the rank and file adopted the new party line, and many of them, one suspects, found it hard to tell apart tactics and beliefs, opportunism and principle. Because beside the feigned naiveté there was also real innocence. It was an amazing spectacle: kids in their early teens, in long skirts and knitted yarmulkes, in T-shirts which said, sixties style, "we have a love and it will overcome," standing at junctions all over the country and handing out to drivers orange ribbons (which became the symbol of their struggle), bumper stickers, and flyers. These youngsters grew up in a shielded environment in the midst of turmoil. They were devoted to the cause, oblivious to its problems, and ready to sacrifice whatever would be required. For them the beauty of the Sabbath was self-evident and the moral authority of rabbis unquestionable; for them

the letters of the Hebrew language were tinged with ancient wisdom and the scent of sacred books; for them the Land of Israel was a name for the sublime, the holistic truth that joins the Jewish people, its Torah, and God's throne on earth. These youths had not heard the opposition's arguments, but only that "the left" was sinister, cynical, and decadent. The daily horrors of occupation had never penetrated their protected world, and for them the Palestinians were not so much a people as a reincarnation of eternal evil, which they knew about from the Passover Haggadah and from the stories they heard around the Hanukkah menorah and the Lag b'Omer bonfire about evil Greeks and Romans. The contemporary enemy was only the newest version of Russian Cossacks, German Nazis, Amaleks, and Philistines, who rise up in every generation to annihilate the people of Israel. And now these teenagers, who had been brought up to think that settlement was above all "moral-human considerations," stood at junctions and stoplights and dished out slogans taken directly from the American civil rights movement. They reiterated patiently to anyone who would listen that those who would "expel Jews" from their homes violated human rights, and that the "corrupt dictator" Sharon was subverting democracy. They spoke passionately in the language of secular democracy without understanding how surprising, even jarring, it was that it should come out of their mouths. They were so deeply convinced that if there was a language of justice in the world, it was on their side. It couldn't possibly be that it wasn't, after all they sacrificed and all they worked and yearned and prayed for. If that language now spoke of "democracy," then they would embrace it wholeheartedly. The idea that the same language could turn

against them was so stunning and so shocking that they could not possibly take it seriously. Nothing in their upbringing had prepared them for the possibility of a clash between their own views and Zionism, and it was obvious to them that the IDF and justice, security considerations and religious faith, patriotism and devotion, Independence Day and the Torah, God and the brigadier were all one and the same and couldn't ever part ways. And this was why they cried in true shock and amazement on the shoulders of the soldiers who came to evacuate them from Gaza (and some parts of North Samaria) in August 2005. Despite huge (legal) rallies, a flood of tears, and small pockets of mostly symbolic resistance—a small number entrenched themselves on rooftops and threw vegetables and paint at the soldiers—the evacuation went smoothly and peacefully. You cannot, it seems, defy the majority violently in the name of democracy, and you cannot claim Martin Luther King as your hero and then pick up arms.

The importance of this sudden switch to liberal-democratic values—even among cynics and opportunists, who used them strictly for tactical reasons—should not be underestimated. Even though some of these cynics despised democracy in their hearts and never attributed any moral or political authority to it, they could not find another language in which to speak to the rest of Israel except that of their opponents. The democratic worldview became the new common ground on which the struggle between settlers and secular Zionists must be conducted. And what is more striking, it became common in the settlers' internal discourse. This would now be the set of terms by which they would attempt to articulate their own predicaments and their own relations to secular Zionism.

It was a long journey up to this point, where denial was—at least temporarily—abandoned. For a while it became impossible, or close to impossible, to ignore the clash between settlement and secular Zionism. The shift to the language of human rights was a prelude to recognizing this problem, a preparation for the peaceful evacuation that testified, more than any words could, to the acceptance that the clash between settlement and secular Zionism had already occurred, and that sovereignty stood above settlements.

The Whole and the Part: The Settlers as a Sector

The discourse of human rights offered the more militant a new way to defend the settlements under the new conditions, which already acknowledged the clash between religious and secular Zionism. The talk of human rights, of the "expulsion" rather than the evacuation, became a way to articulate a sense of victimhood and a new self-perception of the settlers not as the spearhead for secular Zionism but rather as a minority oppressed by it.[12] This trend went even further beyond liberal democratic discourse, because the terminology of the anti-Zionist left—the post-Zionist delegitimization of Zionism under the banners of postcolonial studies, postmodernism, and radical multiculturalism—enabled the settlers to describe themselves as an excluded minority, oppressed by the hegemonic Zionist elite. The settlers sensed, rightly, that multicultural and postcolonial jargon is based on a convenient paradox, for it offers a way to argue in the name of universal human rights sensibilities against the universality of human rights. It therefore opens the door to defending intolerance: if all cultures

and values are equal and cannot be judged from the outside, then who are we to judge nonliberal cultures? Multiculturalism everywhere risks sanctioning, say, the oppression of women, based on respect for the Other's worldview. Why then should it not recognize the equal validity of the settlers' values? In an immigrant society, where the common identity is an ongoing project, and where there are already large sectors that seek to preserve an identity apart from the majority—the Arab citizens of Israel and the ultra-Orthodox—the potential for collaboration between what seems like the far right (the settlers) and what is considered the far left (post-Zionists) is actually great. Based on the recognition of the clash with the central values of secular Zionism, some among the settlers already share the ambition to deconstruct the shared ethos.[13] In this way the language of human rights and the post-Zionist attack on Zionism offer, at least potentially, a way back to the language of redemption, not by aspiring to leadership but as a ghetto creed apart from, and outside the reach of, the secular-Zionist majority.

The same language of human rights and the same talk of "expulsion" can also be used in defense of policies that are generally considered beyond the pale by the great majority of secular Zionists. Since democratic and liberal values have shallow roots in the settlers' culture, it is easy to see how the precedent of the "expulsion" can become a justification for the demand to expel Palestinians from the territories should the opportunity, in the settlers' view, arise.

But despite the temptations of all these dissenting paths and the attempts to redefine settler identity as a sector or minority identity, there are strong centripetal forces to counter the cen-

trifugal ones. What made a peaceful evacuation possible could not be a minor force. Despite the silence of the theologians and their inability to explain the earthquake that was Disengagement, a sense of unity and the shared vision of the Jewish and democratic state in which it is based were powerful enough to counter the anger, frustration, and shock. If the power of the redemptive vision has eroded over the years to such an extent that it can not serve as justification for massive dissent, the new language of human rights is too shallowly rooted with the settlers to offer a stepping-stone for the majority of them on the way back to the old faith, redefined as a sector identity.

Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's theology was never abandoned formally. But practically, by the time the settlers faced the serious challenge of Disengagement, it was no longer their real guide. In the absence of a theological alternative, and with the old theology in danger of turning into an empty husk, when the next clash comes, the settlers may, again, evacuate peacefully, but evacuation may, again, seem like nothing short of total defeat. Without a real alternative theological vision, on the scale of Rabbi Yitzchak Ya'akov Reiness's or the elder Rabbi Kook's, a vision that could grant a positive, independent value to democratic self-determination, they may return physically from the territories without returning to Zionism in the ideological or spiritual sense. So long as the political theology of the younger Rabbi Kook is even nominally clung to, there can be no positive meaning to subordinating settlement to the "empty cart" of secular Zionism.

A strict rabbinical hierarchy, both formal and informal, still dominates religious Zionism. Those who dare challenge the higher authorities—the older rabbis who keep speaking the re-

demptive language of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda—take a serious risk: they may find themselves suddenly disqualified from performing some of their rabbinical duties[14] or otherwise delegitimized, or they may even be driven out of their communities (as Rabbi Bin-nun was driven out of Ofrah).

Some, however, have challenged the official theology. Outside the mainstream of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's disciples, there are religious Zionist rabbis with moderate political opinions and independent standing as theologians, and some of them were adamant. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, head of the Har Etzion Yeshiva (along with the moderate Rabbi Yehuda Amital), wrote a letter to Rabbi Shapira regarding his halachic ruling that forbade taking part in the evacuation of Jewish settlements. The letter found its way to the public and was posted on the Web.[15] Its polite tone thinly veiled Rabbi Lichtenstein's sharp criticism. On the face of it, this was no more than an inquiry as to Rabbi Shapira's exact intentions. But there was much more behind it. From where, Rabbi Lichtenstein wanted to know, does Rabbi Shapira derive his confidence that Disengagement is so bad a policy? Is Rabbi Shapira's "absolute confidence" based on some direct knowledge of God's intentions? And if the opinion is merely political, then is Rabbi Shapira satisfied that the "professional military and political experts" with whom he must have consulted are better informed than those who support Sharon's policy?[16] This was another way to express what Rabbi Bin-nun and Rabbi Amital had argued a decade earlier in the so-called Soul-Searching Conference: theologians should not pretend to be experts on politics. Going a step further, Lichtenstein focused in on Rabbi Shapira's pronouncement that evacuating Jewish settlements

"contradicts our holy Torah faith." He surveyed a long list of
theologians who had disputed this interpretation, going back
to Maimonides and then to Nahmanides, whose minority
opinion served as a basis for making settlement a positive
commandment. It was on the basis of Nahmanides's minority
opinion and Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook's messianism
that Rabbi Shapira arrived at his extreme view that whoever
took part in the evacuation would "not be forgiven in this
world or the next."[17] Presenting Rabbi Shapira's opinion in this
manner made a sham out of his presumption to speak in the
name of the Torah itself.

Other rabbis, younger and closer to the mainstream of
religious Zionism were far more careful, though some of them
clearly rejected Rabbi Shapira's call on religious soldiers to dis-
obey army commands. Rabbi Avi Giesser, the rabbi of Ofrah,
carefully separated the "religious ideal conception" of the Land
of Israel as holy, which means that "we have no right to give . . .
any part of it," from "the decision of the national religious to
tie their fate to secular Zionism, based on the understanding
that Zionism is the only vehicle which assures the existence
of the people of Israel" in our time.[18] This is exactly the kind
of separation that Rabbi Zvi Yehuda resisted when he taught
that divine politics would override earthly politics. Rabbi Gies-
ser politely reversed Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's view: he explained that
one must accept the state's authority in order to remain faith-
ful to the alliance with secular Zionism. He thus took a step
back from Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's narrow views and toward his fa-
ther's more flexible theology, which saw inherent value in sec-
ular Zionism and did not hinge that value on this or that pol-
icy. Though Rabbi Giesser did not draw these conclusions

explicitly, he nevertheless said that it was the duty of rabbis and teachers to "change the conception that says that our actions [i.e., settlements] create an irreversible reality. Now we have to get accustomed to the thought that there are things beyond our power, and we have to trust the Creator that He would know how to conduct his affairs."[19] This is another way to say that in the absence of a map of the path of redemption it is not for us humans to hasten the End of Days.

Other young rabbis also rejected the attempt to encourage soldiers and civilians to rebel against the army and the state. It seems that they did much field work, much of it, perhaps, orally rather than in writing, which may explain why Rabbi Shapira's call was more or less universally ignored by religious soldiers and settlers.

Rabbi Eli Sadan wrote an "Open Letter to the Youth," to protest the talk of "expulsion" and the delegitimization of the state and the army it implied. As the founder of the first pre-army yeshiva, Rabbi Sadan is not a minor public figure. The pre-army yeshivas are intended to give religious Zionists a taste of higher Torah learning after they graduate high school and before they go into the army, in order to buttress their faith but also to reinforce the idea that army service is an indispensable part of their duty to their people. Among Rabbi Sadan's former students are a great many religious IDF soldiers, commanders, and officers, and it is reasonable to believe that many of them consulted him on the eve of Disengagement, and that he told them more or less what he wrote in that letter.

The letter was unequivocal. Though Rabbi Sadan quoted both Kook the son and Kook the father, without pointing out

any of the differences between them, he nevertheless landed squarely on the same side with Rabbi Giesser. "If we really believe in the words of our rabbis [Kook the son and Kook the father]" he said, "that the state of Israel is the foundation of the throne of God in the world"—this is a direct quote of Kook the father—then all talk of "fighting with violence" against any future evacuation is the counsel of evil. Because "after a civil war (that will never happen!)—nothing would be left: not Judea and Samaria, not the seaside plain, not Jerusalem—everything will be destroyed!" Rabbi Sadan went on to declare, and in bold letters, that

> This is our people—we have no other people.
> This is our state—we have no other state.
> This is the only army keeping us safe.[20]

Strikingly, he does not mention land in this trinity.

The same trinity appeared in a short treatise named "Our Way These Days," which Rabbi Sadan signed, along with Rabbi Ya'acov Ariel, Rabbi Giesser, Rabbi Haim Drukman, and a host of other religious Zionist rabbis. It was published as a little booklet after Disengagement. The booklet gave the idea of Greater Israel and the eternal Jewish right to the land as a whole their due, but it nevertheless warned against hastening the End of Days. Most important, and regardless of its theological ambiguity, the booklet insisted on the importance of the state despite the evacuation. Its authors emphatically rejected any thought of turning their backs on "the state of Israel," which is the main expression of "the sovereignty of the Jewish people in its land."[21]

Rabbi Yuval Sherlo said much harsher things, theologically speaking, in a series of short essays he published in *Hazofe,* the national religious newspaper. Rabbi Sherlo put the question squarely on the table and asked what was the relative weight of the commandment to settle the land when compared to the value of sovereignty and Jewish political independence. His answer was clear cut: sovereignty stands above settlement. As a religious Zionist, he said, he chose statehood not grudgingly, in retrospect, but positively, as a first and fundamental principle. People like himself, he said, do not "focus the essence of the state of Israel on one issue only, such as the commandment to settle the land or any other issue, important as it may be." They "do not aspire to disengage from the state of Israel and establish an alternative in a 'state of Judea' or a 'state of Jerusalem' vis-à-vis the 'state of Tel Aviv.'" To the contrary, people like himself "consider such a possibility to be the greater disaster that could befall the Jewish nation, the weight of which is tantamount to idol worship if not worse."[22]

Idol worship is one of the three mortal sins, and Rabbi Sherlo could not have used any stronger term. Against Rabbi Shapira's conviction that whoever takes part in evacuation "will not be forgiven in this world or the next," Rabbi Sherlo said, or almost did, that he who abides by Rabbi Shapira's view commits a mortal sin.

Within this framework, the new talk of the value of democracy, which has been used to redefine settler identity apart from the majority, can also turn into a vehicle for legitimizing the authority of the common polity and for unity in general. The democratic form of government is, after all, a way to preserve unity despite controversy and a way to contain conflict

without relinquishing the common ground. If someone like Rabbi Sherlo is serious about the independent value of sovereignty, then connecting it to democracy may lead back to the original logic of secular Zionism.

Some went even further than Rabbi Sherlo and acknowledged what was, up to that time, a strictly taboo subject among settlers: the corruption entailed by the occupation, both moral and spiritual. In a bold stroke Rabbi Yigal Ariel reminded his colleagues that an occupation "can corrupt, and cannot continue for too long." Settlers' rabbis, he said, should have developed a religious and moral code to cope with that difficult condition. He also speculated on the connection between the rabbinical silence on the moral problems of an occupation and the fact that there are few artists among the settlers. We the religious Zionists, he said, have "no artistic and musical instruments with which to express the longings of the soul." The connection he made was not explicit, but it was nevertheless clear: hardening the hearts blunts not only the sensitivity of conscience but also the subtlety of human emotions.[23]

The stance of these moderate rabbis was dubbed among religious Zionists as the *mamlachti* view. The term, which was central to secular Zionism, is difficult to translate. "Statist" (or "statism" for *mamlachtiyut,* the noun form) is often picked as the English equivalent. But "statism" smacks of a fetish for institutions, even verging on totalitarianism, a connotation that the Hebrew term does not carry. The literal translation would be something like "kingdomism," derived from "kingdom" (*mamlacha* in Hebrew). But the actual usage in Hebrew is focused on sovereignty and embraces public political life and civic-mindedness. It represents at once the opposite of non-

political existence in the old Diaspora and the opposite of egotism. To be mamlachti is to uphold civic virtue and to appreciate the importance of the res publica.

Ben-Gurion embodied the mamlachti worldview, which was the name he chose for his own effort to consolidate the Israeli republic and its political independence. And, indeed, what the moderate mamlachti rabbis are trying to articulate is connected, in a deep sense, to the worldview that Ben-Gurion embodied. It is a retreat from Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's messianic vision of settlement to the mainstream Zionist creed, where political independence and democratic sovereignty override mitzvah dalet, the mitzvah to settle. Though rather than renounce Rabbi Zvi Yehuda, they are, for the most part, reinterpreting him to be a mamlachti theologian himself, this is, in effect, what they are saying: the mitzvah to settle the land is important, and the right of Jews to the whole land is eternal, but the polity—the Jewish democratic state—is still the greatest achievement of the Jews in our time, politically and religiously, and must take precedent above all other considerations.

Nevertheless, these same rabbis did not support the evacuation of Gaza. Once they exhausted all (legal) means in the attempt to stop it, they submitted to it despite the fact that they thought it a terrible mistake. What, then, were the grounds for their objections, and what is the role of settlement in the mamlachti view they have been articulating?

Religiously, the mitzvah to settle the land has obviously been relegated to a more modest role than it had for Rabbi Zvi Yehuda—it's one mitzvah among many others. Ideologically, settlement seems to have become something like what it has been for Likud: though short of full-fledged blood-and-

soil ideology, settling is, for these rabbis, a central—even the central—expression of Jewish nationalism. Indeed, the old story that "the left's" disregarding of the importance of land to the Jewish people is a sign of their detachment from the Jewish heritage as a whole seems to have become more central with the mamlachti rabbis. Their complaint against those who would leave the territories has become less theological and more cultural: turning one's back on Judea and Samaria shows a disregard for Jewish heritage. We may note that this brings the mamlachti rabbis closer not only to Likud but also to mainstream Zionism, which did not conceive of the connection between people and land in blood-and-soil terms. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Zionism's democratic thrust, and its idea of self-determination, brought it back to Zion: if, when Jews are given the chance to shape their own public polity, they would make their public sphere Jewish, this would send them back to their heritage of which the Land of Israel is a necessary part. The cultural content of Jewish nationality includes the Land of Israel as English nationality is tied to England. This is what Israel's Declaration of Independence calls the "historical right"—a right based in history rather than a divine promise. The mamlachti rabbis' demand to hold the territories is in this way subordinated to the overarching need to preserve a Jewish democratic state, and so it is brought back into the folds of political Zionism. Within this worldview it is possible to sustain what the settlers still consider a blow—the dismantling of settlement and the withdrawal from territory—without seeing it as complete ideological bankruptcy.

It would seem, then, that though politically the mamlachti rabbis are still pro-settlement and have not solved the

problem of reconciling the occupation with Zionism, they have nevertheless opened the ideological and theological path back to the older creed. Their view prepares the ground for restoring the synthetic view of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook, which originally enabled religious Zionists to cooperate with the larger secular movement. But the question is, what theological weight will they be able to carry? For now—and this is perhaps not disconnected from their insistence on clinging to the territories—it does not seem that they are able to produce a religious view compelling enough to sweep their public on the way back to the old alliance with Zionism, to infuse it with energy and prepare it for the turmoil that surely lies ahead. Certainly, there is no theologian comparable in stature to Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook or Rabbi Yitzchak Ya'akov Reiness, able to transform religious Zionism both politically and sociologically. For a pious public this is a crucial question.

Conclusion:
What Next?

On February 1, 2006, less than a year after the pull-out from Gaza, a huge police force armed with crowd control equipment, horses, bats, helmets, and transparent shields, assembled to dismantle the illegal settlement of Amona, near Ofrah.[1] A "battle"—as it was called later—ensued. When the police charged, settlers threw bricks from roof tops and met the charging police head-on. Some 50 policemen and over 150 settlers were wounded, most of them lightly. Both sides—the settlers and the government, which had sent the huge police force—had a vested interest in making the evacuation into a battle: each wanted to dramatize its resolve.

The background for the whole affair invited such a drama. The elections were coming, and Sharon's new party, Kadima, was leading in the polls. The party had been formed around Sharon himself, and the only ideological element that held it together, apart from Sharon's personality, was the policy of

unilateralism. But then Sharon collapsed on the 4th of January, and Ehud Olmert, his deputy prime minister and member of Kadima, was thrust into the dual role of acting prime minister and head of Kadima. Olmert had publicly prodded Sharon in the direction of unilateralism ever since 2003.[2] But in addition to establishing his leadership, he had to indicate to the public in general, and to Kadima's many supporters in particular, that he was going to stay the course of unilateralism, and that he had the courage to confront the settlers. He also had to send a message to the settlers themselves: gone were the days in which they dictated policy extralegally.

On the settlers' side, the "battle" was intended to serve as a counterexample to the "mistake" of "surrender" in Gaza. The "battle" was also a product of the collapse of denial: it took for granted that there were two sides that couldn't be reconciled. By their actions, the Amona rebels expressed unequivocally the realization that accepting the authority of the state and evacuating peacefully meant forsaking settlements, and that holding on to settlements meant directly confronting the authority of the state. But unlike in Gaza, they chose to do battle against the state.

The younger generation who rallied to defend Amona, however, challenged not only the authority of the state but also the authority of their elders, who oversaw the evacuation of Gaza, which ended without a fight. (Some of these rebels went so far as to call the Yesha Council "collaborators," and some of the council members were physically attacked in the riot that broke out.) The young Amona rebels felt betrayed and cheated and to an extent rightly so. Their elders had assured them for many years that the word of God and the decree of the sover-

eign would be one and the same. Disengagement had demonstrated more sharply than ever before (though certainly not for the first time) that this was not so. Divine and earthly politics could and did confront each other directly.

If their elders had considered such a possibility honestly, they may have paved the way for dealing with it. But they chose to strengthen their children's resolve by denying the conflict; they taught them to stand firm on the absolute necessity of settlement because it was the very essence of both Judaism and Zionism. When the leadership opted to evacuate peacefully, how could these youngsters not think that their parents had betrayed everything—the Jewish faith, the Jewish heritage, and Zionism? Had they been taught that sovereignty was an independent value, irreducible to settlement, the shock of evacuation may not have been so total. But without a way to tell the difference between Rabbi Kook the father and Rabbi Kook the son, between Zionism and settlement, choosing to obey "the left's" government could only seem to the idealistic among the young like complete moral bankruptcy and a renunciation of all they were brought up to believe. They resembled the young American rebels of the sixties at least in this: they were shocked by the difference between their parents' declared ideals and their actual behavior. The new arguments about unity, independence, statehood, and democracy, all of which were, it was now said, valuable in themselves, sounded like a heap of cowardly excuses, not like real ideals. The mamlachti view, which was to give all this meaning, felt lukewarm. Partly it seemed that way because the voices of the mamlachti rabbis leaped to the fore only under the pressure of political necessity. It all had the aura of apologetics.

Some of the leaders of mainstream religious Zionism joined the rebels in Amona, and they did it, or so it seemed, to try and save face as leaders. They were attempting to win the young back through flattery, although this was the same leadership that had orchestrated the very "surrender" that the Amona rebels were protesting. But this may have been too little too late. Precisely because these youngsters were idealistic, they could not understand how secular Zionism, the hated "left," and decadent democracy had suddenly become more important than the word of God, the Jewish heritage, and the connection of the People of Israel to their land.

It is tempting to see the Amona affair as a turning point in the battle over the hearts of the younger generation, perhaps even the heart of religious Zionism as a whole, in which the mamlachti view lost to the new militancy, which proudly reasserted the original Rabbi Zvi Yehuda view.

But one would be hard pressed to see things that way. The "battle" was more of a drama than a real battle. The violence and the wounded notwithstanding, the settlers were far from picking up firearms (to which they have easy access). Though rhetoric escalated and settlers now habitually called the IDF an "army of expulsion," Amona was not part of any large-scale conscientious objection to army service or any civil disobedience movement. There were a lot of emotions and a real sense of victimhood. But not much more.

It would seem that the settlers had decided to make the evacuation of Amona difficult and traumatic enough to make the government think twice before it considered evacuations on a large scale again. Amona was a way to send a threat: the

peaceful Gaza spectacle will not repeat itself. As a threat, however, it was equivocal. As a dramatic show of force that shied away from full-scale—not to mention armed—confrontation, it also demonstrated the limits of settlers' resistance.

Still, events that have unfolded since Disengagement may have contributed to the forces that produced the "battle" and confirmed the Amona strategy. First there were the continued Qassam rocket attacks from Gaza. Qassam rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza before Disengagement too. It was assumed, however, that after the pullout they would either stop or be stopped by Israeli pressure. But they didn't stop, and given the lack of a clear center of sovereignty on which to apply effective pressure, accompanied by the limits on Israel's policy set by the international community, Israel seemed helpless to stop the constant barrage on its towns. The continued shooting seemed to confirm the lesson of Camp David: the Palestinians did not opt for partition. They did not aim at liberating the occupied territories but at liberating the whole of Palestine.

In the meantime, only a few days before the Amona debacle, Hamas took power. From the Israeli point of view this was an ominous sign: ending the occupation led to radicalization rather than pacification. The warnings of hawks that any withdrawal would be understood only as a sign of weakness and encourage further violence appeared to many to be vindicated. Hamas held fast to its extremist view and refused to recognize Israel's right to exist or to accept agreements signed with it by previous Palestinian leaders.

Nevertheless, with the elections two months away, Olmert's Kadima stood by its platform of unilateral withdrawals in the West Bank and an end to the occupation. And Israel still supported the plan. Kadima won fewer seats in the Knesset than the polls had predicted, but it was still the largest party and could put together a stable coalition. Olmert became prime minister.

But then came the war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006. After Hezbollah kidnapped two soldiers on Israel's northern border, Israel retaliated with massive air strikes. Hezbollah responded with a barrage of rockets that paralyzed a third of the country. The primitive rockets, stored in a thousand little hideouts in huge numbers, were impossible to stop from the air, and Israel did not dare launch another massive ground invasion, remembering its traumatic eighteen-year sojourn that was habitually called the "Lebanese swamp." The war ended with a UN Security Council resolution that ordered an international force to keep the peace. But Israelis generally saw the war as a failure and a serious blow to Israel's power of deterrence. Hezbollah hastened to announce that it had brought the mighty IDF to its knees, though this is doubtful.

But above all, the Lebanon war drove home for many Israelis the lesson that Gaza rockets had not: unilateral withdrawal in the West Bank would expose the majority of Israel's citizens—in its most densely populated areas, including Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Israel's international airport—to Quassam rockets. If the whole force of the IDF, which was not used against the evacuated Gaza by then, cannot stop these primitive weapons, withdrawal from the West Bank may well end in

paralyzing the whole country, as Hezbollah managed to para-
lyze its northern parts.

But though the hawkish right felt vindicated, and though
some of its arguments proved right, this was no return to the
old hawkish Greater Israel ideology any more than Amona was
a return to Rabbi Zvi Yehuda's redemption. Greater Israel was
no less dead, and the territories were still perceived as a bur-
den rather than an asset: the polls still showed a clear majority
who believed partition was the only viable resolution to the
conflict. In an echo of the lesson learned at Camp David, it
now seemed that Israel's staunchest enemies had found an
effective means to push it down the road to destruction: hav-
ing thwarted partition by agreement, they had now managed
to thwart unilateral withdrawal too. For all its military and
economic power Israel was helpless to extract itself from the
territories and prevent itself from sliding down the slippery
slope to binationalism.

This is, no doubt, a bewildering situation for the settlers, one
that may well be hospitable to the spread of the Amona spirit.
Because although events have produced no sympathy for the
settlers—if anything the settlers embody and symbolize the
West Bank hump on Israel's back—the immediate threat of
evacuation has been lifted, and for the immediate future set-
tlement can stay put, even continue to grow. But all the con-
crete, cement, asphalt, and iron don't seem to add up to any-
thing. Settlement now exists in a limbo, with the settlers no
longer energized by the dream of redemption but not yet able
to find their way back to the spiritual home of political Zion-

ism; no longer believing they will make Israel's hold on the territories permanent but not yet returning to Israel proper, inside the international border.

The old guard of the settlers' leadership seems unable to break this passive spell, and nurturing a sense of victimhood comes in lieu of producing a political plan. Ever since the road to unilateral withdrawal was blocked, and the urgency of dealing with such a prospect lifted, the attempts of mamlachti rabbis to reformulate a different theology have grounded to a near halt. The political offspring of this view, a reformulation of religious Zionism in terms of sovereignty rather than land, has also all but vanished from the settlers' public discourse. What Amona signaled, above all, was the collapse of leadership and the spread of despair accompanied by self-righteous self-pity.

The *political* leadership of the settlers—from Gush Emunim to the Yesha Council—had always been strong and highly centralized. It was able to initiate and direct settlement efforts, and it could rely on a mass of faithful followers. Right up to Disengagement its authority was unquestioned—even at the expense of the authority of the older rabbis—and nothing proved this so decisively as the peaceful evacuation of Gaza. The Yesha Council held the reigns tightly, successfully prevented a huge demonstration from turning violent, and effectively orchestrated an orderly evacuation despite the enormous emotional turmoil. Amona demonstrated for the first time that many of the settlers, especially the younger generation, had turned their back on that leadership. But nothing seems to have replaced it. A host of sects, rabbis, ideologues, and activists now speak in different voices, representing, or purport-

ing to represent, different groups. How these various groups will react politically to future decisions regarding their fate is anyone's guess.

If Amona offered no clear new ideology and gave birth to no new leadership, it was mostly a testimony to disintegration. Under the new conditions, where denying the differences between Zionism and settlement and ignoring the incompatibility of the secular creed and its messianic offspring are no longer possible, the unity of the enterprise is dissolving. The real turning point was, then, not the "battle" of Amona; it was peaceful execution of Disengagement. The Amona affair only exposed the effects of the momentous clash between the two creeds, which had already happened. Since Amona it is no longer possible to talk of "the settlers' ideology" any more than it is possible to speak of "the settlers' leadership." A chapter in the history of Zionism is over spiritually, even if it is not yet over politically.

Even under these conditions, however, the danger is not civil war. Since Amona there have been numerous smaller violent incidents between radical settlers and army and state officials, as well as increased violence against Palestinians. These are not only harmful and illegal, they are also dangerous and may contribute to escalation. Pockets of fanatics may even pick up arms in the event of an evacuation. But all this does not add up to a new unifying vision. And without one, without a spiritually meaningful common alternative, the frustration, despair, and anger can neither purport to offer leadership for Israel as a whole nor support a dream of secession from it.

But frustration and despair are still very real dangers. The crisis of religious Zionism is not only a sectorial problem but also a problem for Zionism as a whole, because religious Zionism is an important component of the fabric that gives Zionism as a whole its meaning.

Israel, like the United States, is an immigrant society. In such societies identity, a sense of "we," is not a (real or even imagined) given. It is a consciously deliberate creation. In most national societies a sense of "we" is based on the experience of a shared past. In immigrant societies the past is, from the start, not shared. It is the future that is to be shared. Therefore the sense of "we" is based in a plan for a common future (and remains so even as a shared past accumulates).

In the case of Zionism this plan for a common future draws much on an ancient past—a heritage rather than an experience—but this past is a necessary not a sufficient condition. Zionism cannot be exhumed from the Jewish past. It is inconceivable before modernity, and it was born out of a progressive, future-oriented vision. It was a dream before it became a reality, and it still is: Jews can choose to redefine their identity and, regardless of their past, come and share in the Zionist future. This is a conscious decision. One may be Jewish by birth, but one becomes a Zionist only by choice. Not all Jews choose Zionism. There are secular and non-Orthodox Jews in Israel and abroad who reject a definition of Judaism in national terms for themselves and sometimes for others too; some of them see it as an altogether illegitimate form of Jewish identity. There are also ultra-Orthodox Jews, in Israel and

outside it, who see faith as the only legitimate definition of Judaism and reject any secular version of it.

Political Zionism is, however, inclusive in its view of Judaism. From Herzl's time to ours, choosing to be a Zionist did not mean forsaking other aspects of Jewish identity. Herzl respected the right of rabbis to refuse the choice offered by Zionism. But he also emphatically insisted that the movement must make room for rabbis and believers: conceiving of your Jewish identity in national terms is not, and cannot be, a demand to renounce your Jewish faith. This was a crucial element of Zionism. Though it was a revolutionary view of the Jewish future, it was a turn in a continuous history, not a complete break with the past. And for the same reason that Zionists discovered they would not be able to achieve their political goals anywhere but in the Land of Israel: if Jews were to be masters of their own fate *as Jews in a polity of their own,* Israel could not exclude religious Jews, or it would turn into something resembling nineteenth-century Europe, where Jews were granted rights at the price of renouncing Judaism. The fact that one may be Orthodox and Zionist is thus central to Zionism, and the existence of religious Zionism is an important reminder that this option is practicable and not just theoretical in Israel.

The many years of occupation have eroded these conceptions rather than strengthen them. Because the ideologues of settlement were mostly Orthodox, Orthodoxy has been stained in the minds of many secular Israelis. This was not an argument but rather a progressively creeping mood: the more the occu-

pation dragged on, and the more it was supported by Orthodox Jews, the stronger became the feeling that "the religious," and perhaps even Judaism itself, were somehow an enemy of humanism and democracy.[3] Rather than confront the settlers over the meaning of the Jewish heritage, many were tempted to see Israel in terms of two antagonistic camps: those who believed in democracy and those who believed in God and the Jewish tradition.

If religious settlers are brought down from the messianic tree they have climbed up into only by force, if they are crushed rather than reformed, if they harbor only anger toward the state of Israel, they may compound the damage already done. Their own conception may confirm the sense that secular Zionism and the Jewish faith are at odds. If the lesson that they take from the failure of their messianic adventure in the territories is that secular Zionism, which had turned its back on their enterprise, is a bankrupt option, a materialistic, hedonistic, soulless creed, they may physically return to Israel proper, but it is not likely that they will choose Zionism again. In that case, they will be Israelis like the ultra-Orthodox are, without being part of the common plan for a shared future.

In the absence of a live theology to resurrect a faith that ascribes spiritual meaning to Zionist democratic sovereignty, and with a belief that the ideology that turned against settlement is morally meaningless, religious Zionists may shun Zionism altogether and join ultra-Orthodoxy. The return from settlement may be as damaging to the vitality of the Jewish content of Zionism as the eruption of the religious settlement

movement turned out to be. The struggle over the meaning of Zionism cannot be a triumph of the secular public over the settlers. Zionism, if it is to remain, must do more than win the political struggle: it must also win back the minds and hearts of religious Zionists.

This page intentionally left blank

Appendix
Jewish and Democratic: Complementary or Contradictory?

I srael's contemporary detractors share the settlers' point of view in that they see continuity, rather than contradiction, between Zionism and the occupation, because in their view Israel never really meant to be democratic. Since Zionism itself, according to this view, aimed for a less-than-democratic state, if not a downright apartheid, then ending the occupation will not restore democracy.[1] The occupation, for such critics, is not an anomaly but a predictable extension of the inegalitarian nature of a state that defines itself as Jewish. A Jewish Israel, such critics believe, is emphatically not like an Italian Italy, a German Germany, or a Finnish Finland.

What then sets Israel apart? Why can other nation-states be democratic and a Jewish one cannot? A full and nuanced comparison of Israel to other democratic states can be found in Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein's seminal study

Israel and the Family of Nations[2] and would be beyond our scope here. But some of the main points they raise are worth following if we are to ask to what extent Israel stands out among other national democracies.

We may begin with the fact that many people consider Judaism as, first and foremost, a religious faith, and as such it should not seek political self-determination. If Judaism is like Catholicism, Hinduism, Protestantism, or Islam, then why should it have a state any more than those other religions do? (I am discounting the Vatican City, whose citizens are mostly clergy and Swiss Guard.)

But Israel is not the state of the Jewish faith. A majority of its Jewish citizens are not observant Jews—many are in fact atheists—and the founders of Zionism were for the most part secular, sometimes militantly so. Such people see themselves as Jewish by national rather than religious identity, and their opinion is hard to discount since self-determination relies principally on self-perception. Israeli hawks who have attempted to deny the right of Palestinians to self-determination for many years have argued that there is no such thing as a Palestinian people. Doves have countered that the matter cannot be decided by others and must be left to the Palestinians themselves. If they think of themselves as a nation, then they are. The same, then, goes for Jews. They may formulate their identity as they see fit, and Zionists formulated theirs in terms that are not dependent on religion. Indeed, from its outset Zionism was a secularizing revolution in Jewish identity. This is why so many Orthodox Jews objected to it. To this day the large ultra-Orthodox minority in Israel, though it votes and

has representatives in the Knesset, distances itself from Israel's national identity.

This is not to say, however, that Zionism severed all ties with Judaism as a religion, culturally or institutionally. It did, for example, make quite a few concessions to accommodate the Orthodox, with the result that beyond the common ways in which national identities emerge from (and transform) earlier religious ones, Israel's separation of church and state has some considerable exceptions to it. Is this, then, what singles Israel out as less democratic? Probably not. England has a state church, as do Denmark and Norway, to name a few examples, and that does not seem to constitute evidence of a nondemocratic character. The Greeks identify their national with their religious identity (this is enshrined in the Greek constitution, which begins with the ringing phrase "In the name of the Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity"); the Poles don't clearly separate Catholicism from theirs. But these states too are universally considered democratic. Moreover, a strict separation of church and state, as, for example, in France, is not necessarily a guarantee against violations of the egalitarian principle. France has a strict secular republican conception of its public sphere, which creates problems for religions with a public dimension. Members of minorities in Israel, in contrast, have collective rights as well as individual rights. Unlike the French model, which makes it difficult to resist assimilation and preserve an identity apart from that of the majority, Israel's Declaration of Independence—in a bold, progressive stroke for its time—proclaims that the Jewish state not only protects the civil rights of individual minority members but also rec-

ognizes their separate culture—by its nature an attribute of a group—and their religion as specifically protected rights. Israel therefore has a publicly financed Arab language school-system and a state-sponsored system of Muslim courts for marriage and family status. Arabic is also a second official language of the state. This is due precisely to the fact that Israel does not equate citizenship with national and religious identities. It thus leaves room for groups of citizens—such as the Palestinian Muslim minority (and the smaller Palestinian Christian one) and ultra-Orthodox Jews—who emphatically do not wish to assimilate into the identity of the majority.

The system of religious courts, and especially the state rabbinate, authorized by the state to register all marriages among the Jewish population, is by far the most glaring exception to the separation of church and state (or rather churches and state, since there are such courts for other faiths too, and they are also sponsored by the state and invested with the power to register marriages). Controlled by the Orthodox, the rabbinate and its system of courts can prevent those who are not Jewish by a strict Orthodox standard from getting married in an officially recognized way since Israel has no system for civic marriage (this would apply, for example, to someone who has a Jewish father but not a Jewish mother, and who is thus defined as Jewish for purposes of immigration and naturalization but is not Jewish by Orthodox standards). This arrangement certainly does not favor the majority in Israel—it actually imposes the will of the Orthodox minority on the secular and conservative majority among Jews. It is also not a product of Zionism. Rather, it is a heritage of the Ottoman law, preserved by the British mandate and later adopted by the state

of Israel as part of the compromise between the secular and the Orthodox.

The original Ottoman arrangement gave the ministers of all faiths the right to register marriages for their own denominations. This might have made sense in a multinational illiberal nineteenth-century empire, but it hardly does in a contemporary liberal democracy. Indeed, the rabbinate has drawn much fire and will probably eventually be reformed or marginalized by some state mechanism for civil marriage. In the meantime, however, it is habitually bypassed because the state of Israel recognizes marriages that another state has registered as legitimate, and so many—including Israeli-born Jewish men and women who do not want an Orthodox rabbi to perform their marriage—travel to nearby Cyprus (which is the closest destination for that purpose) or to any other friendly country, get married there, and return to have their marriage officially recognized. This anomaly can and should be corrected, and when it is, this will not, on Zionist premises, diminish the national Jewish character off the state.

But apart from the question of church and state, Israel's critics point out, there is a built-in preferential mechanism in the Jewish state that favors Jews in matters of immigration: Israel's law of repatriation, known as the Law of Return, which gives Jews immigrating to Israel an automatic right to receive full citizenship upon arrival. This law creates a link not just between religion and national identity but also between Jews in Israel and Jews worldwide. Unlike the question of the rabbinate the Law of Return is at the very heart of the Zionist enterprise, which sought to create a "national home," as the Balfour Declaration of 1917 put it, for a homeless people. Israel

was meant to be not just a physical refuge for Jews, who were a vulnerable minority everywhere, but also a means for them to achieve full—that is political—self-determination. The idea of a national home, and a recognition that this home would naturalize any Jew who wished to join it, was sanctioned by the international community and recognized by the United Nations as a primary reason for the creation of Israel. The 1947 partition resolution of the United Nations divided mandatory Palestine based on the explicit assumption that the Jewish portion of the land would become a magnet for Jewish immigration. One may even say that the whole logic behind the UN's partition plan was meant to allow a law of return. Dividing the land into two national states—one Arab, one Jewish—was intended to protect the Arab population from being overwhelmed by Jewish immigration. Jews would be free to immigrate only into their own state and would have no effect on the national character of the neighboring state. In this way, according to the UN, both peoples' right to national self-determination would be preserved. In all its negotiations with the Palestinians since the Oslo Accords in 1993, Israel has rejected what the Palestinians call the "Right of Return," by which they mean that the Palestinian refugees and their descendents may resettle in Israel itself. Israel has insisted that the Palestinians be entitled to a law of return similar to that of Israel, which would naturalize Palestinians in the future Palestine but not in Israel. The reasoning remains that of the partition resolution: each of the two peoples is entitled to a state where it has a majority, without jeopardizing the same right of their neighbors.

Note also that the Law of Return does not mean that Jews

outside Israel have a claim on Israel's polity. If they choose to immigrate and naturalize via the Law of Return, they can take part in Israel's politics as citizens because the state "belongs" to all its citizens—regardless of race, religion, nationality, or gender—but *only* to them. The sovereign is not the Jewish people. It is the collective body of citizens, regardless of any other form of identity.

Though Israel's Law of Return is often cited as what makes the case of Israel unlike any other, such laws of repatriation, designed to favor members of the national Diaspora in immigration and naturalization, are, in fact, quite common and are internationally recognized as conforming to the norms of democracy (the EU officially approved of them). Many countries with diasporas have such laws: Greece, Poland, Hungary, Ireland, Germany, Armenia, and Finland, to name a few.

But again, in the case of Israel's version of repatriation, the question of religion returns. Because though the end result of naturalization under the Law of Return is the taking of a national identity rather than a religious one (or a national identity in addition to a religious one), the point of departure, the criteria by which one counts as a Jew and is eligible under this law, say Israel's critics, is religious. You can transform yourself into a Jew by nationality if and only if you become Jewish by religion. The Law of Return thus makes halacha (Jewish religious law), not national or cultural identity, the gatekeeper of Jewish nationhood. This is, however, a popular misunderstanding. In fact the Law of Return does not base its definition of Judaism on halacha. Israel's legislators and the Israeli Supreme Court have widened the definition "Jewish" far beyond the narrow confines of religion.[3] It is enough, for example, to

be married to someone who had a Jewish grandfather to be eligible under the law. Practice has been even more lax than theory, as the mass immigration from the former Soviet Union proved. Many who have been naturalized in Israel under the Law of Return were not Jewish by any stretch of the religious definition, but they wanted to become so by national identity. And they do, if they so wish. Over time, by partaking in the rights and responsibilities of citizens, speaking Hebrew, and living by a Jewish calendar, they assimilate as others do in other democratic nation-states (such people may still have a problem when they wish to marry and mostly use—as many Jewish-born Israelis do—the Cyprus option).

But then, say Israel's critics, doesn't the Law of Return testify to a basic tribalism that hides behind the democratic façade of the Jewish state? This suggests that Zionism harbors an "ethnic" definition of national identity, and critics will offer as an example the fact that immigrants who come under the Law of Return may assimilate, but Israeli Arabs cannot. There is an "ethnic" dividing line, they say, and this makes Israel an "ethnic democracy"[4] rather than a full democracy. One ethnic group is, so to speak, the proprietor, while others are excluded. This means, or at least implies, that the very idea of a Jewish state is inherently discriminatory.[5]

The more vulgar insinuation, that Israel gives full civil and political rights to Jews only, is of course completely false. In Israel, as we have noted, all citizens together constitute "the sovereign," and each adult has the right to vote and to run for political office regardless of race, religion, gender, or—strikingly—national identity. Citizenship is enough.[6]

The term "ethnic" is often used to imply something more

insidious: racism. The idea of ethnic cleansing as a likely extension of "ethnic democracy" does come to mind, and post-Zionists indeed rhetorically exploit this possibility. But it is not clear why the term "ethnic" should apply to Zionism any more than it would apply to many other national democracies. Not only is Israel less homogenous than, say, Poland, Germany, Denmark, France, Holland, Sweden, or Greece, but the Jewish population itself is strikingly diverse. The term "ethnic"—let alone "racial"—doesn't seem to be very useful in describing the common identity of Jews from Yemen, England, Ethiopia, Russia, Germany, Morocco, Kurdistan, and Argentina (among many other countries from which Jews have emigrated).[7] The idea of an ethnic definition of national identity also makes it hard to classify the ultra-Orthodox, a large group that does not share Israel's national identity but is nevertheless "ethnically" Jewish no matter how one understands the term "ethnic" here. The ultra-Orthodox appear to be part of the *ethnos* but do not see their Judaism as a national identity. For them Jewish identity is strictly religious. There are also some Israeli Jews—very few in fact, and who are mostly educated in the West under a radical multicultural paradigm—who define themselves as Arab by ethnicity,[8] based on their country of origin. From the state's point of view, for such matters as immigration and marriage, they are considered Jewish by national identity. The same goes for other immigrants who may consider themselves "ethnically" Polish or Russian or Ethiopian but who are not any less nationally Jewish for it, in their own eyes or in the eyes of the majority.

It would seem then that the term "ethnic democracy" does not add more than a pejorative ring and a confusion of

criteria over the simpler definition of a "national democracy."
Indeed we come closer to the source of unease with Zionism
when we focus on the national rather than the "ethnic": Israel
has a large indigenous Arab *national* minority, which does not
partake in the Jewish national identity and does not wish to do
so. The crucial divide, then, is clearly national not "ethnic."
Muslim Arabs are a national minority and are by virtue of
that not a part of Israel's national Jewish identity. So is it this,
at bottom, the fact that the national identity excludes a na-
tional minority, that separates Israel from other democracies?
Hardly. National minorities are common among democratic
nations everywhere, including the Basques in Spain, the Aus-
trians in Italy, or the Germans in Poland, to note a few con-
spicuous examples. But for the most part the existence of such
minorities does not require the majority to renounce its na-
tional right of self-determination. Italians are not normally
asked to overthrow the Italian character of their polity because
there is a German-speaking Austrian minority in South Tyrol,
which is, like Israel's Arabs, at once indigenous, Italian by citi-
zenship, and not-Italian by national identity.

But where Israel seems to compare unfavorably with other de-
mocracies, it is not these examples—the more common among
nations—that are habitually noted. Rather the French, Ameri-
can, Canadian, British, Belgian, and Swiss models are held up
as the examples of "real" democracy. I'll confine myself here to
some general remarks about France, the United Kingdom, the
United States, and Switzerland (which represent the four cate-
gories to which the other examples also belong).

     The French model of "a state of all its citizens"—also re-

ferred to as "republican nationalism" because national iden-
tity and citizenship are equated—has been discussed above
with respect to religion. What holds for religious minorities is
even more acute when it comes to national minorities, the ex-
istence of which France does not recognize (which is also why
France alone had reservations about signing the European 1995
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minori-
ties). If you acquire French citizenship, you become French and
are expected to assimilate into French culture and identity. In
principle, you can, of course, be a French Protestant, but
you cannot be German-French, even in the limited sense that
you can be German-American or Italian-American, for ex-
ample. You cannot, that is, be French and also preserve another
national identity. Your national identity is strictly defined by
citizenship.

When this model of "republican nationalism" is applied
to the case of Israel by the critics of its Jewish character, they
mean to equalize the status of Arabs and Jews in Israel by
creating one national identity for both. Such an identity, the
argument goes, would be civic rather than "ethnic." It is thus
sometimes suggested that the national identity should not be
"Jewish" but rather "Israeli." Israel would thus become a state
of all its citizens.[9]

But such a solution would be less, not more, egalitarian.
There is no reason to assume that a non-Jewish minority would
adopt a term—"Israeli"—that is the biblical synonym of "Jew-
ish." The question is not simply semantic, however, since call-
ing that identity "Canaanite" would not solve the problem ei-
ther; the democratic mechanism, left to decide the contents of
such an identity, would impose Jewish culture on the whole

body of citizens. This is indeed the case in France, where republican national identity is not just a product of the particular reverence of the French for a certain kind of republicanism (the values of which are, at least in part, not culturally neutral) but also a mechanism that does not allow groups to escape assimilation and preserve their separateness. Such a common identity in Israel would similarly forbid the existence of a separate Palestinian national identity and would impose a uniform public sphere, which by virtue of democracy would be decidedly Jewish. Israel would then have to abolish, for example, its state-sponsored Arab-speaking schools and force the language of the majority on the education of the minority.

The British case seems to offer a partial remedy for this problem. It creates some distance between the common, thin identity that is called "British," and the thicker national cultures that reside together under it. Enter the hyphen: there are English-Brits, Irish-Brits, Scottish-Brits, and other kinds of Brits too. It is hardly a coincidence, though, that the English-Brits are happiest with this arrangement. Being the majority, the democratic mechanism favors them. They get to shape the thin common identity (which often turns out to be less thin than is formally assumed): the head of the United Kingdom is the queen of England, and she may be replaced by other English kings or queens but not by a Scottish king or an Irish Catholic priest. I mention a priest here because the queen is not just the formal head of state but also the head of the official state church, which is Anglican. The English attributes of the common identity are not necessarily hostile to the other groups, but they are present enough to have created a massive secession movement in Scot-

land and a strong resistance among the Irish. Attempting to create such an umbrella identity in Israel is thus sure to create a resistance among Palestinians at least as fierce as in Scotland, and probably more so, since the conflict between Scotland and England has long been pacified, and the one between Jews and Palestinians is still a festering wound. Moreover, such umbrella identities in the Arab world among Muslims and without Jews—the movement known as Pan-Arabism—have also failed. There is no reason to think that Palestinians would be more hospitable to a pan-Israeli identity than they were to the pan-Arab one.

The American model, in its current multicultural interpretations, purports to offer a more decisive move away from the French model than does the British. The American form of hyphenation denotes a wider distance between the thin shared layer and the subidentities under it. It does so by separating the realms not just quantitatively but also qualitatively: the shared part is political, the particulars are cultural. Some interpretations of multiculturalism aspire to a more or less complete detachment of the identity from the mechanism of state power. In this view a formal liberal democracy offers a neutral common basis on which narratives of identity can flourish so long as none of them usurps the apparatus of state. This is sometimes known as "identity politics," though a better description would be the depoliticization of identity.

Although the current formula of multiculturalism seems new and somehow connected to a "postmodern condition" with flexible views of multilayered identities, cultural relativism, and so on, it actually draws from a deeply rooted and

specifically American tradition. It stems in part from the way Americans went about institutionalizing religious freedom and from the vision of a multireligious polity that that freedom implied. Substitute culture for religion and you get multiculturalism. Any community can cultivate its own identity, but it has to do so by its own means and merits and avoid any attempt to impose that identity on others. This vision of pluralism is buttressed by its political counterpart, a Madisonian view, which would have the mechanism of state conceived as a set of neutral rules, so that the institutions of state specifically disallow any group or interest to entrench itself in them.[10] The state is, then, the neutral counterpart hovering above all specific groups and avoiding any permanent link between itself and any of them. To use more-current jargon, this view seeks to detach the narratives of identity from the political power structure.

The catch in this description is that it relies on an unarticulated assumption that all subordinate identities accept a common set of values—pluralism, gender equality, individual liberty, and the free market—and not just a common set of rules. And when we reach the realm of shared values, we are back in the arena of identity. Unlike James Madison, Thomas Jefferson thought that liberty would not be secure by default if no specific belief or political philosophy was attached to the apparatus of state. Liberty can be maintained only by an overriding positive belief in liberty instilled in the polity's citizens.[11] Accordingly he based his Virginia act for religious freedom on the ringing declaration that "Almighty God hath created the mind free."[12] The foundation of religious freedom is

not neutrality toward religion but rather a positive liberal religious belief: we are entitled to our own beliefs, we might say, not just because we are liberal but because God is liberal too.

This conception allowed the most religious democracy, the American republic, to remain at once Christian and tolerant toward other religions among its citizens. It also allowed God to appear in American public discourse, and even on American currency, to the dismay of strict atheists.

Similarly, the contemporary reincarnation of American pluralism under the guise of multiculturism assumes a shared basis in values defended by the state and represented by its liberal institution. The different narratives are allowed to flourish provided that they incorporate the liberal narrative into themselves. It is important to make these unarticulated assumptions clear because being oblivious to them, or downplaying them, tends to lead the United States into trouble. When we minimize the importance of the common American narrative (or identity) for the stability of America's liberal institutions, the mistake is likely to be repeated in reverse when the United States turns its gaze elsewhere: we may then easily fail to see that democracy can't be transplanted as a pure set of neutral rules when there is no shared national identity and no tradition of democratic values. The attempt to create an instant multicultural democracy in Iraq is only the most recent result of misconceiving liberal democracy as a neutral narrative devoid of the cultural baggage we call "identity."

The American model of a shared polity, like the British one, then, does implicitly assume a common identity manifested in shared values (among other elements)—an American

identity on which the different hyphens are then juxtaposed. The model therefore applies only to such cases where all subgroups either have, or else wish to adopt, an umbrella identity, that is, they wish to assimilate into each other. This situation does not apply to the case of Israeli Arabs; they do not wish to assimilate or subordinate their identity to that of the majority. They desire, explicitly, to define themselves *apart* from the majority. The American equivalent is not, then, "Italian-American," which means, roughly, an American of Italian origin; it would be something like a "not-American Italian," a form of identity which the American conception of nationality is not built to stomach. Like the French model, though more softly, American citizenship implies assimilation and does not offer a ready way for any group to categorically resist it by formulating an un-American identity in the same way that Israel allows a non-Jewish national identity.

So we are left with the most radical separation of the common and the particular: a situation where subgroups are conceived explicitly as *national* groups, but the state does not embody any of them. Such subgroups can have substate political systems, allowing them a large measure of self-rule. Belgium and Switzerland are the clearest examples of this model (but it may well be that only Switzerland will remain so, given the mounting national tensions in Belgium). Assuming for the moment that such arrangements hold despite there being no common identity whatever—this is not a trivial assumption by any means—they still require a great measure of cooperation and a commitment to democracy. So here too one cannot evade at least a core layer of shared values, which we cannot easily assume the Jews and Palestinians of Israel share. (In-

deed, the election of Hamas in Gaza, and its subsequent violent crushing of its opponents, along with a violent suppression of Christian Arabs, casts serious doubts on such an assumption.) But more important, this kind of subgroup arrangement requires a large measure of goodwill and an established tradition of peaceful neighborliness, along with a willingness to forego national political self-determination. This is not the case in Israel and Palestine, where two national movements, both traumatized severely by a lack of political independence, have been fighting each other for more than a century. It is unlikely that either side would entrust its fragile independence to the other, which has been perceived for so long as its mortal enemy. The alternative to two national states—the one-state solution—would most probably not lead to a new Switzerland but to a new Lebanon. The only feasible solution to the conflict is two national states, one Jewish and one Palestinian. Hopefully, in both states minorities would be allowed to preserve their national character apart from the majority.

Such national self-determination clearly cannot be reduced to a nonpolitical form short of independence. Anything short of sovereignty would violate the principle of self-determination and would have to be nondemocratic; if there is a national state where the Jews are the majority, and another where the majority is Palestinian, the only way to prevent these two populations from shaping their public spheres in accord with their national cultures is to deny their citizens the vote.

The decisive factor for determining the way to approach the question of minorities remains the actual wishes of the particular minority or minorities. And so long as a minority does not wish to share an identity, however it is defined, with

the majority, as is the case with Israel's Arab citizens, a comparison with the French, British, American, and Swiss types of polities would seem to be less relevant. The more relevant comparison is to cases where a minority seeks to preserve its *separate* identity, such as the case of national minorities in Poland, Spain, Italy, and most other democratic nation-states. The legal structure (though certainly not always the practice) of the Jewish democratic state compares favorably with the laws of these countries, as it also does with the European Union's guidelines for the protection of national minorities mentioned above.[13] All this, we need to remember, exists under the considerable stress of an ongoing violent conflict with the nation to which the Arab minority of Israel belongs.

We may say, then, that contrary to the view that national identity and democracy play against each other, they are in fact mutually dependent. The connection runs both ways. Democracy not only channels sovereignty in such a way so as to allow a people to express its cultural identity in the public sphere; it also is dependent on national solidarity, on a sense of "we," for its stability.

The unease with Israel's national character may be due in part to the fact that in contemporary Western political thought there is a tendency to ignore the national character of democracy. This may be harder to do in the case of Israel, given the conflict it is entangled in. But there seems to be few grounds to argue that Israel is "more national" and less pluralistic than other democracies.

The tendency to ignore the national character of democracy could be described as a form of liberal reductionism,

which focuses democracy on individual rights and minimizes the question of sovereignty, including both its individual dimensions (the right to vote and run for office) and its public dimension (the collective right to self-determination). In part this tendency arises from a disregard for the importance of a shared bedrock of values and identity and from the assumption that democracies can be instantly built or even imposed. But in part it is also due to the fact that the twentieth century and its horrors have engendered an understandable instinctive fear of the destructive forces nationalism can unleash. After Fascism, Nazism, and countless examples of genocide and ethnic cleansing, we do not easily forget the danger radical nationalism poses to democracy. The case of religious settlers is yet another reminder of how nationalism can subvert democracy. But the fact that nationalism can turn against democracy does not mean that democracy can do without it.[14] In the age of decolonization, despite the horrors of World War II, national liberation movements still served as reminders of this. But after the fall of the Soviet Union, in the age of globalization and the European Union, it became easier to assume that history had ended with a triumph of liberalism, and that nationalism had been "transcended." It has become all too easy to forget that transcending nationalism may also mean transcending democracy. Many liberal institutions, such as the International Court in The Hague, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and even multinational corporations, exercise influence and often jurisdiction over peoples and populations who have no democratic control over them. Though they uphold, explicitly or implicitly, individual liberal rights, they operate in violation of the basic principle of de-

mocracy: government with the consent of the governed. De-
spite declarations that nationalism is an obsolete relic of the
past, the functional dependence of democratic institutions on
the national state, indeed on national cultures and sentiments,
seems to have remained. And so long as this is the case, the rea-
sons for the emergence of Zionism are as valid in the begin-
ning of the twenty-first century as they were in the beginning
of the twentieth.

The general unease with national sentiments cannot ex-
plain fully, however, why Jewish nationality—Zionism—seems
to some more malignant than other national identities. So it
seems that we are back with the occupation after all. Zionism
is targeted precisely because the settlers and Israel's detractors
both believe, or at least argue, that the occupation is part of the
Zionist enterprise and is even its inevitable extension.

The temptation to read deterministic causality into his-
tory is ever present. It is easy to assume, then, that if in the end
Israel came to occupy the territories, it must be that Zionism
contained the seeds of what eventually transpired. But it re-
quires a serious distortion of both the history and the moral
content of mainstream Zionism to see continuity here. This
line of thinking requires a description of Zionism as a blood-
and-soil ideology which postulates that the land belongs ex-
clusively to Jews.[15] It is on this retrospective reinterpretation of
Zionism, the very reinterpretation which the settlers have been
promoting, that the continuity argument hinges.

This is not to say that the settlers' and Israel's detractors
argue for continuity for the same reasons. Quite the contrary.
In the settlers' view continuity would have Zionism bestow
moral sanction on the occupation; for Israel's detractors con-

tinuity is proof that Zionism itself was illegitimate from the start. But the narrative of both groups is still the same. Accepting it means taking the settlers' propaganda at face value and missing the turmoil and convulsion, indeed the very force, behind their struggle.

This page intentionally left blank

Notes

Introduction

1. *Yesha* is the Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. I shall return in detail to the Council below.

2. Any food made with leaven, such as bread or cake, which is not allowed during Passover according to Jewish religious law.

3. Amos Oz, *po vesham be'eretz yisrael bestav 1982* (*In the Land of Israel*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1983).

4. Amos Oz, "sar habitachon umerchav hamichya" ("The Minister of Defense and *Lebensraum*"), in *beor hatchelet ha'aza* (*Under This Blazing Light*) (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1979), pp. 69–73. The article was first printed in the newspaper *Davar* in August 1967.

5. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, quoted in Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *adoney ha'aretz: hamitnahalim umedinat yisrael 1967–2004* (*Lords of the Land: The Settlers and the State of Israel 1967–2004*) (Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2004), p. 283.

6. Rabbi Avi Giesser, interviewed by Oded Shalom, "tzarich lehachin et ha'anashim lemashber hapinuy" ("We Have to Prepare the People for the Crisis of Evacuation"), *Yedioth Ahronoth,* October 1, 2004.

7. Nadav Eyal and Ilil Shachar, "hamatza shel sharon: neatzev gvulot keva" ("Sharon's Platform: We'll Shape Permanent Borders"), *Maariv,* December 26, 2005.

8. Ze'ev Hever, quoted in Ari Shavit, *chalukat ha'aretz* (*Dividing the Land*) (Jerusalem: Keter, 2005), p. 125.

9. Menachem Felix, quoted in Israeli Supreme Court decision HCJ 390/79, Dawikat et al v. Government of Israel et al, 34(1) P.D. 1. [Heb.]

10. Some members of the extremist messianic minority, like Rabbi Moshe Levinger and Menachem Felix, were shunted to the sidelines, while others continued to hold key positions and gradually adjusted their views, or at least the way they presented them, in accord with changing public moods.

11. I heard this story from Moti Sklar in a private conversation.

12. The Talmud actually talks about camels, and so, most probably, did Rabbi Karelitz. But political mythology enshrined the metaphor as carts, and this became a common idiom in religious settlers' discourse.

13. It is difficult to get exact numbers. Israel's statistics bureau does not classify the Jewish population in the territories according to denomination and ideology. I've based this estimate on two sources: (1) a policy paper of the Israel Democracy Institute and (2) the 2006 election ballot count, sorted out by Asher Cohen, political scientist at Bar-Ilan University (unpublished private correspondence). Both point to around the same proportions. Nevertheless one must keep in mind that both sources offer just rough estimates. See Yair Sheleg, *hamashmaut hapolitit vehahevratit shel pinuy yeshuvim be yesha* (*The Political and Social Significance of Evacuating Settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza*), policy paper no. 42 (Israel: Israel Democracy Institute, 2004). For the ballot count see the Knesset website http://www.knesset.gov .il/elections17/heb/results/Main_Results.asp.

Chapter One
Political Zionism

1. The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, more commonly referred to as the Scroll of Independence or The Declaration of Independence, as this text will refer to it. http://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/ eng/megilat_eng.htm. This is the Knesset's official English translation of the document.

2. Charles Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, "Distinctive Properties of a Republic," in *The Spirit of the Laws,* trans. Thomas Nugent (London: Hafner Press, 1949), vol. 1, bk. 8, chap. 16, pp. 120–121. The view that a republic must be small was also hotly debated during the struggle over the Constitution of the United States when James Madison seized on David Hume's suggestion that a republic would be better served by a diversity of interests, which only a large territory could assure. See Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation*

of the American Republic 1776–1787 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), pp. 499–506; James Madison, "The Federalist #10," in James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers,* ed. Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Books, 1987), pp. 122–128.

3. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract,* in *The Social Contract and Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,* the anonymous translation of 1761, ed. L. G. Crocker (New York: Washington Square Press, 1967), p. 70.

4. *Declaration of the Rights of Man,* http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/rightsof.asp.

5. Thomas Jefferson, "First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801," in *The Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents,* ed. John Gabriel Hunt, rev. ed. (New York: Gramercy Books, 1997), p. 25.

6. This was not, in fact, what turned Herzl to Zionism. At the time of the trial he did not think the fact that Dreyfus was Jewish had anything to do with the accusations against him, and by the time the trial became an "affair" Herzl was already immersed in "the Jewish question." See Shlomo Avineri, *hertzel* (*Herzl*) (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2007), pp. 81–82.

7. Judah Leib (Leon) Pinsker, *otoemansipatatziya* (*Auto-Emancipation*), trans. Ehad Haam (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1957).

8. Shlomo Avineri explains this succinctly and lucidly in the introduction to his seminal *Varieties of Zionist Thought.* Shlomo Avineri, *haraayon hatziyoni legvanav* (*Varieties of Zionist Thought*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1980), pp. 19–24. I have taken the examples in this passage from there.

9. Theodor Herzl, *inyan hayehudim: sifrey yoman* (*The Jewish Case: Diaries*), ed. Michael Heyman, Yoram Mayorek, Josef Wenkert, trans. Josef Wenkert (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1997), 1:482. This is the famous entry of September 3, 1897, where Herzl also says "In Basel I founded the state of the Jews."

10. Theodor Herzl, *medinat hayehudim* (*Der Judenstaat*), trans. Asher Barasch, in *medinat hayehudim, altneuland* (*Der Judenstaat, Altneuland*), Am Hasefer Series (Israel: Yediot Sfarim, 2008), pp. 33–99.

11. See for example Anita Shapira, *Land and Power: the Zionist Resort to Force, 1881–1948,* trans. William Templer (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Anita Shapira, "historiya medinit shel hayishuv, 1918–1939," in *toldot hayishuv hayehudi be'eretz-yisrael meaz ha'aliya hashniya, tkufat hamandat habriti, helek sheni* (*The History of the Jewish Community in Eretz-Israel Since 1882, The Period of the British Mandate, Part Two*), ed. Moshe Lisak, Anita Shapira, and Gavriel Cohen (Jerusalem: Israeli Academy for Sciences and Humanities and Bialik Institute, 1994), pp. 1–171.

12. Yehoshua Porath, *tzmichat hatnua haleumit ha'aravit-falastinit*

1918–1929 (*The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement 1918–1929*), 2nd ed. (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1976).

13. Theodor Herzl, *altnoyland* (*Altneuland*), trans. Miriam Kraus (Tel Aviv: Bavel, 2007), p. 213 [Heb.].

Chapter Two
Religious Zionism

1. Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism,* trans. Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

2. Opinions differ about the role of redemption in Rabbi Reiness's view of Zionism. Ravitzky believes Rabbi Reiness clearly separated political Zionism from redemption (an opinion further corroborated by the fact that Hamizrahi was the only party to vote as a party for the infamous Uganda proposal in the sixth Zionist Congress), while others argue that redemption did have a role in his view of Zionism, though not all agree on what it was. See Aviezer Ravitzky, *Haketz hamegule umedinat hayehudim* (*Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1993), pp. 51–54; Dov Schwartz, "mereshit tzmicha lehagshama: toldot hatnua ha tzionit-datit vera'ayonotea" ("From First Flourishing to Realization: The History of Religious Zionism and Its Ideas"), in *hatziyonut hadatit: idan hatmurot* (*Religious Zionism: An Era of Changes*), ed. Asher Cohen and Yisrael Harel (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2004), pp. 27–36; Yosef Shapira, "harav yitzhak yaakov rienes—meyasda shel hatziyonut hadatit: halacha, hagut, ma'ase" ("Rabbi Yitzhak Yaakov Reiness—Founder of Religious Zionism: Halacha, Thought and Action") in *mea shnot tziyonut datit, cherech rishon: ishim veshitot* (*A Hundred Years of Religious Zionism,* Vol. 1: *Figures and Thought*), ed. Avi Sagi and Dov Schwartz (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2003), pp. 381–408.

3. Shalom Rosenberg, "mavo lehaguto shel harayah" ("Introduction to the Thought of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook"), in *yovel orot: haguto shel harav yitzhak avraham hacohen kook zatzal* (*Fifty Years to Orot: The Thought of the Late, Blessed Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook*), ed. Benyamin Ish Shalom and Shalom Rosenberg (Jerusalem: Elinar Library and Beit Morasha Birushalayim, 2005), pp. 27–105.

4. Ravitzky, *Messianism,* p. 124.

5. Kfar Haroeh is named after the elder Rabbi Kook. Horoeh is a Hebrew acronym for Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook's name.

6. Arye Naor, *eretz yisrael hashlema: emuna umedinyut* (*Greater Israel: Faith and Policy*) (Haifa and Lud: University of Haifa Press and Zmora Bitan, 2001), pp. 45–47.

7. Quoted in Ravitzky, *Messianism,* p. 131. The English version of Ravitzky's book uses the word "supersede" rather than "counter." I prefer "counter," which gives a better sense of the original Hebrew.

8. Rabbi Shlomo Aviner, quoted in Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *adoney ha'aretz: hamitnahalim umedinat yisrael 1967–2004* (*Lords of the Land: The Settlers and the State of Israel 1967–2004*) (Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2004), p. 283.

9. Hanan Porat and Rabbi Neriya, quoted in Zvi Ra'anan, *Gush Emunim* (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Hapoalim, 1980), pp. 130–131.

10. Pinhas Lederman, "eretz yisrael ve medinat yisrael be machshavat tnuot datiyot—avar vehove" ("The Land of Israel and the State of Israel in the Thought of Religious Movements—Past and Present") in *medinat yisrael ve'ertz yisrael* (*The State of Israel and the Land of Israel*), ed. Adam Doron (Israel: Beit Berl Press, 1988), pp. 267–293.

11. Nahmanides, quoted ibid.

12. Ravitzky, *Messianism,* p. 220.

13. The idea that the conquest of the Land of Israel "supersedes lives" is based on Nahmanides' notion of an obligatory war (*milhemet mitzvah*). Maimonides does not acknowledge such a view of war and recognizes only defensive wars. But if one follows Nahmanides' logic and sees wars to liberate the Land of Israel as a religious obligation, then it follows that liberating the Land of Israel justifies the sacrifice of lives.

14. I heard this story from Rabbi Yehuda Gilad, Rabbi Amital's son-in-law.

15. Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook, *sikhot harav zvi yehuda: eretz yisrael (Conversations of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook),* ed. Shlomo Haim Ha-Cohen Aviner (Beit El: Hava, 2005), p. 18.

16. Ravitzky, *Messianism,* p. 82

17. Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook, *Lhilkhot Tzibur* (*Public Religious Law*) (Jerusalem: 1987), p. 52.

18. Reuven Pedatzur, *nitzkhon hamevucha: medinyut memshelet eshkol bashnatayim leachar milchemet sheshet hayamim* (*The Triumph of Confusion: The Eshkol Administration in the Territories after the Six Day War*) (Tel Aviv: Bitan and Yad Tabenkin, 1996); Yehiel Admoni, *Asor shel shikul da'at: hahityashvut me'ever lakav hayarok, 1967–1977* (*A Decade of Discretion: Settlement Policy in the Territories 1967–1977*) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1992).

19. Gershom Gorenberg, *The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967–1977* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), pp. 109–114.

20. Dayan's plan originally included settlements on the mountain ridge. See Avi Shlaim, *kir habarzel: yisrael vehaolam ha'aravi* (*The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*), trans. Ya'akov Sharet (Tel Aviv: Aliyat Hagag Books, Yediot Sfarim, 2005), p. 253.

21. Allon's plan became the unofficial Labor policy. Benny Morris, *korbanot: toldot hasichsuch hatziyoni-aravi 1881–2001* (*Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881–2001*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2003), p. 312.

22. For insider accounts of how the movement was created and how it saw itself see Meir Harnoy, *Hamitnahalim* (*The Settlers*) (Or Yehuda: Ma'ariv, 1994); Gerson Shafat, *gush emunim: hasipur meachorey haklaim* (*Gush Emunim: The Story Behind the Scenes*) (Israel: Bet El, 1995).

23. In Israel's system a government can hold power only if a majority in the Knesset supports it. A prime minster therefore needs a coalition that can guarantee that.

24. Yonny Garb, "tzeirei hamafdal veshorashav hara'ayoniyim shel gush emunim" ("The Young in the NRP [National Religious Party] and the Ideological Roots of Gush Emunim") in *Religious Zionism,* ed. Cohen and Harel, pp. 171–200.

25. Gush Emunim manifesto, in Shafat, *Gush Emunim,* appendix 1.

26. Danny Rubinstein, *mi leadonai elai: gush emunim* (*On the Lord's Side: Gush Emunim*) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1982), p. 128.

27. Gush Emunim manifesto.

28. Yehuda Amital, *Hama'aloth Mima'amakim* (*Steps from Depth*) (Jerusalem: Agudat Yeshivat Har-Etziyon, 1974), p. 42. See also Amnon Rubinstein's remarks on Amital's comment in Amnon Rubinstein, *mehertzel ad rabin vehala: meah shnot tziyonut* (*From Herzl to Rabin and Beyond: A Hundred Years of Zionism*) (Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishers, 1997), p. 139.

29. Gush Emunim manifesto.

30. This is an echo of Nahmanides' conception of obligatory war.

31. Gush Emunim manifesto.

32. Ibid.

33. The lyrics of the song are from Isaiah 8:10.

34. Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land,* pp. 70–81 [Heb.].

35. Ibid, p. 59.

36. Admoni, *A Decade of Discretion,* pp. 199–201 [Heb.].

37. "Avodah Zarah" ("Idol Worship") (no byline), *Nekuda,* no. 12, July

11, 1980. The title is a play on words: the Hebrew means "idol worship" but also "foreign labor."

Chapter Three
The Watershed

1. Avi Shilon, *Begin: 1913–1992* (*Begin: 1913–1992*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2007), pp. 272–273 [Heb.].

2. Shlomo Swirski, *mechir hayohara* (*The Price of Hubris*) (Tel Aviv: MAPA Publishers, 2005), p. 50.

3. Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict,* 4th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001), p. 415.

4. "Platform of the Likud Coalition, March 1977," reproduced in English translation in Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict,* pp. 394–395.

5. Gush Emunim manifesto, in Gerson Shafat, *gush emunim: hasipur meachorey haklaim* (*Gush Emunim: The Story Behind the Scenes*) (Israel: Bet El, 1995), appendix 1.

6. Baruch Lior, quoted in Aviezer Ravitzky, *haketz hamegule umedinat hayehudim* (*Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1993), p. 193.

7. The full text of the peace treaty can be found on the Knesset website: http://www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/egypt_eng.htm. Ariel Sharon, then minister of agriculture and the settlers' strongest ally in the cabinet, supported the accord with Egypt. The settlers' critique of Sharon at the time was an ominous sign of the future: "We in the settlements face a unique and curious tactical question: how to help Arik [Sharon's popular nickname] when he builds worlds, and stop him when he begins destroying them?" wrote an anonymous author in *Nekuda.* "Step by step, together, we erased the Green Line which separated the Shomron [Samaria] from the Sharon [a region within Israel proper], we have to prevent the erection of a wall of ruins between Sharon and Shomron." "mehamoten" ("From the Hip") (no byline), *Nekuda,* no. 19, November 14, 1980.

8. In an earlier case, in Beit El, Justice Moshe Landoy ruled in favor of confiscation, noting that he was satisfied that "thought and military planning [by state authorities] preceded the act of settlement." Moshe Negbi, *kvalim shel tzedek: bagatz mul hamimshal hayisraeli bashtahim* (*Justice under Occupation: The Israeli Supreme Court versus the Military Administration in the Occupied Territories*) (Jerusalem: Kana, 1981), p. 45.

9. Menachem Felix, quoted in Israeli Supreme Court decision HCJ 390/79, Dawikat et al v. Government of Israel et al, 34(1) P.D. 1. [Heb.].

10. Ibid.

11. Gadi Taub, "God's Politics in Israel's Supreme Court: The Retreat of Theology in Religious Settlers' Politics," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 6, no. 3 (November 2007): 289–299.

12. After the fashion of Rabbi Meir Kahane's radical party "Kach," outlawed by the Supreme Court on account of racism against Arabs. Mordechai Kremnitzer, *psilat reshimot* (*Disqualification of Lists*), policy paper no. 59 (Israel: Israel Democracy Institute, 2005), 57–63.

13. Hagai Segal, who was part of that terror cell, later wrote a memoir about it. See Hagai Segal, *ahim yekarim* (*Dear Brothers*) (Jerusalem: Keter, 1987).

14. Rabbi Aviner and Rabbi Bin-nun, quoted in Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *adoney ha'aretz: hamitnahalim umedinat yisrael 1967–2004* (*Lords of the Land: The Settlers and the State of Israel 1967–2004*) (Or Yehuda: Kinneret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir, 2004), p. 115.

15. Gideon Aran, *eretz yisrael bein dat upolotica: hatnua leatzirat hanesiga misinai velekahea* (*Eretz Israel between Religion and Politics: The Movement to Stop the Withdrawal in Sinai: A Sociological Perspective*) (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 1985), p. 3.

16. Yehuda Etzion, quoted in Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*, p. 119. For a more detailed discussion of the views of Yehuda Etzion, see Motti Inbari, *fundametalizem yehudi vehar habayit* (*Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount*) (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press and the Eshkolot Library, 2008), pp. 68–86.

17. Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, "hachulsha keideologia" ("Weakness as an Ideology"), *Nekuda,* no. 20, December 5, 1980.

18. Ibid.

19. Benny Katzover, interviewed by A. S. Shlomtzion, "anchnu haemda hakidmit shel gush etzion" ("We Are the Outpost of Gush Etzion"), *Nekuda,* no. 1, December 28, 1979.

20. Shilo Gal et al, "madua anachnu shovtim ra'av?" ("Why Are We Hunger Striking?"), in Zvi Raanan, *Gush emunim* (*Gush Emunim*) (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat Poalim, 1980), appendix 6.

21. Quoted in Raanan, *Gush Emunim,* p. 149–150.

22. Yisrael Harel, "haetgar hagorali: likrat kenes moatzet hayishuv hayehudi beyhuda, shomron, vechevel aza" ("The Fateful Challenge: Toward the Convention of the Jewish Settlement in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip"), *Nekuda,* no. 21, December 19, 1980.

23. The document was published in *Nekuda:* "hakhlatot veidat hay-ishuv hayehudi beyhuda, shomron, vekhevel aza" ("Resolutions of the Convention of the Jewish Settlement in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip") (no byline), *Nekuda,* no. 22, January 9, 1981.

24. To this day, the Yesha Council website makes this its principle goal. http://www.myesha.org.il/?CategoryID=167.

25. In Hebrew and in Judaism in general "resurrection" does not carry the religious meaning it has in Christianity. This is, in fact, a standard term used by secular Zionists to denote the regaining of political independence by Jews.

26. "Resolutions," *Nekuda,* no. 22, January 9, 1981.

27. Danny Rubinstein identified this attitude toward the law as the defining feature of Gush Emunim's political messianism. See Danny Rubinstein, *mi leadonai elai: gush emunim* (*On the Lord's Side: Gush Emunim*) (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1982), p. 136.

28. "Resolutions," *Nekuda,* no. 22, January 9, 1981.

29. "mivtza 'mesirut nefesh': doch meohalei shovtei hara'av" ("Operation 'Devotion': A Report from the Tents of the Hunger Strikers") (no byline), *Nekuda,* no. 8 (special ed.), April 18, 1980.

30. "Resolutions," *Nekuda,* no. 22, January 9, 1981.

31. Ibid.

32. http://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm.

33. Hanan Porat, quoted in Ra'anan, *Gush Emunim,* p. 131.

34. "Operation 'Devotion,'" *Nekuda,* no. 8 (special ed.), April 18, 1980.

35. Symposium proceedings (no headline or byline), *Nekuda,* no. 23, January 31, 1981.

36. Aran, *Eretz Israel.*

37. The Hebrew word used for "secure" also means "confident," and the "National Camp" refers to the whole hawkish group of parties, led by Likud.

38. Rabbi Bin-nun, quoted in Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land,* p. 327.

39. Yisrael Harel, "likrat post-tziyonot datit leumit" ("Toward National Religious Post-Zionism"), *Haaretz,* October 3, 1995.

40. Isaiah 8:10.

41. Ofrah resident Uri Elitzur, head of the prime minister's office under Netanyahu and later editor of *Nekuda,* was the clearest voice for this line of reasoning.

42. For a survey of this tendency, from the days of the struggle against the evacuation of Sinai and the Jewish Underground to the Rabin assassination, see Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother: Violence and Extremism in*

Israeli Politics from Altalena *to the Rabin Assassination* (New York: The Free Press, 1999), chaps. 5–8, pp. 145–285.

<div align="center">

Chapter Four
The Rabin Assassination

</div>

1. Yair Sheleg, *hadatiyim hachadashim* (*The New Religious*) (Jerusalem: Keter, 2000), p. 44–46.

2. Yisrael Harel, "likrat post-tziyonot datit leumit" ("Toward National-Religious Post-Zionism"), *Haaretz,* October 3, 1995.

3. Sheleg, *The New Religious,* p. 44–46.

4. Aviezer Ravitzky, "'nechapsa darkenu venechkerena': hahevra hay-israelit vehatziyonut hadatit nochach retzach rabin" ("'We Shall Search Our Way and Investigate It': Israeli Society and Religious Zionism vis-à-vis the Rabin Assassination"), in *dat veleumiyut beyisrael ubamizrach hatichon (Religion and Nationalism in Israel and the Middle East),* ed. Neri Horowitz (Tel Aviv: Am Oved and the Rabin Center for the Study of Israel, 2002), p. 270.

5. Yoav Sorek, "rega shel tzmarmoret: hatziyonut hadatit lenochach retzach rabin" ("A Moment of Shivers: Religious Zionism vis-à-vis the Rabin Assassination"), in *hatziyonut hadatit: idan hatmurot* (*Religious Zionism: An Era of Changes*), ed. Asher Cohen and Yisrael Harel (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2004), pp. 475–532.

6. At the time of the assassination I worked as a host on TV shows for teenagers. After the assassination we crisscrossed the country and interviewed many religious Zionist youths. We heard many such stories from bewildered, uncomprehending kids.

7. Baruch Lior, quoted in Aviezer Ravitzky, *Haketz hamegule umedinat hayehudim* (*Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1993)*,* p. 193; Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Hacohen Kook, *lehilkhot tzibur* (*Public Religious Laws*) (Jerusalem, 1987), p. 52.

8. *Hazofe* editorial, November 6, 1995.

9. *Hazofe* editorial, November 7, 1995.

10. "mismach: kenes hesbon hanefesh" ("Document: The Soul Searching Conference"), *Nekuda,* no. 190, December 2005. The Document is a transcript of speeches made at the conference.

11. Ibid.

12. The term "rodef" literally means "chaser." It refers to the halachic ruling that permits killing a person if that person is chasing another in order to kill him or her. Some have applied that ruling to the case of a political lead-

ership about to put the people of Israel in great danger. "Shiva" literally means "seven." It refers to the customary Jewish seven days of mourning. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. See for example Hagai Segal, *achim yekarim* (*Dear Brothers*) (Jerusalem: Keter, 1987).

16. *Altalena* was a name of a ship that became a symbol of the consolidation of Israel's sovereignty. After Begin's Irgun merged with the newly formed IDF, the Irgun nevertheless attempted to arm "its own" units separately. These arms arrived on the *Altalena.* Ben-Gurion ordered the ship sunk—despite the dire need for arms—if the Irgun did not give it up. IDF units, under the command of the young Yitzhak Rabin, sank the ship near the shore of Tel Aviv in the summer of 1948. The Irgun units were dismantled and their men dispersed throughout the IDF.

17. Tzvia Greenfield, *hem mefachadim: eich hafach hayamin hadati vehacharedi lekoach movil beyisrael* (*They're Scared: How the Religious and Ultra-Orthodox Right Became a Leading Force in Israel*) (Tel Aviv: Yediot Sfarim, 2001).

18. Yair Sheleg, "hatragedya shel hovshey hakipot hasrugot" ("The Tragedy of the Knitted Yarmulke Wearers"), *Eretz Aheret Magazine,* no. 24, October–November 2004.

19. Feiglin, founder of a movement named Jewish Leadership, was not a veteran of Gush Emunim and did not belong to the inner circle of the Yesha Council. Though the council told him it would adopt the plan, it was too slow for his taste, and he, and those he managed to recruit, created overnight settlements, one at a time, and were usually forced off the ground by the army. See Motti Inbari, *fundametalizem yehudi vehar habayit* (*Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount*) (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Magnes Press and the Eshkolot Library, 2008), pp. 91–93. Nevertheless the idea of redoubling settlement found favor with the council. Indeed, the Oslo process did not slow down the growth of the Jewish population in the territories. From about 100,000 people when Rabin assumed power, settlement population rose to around 200,000 by the year 2000. See Shlomo Swirski, *mechir hayohara* (*The Price of Hubris*) (Tel Aviv: MAPA Publishers, 2005), p. 51.

20. Settler and activist Ze'ev Hever explained this strategy to journalist Ari Shavit. See Ari Shavit, *chalukat haaretz* (*Dividing the Land*) (Jerusalem: Keter, 2005), p. 122.

21. Daniel Shalit, *sefer hakanyon: hamadrich hashalem lakanyon haolami (The Shopping Mall Book: The Complete Guide to the Global Shopping Mall*) (Jerusalem: Tvai, 2004).

22. Gadi Taub, "hayisraeliyut hi lo anachnu" ("Israeliness Isn't Us"), *Eretz Aheret Magazine,* no. 45, May–June 2008.

23. For a summary of demographics by Sergio DellaPergola, senior Israeli demographer at Hebrew University, see Sergio DellaPergola, "demographia: hapulmus nimshach" ("Demography: The Controversy Continues"), *T'helet* (*Azure*), no. 27 (Spring 2007): 7–21. According to DellaPergola's extrapolations for the whole territory between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea—Israel plus the territories—Jews will be 51 percent of the population by 2010 and 47 percent by 2020. In Israel proper, where Arab birthrates are slowly approximating those of Jews, Jews will be 79 percent of the population by 2010 and 77 percent by 2020. The meaning is clear: the Jewish majority in Israel is more or less stable; but including the territories, Jews, now just over half the population, will become a minority in less than a decade. See also Uzi Ravhon and Gilad Malach, *megamot demographiyot beyisrael* (*Demographic Trends in Israel*) (Jerusalem: Metzila, 2009).

24. See for example the book by the editor of *Nekuda* about the coming revolution of faith: Moti Karpel, *hamahapecha haemunit: shkiata shel hatziyonut vealiata shel ha'alternativa haemunit* (*The Revolution of Faith: The fall of Zionism and the Rise of the Religious Alternative*) (Alon Shvut: Lechatchila Publishing House, 2003).

25. Michael Avraham, *shtey agalot vekadur poreach: al yahadut vepostmodernism* (*Two Carts and a Hot-Air Balloon: On Judaism and Postmodernism*) (Jerusalem: Beit-El Library, 2002), p. 421.

26. Avraham, *Two Carts;* Shalit, *The Shopping Mall Book.*

27. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, *French Philosophy of the Sixties: An Essay on Antihumanism,* trans. Mary H. S. Cattani (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990); Pascal Engel, "The Decline and Fall of French Nietzscheo-Structuralism" in *European Philosophy and the American Academy,* ed. Barry Smith (La Salle, Illinois: Hegler Institute, Monist Library of Philosophy, 1994), pp. 21–41.

28. Some have even tried to argue explicitly, not necessarily successfully, that renouncing "foundationalism"—the very idea that there are secure foundations to democracy—will actually make liberalism, so to speak, more liberal. See for example Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

29. The obvious objection to this misleading intuition is that it gives equal legitimacy to antidemocratic, patriarchal, and even Fascist ideas.

30. Compelling remarks on how the settlement movement has violated the values of Judaism also came from dovish religious Zionists. See for example Uriel Simon, *bakesh shalom verodfehu: she'elot hasha'a beor hamikra,*

hamikra beor she'elot hasha'a (*Seek Peace and Pursue It: Topical Issues in the Light of the Bible, the Bible in the Light of Topical Issues*) (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Sfarim, 2002).

Chapter Five
Disengagement

1. Shlomo Swirski, *mechir hayohara* (*The Price of Hubris*) (Tel Aviv: MAPA Publishers, 2005), p. 52.

2. Benny Katzover, interviewed by A. S. Shlomtzion, "anachnu haemda hakidmit shel gush etzion" ("We Are the Outpost of Gush Etzion"), *Nekuda,* no. 1, December 28, 1979.

3. Nadav Eyal and Ilil Shachar, "hamatza shel sharon: neatzev gvulot keva" ("Sharon's Platform: We'll Shape Permanent Borders"), *Maariv,* December 26, 2005.

4. Rabbi Avraham Shapira, "tshuva lechayal veleshoter" ("Answer to a Soldier and a Policeman"), http://www.katif.net/ro_new.php?id=8936.

5. Rabbi Yoel Bin-nun, interviewed by Ari Shavit, "ma, atem lo zochrim kama sharon mesukan?" ("What, Don't You Remember How Dangerous Sharon Is?"), *Haaretz,* January 28, 2005.

6. Amiel Unger, "hayeladim shel kayitz 2005" ("The Children of Summer 2005"), *Nekuda,* no. 283, August 2005.

7. Shoshi Greenfield, "martin luzer king" ("Martin Loser King"), *Nekuda,* no. 283, August 2005.

8. Israel does not have a constitution. It has several "Basic Laws," which are supposed to be the beginning of one. Indeed, such laws deal with what constitutions are made to deal with: fundamental issues such as the structure of government and the rights of citizens.

9. Supreme Court decision HCJ 1661/05, Gaza Shore Regional Council v. the Knesset, 59 PD (2) 481 [Heb.].

10. In May 1973 the Supreme Court ruled on this subject for the first time, when it rejected the plea of the Rafiach area Bedouins, based on an affidavit by General Yisrael Tal, who said there was a military necessity in settling in the area. (See Moshe Negbi, *Kvalim shel tzedek: bagatz mul hamimshal hayisraeli bashtahim* (*Justice Under Occupation: The Israeli Supreme Court versus the Military Administration in the Occupied Territories*) (Jerusalem: Cana, 1981), pp. 29–33. The argument that enabled settlement was thus the same one that now justified dismantling them: confiscation of property, and even expulsions, are justified on the basis of security arguments. The court did

not, however, always accept the state's opinion that such a security necessity existed. In the case of Elon Moreh, for example, it thought the army made an unconvincing case for security necessity. In the Evacuation-Compensation verdict, however, it was not just the army but the executive and legislative branches that defined the national interest, and the court would not dispute them.

11. Even the Elon Moreh case was not an exception to this rule. In that case the court ordered the settlement dismantled precisely because it had determined there was no real national interest to justify the breaching of human rights.

12. See for example the website dedicated to the evacuated Gaza settlements of Gush Katif, http://new.katif.net, or the page dedicated to "the Expulsion" on the Yesha Council website, http://www.myesha.org.il/?Category ID=227.

13. Daniel Gutwein, "Left and Right, Post-Zionism and the Privatization of Israeli Collective Memory," *Journal of Israeli History* 20 (2001): 9–42.

14. Avishai Ben-Haim, "kach yease larav sheyitnaged lasarbanut" ("Thus Shall Be Done to the Rabbi Who Will Object to Conscientious Objection"), NRG website, September 5, 2005, http://www.nrg.co.il/online/11/ART/979/753.html.

15. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, letter to Rabbi Avraham Shapira, August 16, 2005, http://www.nrg.co.il/images/yehadut/210805.rtf.

16. Ibid.

17. Rabbi Avraham Shapira "tshuva lechayal veleshoter" ("Answer to a Soldier and a Policeman"), http://www.katif.net/r0_new.php?id=8936.

18. Rabbi Avi Giesser, interviewed by Oded Shalom, "tzarich lehachin et ha'anashim lemashber hapinuy" ("We Have to Prepare the People for the Crisis of Evacuation"), *Yedioth Ahronoth,* October 1, 2004.

19. Rabbi Avi Giesser, quoted in Yaron London, "achshar anachnu mevinim: hametziut sheyatzarnu—haficha" ("Now We Understand: The Reality We Created Is Reversible"), symposium in *Yedioth Ahronoth,* April 22, 2005.

20. Rabbi Eli Sadan, "michtav galuy lanoar" ("Open Letter to the Youth"), Bnei David Eli: The Military Yeshiva Academy of Israel, May 2006, http://www.bneidavid.org/System/LessonInside.asp?LessonId=1536. The letter circulated widely, both in print and on the Web.

21. Rabbi Yaacov Ariel et al, *darkenu laet hazot: mismach ekronot shel rabanim batziyonut hadatit* (*Our Way These Days: A Document of Principles of Rabbis of Religious Zionism*), p. 6. [No date, place, or publisher]

22. Rabbi Yuval Sherlo, "mamlachti lechatchila" ("Statist in Advance"), *Hazofe,* April 16, 2006.

23. Rabbi Yigal Ariel, "hahitnatkut haruchanit kvar kan" ("Spiritual Disengagement Is Already Here"), *Eretz Acheret*, no. 24, October–November 2004.

Conclusion

1. The press commonly uses the term "illegal" to denote settlements that were never authorized by the government. A report on the subject, commissioned by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, calls them "unauthorized" rather than "illegal." See Talia Sasson, c*havat da'at (beynayim) benose ma'ahazim bilti murshim* (*Intermediary Assessment on the Subject of Unauthorized Outposts*), submitted to the prime minister in March 2005, http://www.pmo.gov.il/NR/rdonlyres/0A0FBE3C-C741−46A6−8CB5-F6CDC042465D/0/sason2.pdf. The fact that Sharon wished to distinguish authorized from unauthorized settlements was a radical break with his longtime policy of supporting pirate settlement activities. According to the report, though many of these settlements lacked official recognition, they nevertheless received abundant support channeled through the security, education, and housing ministries, among others.

2. Nahum Barnea, "Olmert yotze mehashtachim" ("Olmert Gets Out of the Territories"), an interview with Ehud Olmert, *Yedioth Ahronoth,* December 5, 2003.

3. The lack of respect for democratic values among the ultra-Orthodox, and their automatic support of the hawkish right wing, along with the settlers, seemed only to confirm the same feeling.

Appendix

1. See such recent anti-Israeli polemics as Joel Kovel, *Overcoming Zionism: Creating a Single Democratic State in Israel/Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2007); and Daniel Cil Brecher, *A Stranger in the Land: Jewish Identity Beyond Nationalism,* trans. Barbara Harshav (New York: Other Press, 2007). For a more academic presentation of this position see for example Uri Ram, "post-tziyonut: ha'asor harishon" ("Post-Zionism: The First Decade"), in c*hevra vekalkala beyisrael: mabat history veachshavi* (*Society and Economy in Israel: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*), ed. Avi Bareli, Daniel Gutwein, Tuvia Frilling (Sde-Boker: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, Ben-Gurion University in the Negev, and Yad Ben-Zvi Press, 2005), pp.

803–854. For further discussion of the topic see Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Yechiam Weitz, ed., *bein chazon lerevizia: mea shnot historiographia tziyonit* (*From Vision to Revision: A Hundred Years of Zionist Historiography*) (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1997); and Tuvia Frilling, ed., *tshuva leamit post-tziyoni* (*Response to a Post-Zionist Friend*) (Tel Aviv: Yediot Sfarim, 2003).

2. Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein, *yisrael umishpahat ha'amim: medinat leom yehudit vezchuyot adam* (*Israel and the Family of Nations: The Jewish Nation-State and Human Rights*) (Jerusalem: Schocken Publishers, 2003). I've mostly used the longer Hebrew version of the book, but also the abbreviated and updated English one. Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein, Israel and the Family of Nations: The Jewish Nation-State and Human Rights (London: Routledge, 2009).

3. The law applies rights of naturalization to anyone converted to Judaism abroad (and not only to those converted under Orthodox halacha rules). Section 4A applies them also to people whom halacha defines clearly as not Jewish and who did not convert in any manner: "a child and a grandchild of a Jew, the spouse of a Jew, the spouse of a child of a Jew and the spouse of a grandchild of a Jew, except for a person who has been a Jew and has voluntarily changed his religion." For a discussion of the meaning of this clause, the way it was interpreted, and the further widening of the definitions in practice, see Amnon Rubinstein and Barak Medina, *hamishpat hachukati shel medinat yisrael* (*The Constitutional Law in the State of Israel*), 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Schocken Books, 2005), 2:1088.

4. The term was coined by Israeli sociologist Sammy Smooha to describe Israel as a unique case. Sammy Smooha "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," *Israel Studies* 2, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 198–241.

5. Uri Ram *hazman shel hapost: leumiyut vehapolitica shel hayeda beyisrael* (*Time of the 'Post': Nationalism and the Politics of Knowledge in Israel*) (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2006); Yoav Peled, "zarim beutopiya: ma'amadam haezrachi shel hafalstinim beyisrael" ("Strangers in Utopia: The Civil Status of Palestinians in Israel"), *teoriya uvikoret* (*Theory & Criticism*), no. 3 (Winter 1993): 21–35; Kovel, *Overcoming Zionism.*

6. As stated in Israel's Declaration of Independence, The Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, http://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/megilat_eng.htm.

7. Because of such an observation Herzl ruled out any racial definition of Judaism for the national movement he inaugurated. Shlomo Avineri, "mavo—mi'inyan hayehudim' le'medinat hayehudim': darko shel hertzel

legibush toda'a leumit yehudit" ("Introduction—from 'The Case of the Jews' to 'The State of the Jews': Herzl's Road to Formulating a Jewish National Consciousness") in Herzl, *The Jewish Case: Diaries,* 1:32.

8. Yehuda Shenhav, *hayehudim ha'aravim: leumiyut, dat ve'etniyut* (*The Arab Jews: Nationalism, Religion and Ethnicity*) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2003).

9. See for example Ram, *Time of the 'Post.'* For different versions of this idea see Yossi Yonah, *bizchut hahevdel: haproyekt harav-tarbuti beyisrael* (*In Virtue of Difference: The Multicultural Project in Israel*) (Israel: Van Leer Institute of Jerusalem and Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 2005), pp. 21–54. For a discussion of this attempt to define citizenship on a formal and legal basis only see Eliezer Schweid, *hatziyonut sheachrei hatziyonut* (*Zionism in a Post-Modernistic Era*) (Israel: Hassifria Hatziyonit, Publishing House of the World Zionism Organization, 1996), pp. 111–147.

10. Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic 1776–1787*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 606.

11. This was also the basis for the demand of the Anti-Federalists for a Bill of Rights.

12. Thomas Jefferson, "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom," in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson,* ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 251.

13. Council of Europe, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,* European Treaty Series, No. 157 (Strasbourg, 1995), http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Word/157.doc.

14. Gadi Taub, "Can Nationalism and Democracy be Understood Apart? The Case of Zionism and Its Critics," *The Journal of Israeli History* 26, no. 2 (September 2007): 157–177.

15. For such a blood-and-soil definition of Zionism among post-Zionists see Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates,* p. 16.

This page intentionally left blank

Index