

**A  
POLITICAL  
THEORY  
FOR THE  
JEWISH  
PEOPLE**

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**CHAIM GANS**

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FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE



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*To the memory of my parents Anshel and Yehudit Gans*



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## PREFACE

The title of this book is ambitious, and perhaps so also is the book itself—not only in its purpose, but also in the breadth of the spheres within which it argues and the range of its adversaries. The book argues both foundationally and in an applicative manner within the spheres of historiography, history of ideas, analytic political morality, and constitutional theory. It has both normative and explanatory components. Its adversaries are mainstream Israeli Zionism on the one hand and Israeli and Anglo-American-Jewish post-Zionism on the other. The latter's criticisms of Zionism represent also the main Palestinian and Arab depictions and criticisms of the Zionist political idea and historical movement.

I conceived these ambitions for my book as a result of the way my thinking about Zionism developed. I didn't intend this ambitiousness when setting out to write the book; it came as a discovery for me, which I was happy to give expression to in the title. In 2008 Oxford University Press published my *A Just Zionism: On the Morality of the Jewish State*. That book deals mainly with questions concerning the status of the Jewish community constituted by the Zionist movement in historic Palestine / Land of Israel vis-à-vis the status of the Palestinians. Though it was very critical of Israel's major Zionist policies since the 1970s, it still argued in favor of the Zionist political idea. *A Just Zionism* presented an independent, constructive argument, free from polemics. It developed and modified my general ideas on nationalism as elaborated in my book *The Limits of Nationalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) and applied them to the concrete case of Zionism and Israeli nationalism. After the publication of *A Just Zionism* I had the strong feeling that its theoretical and practical significance could not become fully clear either to myself or, probably, to its readers unless I compared it with other current interpretations of the Zionist political idea and historical movement, and the major criticisms of them made by the post-Zionist intellectuals. The latter's major arguments are of two types. One concerns the social ontology underlying the factual components of the Zionist narrative, which the post-Zionists claim is necessarily an essentialist social ontology. The other type concerns political morality. Post-Zionist criticisms of the facts of the Zionist narrative (mainly of pre-Zionist Judaism) led me to criticize both this historiography itself and its post-Zionist critics, and to

explicate the presuppositions of the historiography of Judaism underlying the political morality of *A Just Zionism*. Their criticisms of Zionism's political morality made me explicate the political morality justifying the mainstream interpretations of the Zionist narrative and the moral ontology underlying it, and compare it with the political morality and moral ontology of *A Just Zionism*. The discussion of all these issues led me to examine the implications of these various moral ontologies and political moralities with regard not only to the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine, but also to the relationship between Jews in Israel/Palestine and Jews outside it: their status in the countries where they live and their status in Israel/Palestine. This explains the title of my book. It is a multilayered political theory for all Jewish people: religious and nonreligious, Israelis and non-Israelis, Zionists, non-Zionists, post-Zionists, anti-Zionists, and those who don't care for any of these positions or commitments, not even for their Jewishness.

I wrote and published most of the book first in Hebrew in 2013. The comparison described above on which it is constructed—namely, explicating the differences between the Zionism of *A Just Zionism* on the one hand, and its mainstream Zionist and post-Zionist rivals on the other (rivals that I classify into proprietary and hierarchical Zionisms, civic, postcolonial, and neodiasporic post-Zionisms)—made me replace the title of the 2008 OUP *A Just Zionism* in its Hebrew version with the title *Egalitarian Zionism* (Molad, Jerusalem, 2014). It is too late now to change the title of the English 2008 book. The core argument of *A Just Zionism / Egalitarian Zionism* is concisely repeated in chapter 3.4 of the current book. Apart from changing its name in the Hebrew edition for reasons that emerged while I was writing the current book, the major change I made in the Hebrew edition from the 2008 English edition is to omit the last two paragraphs in the introduction to *A Just Zionism* (pp. 7–8 of that book). They are replaced now with chapter 2 of the current book. The present book purports to argue that the Zionism of *A Just Zionism* is egalitarian both in the way it accounts for and justifies the Zionist historical project of establishing a Jewish self-determining political community in historic Palestine / the Land of Israel, and in the end-state political/constitutional/legal arrangements it proposes for settling permanently the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. Though I was motivated to write the current book as a continuation of *A Just Zionism*, in important senses it is an introduction to it.

A concise summary of the comparison between egalitarian Zionism and the other approaches to Zionism mentioned above with regard to

the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine appears in my article “Jewish and Democratic: Three Zionisms and Post-Zionism,” in Gideon Sapir, Daphne Barak-Erez and Aharon Barak (eds.), *Israeli Constitutional Law in the Making* (Oxford: Hart, 2013), 473–86. This article was based on the Hebrew edition of the current book. Some of the arguments I make in chapter 4.5 on neodiasporic post-Zionism are taken from my review of Judith Butler’s *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*, which appeared in *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 12.13.2012.

A number of colleagues and friends in the areas of political and legal theory made important comments on many of the arguments of this book: Julie Cooper, Alon Harel, David Heyd, David Luban, and Andrei Marmor; Michael Walzer, who reviewed the book for OUP; and OUP’s second reviewer, who remained anonymous. Avi Sagi helped me greatly with the section in chapter 4 pertaining to diasporic post-Zionism and its historical predecessors. Ziv Borer helped me with various aspects of classical Zionist thinking. He and Yoram Margalioth encouraged me to persist with writing this book. The historians Jacob Barnai and Dimitri Shumsky read early versions and directed my attention to the works of historians to whom I refer in this book and whose work is relevant for the arguments and theses I pursue here. On these matters I also received considerable help from Jonathan Ben-Shushan. He, Nofar Yakovi Gan-or, and Adi Caspi greatly assisted me in the research for the Hebrew edition. Yochay Moshe-Waiser and Shira Flugelman did the same while I was preparing the current English edition. Mirjam Hadar Meerschwan and Haim Watzman helped with translating from Hebrew, and Michal Kirschner and (mainly) Michael James edited the English.

Many research institutions hosted me while I was working on this book. Apart from conducting research at my home university, Tel Aviv, and at the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, which became my second home for research in the last few years, I spent several months in 2009 at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law at Heidelberg, six months in 2011 at the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and the academic year 2013–14 at the Princeton University Center for Human Values. I am grateful to all these institutions—their directors, administrators, and especially my colleagues in all of them—for the friendly and intellectual environment they provided me and which reached its peak at Princeton’s UCHV.

All these institutions supported financially the research leading to this book. In this they were joined by the Israel Science Foundation, the Kalman Lubowsky Chair of Legal Theory and Applied Ethics, which I hold at my university, the Cegla and Minerva Centers, and the Berg Institute for Law and History at the Faculty of Law of Tel Aviv University. I am very grateful for this invaluable support.

Tel Aviv, April 2015

# CHAPTER 1

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## Zionisms and Post-Zionisms

### 1.1. A Variety of Approaches

This book presents a liberal political theory for the Jewish people. It was written in the 2010s, following centuries of persecutions of Jews in Europe, their emancipation there in the nineteenth century, and two centuries of modern political proposals to solve the Jewish problem. Initially, such proposals were worked out and put forward by visionaries and political activists, but over the last few decades academic historians and sociologists have also offered ideas. Only rarely, however, have political theorists and philosophers weighed in. This book seeks to begin to make up for that deficiency. It is being written after the Holocaust and after the Zionist movement's success in establishing the State of Israel. It also comes in the wake of the unprecedented flourishing of Jewish communities in the West, in the United States in particular. But it has also been written at a time when there are indications that Judaism in the West may be fading, at least Judaism as we have known it—a collective that straddles the boundaries between nationality, ethnicity, and religion.<sup>1</sup>

When it comes to proposing a political theory for the Jewish people at this point in history, the Zionist movement's establishment of a Jewish state, with all its virtues and all its drawbacks, is the most important fact to be taken into account. It requires anyone proposing to the Jewish people a political theory and political action to place Zionism at the center, whether one favors Zionism and Israel in their current form, or seeks to repair them, or rejects them altogether.

Zionism constitutes both a theory of identity and an institutional political theory for the Jews. In addition, it is a Jewish historical

movement. Both as a political theory and as a historical movement, it is a particular instance of one of the most widespread and sweeping historical and intellectual phenomena of the past two centuries, namely, nationalism. Both as a political idea and as a historical movement, nationalism in this period operated in two opposite directions. On the one hand, social and historical processes gave rise to a motivation for the cultural homogenization of states' populations, political philosophers provided justifications for this unification, and political systems implemented it. On the other hand, social and historical processes provided people with reasons for adhering to their original cultures, to live within the frameworks of these cultures, and to wish to maintain them across generations by political means. Political philosophers provided justifications for this wish, while political activists and leaders instituted the structures needed to realize it. The nationalism that focused on the cultural homogenization of state-based populations is known as "territorial-civic nationalism"; its most notable instances originated in ideas discussed by thinkers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, and were realized in France, Britain, and the United States. The nationalism that focused on protecting people's interests in adhering to their original culture and on the possibility of realizing it within political frameworks is known as "ethnocultural nationalism." Major examples of it are the nationalism advocated by philosophers like Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Gottlieb Fichte, which was realized in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Zionism belongs with ideologies and national movements of the ethnocultural type. As such it has many sister movements. And yet the nature of the group that was, and continues to be, the object of its ethnocultural nationalist idea—namely the Jews—has made for two significant differences between it and other instances of this type of nationalism. In other cases, ethnocultural nationalism served groups the majority of whose members were concentrated in one place where they shared a single history and a single pervasive culture. This place was its individual members' birthplace and the group's collective homeland. Zionism at the time of its inception was different, and today remains largely different. The collective of world Jewry, of which Zionism aspires to be the voice, was at the time of the inception of Zionism much less ready than other groups that embraced nationalism to become a nation in the full sense of the word, and the place perceived to be its collective homeland was not its members' birthplace. It was the homeland of another group and the birthplace of the members of that group. Therefore, both as a political idea and as a historical movement Zionism was, and continues

to be, forced to struggle to fill these two deficits, which make it particularly vulnerable to objections and a particularly hard case to justify and realize. Zionism is forced to justify and realize what other ethnocultural nationalist movements possessed more or less at their inception. The controversy regarding the claims that the Jews constitute one nation and that they should realize their oneness and nationhood in Palestine / the Land of Israel has persisted since the inception of Zionism.<sup>2</sup> This book tries both to sketch the contours of this controversy and to take part in it.

It does so by intervening in the debate between post-Zionism and contemporary mainstream Zionism mainly on issues concerning the status of the Jews relative to that of the Palestinians in Israel and its surroundings, and the status of Israeli Jews relative to world Jewry within the Jewish people. Post-Zionism, at least the type of it that I am concerned with in this book, totally rejects the Zionist narrative regarding Jewish history and the justification it seeks to provide for the establishment and continued existence of the State of Israel as a Jewish state.<sup>3</sup> Contemporary mainstream Zionism can be seen as wavering between two interpretations of the Zionist narrative. I call these two interpretations “proprietary” and “hierarchical” respectively. In this book, I reject both the post-Zionists’ total negation of the Zionist narrative and the two mainstream interpretations of Zionism. I then propose a third interpretation of the Zionist narrative, an egalitarian interpretation, which in my opinion is deeply rooted in the history of the Zionist idea and the history of the Zionist movement, at least as they proceeded until 1967.

The Zionist narrative is as follows:

The Jews in the Land of Israel are part of the Jewish collective, the members of which are scattered all over the world. This collective is a continuation of the Jewish people, who came into being in antiquity in the Land of Israel. This people ceased living in the Land of Israel many centuries ago, and has since resided outside this land. As a collective, it lacked a common territory and self-government. The modern Jewish community that was formed in the Land of Israel gradually started to emerge at the end of the nineteenth century so as to enable Jews to exercise self-rule and to live a full life within the framework of their common Hebrew culture. The formation of this community and its continued existence are justified and continue to be so even though the Land of Israel was and still is inhabited by Arabs. Like other peoples, the Jews are entitled to self-rule in their historic homeland; especially in view of the incessant persecution they have suffered for centuries, and which culminated in the Holocaust.



As mentioned above, there are two widespread interpretations for this narrative among Israeli Jews. According to one of them, the Jewish people was formed in the Land of Israel in antiquity. Despite the physical absence of this people from the Land of Israel over many centuries, and despite the fact that members of the Jewish people are scattered all over the world, it has not ceased to exist as a nation that regards the Land of Israel as *both its essence and property*. At the end of the nineteenth century, members of this nation began to migrate to the Land of Israel in order to realize their right to physically occupy it and to actually realize their right to sovereignty over it. This *essentialist and proprietary* interpretation of the Zionist narrative is the prevalent one among Israeli and many non-Israeli Jews. It is rooted in the positions held by many important Zionist leaders and parties since the 1930s or even earlier, such as David Ben-Gurion, Ze'ev Jabotinsky, Yitzhak Tebenkin, and Menachem Begin, and parties such as Ahdut ha'Avodah and the Revisionist Zionists.<sup>4</sup> All of these leaders and parties adhered to this interpretation of Zionism at one time or another. More importantly, this interpretation is also rooted in the ideological assumptions underlying mainstream Zionist historiography of the Jewish past. These assumptions were formulated in the 1930s by historians such as Ben Zion Dinur and Yitzhak Baer. They have dictated Zionist educational policy since then, and therefore constitute a major component in Israel's national memory.<sup>5</sup>

The second common interpretation of the Zionist narrative, namely the hierarchical interpretation, is derived from a particular interpretation of the universal right to self-government. According to this interpretation, the right in question is a right to “a nation state—a state whose institutions and official public culture are linked to a particular national group—[which] offers special benefits to the people with whom the state is identified. At the same time, it puts those citizens who are not members of the preferred national community at a disadvantage.”<sup>6</sup> Well-regarded academics whose views reflect and help shape the official consensus such as Amnon Rubinstein and Shlomo Avineri, and a number of Israeli Supreme Court justices, support this *FavoritVolk* interpretation of the universal right to self-determination expressed by Ruth Gavison, another prominent academic, in the above quotation.<sup>7</sup> This interpretation has implications mainly for the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel.

The post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism are contemporary Jewish intellectuals, mainly Israelis but also some Americans. Most of them reject

the entire Zionist narrative and ignore the possibility that this narrative could be interpreted in ways other than the two mainstream interpretations. Some of them totally reject any possibility of ascribing nationhood to the Jewish collective, and all of them deny its right to national self-determination in the Land of Israel. Some post-Zionists, being influenced by a color-blind liberalism and civic nationalism, propose replacing Jewish self-determination in Israel with the self-determination of an Israeli civic nation that would include Jews, Arabs, and any other groups or individuals living in Israel/Palestine.<sup>8</sup> Other post-Zionists, inspired by postcolonial thinkers, propose the establishment of a multi-cultural regime in Israel within which group rights are granted mainly as a form of compensation for Oriental Jews and for the Palestinians, who have suffered at the hands of the Zionist movement.<sup>9</sup> A third group of post-Zionists, mainly Jewish American intellectuals, argue that Jewish communities and individuals both in Israel and outside it should view themselves as diaspora communities. They support this position by using mainly intra-Jewish considerations and by relying mainly on ancient and modern Jewish sages. The theoretical foundations of these post-Zionist positions imply a rejection of the realization of Jewish nationalism in the Land of Israel.<sup>10</sup>

Like the hierarchical interpretation of Zionism, the alternative interpretation I propose, the egalitarian interpretation, is mainly based on the right to national self-determination of ethnocultural groups in their homeland. However, I argue that this right must be implemented by states equally for all the homeland ethnocultural groups living under their rule. Advantages awarded to some homeland nations at the expense of other homeland nations in countries they share should be based only on considerations pertaining to achieving equality, such as differences in the size of the population making up the groups, or differences in their needs. It cannot be assumed that the concept of self-determination means a hierarchy between homeland groups.

I should stress here that these three interpretations of Zionism—the proprietary, the hierarchical, and the egalitarian—are three ideal types of the Zionist political idea, its historiographical foundations, and its history. With just a few exceptions, which I note below, I do not purport to claim that these interpretations have been separately realized in pure form in actual Zionist history. I distinguish between them in this work by analyzing the statements, declarations, writings, decisions, and actions of self-proclaimed Zionist individuals and institutions, against the backdrop of the historical context in which they have been operating. On

this basis, I show that these three interpretations can serve as fertile categories for making important distinctions regarding factual and moral components of the Zionist narrative. The followers of Meir Kahane, the Lehi underground, and Gush Emunim could be said to represent pure forms of essentialist-proprietary Zionism.<sup>11</sup> The State of Israel under right-wing governments since 1977 might be seen as a nearly pure realization of this form of Zionism. Some statements and writings of the academics and Supreme Court justices I call here “hierarchical Zionists” are statements of pure hierarchical Zionism. This book and its predecessor, *A Just Zionism: On the Morality of the Jewish State*, offer a pure form of egalitarian Zionism. But most of those who have spoken and acted in the name of Zionism since the movement was founded, including Zionist political parties, have not advocated or carried out a pure form of any one of the three types of Zionism that form the basis of my discussion here.<sup>12</sup> Without being conscious of the fact, many of these actors have wavered between these three categories and have given expression to all three, sometimes in the very same document. Israel’s Declaration of Independence, as I show, is the most salient example of this mixture of proprietary, hierarchical, and egalitarian ideas. Some Zionist thinkers and leaders have displayed a clear bent for one of the three interpretations, while at the same time at least sometimes tending toward one or both of the others. While my analysis of these three types can, in my view, be useful and illuminating for historians in reexamining Zionist classical thought and action, I offer it here primarily as a way of guiding political thinking for perplexed people who today ponder moral and practical questions regarding their allegiance to Zionism and, in particular, to the State of Israel.

One goal of the analysis provided here is to compare the egalitarian interpretation of Zionism with the other interpretations in order to clarify the various advantages of the egalitarian interpretation. A second goal of this book is to explicate the moral and social ontologies underlying the different interpretations of the Zionist narrative and their implications for Zionist historiography and for Zionism as a political idea. A third goal is to discuss the implications of these interpretations for the relationship between Israeli Jews and world Jewry. The theory to be derived from these comparisons and interpretations constitutes a liberal political theory for the Jewish people both in Israel and elsewhere. It is a political theory for the Jewish people as a whole because it addresses the political and civil status not only of the Jews in Israel but of Jews throughout the world. It is a liberal theory

because, among other things, it addresses the appropriate political and legal arrangements that can make it possible for people who interpret their Jewishness in terms of nationhood rather than just religion or ethnicity to realize this interpretation and fully live in its light.

It is important to spell out the implications of this last point. It means that the egalitarian Zionism proposed in this book aims to provide a solid basis for individual Jews' *right* to view themselves as members of a nation and to realize this interpretation. It asks what political and legal arrangements are necessary for this right to be realizable and what moral constraints must be imposed on these arrangements. My aim is not to defend Zionism as "a theory of the good" for Jews or as the sole appropriate choice at all times for all Jews, not even for every Israeli Jew. In terms that philosophers like to use, this book is derivative of "a theory of the right," not of "a theory of the good". The book argues that justice requires the establishment of political and legal conditions, throughout the world and in Israel, that enable the realization of Jews' right to nationhood. It offers an account of what can justly be done, politically and constitutionally, so that these conditions prevail and this right can be enjoyed. However, the right in question, like most rights, is one that people may rightly choose not to invoke. In the view of this book, people who were born or grew up as Jews are not required to attach central importance to this fact, and people who ascribe to it central importance need not interpret their Jewishness in terms of nationhood.

In this sense, as in many others I clarify below, the Zionism that this book argues for stands in the space between essentialist-proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism. Proprietary Zionism, as I show, believes that Jews are duty-bound to ascribe central importance to their Jewishness and to interpret it in terms of nationhood. Post-Zionists oppose not only this proposition but also the very existence of political and legal arrangements that enable Jewish individuals to realize the national interpretation of their Jewish identities. Egalitarian Zionism is an application of a general theory of ethnocultural nationalism according to which members of ethnonational groups are not bound by their very nature to choose to live as members of their groups, and they should not be forced to do so by a social or legal order. All that should be done is to maintain political and legal conditions that enable them to live within their groups under conditions of equality with members of other ethnocultural groups. Similarly, they should be allowed to leave their groups, either to become cosmopolitans or

to seek to affiliate with some other national group. Israel, according to this book, was justifiably established in order to implement these political, social, and legal conditions for the Jews, and one of Israel's principal goals is to sustain these conditions (under the constraints of human rights and equality). The post-Zionists reject the justifiability of Israel's establishment and its continued existence for these goals. Proprietary Zionists, as is shown, believe and argue that Israel was justly established in order to achieve much more ambitious goals.

## 1.2. The Post-Zionist Challenge

As mentioned above, the discussion regarding the justice of Zionism is conducted here by way of intervening in the debate between the post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism and contemporary mainstream Zionism under its two major conceptions: the proprietary and the hierarchical.<sup>13</sup> The post-Zionists who reject Zionism do so either (1) by disputing the basic assumptions of the Zionist version of pre-Zionist Jewish history (for example, the assumption that the Jews could be considered as constituting one single collective or nation); or (2) by disputing Zionism's conception of its own history in a way that dismisses or marginalizes it as a history of national revival and by viewing the Jews' settlement of Palestine since the inception of Zionism mainly in terms of colonialism; or (3) by rejecting the justifiability of the goal that is the common denominator of all the various versions of Zionism, namely establishing a national homeland for the Jews in the Land of Israel.<sup>14</sup>

The Zionist narrative is the story of the collective identity of the majority of Jews in Israel and of Jews living outside Israel all over the world. According to post-Zionist writers, the Jews in Israel and elsewhere who believe in the Zionist narrative must forgo living according to this narrative, which must cease expressing their collective identity and must no longer be a defining component of their political and legal reality; Jews must seek a different collective identity: either the civic identity of the country in which they are citizens, or a Jewish diasporic identity. And they must do so wherever they live, including Israel.

Calls for the Jews in Israel and the world to divest themselves of their national identity as Jews are not new. Such calls began with the Canaanite movement in the 1930s, and were repeated by Hillel Kook and the Hebrew Committee for National Liberation at the end of the 1940s and in the early 1950s. This sentiment has not ceased to be voiced

in Israel by scholars and public activists, who have written books, established associations, and petitioned Israel's Supreme Court to this end.<sup>15</sup> The difference between these calls to replace Jewish nationalism with an all-Israeli nation and the post-Zionist call is that the latter use far blunter and more acerbic arguments. Their predecessors argued that Israel's perception of itself as belonging to the entire Jewish collective has unjust implications. They reinforced this by pointing out a certain type of internal logic in Zionism itself (the traditional Zionist aspiration for the normalization of the Jewish people) that requires the Israelization or even Canaanization of Israeli Judaism (along with the assimilation of Jews who prefer to live outside Israel among other nations).<sup>16</sup> They did not hold the view that Zionism was not justified from the outset. Many post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism argue differently. They do agree with their predecessors that Israel should adopt an all-inclusive Israeli nationalism rather than a Jewish nationalism because of unjust consequences resulting from Israel's conception of itself as belonging to all Jews. However, their other motive for shifting away from Zionism is not that Zionism's own internal logic, when taken to its extreme, requires this transition but rather that some major components of the Zionist conception of Jewish identity and historiography are groundless and even fallacious. Major spokesmen of post-Zionism believe that the Zionist assumption that the Jews can constitute one collectivity and one nation is unfounded. In other words, according to them, it is not Zionism's own internal logic that entails the shift away from Zionism but rather Zionism's utter lack of internal logic.<sup>17</sup>

For the majority of Jews in Israel and for many Jews the world over, the call to divest themselves of their collective ethnonational identity as Jews is exceptionally demanding as well as insulting. In effect, it requires that they discard or replace fundamental aspects of their identity that have a profound effect on their lives, personalities, values, and at times even their perception of reality. From the perspective of Jews in Israel and all over the world, these demands actually require them to cease being who they are. Moreover, the demands in question are in effect demands to change one's identity because it is false, or supposedly perverted.

One need not go too far to realize that such demands are extremely problematic. Note the following examples: The demand that people convert to another religion, giving up their original beliefs, based on the claim that their religion is not a true religion, or creating a legal, social, and political environment that does not allow people to practice their religion; similarly, the demand that a homosexual give up his sexual

orientation and become straight since being gay is supposedly perverse, or creating a legal and social environment that does not allow people to realize their sexual orientation. Yet, even though demands for a change in identity or the creation of an environment that does not enable people to realize their identity may be highly unjust, this does not mean that such demands are never justified. Again one need not go too far to see this. Take the example of some Europeans and Americans whose identity mainly stresses white supremacy, or of some men (and women) whose identity is rooted in the superiority of the male over the female. In these specific cases, it is justified to demand that such people change their identity. It is justified at least to create a legal, social, and political environment that does not allow the realization of these particular and unacceptable identities. Allowing their realization means accepting political realities that are inherently unjust and oppressive. Such realities are clearly detrimental to people in social and political proximity to white supremacists or sexists. If the identities in question are false or perverse, it is even more justified to not maintain a political environment in which they can flourish.

The question as to whether the demand that post-Zionism makes on the majority of Jews in Israel and many Diaspora Jews to change their identity is justified therefore depends on two other questions, namely, whether the legal, social, and political environment that allows the realization of the Zionist interpretation of Jewish history is inherently oppressive and unjust, and whether the narrative of Zionist identity is indeed historically false. The post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism respond with a yes at least to one of these questions. Yet the post-Zionists fail to establish their claims. Most of what they say to support their claims does not even begin to be an argument; and where it does, it usually does not lead to the conclusions that the post-Zionists wish to draw from it. I argue that the considerations that the post-Zionists raise make a good case for the rejection of the proprietary and the hierarchical versions of Zionism, but they are not in the least convincing regarding the rejection of Zionism itself. Under the proprietary and essentialist interpretations of Zionism, this narrative is indeed false and oppressive. In my view, the version of the Jewish identity to which it gives rise is indeed unworthy of being realized and should not be allowed to be realized. I argue that, even though the hierarchical interpretation of the Zionist narrative is less damaging than the proprietary interpretation, it is nonetheless unjust. Yet all this does not apply to the egalitarian interpretation of the Zionist narrative. This interpretation does not render the narrative false

and does not induce its believers to commit gross and ongoing injustices. Therefore, the post-Zionist scholars' total renunciation of the Zionist narrative and the environment facilitating its realization is in many ways just as oppressive and unjust as many of the Zionist policies instructed by the proprietary and hierarchical versions of Zionism.

According to many of the post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism (mainly the Israelis among them), the Zionist narrative contains three fundamental falsehoods. These falsehoods fall under the three following headings: *ontological-epistemic*, *conceptual*, and *historiographical*.

*Ontological-epistemic.* The Zionist narrative conceives of the Jews as one single collective, the essence and goals of which are independent of its actual realizations in the world. According to the Zionist narrative, the Jews are a nation whose ultimate goal is to return to their historical homeland. This Jewish collective has existed since antiquity, and the Zionist movement merely awakened it from a deep slumber and allowed it to realize its ultimate goal as a nation. However, the post-Zionists regard the Jews as constituting many collectives rather than just a single one. According to them, it is certainly not nationhood that binds the Jews together. They claim that Jewish nationhood was invented and forged by Zionism, which continues to mislead masses of Jews into thinking of themselves as members of one single nation. Using a terminology favored by post-Zionists writers, I call the present falsehood attributed to Zionism "ontological-epistemic."

*Conceptual.* Hence, the protagonist of the Zionist narrative of Jewish history—so the post-Zionists claim—is not a nation that has existed since antiquity by virtue of a metaphysical essence. However, it is also not a nation by virtue of its concrete historical manifestations. Prominent spokesmen of post-Zionism argue that the Jewish collective does not constitute a nation or a people since it lacks the main characteristics of groups called nations. They thus share a view expressed by many early anti-Zionists. Nations are groups whose members share a culture—that is, a common language and ways of life encompassing many aspects of their lives, a common territory, and a common history. Today's world Jewry does not have any of these characteristics and therefore does not constitute a nation. I term this falsehood "the conceptual falsehood."

*Historiographical.* The third falsehood inherent in the Zionist narrative pertains to historiography, namely, to the factual details of the narrative. According to the post-Zionists, in order to support the historical continuity between the Jewish collectivity that lived in the Land of Israel in ancient days and the Jews that lived in the world in the centuries that



preceded Zionism, Zionist historiography has made claims or assumptions that cannot be supported by empirical evidence. For instance, Zionist historiography has claimed that the Jews were expelled from their country by the Romans, or that since then they have been tireless in striving to return to it. Similarly, Zionist historiography has downplayed or even ignored many very significant facts about the complex, rich, and varied lives of the Jews outside of the Land of Israel since antiquity.

According to the post-Zionist writers, the Zionist narrative also entails the commission of gross injustices. These injustices fall into four main categories.

The first and most important injustice pertains to the Palestinians. Zionism either denied or belittled the presence of indigenous Arabs in Palestine. Zionism has always treated them as inferior to the Jews and continues to do so. The Arabs living within the State of Israel and those living in the territories occupied by Israel are all oppressed by Israel.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the Zionist movement did not only accidentally do these things. They are, rather, necessarily entailed by the goals of this movement in perhaps just the same way that the continuous oppression of nonwhites is inherent in the conception of identity of white supremacists and in the same way that the continuous oppression of women is an integral part of patriarchal and sexist views that accord men positions superior to those of women.

Second, Zionism has also oppressed some Jewish subidentities in Israel, especially that of Oriental, non-European Jews, but also others, such as the East European Yiddish culture. This oppression continues in the name of a Hebrew-Israeli identity, which purports to represent a continuation of the biblical Jewish identity and is therefore committed to the eradication of identities formed in the diaspora. Regarding Oriental Jewry, not only were particular cultural traditions eradicated at the behest of the Zionist establishment, but the members of these groups were also discriminated against in ways that affected their social and economic welfare.<sup>19</sup>

Third, since the 1990s, there have been two new kinds of victims of the Zionist narrative. The first group consists of non-Jewish migrant workers from countries such as the Philippines, Romania, and African and South American countries, who began to arrive in Israel in the early 1990s. The second group consists of hundreds of thousands of non-Jews who migrated to Israel in the large immigration wave from the former USSR in the 1990s. Although not Jewish themselves, this latter group was eligible for Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return since they

had kinship ties with Jews (for example, they were spouses or children of Jews). Since the Zionist narrative stresses the Jewish character of the State of Israel, these groups too are in danger of being discriminated against in Israel.<sup>20</sup>

Fourth, Zionism has always rejected Jewish life outside the Land of Israel (usually called “the negation of exile” in the Zionist discourse and in the discourse about Zionism). Zionism did this not only at the level of Jewish historiography—that is, by downplaying the significance of the history of Jewish life outside the Land of Israel from ancient times to the present—but also by its scornful and dismissive attitude toward the very existence and nature of Jewish life outside Israel. In just the same way that Zionism has generally disregarded and snubbed diaspora communities that migrated to Israel, so it has adopted an arrogant stance, belittling the value of such communities as they continue to exist outside of Israel. Since Diaspora Jews are generally not dependent on Israel for their rights and their existence—rather, just the opposite: to a great extent, Israel is dependent on such communities for *its* existence—the outcome of this injustice has not been as evil as other injustices perpetrated by Zionism. Yet the general attitude toward the Jewish Diaspora is inappropriate, being authoritarian and arrogant toward them, and sometimes also resulting in breaches of their freedoms.

I believe that many components of the mainstream interpretation of the Zionist narrative should be removed from it. These components include parts of the historical content of the narrative as well as some aspects of the ontological status of the Jewish collective as conceived of by mainstream Zionism. However, the necessary revision mainly pertains to the conclusions the mainstream interpretation draws with regard to the territorial, institutional, cultural, and demographic dimensions of Jewish self-rule in Israel. I cannot help, however, but resort here to a variation on a well-known cliché. Unlike the post-Zionist writers, I believe the Zionist baby need not be thrown out along with the bathwater containing the metaphysical, historiographical, moral, constitutional, and legal filth added to it by the mainstream versions of Zionism.

In chapter 2 of this book, I will discuss the three types of falsehoods, summarized above, that the post-Zionists attribute to the Zionist narrative. These falsehoods pertain to the fundamental presuppositions underlying the Zionist narrative as presented at the beginning of this book and to the factual details included in the Zionist narrative. While the post-Zionists are convinced that their critique of this narrative justifies abandoning it completely, I will argue that what follows

from their critique is that the assumptions and details of the Zionist narrative—namely, those concerning the unity of the Jewish collective, its historical continuity since antiquity, and its national character—must be interpreted differently from the official mainstream Zionist historiography. The interpretation I propose for the narrative makes it possible to preserve it rather than relinquish it.

The remaining chapters are devoted mainly to each of the two normative components of the Zionist narrative that have great importance for a political theory for the Jewish people: (a) the status of the Jews in Palestine / the Land of Israel compared with the status of the Arabs in it; and (b) the status of the Jews in the Land of Israel compared with that of Jews living elsewhere in the world. In chapter 3, I show how the proprietary and hierarchal interpretations of the Zionist narrative render this narrative inherently and necessarily oppressive and unjust toward the Arabs living in Palestine. I also show how the egalitarian interpretation of the Zionist narrative does not result in oppression and injustice toward the Arabs. In chapter 4, I will reject the post-Zionists' total negation of Zionism, that is, their claim that the very establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel and its continued existence are unjustifiable. Chapter 5 explicates some important theoretical and practical advantages of egalitarian Zionism over its rivals, both Zionist and post-Zionist, additional to those already set out in the chapters preceding it.

In chapter 6, I first explain the meaning of the principle of the negation of exile according to the proprietary and essentialist version of Zionism. I argue that essentialist Zionism opposes any Jewish existence outside the Land of Israel and implies that all Jews must reside within the Land of Israel. This position entails forcing Jews to migrate to Israel.<sup>21</sup> Using real historical examples, I illustrate how the State of Israel has in fact done so. Since opportunities to actually force Jews to migrate to Israel are rare, proprietary and essentialist Zionism usually makes its supporters adopt attitudes of arrogance or even of contempt toward those Jews living outside the Land of Israel.<sup>22</sup> In chapter 6, I also explicate the implications of the civic and postcolonial versions of post-Zionism on the issue of the relationship between the Jewish community in the Land of Israel and the Jewish communities living elsewhere. In contrast to the neodiasporic version of post-Zionism that argues that all Jewish communities (including the one in Israel) should view themselves as exilic or diasporic, the civic and the postcolonial versions deny the very conceptual possibility that

any Jewish community can conceive of itself as exilic or diasporic. The latter post-Zionisms also imply the undesirability of this conception. I argue that these implications provide reasons for dismissing the civic and the postcolonial versions of post-Zionism (in addition to the reasons for rejecting them discussed in chapters 4 and 5). I conclude the chapter by presenting the positions following from egalitarian Zionism for the relationship between the Jewish community in Israel and Jewish communities elsewhere. I argue that egalitarian Zionism does entail the negation of exile, but that the meaning of this negation is very different from what it means in proprietary Zionism. In the latter, the negation of the exile means that there should not be any Jews living in the diaspora. In egalitarian Zionism, the negation of the exile means only that not all Jews live in the diaspora. It is thus possible to negate the exile while at the same time reaffirming the Jewish Diaspora. After explaining how this approach follows from egalitarian Zionism, I describe its legal and institutional implications, mainly regarding the issues of Israel's Law of Return and its citizenship laws,<sup>23</sup> which grant all Jews in the world a right to immigrate to Israel and automatically become its citizens if they so immigrate.

### 1.3. The Narrative versus Its Interpretations

The distinction between the Zionist narrative on the one hand, and the interpretations of this narrative on the other hand, underlies the methodology of this study. The inclusion of some details and not others in the narrative itself rather than in its interpretation, or vice versa, could at least partially predetermine the outcomes of the disputes over the question of the acceptability of the narrative. Consider the wording of the following sentence from the narrative presented at the beginning of this book: "The modern Jewish community that was formed in the Land of Israel gradually came into being starting at the end of the nineteenth century so as to enable Jews to exercise self-rule and to live a full life within the framework of their common Hebrew culture."

Let us rewrite the above as follows: "The Jewish nation that was reestablished by Zionism in the Land of Israel beginning at the end of the nineteenth century was reestablished there *so as to enable Jews to enjoy sovereignty and exclusive presence in the Land of Israel or part of it.*" If the post-Zionists had phrased the narrative in this manner at least twenty years ago, they would have achieved an immediate victory

for their position. All those opposing the likes of Meir Kahane and Avigdor Lieberman—two right-wing Jewish extremists who called for the transfer or expulsion of Arabs from Israel—would have turned into post-Zionists.<sup>24</sup> In 1993, many people opposed Kahane's and Lieberman's positions, and would certainly have protested against being presented as anti-Zionists merely because they had rejected these two extremists. They would presumably have argued that Kahane and Lieberman represent only one interpretation of Zionism out of many, but do not determine the core meaning of Zionism. Therefore, anyone rejecting their repulsive interpretation is not necessarily anti-Zionist. On the contrary, such persons might even be considered more Zionist than others, for they want to protect Zionism from its corruption by Kahanist interpretations. Since I believe this objection is justified, I did not formulate the core Zionist narrative in such a way that it would include Kahane's and Lieberman's interpretations. However, I did much more than that, for it seems that, in the formulation of the Zionist narrative at the beginning of this book, the signatories of Israel's Declaration of Independence of 1948, and not just later figures such as Kahane and Lieberman, are mere interpreters, rather than authors of the Zionist narrative. As worded at the beginning of this book, the Zionist narrative does not share the goal of Israel's Declaration of Independence, namely, the establishment of a Jewish state. Rather, it speaks about a Jewish nation in the Land of Israel created by Zionism so as to enable the Jewish people to gain self-rule. A state is just one way to realize the group right to self-rule. Similarly, the Zionist story told at the beginning of this chapter fails to mention important details pertaining to Jewish history that are included in the Declaration, such as that the ancient Jewish people "was forcibly exiled from their land," or that the Jews "strove in every successive generation to reestablish themselves in their ancient homeland." Many Zionists might perhaps think that it is legitimate not to consider the likes of Kahane and Lieberman authors of the Zionist narrative. However, they would insist on viewing David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first prime minister, who is considered to be its "founding father") and many other signatories of Israel's Declaration of Independence as authors of the Zionist narrative.

Actually, such a preliminary argument could be made by the post-Zionists themselves against the Zionist narrative as expressed at the beginning of this book. They would claim that as soon as one finishes reading the first few pages of this book one might as well agree with all the arguments I am about to make against post-Zionism throughout the book. However, this will be the case at least partly because I have already

removed Ben-Gurion from the group of authors of the Zionist narrative. As early as that, they might say, "You have shot the arrow and only then marked the target around it." Of course, I would argue the opposite, that is, that if the post-Zionists' arguments are even slightly plausible, this is because they have read into the Zionist narrative part of what the Declaration of Independence actually does and says.

How can this preliminary debate be resolved? After all, the view that Israel's Declaration of Independence expresses the core Zionist narrative is a reasonable one. The declaration was signed by people from the entire political spectrum of the Jewish *Yishuv* (the body of Jewish residents in Palestine) before the establishment of the State of Israel, most of whom were paradigmatic representatives of Zionism at the peak of its achievements. The Declaration of Independence expresses the Zionist positions of that generation and of the generations that followed it, who were raised in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence. In other words, the document in question does not express Zionist positions that could be considered minority views (like Kahane's position in the 1980s and 1990s). Moreover, the declaration is an official document, possessing an objective standing in the history of Zionism. If the Declaration of Independence is not accepted as the formulation of the Zionist narrative, anyone can come up with his or her own versions of this story. There would be no way to forge a consensus on the distinction between what deserves to be considered part of the narrative itself and what is just an interpretation of this narrative.

These arguments for accepting Israel's Declaration of Independence as the Zionist narrative itself rather than just an interpretation of it do make sense but cannot be considered decisive. The Zionist idea and the Zionist movement were conceived and founded by European Jews in the last decades of the nineteenth century, long before Israel's Declaration of Independence in 1948. The Zionist movement included a great variety of thinkers and activists. In view of the positions on Zionism held by many of them, including important thinkers and activists, they cannot be considered as having agreed with everything stated in the Declaration of Independence. In earlier stages of their public careers, even the signatories of the declaration itself, including Ben-Gurion, did not necessarily identify with all the statements made in this document. Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky, Weizmann, let alone Ahad Ha'am,<sup>25</sup> and the official Zionist documents that preceded the Declaration of Independence, such as the Basel Program of the First Zionist Congress of 1897, or the Balfour

Declaration of 1917, did not talk about the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel.<sup>26</sup> Zionism is one national movement among many, and it is not even the only Jewish national movement. In my opinion, the wording of its common narrative must reflect both what is common to it and to other nationalist ideologies and what distinguishes it from them. However, it must also reflect the common denominator of all thinkers and activists since the inception of Zionism who were considered Zionists throughout the history of this idea and movement.

Obviously, those who are convinced that the Jews cannot be considered a nation, or those who feel that self-rule within the framework of a Jewish societal culture is not something that the Jews should aspire to, or that this self-rule need not be realized in the Land of Israel, reject the core ideas of the Zionist movement. In contrast, both historically and analytically, it seems that the dispute over whether or not Jewish self-rule in the Land of Israel should take the form of a state is an intra-Zionist controversy and not one about the very Zionist idea. First, such disputes occur in many national movements, and there is no reason why Zionism should be different in this respect. Second, as I will show in this book, such disputes are in line with the internal logic of nationalist ideologies. Moreover, the claim that anyone who did not accept that the goal of Zionism was the establishment of a state was not a Zionist is tantamount to claiming that important figures like Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky, and Weizmann were not Zionists in the early stages of their careers, since their version of Zionism at the time did not yet include the idea of a Jewish state. In this sense, even the Zionist movement itself could be said not to have been Zionist until the late 1930s because it had until then consistently denounced the idea of a statist interpretation of self-determination for the Jews in Palestine.<sup>27</sup>

Also, the issue of whether the ancient Jewish nation was forcibly exiled from its land—as asserted in Israel’s Declaration of Independence—is a controversy *within Zionism*, and not *between Zionism and its opponents*. The claim that one’s loyalty to Zionism is determined by one’s belief that the Jews were forcibly expelled from the Land of Israel by the Romans after the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70 would imply that Zionist historians such as Anita Shapira and Israel Bartal are not really Zionists, since they deny that the Romans forcibly exiled the Jews.<sup>28</sup>

Another issue contested among people who are and should be considered Zionists but which the Declaration of Independence states as historical fact is that the Jews “strove in every successive generation to reestablish themselves in their ancient homeland.” Again, to contend

that anyone who opposes this statement is not really a Zionist is equivalent to claiming that people like the highly esteemed author A. B. Yehoshua—considered by mainstream Zionism in Israel and in the Jewish Diaspora to be a spokesman of Zionism—is not really a Zionist. For according to him, “[In the course of their years of exile], masses of Jews settled in all the lands of the Mediterranean Basin, except for the Land of Israel.”<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the claim that the Jews were expelled from their country as well as the claim that they did not cease to strive to regain a foothold in it should be deleted from the Zionist narrative, not only because these claims are false, but also because they are not necessary for the purpose of justifying the main goal of Zionism, namely, to establish an independent Jewish national home in the Land of Israel. I will argue this point more fully in chapter 3.

Besides all these considerations, one must keep in mind that my argument with post-Zionism on the one hand, and with mainstream Zionism on the other hand, is not a semantic debate on the meaning of the concept of Zionism but rather a moral dispute over concrete ethical and political issues. My argument with the post-Zionists is about the very question of whether the Jews deserve to live and govern themselves within the framework of Jewish culture in the Land of Israel. My argument also pertains to the implications that various responses to this question would have on the lives of Jews and non-Jews in the Land of Israel and the lives of Jews elsewhere in the world. My argument with mainstream Zionism does not pertain to the issue of whether the Jews deserve self-rule and life within the framework of their culture in the Land of Israel. My argument with it is about the demographic, territorial, and institutional dimensions of this self-rule, a dispute that is of course related to the justifications for the Zionist aspiration for Jewish self-rule in the Land of Israel. The two disputes are obviously based upon assumptions concerning the nature of Jewish existence, identity, and history. This explains the importance of the descriptive-factual aspects of the Zionist narrative of Jewish history and the way one ought to fill the factual gaps (as opposed to the moral gaps) of this narrative, an issue I will be dealing with in chapter 2.



## CHAPTER 2

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### The Facts of the Zionist Narrative

#### 2.1. Was There a Protagonist?

As mentioned in chapter 1, many of the post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism deny not only the historical details that comprise the Zionist narrative but also the assumptions underlying this narrative. They deny that the Zionist narrative has only one protagonist, namely, one Jewish collective. They believe that the Jews constitute many collectives. They reject the Zionist claim that this protagonist has been present in the world ever since antiquity. They deny even more strongly that this protagonist is a nation. These post-Zionists are convinced that many of the details included in the narrative are not the truth or nothing but the truth. Moreover, the narrative as a whole certainly does not contain the whole truth. In other words, the view of these post-Zionists writers regarding the Zionist narrative is that (a) it is a story about a nonexistent protagonist; (b) if the protagonist does exist, it does not resemble the protagonist of the story in any way; and perhaps principally (c) the story about this protagonist is one that is completely different from that told in the Zionist narrative.

These issues are the main concern of the scholars who deny the Zionist narrative, although their emphases vary. For example, in his book *Jewish State or Israeli Nation* Boas Evron traces the historical circumstances and the social condition in which Jews lived from antiquity up to the emergence of the settlement movement Gush Emunim after the Six-Day War of 1967, attempting to prove that “the Zionist conception, according to which the Jews are a territorial people striving to return to its homeland, is not verified by the facts.”<sup>1</sup> Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin express a closely related view.<sup>2</sup> Shlomo Sand attempts to prove that the Jews do

not constitute a *genetic* people: that is, they do not stem from a single origin. They are therefore not one people, and are also not one nation.<sup>3</sup> Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled have written a sociological work describing and emphasizing the colonial nature of the Zionist-initiated Jewish settlement in Palestine.<sup>4</sup> Finally, Uri Ram denies the unity and nationhood of the Jews mainly by criticizing the ontological, epistemological, conceptual, and perhaps also the moral presuppositions of the official Zionist historiography.<sup>5</sup>

My main interest here regarding the post-Zionist critique of the Zionist narrative does not pertain to any specific details in their account of Zionist and pre-Zionist Jewish history. Such an analysis is also beyond the scope of my academic training. My main concern here is with the post-Zionist critique of the ontological assumptions of the Zionist historiography, namely, the assumptions concerning the unity and nationhood of the Jewish collective. I discuss the post-Zionist criticisms pertaining to the main components of the Zionist narrative (for example, the negation of the exile, or the claim regarding the Jews' repeated attempts throughout the ages to return to Zion).

In the second part of the chapter, I discuss the theoretical assumptions underlying the issues of the unity and nationhood of the Jewish collective and criticize the arguments used by post-Zionist writers to deny this unity and nationhood. First, I discuss their rejection of claims by prominent Zionist historians that nationhood is the essence of the Jewish collective. My argument will be that even if this essentialism is groundless, this does not contradict the possibility of attributing the types of unity and nationhood necessary for the Zionist narrative to make sense to the Jews. After that, I discuss the post-Zionist conceptual arguments for the denial of Jewish unity and nationhood. My analysis addresses the main responses provided by the academic literature on nationalism to the question "What is a nation?" The central claim for which I argue in this part of the chapter is that the post-Zionists who deny the possibility of attributing unity and nationhood to the Jewish collective do so because they ignore the distinction between the questions "*Is a given group a nation in the full sense of the word at a particular time?*" and "*Is it conceptually feasible and normatively justifiable for a group to interpret itself as a nation and act accordingly at a particular time?*"

In the third part of the chapter, I show that the failure to distinguish between the issue of whether the Jews actually constitute a nation on the one hand, and the issue of whether it is feasible and justifiable for them to think of themselves as a nation on the other hand, is also what misled

official Zionist historiography into going beyond its appropriate boundaries for two of its more problematic endeavors, namely, downplaying the long history of Jewish exile on the one hand, and, on the other, over-emphasizing the almost nonexistent Jewish ties with the Land of Israel throughout the centuries of exile. It is not only post-Zionists who criticize these two important motifs of the dominant Zionist historiography. As I noted in chapter 1, these motifs are criticized also by central figures of mainstream Zionism and by Zionist historians.<sup>6</sup> I agree with this criticism. Moreover, I demonstrate that filling in the gaps in the Zionist narrative of Jewish history by disproportionately downplaying the Jewish existence in exile and overplaying the continuity of Jewish ties with the Land of Israel during the time of exile is not necessary for establishing the two fundamental normative principles of Zionism as a political theory for the Jewish people, namely, the principles that the Jews deserve national self-determination and that it was very important that they realize this right in the Land of Israel. In this chapter, I discuss the story we must adopt in order for these principles to make sense, rather than the question of whether it was decisively justifiable for the Jews to act upon these principles. The latter issue is discussed only in later chapters of this book.

## 2.2. The Protagonist, Its Age, and Its Nature

Even after the Jewish state ceased to exist, and even after the ground they stood upon was swept away from under the feet of the Jews and they were dispersed among the nations and were absorbed among the kingdoms, the complete unity of the Hebrew nation did not come to an end: It is only the conditions of its life and existence that changed. There was no change in its selfhood and its essence.<sup>7</sup>

These statements are by Ben Zion Dinur, who was a professor of history at the Hebrew University as of the 1930s and was one of the framers of the theoretical foundations of the prevalent Zionist historiography. As the third minister of education of Israel in the early 1950s, he played an important role among those who have shaped the historical consciousness of most Israelis since then.<sup>8</sup>

According to Dinur, there is one Jewish collective. This collective is a nation, since *being a nation constitutes its essence*. In the jargon of a number of fields in the humanities and social sciences, the position expressed by theses of this type is dubbed “essentialism.” According to this stance, things have essences, that is, unchanging characteristics or components, even if the manifestations of these things in the concrete world do change.

The molecule H<sub>2</sub>O is the essence of water. Even when water becomes ice or steam, it still has this basic component. Similarly, Dinur and other authors of Zionist historiography thought that the Jewish collective, the essence of which is nationhood, retained this essential characteristic even when the Jews were dispersed among other nations.

Many post-Zionists are antiessentialists and use arguments against essentialism to criticize Zionism.<sup>9</sup> The main representative of this type of critique is Uri Ram, a sociologist from Ben-Gurion University.<sup>10</sup> According to Ram, the protagonist of the Zionist story is a figure who “in spatial terms . . . is organic, that is . . . a protagonist that maintains its uniform and unified identity [that is, national identity] despite the scattering of its organs to the four corners of the earth.”<sup>11</sup> The protagonist in question according to Dinur in Ram’s interpretation is “in the temporal axis . . . teleological, that is, . . . striving over a long period for a given goal—to return to the homeland torn away from it in its youth.”<sup>12</sup> “In the accepted terms of contemporary cultural criticism,” Ram says, “this is an essentialist story, meaning, a story that replaces the range of vague identical entities in time and space and puts in their stead a single permanent, defined entity.”<sup>13</sup> Ram is not happy with the essentialism underlying Dinur’s Zionist historiography that allowed him (Dinur) to, as it were, gather the organs of the Jewish collective dispersed to the four corners of the earth. According to Ram, attributing essences to human and social entities is a fundamental mistake. It is therefore also wrong to argue for the unity and nationhood of the Jewish collective on the basis of essentialist assumptions.

Whether essentialism on the whole is a truly erroneous doctrine or not, it should at least be considered erroneous in the sense used by Dinur and mainstream Zionism since the 1930s. I will clarify this in detail in the second part of this chapter. However, what must be demonstrated now is that, contrary to what Ram and many other post-Zionists believe, the fallaciousness of this essentialism, even in conjunction with the fact that the Jews were dispersed all over the world and did not share a common language or territory, does not entail an outright negation of a possible Jewish unity and nationhood.

### *2.2.1. The Unity and Nationhood of the Jewish Collective as an Issue of Essence*

Consider the case of Dana International, an Israeli pop singer who has been credited as being one of the world’s best-known transsexuals,

especially after she won the 1998 Eurovision Song Contest representing Israel. She is a woman today but was born male. Is it necessary to determine that her essence is that of a woman or that of a man in order for her to be considered one individual and to be “a protagonist who preserves her unified identity?” Dana may indeed believe that her true essence is feminine and that this was the case even before her sex change. She may believe that the fact that she was born a man was an accident. Conversely, ultra-Orthodox Jews (as well as religious Christians or Muslims) might believe that Dana’s true essence is male because that is how she was created by God. In their view, this still applies to her even after she has undergone the process of turning herself into a woman, which they regard as an act of self-destruction. What Dana International and ultra-Orthodox Jews have in common is the assumption of her unity before and after she turned into a woman. This presupposition is not at all dependent upon the issue of what they think her essence is and certainly not on the question as to whether they believe that her gender is part of her essence. On the contrary, only if Dana International and ultra-Orthodox Jews agree on her oneness can they disagree over what her essential gender is. If she were two separate individuals and not one, the claim that one of them is a woman while the other one is a man could not create a dispute over the essence of the individual Dana International.

Similar observations can be made with regard to the unity of the Jewish collective. Ram discusses Dinur’s intervention in the debate among nineteenth-century Jewish historians regarding the essence of the Jewish collective. He mentions the nineteenth-century Jewish historian Markus Jost, who considered Jewish history to be a history of separate communities, in contrast to other nineteenth-century Jewish historians Heinrich Graetz, Abraham Geiger, and Simon Dubnow, who “indeed placed a [single] Jewish essence at the center of their story.”<sup>14</sup> However, they were divided on the issue of how to define this essence. According to Ram’s reading of Dinur, Graetz thought that the spiritual trends in Judaism constituted the common core of Jewish history. Geiger’s and Dubnow’s approach was similar to Graetz’s. Dinur himself, however, felt that not only had Jost erred in regarding Jewish history as the history of separate communities, but that all three other historians had been mistaken and that the essence of Judaism comprises not only a common spirit but also national and political territoriality through the link with the Land of Israel. Just like the argument between Dana International and ultra-Orthodox Jews as to whether Dana’s essence is feminine or

masculine, which must presuppose Dana's oneness in order to make sense, so must Graetz, Geiger, Dubnow, and Dinur assume a collective Jewish unity so that the argument between them regarding Judaism's essence makes sense. Therefore, the resolution of the issue of this debate, namely, "What is the essence of the Jewish collective?" and the assumption that the Jewish collective must have an essence, is not necessary for assuming the unity of the subject the debate centers on: quite the contrary. The assumption of the unity of the Jewish collective is what makes it possible to ask questions about its essence.<sup>15</sup>

Also, the very fact that the Jewish collective was geographically scattered and formed communities distinct from one another in their histories and cultures cannot be a sufficient reason for denying its unity. Ram deprecates the old historians and sociologists of Israel for "two types of enslavement" to which they are subject—"enslavement to the nationalist ideology and enslavement to the Positivist approach."<sup>16</sup> Yet it is difficult to imagine more blatant positivism than that expressed by Ram's move from the empirical fact that the Jews are scattered to the conclusion that it is impossible to attribute oneness to the Jewish collective. Consider what one might say regarding the human race despite what God did to it after he thwarted the construction of the Tower of Babel. He confounded the languages of the entire world and scattered humankind all over the world. Does that mean that many Enlightenment thinkers in the eighteenth century could not say something about human beings along the lines of what Dinur said about the Jews, namely that "the full unity of the human race has not ceased: only the conditions of its life and existence have changed"? Obviously, there were also others who thought just the opposite. "There is no such thing as *man* in the world. . . . In the course of my life, I have seen Frenchmen, Italians, Russians; I even know, thanks to Montesquieu, that one can be a Persian; but man I have never met. If he exists, it is unbeknownst to me."<sup>17</sup> However, the argument over the unity of mankind between Joseph de Maistre, a member of the French Counter-Enlightenment, who made this famous statement, and the Enlightenment thinkers could certainly not be resolved in favor of de Maistre merely by invoking the fact that humanity is divided into different nationalities, such as Frenchmen, Italians, and others. I am not convinced that all Zionists reject de Maistre, but it seems to me quite safe to conjecture that at least the post-Zionists reject him. From the fact of the dispersion of the Jews to the principled negation of their unity, the post-Zionists, therefore, still have a long way to go.

Attributing unity to groups must presuppose that the characteristic that defines the group produces reasons for the group members to then work together and operate as a single body. If one speaks about the unity of the working class, the human race, or the Jews, respectively, and also promotes such unity, one must assume that it is desirable for members of each of these groups to operate as a single collective on the basis of the characteristic that makes each of them a member of this group. In order to refute the assumption of unity for the working class, the human race, or the Jews, one must show that this unity is not based on any worthy values or that there are other values that override these specific values. Nineteenth-century Zionism certainly assumed that the joint action of at least European Jews as a single body was important. Nineteenth-century Zionist activists presented many varied moral arguments for this thesis. One such argument was that there is value in the preservation of Jewish life in the face of the dangers threatening it by the emancipation of the Jews in nineteenth-century Europe on the one hand, and by the decline of religion on the other. Another argument was that the emancipation had failed and that Jews were still discriminated against and persecuted while living among non-Jews. They must therefore take their fate into their own hands and establish an independent community in their ancient homeland.<sup>18</sup> Regardless of whether or not all or some of these arguments were valid, Ram and other post-Zionists do not discuss them at all in their rejection of the assumption of Jewish unity by nineteenth-century Zionism. Ram only points out the empirical fact of the dispersal of the Jews. In this sense, he is like a “de Maistre for the Jews,” someone who denies their unity and its value just because he has only met Moroccan, Polish, German, Romanian, and other types of Jews, but has never met “a Jew.” Moreover, he spotlights their separate existence in the nineteenth century while many of his conclusions and those of other post-Zionists writers, which I discuss in this book, concern the question of Jewish unity today, and not only in the nineteenth century. Whether the values instructing Zionism at its inception were wrong at the time or not, Zionism did indeed bring about significant and real changes in the political condition of the Jews, which also gave rise to a whole new set of normative problems. This is so even if we believe that it would have been better if all or some of the changes brought about by Zionism had never occurred.

Along with other post-Zionists, Ram invokes the falsity of essentialism in order to argue not only against the thesis regarding the unity of the Jewish collective but also against the attribution of nationhood.

Here he recruits support from Ernest Gellner, one of the most influential sociologists of nationalism in the last decades of the twentieth century. One of Gellner's theses is that there was no historical necessity for the formation of each of the modern nations, and that from a historical perspective, these nations are "contingent" and not "ontological" (Ram's terminology).<sup>19</sup> Gellner argues that the emergence of the current nations of the world was a mere accident. These particular nations are not essential or permanent features of the world.

Gellner sarcastically describes the way nationalists like to describe their nations, namely, as dormant nations that are currently awakening, having hibernated since time immemorial. According to Gellner, nationalism did not awaken already existing nations, but rather created new ones, and to a great extent "invented" them.<sup>20</sup> Gellner argues for this position after arguing for two other theses: First, the basic principle of nationalism, which according to him is the principle of the congruency between nations and political units,<sup>21</sup> is itself the product of a historical necessity stemming from the shift of humanity from agrarian societies and economies to industrial societies and economies.<sup>22</sup> Second, Gellner points out that there have been and still are thousands of ethnic groups in the world whose language and culture might have been turned into the culture and language of a state. But since the world only has room for eight hundred states at the most, only eight hundred out of the thousands of cultures of the world could become nations in the modern sense of the word.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, since only partial answers can be given to the questions of why only some of these groups tried to become nations and why only some of them actually succeeded, and "since this depends on too many historical contingencies," one has no choice but to assert that, in contrast to the historical necessity that created nationalism as a historical phenomenon, the specific nations that came into being through this historical necessity are a mere accident and there could easily have been different nations in the world.<sup>24</sup>

These ideas of Gellner's, in which he applies the general antiessentialist stances in the humanities and social sciences to the notion of nation, seem to be very convincing. Yet they cannot serve as a basis for the dismissive views expressed by Gellner's Israeli post-Zionist disciples about Zionism, the Jewish nation forged by Zionism, and the value that many Israelis and Jews attribute to this nation. Gellner rightly claims that nations in the modern sense of the term have not existed since time immemorial. I believe he is also right in stressing the active role that the nationalist movements have played since the end of the eighteenth century in the



very creation of nations that they have led since then. According to his sociohistorical theory, which in my opinion is quite powerful, the formation of these nations is the result of the accidental fusion of certain cultures rather than others in the historical shift from an agrarian economy to an industrial economy. However, from the contingency of the specific nations existing today and the fact that they are not kinds of animals or metals that have existed in nature from time immemorial, it does not follow that they are dismissible or easily replaceable both practically and morally. I assume that most, if not all, the concrete things that exist in the world, as well as the world itself, are contingent in the same sense that the nations that were created over the course of the last two hundred years are. At least the specific individual people existing in the world are contingent in this sense. Each of them is the product of an accidentally successful coupling of their parents in which a single one of their father's sperm cells accidentally fertilized their mother's ovum. From this contingency of the actual people existing in the world today, from the fact that they do not either constitute or reflect a constant essence transcending their contingency, it does not follow that they do not actually exist, or that they have simply been "invented." Nor does it follow that they deserve to be treated scornfully.<sup>25</sup> Similar arguments would apply to the contingency of many other important components of our lives, such as our loves, friendships, and families. They are all contingent. It is important to stress that the analogy drawn here between the respect people should have for individuals and their personal relationships despite the contingency of these bonds, and the respect people should demonstrate for national affiliations despite the chance element of these affiliations, is not a perfect one. However, it seems to me that the analogy is sufficient to support the claim that we cannot dismiss the value that members of national groups ascribe to their respective nation merely by pointing out that these nations are contingent in the sense defined by Gellner. And this also applies to the value Israeli Jews and Jews in general ascribe to the Jewish nation created by Zionism.<sup>26</sup>

The upshot of this is that essentialism, and the claim that the Jewish collective is in essence a nation, an ancient collective that never ceased to be a nation, is superfluous from the point of view of Zionist ideology, which can manage without it. According to this ideology, the Jews, if they were to avoid potentially deadly persecution in Europe, had to realize their right to collective self-determination in the Land of Israel at the end of the nineteenth century, and they have to do the same thing today. In order to support this tenet, which constitutes the principal

common denominator of all Zionists, minimalists such as Ahad Ha'am or maximalists such as Jabotinsky,<sup>27</sup> Zionism does not need to argue that the Jews are a nation in their essence and that they always existed as such, nor did Zionism need to make this claim at the end of the nineteenth century. It did not even need, nor is it necessary today, to argue that the Jews under the conditions in which they lived at the end of the nineteenth century constituted a fully fledged nation. Zionism could instead have claimed, and can still at present claim, that it was *desirable* and *justified*, and that it is still desirable and justified, for the Jewish collective *to view itself, or to interpret itself as a nation*, even if it was not and is not a nation in the full sense of the word. Apparently, it seems that this is one way to interpret what was actually argued by some of Zionism's major spokesmen at its inception.<sup>28</sup> For the sake of justifying its aspirations, Zionism could make do with the claim that it was feasible for the Jewish collective to consider itself as a nation whose homeland is the Land of Israel. Certainly they did not need to argue that this was its essence.<sup>29</sup> Dinur thought that nationhood was the essence of the Jewish collective and therefore that it was necessary and not just feasible for it to view itself as a nation whose homeland is the Land of Israel. Mainstream Zionism, which has been shaped by Dinur's views, followed suit. Yet these are reasons for criticizing Dinur and the mainstream Zionists. They are not reasons for rejecting the Zionist narrative itself.

Let us again consider the example of Dana International. In order to wish to have transsexual surgery, she may, but need not, be an essentialist who believes that being a female is an essential part of her being. She does not even have to believe that she is a woman in the full sense of the word. It is enough for her to believe that, despite the fact that her body is that of a male, her soul, her interests, her orientations, and her loves are all those of a woman. She might also say that confining her orientations, interests, and loves in her male body makes her life intolerable, so that it would be desirable for her to undergo transsexual surgery. In addition, she could argue that it is feasible for her to become a woman in the sense that she is already feminine in important ways even without the operation. Moreover, modern medicine now makes it possible for her to successfully undergo the physical sex change. Of course, Dana International could also be an essentialist and argue that femininity is her true essence, and that this femininity accidentally found itself in a male body. Yet she does not need to make excessive essentialist claims such as these in order to justify what she seeks to have, a sex-change

operation. She could merely argue that a sex change is both suitable and feasible for her, even if it is not necessitated by her essence.

At least in their subconscious, the post-Zionists are apparently aware of this possibility. So they rage not only against Dinur's approach, according to which nationhood is the essence of the Jewish collective, but even against the very possibility in principle of attributing this characteristic to this collective. Whoever is familiar, even minimally, with the history of Zionism knows that classifying the Jews as a nation has aroused anger among Zionism's opponents, mainly among its Jewish opponents, since the inception of Zionism. Orthodox and Reform Jewry, who insisted on classifying Judaism as merely a religion, were against it.<sup>30</sup> The Jewish Enlightenment in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe opposed it because its supporters wanted to assimilate or at least integrate into the peoples among whom they were living. The Bund, a Jewish labor organization in the Russian empire, opposed it because it sought national rights only for the Jews affiliated with the Yiddish culture of Eastern Europe in the places where they lived, and not for the Jewish collective as a whole in the Land of Israel. All these Jewish groups rejected the idea of the Jews as a single collective constituting a single and unified nation.<sup>31</sup> The post-Zionists go one step further. They not only point out that the idea of Jewish nationhood stimulated a great deal of opposition among the Jews in the nineteenth century. Uri Ram argues that the idea *was actually considered* by the Jews as queer, and *had to be considered* by them as queer.<sup>32</sup> Shlomo Sand says that we are dealing with an idea that was considered not only odd but also offensive. According to Sand, in the nineteenth century, "if anyone claimed that all the Jews belonged to a people with a foreign origin, he was immediately classified as an anti-Semite."<sup>33</sup>

### *2.2.2. The Unity and Nationhood of the Jewish Collective as a Question of Classification*

Sand tells a true story. The desire of masses of Jews throughout Europe to integrate into the cultures of the peoples in whose midst they dwelled, or to gain collective rights while still living among these nations, was not well received among many members of these nations. To thwart the integration of the Jews, whether as individuals or as a group within those peoples, those who abhorred them argued that they belonged to

a people of foreign origin.<sup>34</sup> Yet this claim by anti-Semites refutes Ram's argument that the notion of Judaism as nationhood rather than merely as religion was an alien one in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. If this were true, the notion of the Jews as a nation could not have been such an effective tool at the hands of anti-Semites. Moreover, it is not only anti-Semites who thought of the Jews as a nation. The idea was quite common. Consider the following words from a speech given by Count Clermont-Tonnerre at a meeting of the French National Assembly in 1789 dealing with the rights of non-Catholics in the new regime that had emerged after the French Revolution: "We must refuse everything to the Jews as a nation and accord everything to Jews as individuals."<sup>35</sup> If the idea that the Jews are a nation had been a completely unfamiliar notion at the end of the eighteenth century, Tonnerre would not have said what he did.<sup>36</sup>

Like many other critics, both Ram and Sand are convinced that the Jewish collective could not have been considered a nation in the nineteenth century and that this also applies today. Ram says the following: "How could a group be a nation if it does not have a shared language, territory, or history?"<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Sand argues: "If the Jews all over the world were really a 'people,' what would Jews in Kiev and Jews in Marrakesh have in common in terms of their ethnographic cultural characteristics except for their religious faith or some of their ritual practices?"<sup>38</sup> Ram's and Sand's notion of the nation is similar to that of many other writers who have analyzed the concept of the nation, namely, that a group must have a pervasive culture, common language, and common territory in order to be considered a people or a nation. Other writers have also added to this list the requirement of a common psychological makeup, sharing economic life and a stable existence over time.<sup>39</sup> Yet other writers have added that, for the individual members of groups under discussion, belonging to the group constitutes a significant part of one's identity and is one of the primary facts by which people are identified.<sup>40</sup>

A shared pervasive culture, language, territory, psychological makeup, and economy, as well as stable existence over generations, are the characteristics categorized in the theoretical literature on nationalism as reflecting the so-called objectivist approach to the definition of a nation. Many years before he became the ruler of the Soviet Union in the 1920s, Stalin wrote an article on this issue that enumerates and clarifies many of the characteristics just cited. He felt that groups must fulfill all, not just some, of the characteristics that he listed in order to be considered

nations. Other writers—Sand and Ram seem to be among them—hold a less rigid position, requiring the presence of only some of these attributes. Stalin’s article is often included in readers for introductory courses on nationalism, apparently because it is both exhaustive and also serves as an extreme, doctrinaire example of the objectivist approach to defining a nation. In this article, the Jews are cited as an example of a group that certainly does not meet many of the conditions required for groups to be considered nations.

To be sure, one must admit that, as claimed by Stalin and also by Sand, Ram, and Evron, the Jewish collective has not had a common territory, a pervasive culture, or one language in the past 1,300 years. Still, it is possible to argue that at least in the collective memory of the Jews, and actually in the collective memory of those parts of mankind that have had significant contact with Jews, the Jews did once have one pervasive culture, a common language, and lived in one territory. If we define nations as collectives that meet these objective criteria, the question still remains as to whether they need to have met all of these criteria at every single moment in their history, or whether they must fulfill these conditions at the time the question about classifying them as a nation is posed. Some theoreticians would argue that it is sufficient for the group in question to have possessed a shared culture, territory, and language sometime in the past in order to now be considered a nation. Ultimately, the fact that an object loses certain characteristics temporarily or even permanently does not perforce result in removing it from the category typified by these characteristics. A person who has lost consciousness or is currently in a coma loses major characteristics that define him a person in the moral sense of the word. Yet loss of consciousness or being in a coma does not cause us to automatically cease viewing him as a person, at least in certain moral aspects, and to act accordingly.

The same logic applies to the question of whether the Jews are a nation according to other main definitions of this concept. As well as Stalin’s extreme objectivist position regarding the definition of a nation, textbooks on nationalism often include also the famous article “What Is a Nation?” by the nineteenth-century French historian Ernest Renan.<sup>41</sup> This article expresses what scholars of nationalism term a “subjectivist” approach to the question. Renan rejects the position whereby groups must have shared geography, religion, language, and interests in order to be considered nations. He argues that a nation is “a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle: . . . One is the possession in

common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, according to Renan, it is not the fact that the members of the collective share a language and a territory that makes the collective a nation. What turns it into a nation is the fact that a sufficient number of its members have a desire to consider a particular common heritage as the exclusive legacy of the group’s common and collective memories, a desire to live together, and a desire to jointly maintain this legacy over generations. I doubt whether it is adequate to characterize Renan’s concept of a nation as subjectivist and the other definition presented above as objectivist. Both the objectivist and the subjectivist conceptions require the presence of objective social facts for it to be possible to speak about given groups as nations. For Renan, it is objective facts relating to the consciousness and the mental life of the members of the specific group that allow them to be considered a nation, while for the objectivists it is not mental facts that are involved but rather behavioral, sociogeographic, and sociolinguistic facts. I note this point here since it is important for a number of my arguments in subsequent parts of this book. However, I continue to characterize the distinction between a shared territory, language, and pervasive culture, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the desire to continue to maintain a shared heritage of remembrances as the distinction between objectivist and subjectivist conceptions of a nation.<sup>43</sup>

Whoever thinks that in the debate between the objectivists and the subjectivists on the meaning of the concept of nation Renan’s position is correct might argue that, by denying the Jewish collective the status of nationhood, perhaps the post-Zionists are right with regard to the Jews of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; but it is doubtful that the post-Zionists are right in their total denial of that status for the Jewish collective today. Renan’s supporters might argue that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries not enough Jews in the world possessed and shared one common “rich legacy of memories” and “the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form.”<sup>44</sup> At the time, many Jews wished to be assimilated into the nations in whose midst they currently lived. Others wished to honor and maintain only their religious heritage. And there were those (the Bundists) who desired to live together and to continue to value the heritage of a secular Yiddish culture and the rich legacy of remembrances of Eastern European Jewry. At the time (the end of

the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century), non-European Jews had completely different heritages and memories.

Furthermore, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, no Jewish community could be considered by the members of the overall Jewish collective as a community with a heritage that the entire collective could identify with and want to maintain. The Eastern European Yiddish-speaking Jews were not the only subgroup of the Jewish collective. Other subgroups of this collective could not share its specific heritage, since most aspects of Yiddish culture and the history of East European Jewry were not part of their own heritage and history. This applies to all the subgroups of the Jewish collective in the centuries prior to Zionism. Today, however, Jews and Jewish communities all over the world can share the heritage of remembrances shared by Israeli Jews because the story of ancient Jewish independence in the Land of Israel was revived by Zionism. Moreover, European Jews suffered from persecution in the centuries prior to Zionism *qua* Jews, *simpliciter*, and not as Jews belonging to a particular subgroup of the Jewish collective. All Jews should therefore be able to identify with this particular legacy of remembrance that is shared by Israeli Jews, and in fact many Jews do.

It thus follows that, according to the objectivist approach, the general Jewish collective could be considered a borderline case of a nation as early as the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (and in even earlier centuries) because, in antiquity, it had met the conditions required by the objectivist conception. Therefore, in contrast to Ram's and other post-Zionists' position, the idea that the Jews constitute a nation should not have been considered odd at the time. Thinking about the collective of world Jewry as a nation is even less odd today, since it could also be considered a borderline case of a nation according to the subjectivist conception of this notion. Consider the example of the Tottenham Football Club supporters. It would clearly be considered odd if this particular group were classified as a nation.<sup>45</sup> Doing so would justifiably arouse astonishment and ridicule, since this group does not have any of the features of a nation. It does not have, and never has had, a pervasive culture; it does not have, and has never had, a single common language; and it has also never had one single shared territory. The members of this group also do not have, and have never had, a legacy of remembrances respected by the group members and which they wish to uphold. In contrast, the Jews are not such a case today, and they were not even prior to Zionism. Even though they did not speak one language in previous centuries and do not have one language that is universally spoken by all members of the group today, the Hebrew language is the

language with which they are identified in their own consciousness and by other nations. Even though they did not have one territory before Zionism or today, there is one territory with which they are identified in their historical memory and that of mankind—the Land of Israel. According to their own historical memory and that of mankind, they have not had one pervasive culture in recent centuries but did have one in antiquity.

To be sure, one must admit—and this time, as mainstream Zionism and not the post-Zionists refuse to—the Jewish collective was not and still is not a clear-cut case of a nation in the sense that the Poles, for example, are today. The Poles constitute a paradigmatic case of a non-nation because most of them live in one territory (Poland), speak the same language (Polish), and share one culture. However, according to the position of this study, which opposes both mainstream Zionism and post-Zionism, even if the Jews are not a clear-cut case of a nation similar to the Polish collective, they are also not a clear-cut case of a non-nation like that of the Tottenham Football Club supporters. Therefore, it has never been odd or unreasonable to refer to the Jews as a nation. Moreover, the Zionists could also claim that groups that for various reasons are not clear-cut examples of nations are a common occurrence. For example, do the Swiss constitute a nation, and can one consider the British a nation? I would venture to say that they do meet the criteria for nationhood, but perhaps not to the extent that the Poles do. On the other hand, they meet more of the criteria for nationhood than Tottenham Football Club supporters.

In line with the position I have already argued for in my discussion of Dinur's essentialism, Zionist thinkers could argue that the plan to establish self-determination for the entire Jewish collective in the Land of Israel, which the Zionist movement presented to the Jews at the end of the nineteenth century, was not based on the essentialist conception of Jewish nationhood. Nor was it based on the idea that the Jewish collective was in practice a nation in the full sense of the term. Both then and today, Zionists could argue that the plan was based, first, on the *conceptual feasibility* of their viewing themselves as a nation since they once had been a nation in the full sense of the term, or because this is the way they were viewed by people in their surroundings and by themselves; and second, on the practical and moral justifications that the Jews had at the time (and perhaps also have today) for choosing this option, that is, to once again become a nation in the full sense of the term. In other words, Zionists could argue that the objective social facts owing to which the Jewish collective is indeed not entirely a nation but is also not really not a nation provided the Jews of the nineteenth century (as it does for the Jews in the



twenty-first century) the opportunity to consider themselves a nation and to realize this self-conception. Zionists could also argue that both then and today, this self-conception and self-realization are the best solution to the practical problems and existential dilemmas challenging them.

In terms of logical possibilities—as opposed to terms of practical *feasibility*—the national solution may solve the problems of groups even if they have no specific characteristics that would make it possible to consider them a nation. Consider the predicament of European and especially German homosexuals in the first half of the twentieth century. At the time, they faced problems similar to those encountered by European Jews at the end of the nineteenth century. In a certain sense, this problem could perhaps have been solved by turning homosexuals into a nation. Yet there are obvious and decisive differences between homosexuals and the Jewish collective at that time. One such difference is the fact that, in contrast to the Jews, they lack any of the characteristics of nations. The suggestion that the problems of homosexuals be solved by declaring them a nation is ludicrous since national characteristics develop over hundreds of years. The Jews did not need to undergo a long eligibility period, as it were, since they had already gone through such an eligibility period in antiquity, or were at least considered to have done so.<sup>46</sup>

It is also possible to reach many of my above conclusions by applying the analysis of the characteristics of the groups worthy of national self-determination recently proposed by Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz.<sup>47</sup> According to them, groups deserving of national self-determination<sup>48</sup> have two kinds of characteristics: First, they are groups that have what they term “pervasive” cultures “that encompass many, varied, and important aspects of life that [define] or [mark] a variety of forms or styles of life, types of activity, occupation, pursuit, and relationship.”<sup>49</sup> Second, the cultures of the groups in question shape the character of the individuals growing up among members of the group, mark their identities, and are important for their self-identification.<sup>50</sup> According to Margalit and Raz, these groups have

a high social profile, that is, groups, membership of which is one of the primary facts by which people are identified and which form expectations as to what they are like, groups membership of which is one of the primary clues for people generally in interpreting the conduct of others. Since our perceptions of ourselves are in large measure determined by how we expect others to perceive us, it follows that membership of such groups is an important identifying feature for each about himself.<sup>51</sup>

Let me repeat: The Jewish collective clearly did not have a single pervasive culture before Zionism and still does not today. The Jewish collective has always had subgroups with their own cultures.<sup>52</sup> Yet it is also clear that membership of the Jewish collective as a whole rather than of its subgroups was and still is one of the principal facts by means of which individual Jews are identified. Moreover, membership of this group makes people form expectations as to what they are like. Belonging to the Jewish collective as a whole also constitutes an important component of identity for a great many Jews.<sup>53</sup> In order to forestall possible criticism, I would like to note that the identity characteristic in question is not merely one of religious identity but also stems from the belief in common descent and similar characteristics resulting from the social status and occupations commonly held by Jews in their history.<sup>54</sup> At least in the consciousness of the Jews and of mankind in general, the history in question was common to the entire group, which began as an encompassing group, namely, a group that had a pervasive culture.

Again, because the Jews as a single collective do not currently have a single pervasive culture, and also did not have such a pervasive culture in the nineteenth century, according to Raz and Margalit they do not constitute a paradigmatic case of a group qualified for national self-determination either today or in the nineteenth century. However, belonging to the Jewish collective as a whole and not to its subgroups constitutes an important feature used by members of this collective and by people who do not belong to it to identify and form expectations about individual members belonging to this group. Therefore, according to Raz and Margalit, the Jewish collective is clearly also not a paradigmatic case of a group that cannot be a candidate for self-determination.<sup>55</sup> Hence, like the previous conceptions of nationhood, the current conception made it feasible for the Jews to consider themselves a single collective sufficiently qualified to entertain the idea of national self-determination as the best solution for the practical problems or existential dilemmas that they faced at the time and still grapple with today.

### *2.2.3. The Unity and Nationhood of the Jewish Collective as an Issue of Interpretation*

On the basis of the above discussion, the Zionist idea could be viewed as a particular interpretation of the nature of Jewish collectivity, and the Zionist movement could be viewed as a movement that aspired to

realize this particular interpretation. In the nineteenth century, in order to achieve this realization, there was no need for Zionism to argue that the Jews were a nation in the full sense of the term. This is also not necessary today. It would be sufficient for Zionism to make a more modest and accurate claim, namely that, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Jews constituted a nation in a partial sense, and that they do the same today, though in a somewhat stronger sense. In fact, it could be argued that as a political idea, what Zionism could have claimed at the end of the nineteenth century and what it claims today is that, since Jews are a nation in a partial sense of the term, one of the possibilities open to them is to attempt to become a nation in the full sense of the word and to realize their self-determination as a nation. The practical considerations stemming from their predicament and the moral considerations relevant to this predicament support the adoption of this possibility.

This is in fact what Zionism actually did at the end of the nineteenth century, and the post-Zionists are fully aware of this. Let me quote Ram again.

The Zionist movement was established in Eastern and Central Europe in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Before the establishment of the Zionist movement, there were several decades during which Jewish intellectuals pondered the future of Judaism, Jewishness, and Jewish identity in the modern world. Emancipation was supposed to free the Jews from the persecution they were currently suffering from. . . . Even when the universal civic principle [of emancipation] did not actually take root, the processes by which Jewish communities began to dissolve did in fact occur. Similarly, even where the romantic-national reaction to universalistic enlightenment gave birth to renewed anti-Semitism that threatened the Jews, they had to provide a new more fitting response to their new predicament.<sup>56</sup>

Ram then distinguishes between a number of what he calls “identity strategies” available to the Jews in order to cope with new circumstances. The identity strategies comprise individual assimilation; maintaining religious communities that are either open to modernity (for example, the Reform movement in Judaism that began in early nineteenth-century Europe) or closed to modernity (such as Orthodox Judaism); maintaining autonomy within secular Jewish communities (mainly the Bund and Dubnow’s followers); and the identity strategy proposed by Zionism.

According to Ram, the difference between Zionism and what he calls the “identity strategy of secular communal autonomy” (proposed

by the Bund and Dubnow) is that Zionism is a political-territorial movement that demands sovereignty. I am not convinced that this is really the principal difference between Zionism and the autonomists. First, it is not clear whether it is correct to attribute a demand for Jewish sovereignty, or at least statist sovereignty, to early Zionism. Second, the Bund's demand for autonomy (which is also a demand for sovereignty, although this sovereignty is neither statist nor territorial) also included a national component. Third, the principal difference between the Bund and Zionism was with regard to the issues of the specific geographic location they sought for Jewish self-determination and which Jewish subgroups should be included in this realization of Jewish self-determination. The Bund sought Jewish self-determination only for the Jews of Eastern Europe in Eastern Europe. The beneficiaries of this particular realization of the right to self-determination were the Yiddish-speaking Jews of Eastern Europe. The Bund did not intend to enable Jews outside Eastern Europe to identify and participate in the Jewish self-determination they proposed. In contrast, Zionism sought to achieve self-determination for the Jews in the Land of Israel. Even if the founding fathers of Zionism aspired to realize Jewish self-determination because of the situation of European Jews, the inner logic of their solution to this problem meant that it would serve all Jews, and actually could not do otherwise.<sup>57</sup>

Before expanding on this point, let me return to Ram for a moment. I quoted him here not because his description of the alternatives that the Jews faced at the end of the nineteenth century reveals anything new, but in order to demonstrate that he is well aware of these well-known facts. Like other post-Zionists, he knows that Zionism was first and foremost intended to solve practical problems faced by European Jews at the end of the nineteenth century because of their Jewishness. Zionism was not a stance taken in the metaphysics of essences. Neither was it a position in a conceptual debate on the meaning of the concept of the nation. It was one among a number of possible responses to the predicament the Jews found themselves in and the practical problems they faced as Jews, both as individuals and as a collective. Even though the Jews consisted of many separate communities, Zionism considered it desirable for the Jews to act in a united fashion, and therefore treated them as a single collective. Moreover, even if they did not constitute a nation in the full sense of this word, it was conceptually feasible to treat them as a nation because they had been a full-fledged nation in the distant past. At least, that is how they perceived themselves and how they were perceived in

the consciousness of others. In addition, owing to their desire to maintain a collective Jewish existence, and the fact that they had been rejected by their surroundings, they were justified in entertaining the option of turning themselves into a nation in the full sense of the term.

On this point, Zionism was no different from other national movements in Europe in the nineteenth century. According to the luminaries of sociology and critical historiography of nationalism—some of whom I mentioned earlier, including Renan, Gellner, Anderson, and Hobsbawm—since the end of the eighteenth century the national ideology created nations rather than being created by nations. Ram himself states that Zionism did not differ from other national movements in this respect.<sup>58</sup> Yet he chooses to say that the national ideology “invented” nations, rather than that it “created” nations,<sup>59</sup> and that Zionism “invented” the modern Jewish nation, rather than that it “created” it.<sup>60</sup> Ernest Gellner also spoke in terms of the “invention of nations” in one instance.<sup>61</sup> Elsewhere, however, his language was that of “creation” rather than “invention,”<sup>62</sup> and, as Benedict Anderson has already taught us, there is a significant difference between stating that nationalism *invented* nations and speaking about it having engendered nations, or—in his terms—having caused people “to imagine” their nations. Anderson writes:

Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretenses [namely, that it is an ideology adopted by long-standing nations, and not an ideology that constitutes these nations] that he assimilates “invention” to “fabrication” and “falsity,” rather than to “imagining” and “creation.” In this way he implies that “true” communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations. In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.<sup>63</sup>

According to these statements, for Anderson social “imagining” does not mean inventing something that has no basis in social reality. Rather, it means that people invent and simultaneously recognize a social reality that is beyond the social reality of face-to-face recognition. For such a reality to be created and maintained and recognized, he argues, it is imperative to invoke the power of the imagination, for we are speaking of realities that are not observed visually, are not heard aurally, and are not palpable to touch. In contrast to the impression created by Anderson, and as is demonstrated in the above quotations, Gellner did not always speak about “the invention” of nations and faking them. At times, he was less aggressive about national ideology, and actually made the same

point as Anderson.<sup>64</sup> Both argued that by means of materials taken from reality—namely, the fact that people belonged to linguistic and cultural communities that had lived in these or other territories for extended periods of time—national ideology caused people to imagine themselves as belonging to a nation with a historical past they identified with and wished to continue to do so.

Furthermore, although Gellner's sarcastic rhetoric against the historiographical distortions characteristic of national movements makes him sound as if he utterly rejected nationalism, many other characterizations he ascribes to nationalism demonstrate his acknowledgment of its value.<sup>65</sup> Many of his descriptions imply that, as a historical phenomenon, nationalism has been and still is highly valuable. This can be gathered from his characterization of the nationalism of large industrial societies as a socioeconomic process produced by the Industrial Revolution that was necessary in order to facilitate the welfare of the masses.<sup>66</sup> The value he attributes to nationalism is discernible also in his characterizations of its more marginal streams, such as the nationalism he calls "diaspora nationalism" of which Zionism was perhaps its main example. Despite Gellner's somewhat critical approach to Israel, he points out the economic and social needs that provided justifications for the national movement that led to its establishment.<sup>67</sup>

In contrast, Ram chooses to describe Zionism as having "invented" the Jewish people, that is, fraudulently asserting its existence. However, he fails to note that the Jews were prompted to imagine themselves as belonging to a general Jewish national community because of *real* aspects of the circumstances they lived in. On this issue Shlomo Sand went even further, dedicating an entire book to the "invention" of the Jewish nation in this sense of "forgery."<sup>68</sup> Both authors skip those elements in Gellner's sociology of nationalism that concern the troubles of the Jews and Judaism from which the Zionist solution to them developed.

I would now like to return to my main concern in this section, namely, understanding the interpretive steps and the historical changes wrought by Zionism since the end of the nineteenth century with regard to the Jewish collective. It could be argued that Zionism brought about two significant changes regarding the nationhood of the Jews. First, Zionism turned a subgroup of a collective that at the end of the nineteenth century was a nation in only a partial sense of the term into a nation in the full sense of the word. Moreover, it did so according to all the interpretations of the concept of a nation. The writings of theoreticians very different from each other in their personal backgrounds and in the theories

they propose for the concept of the nation all imply a clear and positive answer to the question as to whether the subgroup of Jews living in Israel constitutes a nation. The Jewish community in Israel is a community with a pervasive culture, a language, and a single territory. Thus, it fits Stalin's definition of a nation. Second, the members of this group have a "possession in common of a rich legacy of memories [. . . and] present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form."<sup>69</sup> Hence, the Jewish group in Israel could also be considered a nation according to Renan's definition of the term. Israeli Jews constitute a group that shares a pervasive culture and it is a group "membership of which is one of the primary facts by which [they] are identified [. . . and membership of which] is an important identifying feature for each [of the members] about himself."<sup>70</sup> Hence, this group can also be considered to be a nation in the sense defined by Raz and Margalit.

The second significant change brought about by the Zionist movement with regard to the nationhood of the Jewish collective pertains to the way in which the Israeli Jewish collective is a nation. This collective realizes its nationhood under a conception that allows all members of the Jewish collective, whether they are currently living in Israel or elsewhere in the world, to participate in its "legacy of memories." It is the legacy expressed by the Zionist narrative of Jewish history, a narrative about a sovereign people that lived in the Land of Israel in antiquity, and revived itself in the Land of Israel in the twentieth century. Moreover, Zionism, or certain historical factors that facilitated its success (mainly the Holocaust), not only made possible but also brought about the emergence of an actual awareness among masses of Jews living in all parts of the world regarding the importance of the Israeli Jewish legacy of remembrances for the Jewish collective as a whole. Zionism and the historical factors that facilitated its success made them share this legacy, and made this legacy into a major part of their Jewish identity. Many Jews living outside Israel identify with this legacy, regard it as part of their own identity, and see its perpetuation into the future as an important interest of theirs. They have the "will to continue to value" this heritage together with Israeli Jews. Of course, most of them do not show any desire to live together with Israeli Jews in the same political unit. However, Renan's insistence on "the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common" could be given a broader interpretation than living together in the same territorial and political unit. In this sense, the collective of world Jewry, or at least large

numbers of its members, could be considered to have been turned by Zionism into a nation in a much less partial sense than the partial sense in which they were a nation at the end of the nineteenth century and the centuries preceding it. They were then only partially a nation only because they had been a fully-fledged nation in antiquity, or at least had been conceived of by themselves and others to have been such nation in antiquity. Except for the fact that Israeli Jews constitute a nation in the paradigmatic sense of the term, since the establishment of Israel the Jewish collective as whole has become much more of a nation than it had been before then because large numbers of non-Israeli Jews now share and value the national heritage of Israeli Jewry and therefore constitute a partial case of a nation under Renan's conception of this notion.<sup>71</sup>

If the way I have thus far described the formation of the unity and nationhood of the Jewish collective in the nineteenth century and from then on is correct, then this portrayal also provides grounds for rejecting the post-Zionist arguments that I presented at the beginning of the chapter regarding the unity and nationhood of the protagonist of the Zionist narrative. The post-Zionists who reject this unity and nationhood do so because they deny the facts on the basis of which one could regard the Jews as a single nation in the nineteenth century. They ignore these facts and nowhere discuss the arguments used by the early Zionists in order to justify the idea of conceiving of Jewish existence in terms of nationhood. Neither Ram, nor Sand, nor Shenhav, nor Yonah, nor indeed any other post-Zionist discusses (at least not systematically) the issue of whether the Zionist solution to the problems of the European Jews at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth—that is, the formation of a fully fledged Jewish nation in the Land of Israel—was appropriate. At most, they take it for granted that this solution was not appropriate, or express views from which this follows. Moreover, one also gets the impression that according to them the reality created by Zionism (in collaboration with other historical factors), namely, a reality within which a Jewish nation in the full sense of this word exists in Israel, and which also comprises of world Jewish nation in one important partial sense, must be seen as a reality that has never existed.<sup>72</sup>

### 2.3. The Protagonist's Adventures

In utter contrast to the Israeli post-Zionists mentioned above, from the 1930s onward mainstream Zionism moved in the opposite direction.



Given that at the onset of Zionism the Jewish collective was a nation in only a limited sense of the word, and given that the tiny part of this collective that had settled in the Land of Israel up until the 1930s gradually grew into a fully fledged nation, mainstream Zionism maintained that the entire Jewish collective was, and moreover had always been, a fully-fledged nation—during the nineteenth century, at the inception of Zionism, and before it, stretching back throughout its history.

The basic assumption which must serve as point of departure both for clarifying the roles of Jewish historiography and for determining the subject matter of historical research should in our opinion be simply the following: Jewish history is the history of the Israelite nation, which has never ceased and whose importance has not waned in any period. Jewish history is a homogeneous unity that encompasses all periods and all places, each of which informs the others.<sup>73</sup>

This passage is part of the manifesto that appeared in the opening pages of the first issue of the periodical *Zion*, first published in 1936 under the editorship of the historians Yitzhak Baer and Ben Zion Dinur. In the preface the editors announce their deliberate, calculated adoption of the position that the Jews as a collective had always formed a nation. They express this position even more unambiguously in the passage quoted above than in the passage quoted at the opening of this chapter. Dinur, in his double role as the leading historian filling the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative and as the Israeli minister of education who played a crucial part in the formation of the national consciousness of Israeli Jews, as Ram successfully described it, made this position part of the mindset of the nation's members. Israel's Declaration of Independence made it the near-official view of the state and of mainstream Zionism.

The Declaration—much like the stance that informed it—does not settle for the first claim appearing in the version of the Zionist narrative as I drafted it at the beginning of this study, namely, that the Jews in the Land of Israel are part of the world's Jewish collective and that this collective represents the continuation of the Jewish people who came into being in the Land of Israel in antiquity. This claim describes in greater precision than does the Declaration of Independence the common denominator of late nineteenth-century Zionist aspirations at the inception of this movement, and what it actually did. It is compatible with the assumption that the Jewish collective, after antiquity or after the first centuries of the Middle Ages, stopped being a nation in the full

sense of the word, and that only a small part of it went back to being a nation in every sense as a result of Zionism and its success. Both the Declaration of Independence and Dinur's statements tell the story of a people that emerged in the Land of Israel during antiquity and that never lost its essence as one collective and one nation.

*2.3.1. Is Nationhood the Essence of Judaism? Falsehoods and Imprecisions on Behalf of the Objective*

Dinur's version of the Zionist narrative is based on the assumption that being a nation is the essence of the Jews. I compared the relationship between nationhood and the Jewish collective to that between the  $H_2O$  molecule and water in order to illustrate what Dinur had in mind. As water does not stop being  $H_2O$  whether it's fluid, congeals into ice, or turns into steam, the Jews did not stop being a nation whether they were (or still are) religious communities or diffuse diasporas. In order for this image, along with the claim that the crux of Jewish collectivity is nationhood, to be convincing, Dinur and his historiography had to ground them somehow; for if a group must meet specific conditions to qualify as a nation, and if the Jews did not meet these conditions throughout the long interval of their exile, then their condition cannot be likened to that of water whose state changes from fluid to solid or to gas, but must rather be seen like that of water that has stopped being  $H_2O$ —water, that is, that has stopped being water. The  $H_2O$  molecule in its integral atomic form, after all, consistently characterizes water whether it manifests itself as ice, fluid water, or steam. The Jews during the period of their exile were not characterized by the “molecular structure” of territorial and cultural commonality combined with a consciousness of a shared legacy and a desire to maintain that legacy together. As one worldwide collective they did not have even one of these characteristics, and since the establishment of Israel they can be characterized by only one of them, and only partially. What “molecule” did the Jewish people have then (or indeed do they have now) that would justify the claim that they never lost their national essence?

Had he adhered to a simplistic version of Plato's theory of forms, Dinur might have answered this question by stating that there is a form of the Jewish collective, namely, a form of the nation, and that the concrete history of the Jews in its entirety—their dispersal among the nations as

well as their return to the Land of Israel—is made up of poor reflections of that form. At least with regard to the issue at hand, however, Dinur was no Platonist. Along with mainstream Zionist historiography he tried to overcome the problems resulting from their common thesis that the essence of Jews is national by much more conventional means: They simply denied the absence, or the importance of the absence, of national characteristics from the Jewish collective during the entire period when it seemed that this collective possessed no such characteristics.

Zionist ideologues insisted that territoriality was one of the characteristics of the Jewish collective. A. B. Yehoshua formulates this as follows:

[These ideologues] enthusiastically count the number of Jews in Eretz Israel in each century in order to prove the continuity of a Jewish presence there, who laud the family that maintained a continuous presence in the Galilee town of Peki'in, and who are driven to extremes of joy by every rabbi who came to the country with his followers and manage to stay here for a couple of years.<sup>74</sup>

The most famous of all *aliyahs* (return by Jews to the Land of Israel) Yehoshua mentions is the one made by Rabbi Yehuda Hahasid in 1700.<sup>75</sup> It is on the basis of this aliyah and of the existence of Jewish culture in the Land of Israel until the seventh-century Muslim conquest that Dinur contrived to reduce the absence of Jewish life in the Land of Israel from two millennia to a single millennium.<sup>76</sup> However, what Dinur and the Declaration of Independence mainly wished to deny was not the absence as such of a shared Jewish territory and a shared pervasive culture during their thousand or two thousand years of dispersal, but rather the *importance* of this absence. This they did by arguing that the absence was not voluntary: it was forced upon the Jews, as the Declaration of Independence states:

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

Impelled by this historic association, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland.<sup>77</sup>

Dinur himself puts it more explicitly:

Even when the Land of Israel was not under Israelite rule, the Israelite people was not a homeless people, but rather a people from whom others have

plundered its country, while it “clings to its fringe,” and “seizes and holds the branches of its palms,” and claims “it’s all mine.”<sup>78</sup>

Dinur, like the Declaration of Independence (though less explicitly), alludes to Rabbi Judah Halevi’s marvelous verses in the liturgical poem *Ode to Zion*:

Perfect in beauty, Zion, how in thee  
Do love and grace unite!  
. . . Unto thy garments’ fringe they cling, and haste  
The branches of thy palms to seize and hold.<sup>79</sup>

Judah Halevi’s expressions of yearning, and the additional allusions in the Declaration of Independence to certain verses from the *Amidah*—the central prayer in the Jewish liturgy—and the *Haggadah*—the text that is being read and that sets forth the order of Passover’s eve ritual feast—apparently were necessary to prove that the concrete, physical absence of the Jewish collective from its common territory—an absence through which part of the objective criterion of nationality, as it were, is missing—does not really deprive the Jews of territoriality, since this was taken from them against their will. Moreover, the claim that the Jews were involuntarily absent from the Land of Israel may perhaps also indirectly provide them with the second main component of the objectivist definition of nationhood, namely that of sharing a pervasive culture. Even if they may not have maintained such a culture during their exile, since that exile was the result of the expropriation of the Land of Israel it is not just territory that they involuntarily lacked but also a shared culture. Finally, the loss of the Land of Israel, the yearning for it, and the striving to return to it surely can serve as evidence that the Jewish collective never ceased to fulfill Renan’s subjectivist criterion of nationhood. If the Declaration of Independence is right in claiming that Jews in every generation strove to return and settle in their ancient homeland, then certainly their memories of their life there in antiquity constitute a legacy to which they ceaselessly adhered and which they wished to revive and to resume together. If this is the case, then we have no choice but to accept Dinur’s claim and the stance underlying the Declaration of Independence, that is, that the essence of the Jewish collective never ceased to be a national essence, even when the conditions of its life and existence changed.<sup>80</sup>

And yet all these claims are falsehoods. A. B. Yehoshua expresses this in a particularly blunt manner. He argues that the attempts of “all those ideologues . . . to prove the continuity of a Jewish presence [in the Land of Israel]”—by which he means attempts like Dinur’s or that of the Declaration of Independence—are depressing in nature.<sup>81</sup> He then adds:

I think I will not be terribly mistaken if I assert that in all these centuries, from the destruction of the Second Temple to the beginning of Zionism, and in fact right up to the present, the people has not made a serious effort to return to Eretz Israel, not only to reestablish its political independence but even to try to settle there. This people, which displayed resourcefulness, flexibility, and cunning intelligence in reaching almost every point on the globe—from the Atlas Mountains to the steppes of China, from Tierra del Fuego in South America to the Siberian wastes—made no real attempt to return to and settle in Eretz Israel. . . . The Jews settled in numbers in all lands of the Mediterranean basin, except for Eretz Israel. In their wanderings the Jews circled near the country, were drawn to it, but also feared and avoided it.<sup>82</sup>

Yehoshua is right. If one wants to justify claims involving general, abstract concepts like that of a collective’s “will” and “striving” to achieve certain things (as well as the concept of a collective’s “expulsion” from a territory, the concept of a collective’s “presence” in a territory, and so on) facts are needed that are far more robust than those official Zionist historiography refers to in its attempt to fill the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative.

During the many generations of Jewish Diaspora existence, a few Jews tried to reach the Land of Israel or to live there, and a small number of them managed to achieve a fragmented community life there. But these facts do not suffice to ground any claim regarding the continuity of the Jewish nation in the Land of Israel or its striving to return there. The Jews living in the Land of Israel constituted a tiny minority of world Jewry, which never attained any leadership position among world Jewry (in contrast with the contemporary Jewish community in Israel).

Nor can the fact that Jews at the end of their annual Passover Seder (ritual feast) recited “Next year in Jerusalem” serve to ground the claim that the Jews “throughout the ages strove to return and settle in their ancient homeland.” Elizabeth Anscombe, a British philosopher, defined “intending” as “trying to get.”<sup>83</sup> It goes without saying that “to strive” for something is tantamount to trying to get it. Praying, hoping, and writing great poetry, however, are not the same as “trying to get.”

Indeed, it has often been noted that it is doubtful whether the Jews, when proclaiming “Next year in Jerusalem,” were expressing a real personal or communal hope to be there. Surely they did not intend to voice a real wish to be there the next year or the year after. It would rather seem they were expressing a hope for a utopian redemption without the slightest intention to realize it.<sup>84</sup>

Zionism altered the meanings of these sayings. Even if a little before the inception of Zionism, in the course of the nineteenth century, and subsequently, some of the Jews who uttered these words were actually expressing a real desire to return to Zion, this does not mean that the generations of Jews before the nineteenth century had exactly this in mind. The official Zionist historiography under discussion here characterizes generations of Jews long before the inception of Zionism, not just the period close to Zionism or following its inception, as aspiring to return to the Land of Israel. It would hence not be right to claim that these generations strove to return to the Land of Israel, nor indeed would it be right to claim that they really hoped to return there.

In their book *Israel and the Family of Nations*, Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein quote the sentence in the Declaration of Independence stating that the Jewish people in exile “never ceas[ed] to pray and hope for their return and the restoration of their political freedom.”<sup>85</sup> They admit that the expression “political freedom” constitutes a modern notion of nationhood that does not accurately reflect the substance of the traditional “prayer and hope.” Still, they add that it “is possible to view Zionism as a modern interpretation or a modern embodiment of the traditional Jewish vision of the return to Zion adapted to the needs of modern Jewish nationalism.”<sup>86</sup> I would strongly agree with this proposition. Just as I believe that Zionism’s initial stance, to the effect that the Jews are a nation, should be considered as interpretive, its stance regarding prayers and blessings like “May our eyes witness your return to Zion” and “Next year in Jerusalem” should, I believe, also be understood in this manner. Yakobson and Rubinstein, however, along with many other mainstream Zionists, ignore one important thing: The Declaration of Independence is formulated in a way that pretends to assert a historical fact on the basis of a traditional text rather than giving a new interpretation to that text. The Declaration of Independence claims that the generations of Jews who prayed to witness God’s return to Zion and hoped for the reconstruction of Jerusalem were expressing a real wish to go back there and, moreover, wished to return there to re-establish their political freedom. By definition, a reinterpretation

of a prayer and a blessing assumes that previous interpretations were different. Had the Declaration of Independence been about the reinterpretation of this prayer and blessing, then it would have contradicted itself by arguing that the generations of Jews preceding the nineteenth century, too, had prayed for political liberty. On the contrary: if this is a reinterpretation, then that testifies to the fact that these generations of Jews were not praying for liberty of this type and most certainly were not striving for it. I am not making this distinction for pedantic scholarly reasons. As I will show in chapter 3, it has very serious practical implications: The claim that the Jews were striving to return to Zion when praying “May our eyes witness your return to Zion” can help them claim proprietary rights over Zion; by contrast, the claim that the aspiration for political independence is only a reinterpretation of the prayer thwarts the claim to such right over it.

In order to allow it to describe the Jews as never having ceased to be essentially a nation, mainstream Zionism avoids the truth about the Jews’ hope and striving to return to the Land of Israel. Worse, it avoids telling *the whole truth* about what the Jews did when they stopped being a fully fledged nation. Here I am thinking of the “negation of the exile.” This major Zionist concept is morally loaded in the sense that the very mode and content of existence in dispersion must be disapproved of.<sup>87</sup> The concept, however, also has a historiographical significance: it denies (or conceals) the fact that Diaspora Jews often also enjoyed a full, meaningful, and complex life which we could approve of and affirm, and not wholly negate.<sup>88</sup> Many Diaspora Jews, clearly, still lead such lives. Again, we might be served by Ram’s very useful quotations, this time taken from the Hebrew *Educational Encyclopedia* and concerning the teaching of Jewish history:

Teaching must consist of the national history and its central axis must be the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. More space must be assigned for the periods in which the Jewish people resided in its Land. The different exiles . . . will be explained as “episodes” in the life of the nation, as transition periods for which the aspiration of the people to return to its Land must be emphasized.<sup>89</sup>

Learning the different exiles and dispersions separately will not stress sufficiently the spirit of our unity. This requires discussing the exile as one whole.<sup>90</sup>

Stating an untruth regarding the Jews’ striving to return to the Land of Israel is similar to avoiding telling the whole truth about Jews’ diaspora existence: both are intended to satisfy the need to support the thesis

that nationhood is the essence of the Jewish collective even when that collective actually lacked such an essence. It is this need, and not the historical truth about the Jewish collective, that is constitutive of mainstream Zionism's prevalent historiography.

No matter whether or not essentialism as such is a misguided and misleading doctrine, it is definitely misguided and misleading in the sense in which Dinur and Zionism as it evolved after the 1930s have employed it. I hope I have shown how this essentialism has led official Zionist historiography into outright falsification and the retailing of fiction. Still, it does not follow from this that Zionism should not be essentialist in any sense at all, or that any type of essentialism is bound to drive Zionism to fill the factual gaps in its narrative with fabrications.

### *2.3.2. The Zionist Historiography of Judaism: What Do Judaism and Water Have in Common?*

Consider the following statement: "Man's essence lies in his ability to reason, to be free, to choose between good and evil." This position, in its essentialist wording, seems to be assumed by important moral theories and is also important for criminal and other areas of the law. Nevertheless, in these domains it does not seem to function as the statement "The essence of water is the H<sub>2</sub>O molecule" does in the domain of chemistry. If a chemist subscribes to this statement, he will necessarily expect that each concrete instance of water will also be an instance of H<sub>2</sub>O. Experts on criminal law, however, and moral philosophers who assume that man's essence is his ability to reason and choose between good and evil do not mean thereby that each and every person at any given moment has the ability to reason or to act rationally. They are aware that this is not the case. What they do is to single out a salient human ability that can serve as a working assumption for the purpose of determining how to treat humans and what expectations they should give rise to. This difference between essentialism in the domain of science and essentialism in the domain of morality could reflect the descriptive nature of the natural sciences generally as opposed to the normative nature of law and morality. In the natural and life sciences essentialism must be descriptive, while in the other domains I mentioned it could be interpreted as mainly normative. While not a totally accidental descriptive feature of the category at issue, the characteristic in question need not necessarily obtain in each and every specific instance of the relevant category.



Normative essentialism means considering a feature of a given category that is characteristic but not necessarily always present as the one that must form the basis for the desirable behaviors of the individuals making up this category or of the desirable behaviors toward them.

If one accepts the assumption that essentialist positions in certain areas of the humanities and social sciences are mainly normative, and if one accepts that it is a mistake to assume that they purport to apply to each and every member of the category they refer to in each and every appearance of this member, then the question regarding the truthfulness of the Zionist claim that the Jewish collective is essentially a nation is a question of political morality, not of historical fact. When the Zionist says that the Jewish collective is essentially a nation, he expresses his strong commitment to a norm according to which the Jewish collective, by virtue of possessing certain characteristics of nations, should both act like a nation and be treated as one. Commitment to this norm does not entail the belief that the attribute of nationhood is fully embodied in all concrete manifestations of the current Jewish collective, let alone in the historical Jewish collective. It is the same type of norm as the one that states that humans should be treated on the assumption that they are able to distinguish between right and wrong and that they should themselves behave as having this ability. This normative “working assumption” does not imply that the ability to distinguish right from wrong is fully realized in each and every concrete manifestation of human beings, past or present.<sup>91</sup>

I argued earlier on that Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century did not have (and indeed that today it does not have) to argue that the Jews always were (and still are) a nation in the full sense of the word or that they are a nation in essence. I am in a position now to add an important nuance to this claim: There was no need for Zionism to argue that it is of the essence of the Jewish people that it constitutes a nation in the same way as it is of the essence of water that it is H<sub>2</sub>O. The fact that the Jews existed as a nation in the Land of Israel in antiquity, and the centrality of that fact to their identity both in their own eyes and in the eyes of others, should provide a sufficient empirical basis for Zionism’s normative stance according to which it is of utmost importance that Jews see themselves as a nation, treat themselves as a nation, and demand that others treat them (or those of them who see themselves as such) as a nation. I do not mean, at this point, to argue that this Zionist stance was entirely justified. I contend only that the conceptual possibility of supporting this normative stance does not hinge on the truth of the claim

that the Jews were a nation at each and every moment in history or that they are currently a nation in the full sense of the word.

Subscribing to normative essentialism concerning the Jews' nationhood should not, therefore, require grafting falsehoods onto accounts of Jewish history, as official Zionist historiography has done. The British historian Eric Hobsbawm, one of the spiritual fathers of the Israeli post-Zionists, believes Zionists are by definition unable to write a serious history of the Jews:

No serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist . . . to be a Fenian or an Orangeman, I would judge, is not compatible, any more than to be a Zionist is compatible with writing a genuinely serious history of the Jews; unless the historian leaves his or her convictions behind when entering the library or the study.<sup>92</sup>

If nationalism is defined as an ideology that demands self-rule for groups that have existed from time immemorial, that are a part of the natural world in the sense in which—according to Hobsbawm's and Gellner's illustrations—water, horses, lizards, and Mount Everest are part of the natural world, then Hobsbawm is right in arguing that no historian of nations and nationalism can be a serious historian if he is a nationalist.<sup>93</sup> If the historiographical presuppositions of mainstream Zionism that were quoted above from Ben Zion Dinur and Yitzhak Baer define Zionist ideology in general, then Hobsbawm is also right in arguing that a Zionist cannot be a serious scholar of Jewish history.

However, there is no reason to accept unquestioningly Hobsbawm's and Gellner's definitions of nationalist ideologies. There is likewise no reason to accept Dinur's and Baer's stance concerning Jewish historiography as part of the definition of Zionist ideology.<sup>94</sup> Nationalist ideologies can be defined as ideologies that either demand self-rule for groups associated with pervasive cultures or contend that groups enjoying statist self-rule should have one more or less homogeneous pervasive culture.<sup>95</sup> The activities of the historical movements that have pursued these two ideologies and attempted to implement them, and the way these movements characterize the groups on behalf of which they act, are part of their characterization as historical phenomena. They are not part of nationalism as a political idea.

As for Zionism: Whoever adopts Dinur's and Baer's historiographical thesis, which has become embedded in the historiography of mainstream Zionism, as part of the definition of Zionism itself, is committed thereby to the thesis that some of the most prominent forefathers of

Zionism were not Zionists.<sup>96</sup> He or she is also committed to claiming that many historians of the Jewish people who supported Zionism were not Zionists if they did not conduct their research as required by the essentialism of Dinur and mainstream Zionism.<sup>97</sup>

The common denominator of Zionism's various versions is the demand for a Jewish national home in the Land of Israel by virtue of what both Jewish consciousness and Judeo-Christian consciousness perceive as a historical link of the Jews to this land. Anything else is an elaboration of this common denominator into some version or another—past, present, or future—of Zionism. This common denominator necessarily assumes that the Jews of recent centuries entertain a relationship with the nation that Western consciousness perceives as the Jewish nation that resided in the Land of Israel in antiquity. Still, this common denominator does not imply that the Jewish collective has existed as a single collective and as a nation in the full sense of the word ever since antiquity. A Zionist historian can therefore be a serious historian of the history of the Jewish people as long as he does not subscribe to the mainstream Zionism of recent decades.

Such an historian, as mentioned above, must acknowledge the bond between the Jews of recent centuries and the ancient Jewish nation in the Land of Israel. Obviously, he will have to decipher the details of this bond. He will, for instance, have to answer the question whether that relationship is genetic or rather akin to one of children adopting their parents or a mixture of the two. This, by the way, is what many Zionist historians actually do.<sup>98</sup> Such an historian may also agree with Gellner and his Israeli post-Zionist followers that talk about an ancient Jewish nation does not draw on the meaning attached to the concept of nation in the era of modern nationalism. He may also concede—as Gellner demands in the case of the nations on whose behalf national movements have been speaking up ever since the late eighteenth century—that the modern Jewish nation did not and could not exist as a nation in that modern sense before the modern era. At the same time, he may also rely on what Gellner and Hobsbawm, as well as their Israeli post-Zionist students, have shown, namely that modern nations, including the modern Jewish nation, are formed on the basis of linguistic and cultural groups that preceded the modern era.<sup>99</sup>

Modern nations are not mere inventions of nationalist ideology. They are not invented by them in the sense of being forged while having no real existence *qua* social entities. Neither are they invented in the sense that they are communities that nationalist ideology generated *ex nihilo*.

In order to make up nations, nationalist ideology had to couple itself not to the Holy Spirit but to cultures that have had a sociohistorical existence before the emergence of the need for, or the sociohistorical possibility of, such an ideology. This ideology chose to ally itself with certain cultures: in the case of the Jews it allied itself with Yiddish culture as mediated by the Bund, and with ancient Jewish culture as mediated by Zionism. Only some of these couplings managed to create nations in the modern sense of that notion: in the case of the Jews, the second attempt, that of Zionism, succeeded. In itself this is not a sufficient reason to dismiss out of hand these nations' very existence or the value they hold for their members. In our case, of course, this refers to the value Israelis, and Jews in general, attribute to the Jewish state that Zionism established. In the following chapters, where I discuss the moral gaps in the Zionist narrative of Jewish history, I will among other things examine whether there is an argument in favor of rejecting the value that Jews both in Israel and in the diaspora attribute to the modern Jewish nation.

My main interest in this chapter is, we may recall, the question of how the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative are filled. I suppose that most scholars of the history of the Jewish people and of Judaism in Israel and the rest of the world, whether or not they are Zionists, fill these gaps correctly, in terms of my argument above.<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, mainstream Zionism—at least in its prevailing official version—fills them with quite a few falsehoods. In this respect, the post-Zionists who were discussed above are no better than mainstream Zionists; they largely criticize defects from which they themselves are not exempt. As opposed to official Zionist historiography, which tries in vain to establish the Zionist principle according to which the Jews must conduct themselves as a nation by means of the unsound and superfluous assumption that the Jews never stopped being a nation, the post-Zionists discussed above try to reject this principle by denying that the Jews ever were a nation or that they were ever considered one—either by themselves or by others. Exactly like mainstream Zionism, they attempt to draw moral conclusions from statements of historical fact. Both uphold baseless factual claims produced by a combination of quarter-truths and conceptual fakes. Mainstream Zionists, on the one hand, claim that the Jewish people throughout the generations “strove” to return to the Land of Israel; the post-Zionists, on the other, claim that the notion of the Jews constituting a nation was considered “queer” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These defects, in the case of mainstream Zionism, lead to the overfeeding and the likely demise of the protagonist of the Zionist

narrative (along with many Palestinians), while the post-Zionists avowedly wish to starve the protagonist to death.

Mainstream Zionism filled the gaps in the Zionist narrative as it did out of a fear of being unable to justify certain historical moves taken by Zionism or certain political demands to which it gave rise. Post-Zionism rejected the infrastructure and emptied the meaning out of the Zionist narrative for fear that, unless it is wholly abandoned, it will not be possible to repair the great injustice that Zionism and Israel committed and are still committing. Both sides are wrong. Zionism can justify a considerable number of its political demands and historical moves without filling the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative in the manner displayed by mainstream Zionism beginning in the 1930s. And the great injustices perpetrated now and in the past by Zionism and Israel can be repaired without wholly emptying that narrative of all structure and meaning.

## CHAPTER 3

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# The Morality of the Zionist Narrative

### 3.1. Three Zionisms

In addition to the pre-Zionist adventures of the Jewish collective, the Zionist narrative is about the history of this collective since the inception of Zionism itself, the projects undertaken by the Jewish collective that were inspired by Zionism, and the *justifiability* of those projects. It is a story about the Jewish collective striving to realize the Jews' right to self-determination and to live within the framework of their culture in the Land of Israel, and about the justifiability of so doing despite the fact that Arabs were residing in this land and continue to do so to this day. The justifications that the Zionist narrative provides for these deeds are rooted in the historical link between the Jews and the Land of Israel, in the universal right to self-determination, and in the persecutions of the Jews.

There are many gaps of great practical significance in the various normative components of the narrative that require clarification. What exactly does the right to national self-determination amount to within this particular story? Which facts in the story justified asserting the right to self-rule in a place where another ethnocultural group was living, and what made these facts morally significant? How should we conceive of the institutional and territorial dimensions of Jewish self-rule in the Land of Israel in relation to the other groups living in that land, especially the Palestinian Arabs?

At least since the end of the 1930s, mainstream Zionism has filled these normative gaps in the narrative by invoking maximalist conceptions and principles. These conceptions and principles are unreservedly maximalist in their institutional dimensions. They demand Jewish hegemony

over the Arabs, and in certain spheres they even demand exclusive Jewish presence and control. As for the territorial aspect, they waver between principled maximalism (a right to the entire country) and compromise that, to judge from the approach of influential mainstream personages, stems from tactical or pragmatic considerations.

The post-Zionists reject or at least ignore the very need to fill these gaps in justification. As many of them see it, all the components of the justification of the Zionist narrative are utterly unacceptable, no matter how its gaps are filled. We discussed in chapter 2 how the post-Zionists rejected the factual components of this narrative by rebutting not only its historical details but even its basic presuppositions, that is, the presumed oneness and nationhood of the narrative's protagonist. Likewise, they are rejecting the components of the narrative's justification by rebutting not only the claim that the Jews had reasons to strive for the right to Jewish self-rule in the Land of Israel but even the claim that they are justified in continuing to assert this right after it has been realized.

The discussion in this chapter and chapters 4 and 5 is devoted mainly to mainstream Zionism's interpretations of the normative components of the Zionist narrative and to the post-Zionist rejection of these components. My argument against these interpretations has a structure similar to that in chapter 2, but it will be presented in a certain reverse order. Instead of first discussing the post-Zionist critique, then turning to the position of mainstream Zionism, and finishing with the principles of what in my opinion is the best possible interpretation of the Zionist narrative, I start with the problems that arise from the mainstream stance and propose an alternative interpretation for the gaps in the justification of the Zionist narrative. After that, in chapters 4 and 5, I will address the problems created by the post-Zionist critique and compare the repercussions of the various interpretations for the justification of Zionism and post-Zionism on Zionist historiography and on potential political and legal arrangements within whose framework Jews and Palestinians in the Land of Israel could live.

Mainstream Zionism invokes two major interpretations for the normative gaps in the Zionist narrative. The foundations of both interpretations are all found in Israel's Declaration of Independence and in the way Israelis were brought up (or became accustomed) to read it. The first interpretation rests entirely on history and proprietary rights. It is consistent with the Zionism presented in chapter 2 in being essentialist with regard to the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative. According to this

proprietary interpretation, the Jewish people has had the right of ownership of the Land of Israel, its outside and inside, its entire territory and its political institutions, since antiquity. This interpretation is prevalent among Israel's general public and many of its political leaders. It is discussed in the second part of the chapter.

The second mainstream interpretation—to be discussed in the third part—maintains that the right of ethnic nations to self-determination is, as a prominent Israeli legal scholar puts it, the right to a state that “offers special benefits to the people with whom the state is identified [and] at the same time, . . . puts those citizens who are not members of the preferred national community at a disadvantage.”<sup>1</sup> It seems that among the public at large this argument, which rests on a hierarchical conception of the right to self-determination, is considered only a secondary justification of Zionism. Many mainstream politicians fluctuate between it and the historical–proprietary justification. Those who consider the right to self-determination according to its hierarchical conception to be the main justification of Zionism comprise predominantly well-regarded academics whose views reflect and help shape the official consensus, and also a number of Israeli Supreme Court justices.<sup>2</sup> While mentioning also the historical ties between the Jews and the Land of Israel and the history of persecutions against the Jews as justifications for Zionism, they cite the right to self-determination, as described in the passage quoted above, as the primary justification for Jewish hegemony in Israel.

In the final part of the chapter I offer an interpretation of the Zionist narrative based on the same justifications as those on which mainstream academics and jurists rely—the ahistorical right to self-determination, the historical ties between the Jews and the Land of Israel, and the history of the persecutions against the Jews. Yet, in contrast to the principled hierarchical approach of these academics to national self-determination, I offer an egalitarian interpretation. Moreover, I argue that the view according to which each of these three justifications by itself legitimizes the hegemonic status of the Jews in the Land of Israel is misconceived. Zionism can be justified only through the combination of these three justifications, which are each necessary but sufficient only jointly. I call the version of Zionism that emerges from this discussion “egalitarian Zionism.” My main goal is to explicate the most significant advantages of this Zionism both over the other two interpretations described above and over post-Zionism.



### 3.2. Proprietary Zionism

Even when the land of Israel was not under Israelite rule, the Israelite people was not a homeless people, but rather a people from whom others have plundered its country, while it “clings to its fringe,” and “seizes and holds the branches of its palms,” and claims “it’s all mine.”<sup>3</sup>

This quotation from Ben Zion Dinur was cited in chapter 2 to illustrate how official Zionist historiography attempted to establish the immutable national essence of the Jewish collective since antiquity up until the inception of Zionism. The quotation provides a response to the objection that the Diaspora Jews before Zionism did not constitute a nation because they did not share a legacy of remembrances that they had an interest in fostering (a legacy that constitutes the so-called subjective component in the definition of a nation). The quotation from Dinur implies that the Jews did share such a legacy of remembrances that they fostered: the memory of the national life that used to exist in the Land of Israel and that they incessantly strove to recover. The quotation also implies a response to the claim that Diaspora Jews before Zionism were not a nation since they had not shared a common territory or a common culture (the so-called objective component in the definition of a nation). It implies that Diaspora Jews’ lack of a common territory or a common pervasive culture was devoid of normative significance since this lack was not something they had chosen but had been forced upon them.

Thus the story of exile, the theft of territory, and the striving of every generation to return to the land are meant to demonstrate that because the Jews preserved the Land of Israel as their territory and as their legacy, that land preserved the essence of the Jews as a nation. However, it is also intended to show that, for these same reasons, the Land of Israel never ceased to be the property of the Jews. In other words, the narrative is centered on the nation-property symbiosis that exists between the Jews and the Land of Israel. Dinur expresses all of this even more clearly and explicitly in the following:

The Jews were never in the condition of a nation without a country, of a homeless nation. There were always, even when in exile, in the condition of a robbed and exploited nation, whose land has been expropriated and plundered, and which never stops arguing and complaining about being exploited or claiming restoration of the plundered land, claiming and arguing that were addressed, of course, to whomever could expected to listen.<sup>4</sup>

In the eyes of perhaps most Israeli Jews, this proprietary/essentialist narrative justifies the establishment of modern Israel. Most Israelis would defend the privileged status of the Jews in the Land of Israel vis-à-vis that of the Arabs by reference to this narrative. The normative framework of the narrative is proprietary-historical justice, and the moral ontology it presupposes is collectivist: it assumes that the basic units of political morality are nations, not individual human beings.

### *3.2.1. The Proprietary Argument as a Basis for Jewish Sovereignty over the Land of Israel*

The proprietary-historical argument for Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel and for determining the normative relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel is the argument most frequently invoked by the “man in the street” in Israel. It has been pronounced not only by Dinur but also by prominent leaders of mainstream Zionism—such as Jabotinsky, Ben-Gurion, Tabenkin, Begin, and also the current Israeli leaders. Admittedly, the formative leaders’ interpretation of the justifiability of Zionism and their account of its territorial and institutional dimensions were complex and in the course of their political careers fluctuated between the proprietary argument and arguments based on the right to self-determination and the persecution of the Jews. However, during critical periods of their career they were promoting institutional and territorial maximalism on the basis of the Jews’ historical right to ownership over the Land of Israel.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, those who did give up on territorial maximalism did so mainly for tactical and pragmatic reasons and not as a result of relinquishing the principle of the Jewish proprietary right to the Land of Israel. Ben-Gurion, in a famous letter to his son Amos in 1937 explaining his support for Lord Peel’s Partition Plan, wrote: “My assumption is, and because of that I am an enthusiastic supporter of the state, even if for now it involves partition—that a partial Jewish state is not the end, but the beginning ... and it will serve as a very powerful hoist in our historical efforts to redeem the land in its entirety.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Menachem Begin, in trying to assuage the fears of Jordan’s King Hussein about the intentions of his government, stated, “We, as a result of the Holocaust, do not have the strength and therefore do not have the desire to realize our right to Transjordan.”<sup>7</sup> Note that Begin did not say that the Jews had no historical proprietary right to Transjordan, nor did he relinquish that right.<sup>8</sup>

To this day, this mixture of principled claims to ownership and pragmatic or psychological concessions is still plied. The authors of a recently published manifesto entitled *The National Left*, which made a great public impact, also swear by this combination. On page 7 of the manifesto the authors write: “We are convinced that Ben-Gurion was right—that we are here because the Bible is our deed of ownership to our beloved country.”<sup>9</sup> They then offer pragmatic reasons for relinquishing part of this deed. That this represents the prevailing approach in Israel is confirmed also by systematic studies.<sup>10</sup>

The historical-proprietary argument also reverberates strongly in Israel’s Declaration of Independence. The first paragraph of the declaration states: “Eretz-Israel [Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.”<sup>11</sup>

To be sure, this section tells the (true) story of the primacy of the Land of Israel in Jewish history, emphasizing that it was from the Land of Israel that the Jews bequeathed the Bible to the world. However, Jewish Israelis adhering to mainstream Zionism and its politicians usually reverse what is stated in the first section of the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Instead of emphasizing what it actually asserts, namely, *the primacy of the Land of Israel in Jewish history and identity*, they usually stress *the primacy of the Jews in the history of the Land of Israel*. And instead of noting that *the Jews had bequeathed the Bible to the world* when they resided in the Land of Israel, they speak of *the Bible bequeathing the Land of Israel to the Jews*. This reversal serves to justify their proprietary claims to the Land of Israel. The second and third sections in the Declaration of Independence encourage this transposition: “After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom. . . . Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland.”<sup>12</sup>

These statements are questionable, as acknowledged even by historians associated with mainstream Zionism (such as Anita Shapira and Israel Bartal). This questionable filling of the gaps—one of the purposes of which was to support the claim of unstopped continuity of Jewish nationhood since antiquity—receives much of its inspiration from basic distinctions and doctrines of property law and from the moral intuitions

underlying them. First, this filling of the gaps alludes to the elementary proprietary distinction between *physical possession* of a property and the right of *ownership* over it: two states of affairs belonging to different spheres, the physical and the normative, that need not necessarily be congruent. It is possible to physically occupy a property without being its owner, and it is possible to be the owner of a property without having physical possession over it. One of the ways to get hold of a property without being its owner is to grab it without the owner's permission—that is, to steal it. One of the ways to own a property without holding it is to lose possession to thieves and robbers. Second, the filling of the gaps in the third paragraph of the Declaration of Independence alludes to doctrines of proprietary limitations, according to which loss of physical possession will result in loss of the right of ownership if the owner ceases to strive to restore possession to himself. To sum up: mainstream Zionism tells the story of a people that came into being in the Land of Israel in ancient times, that was forcibly exiled from it, but that never stopped attempting to return to it. Mainstream Zionism uses the Declaration of Independence to tell the story of an owner that was forced to be separated physically from its property—land and political freedom—but never lost its right of ownership over it.

According to this interpretation of the Zionist narrative, the proprietary history of the Jews in the Land of Israel serves as a justification for the very formation of the modern Jewish collective in the land from the end of the nineteenth century onward, even though the country was mainly Arab, both in its demographics and in the cultural character of its public sphere. Arab presence did not have to be a delaying or disruptive factor since it was the presence of people occupying property that was stolen from the Jews.<sup>13</sup>

This narrative of justification serves as a source for filling other normative gaps in the story. These additional gaps relate to demographic, institutional, and territorial rights to which the Jews are entitled as part of their existence in the Land of Israel; to the status of the Jews there vis-à-vis that of the Arabs; and to similar issues of crucial significance for whoever has been living in Palestine / the Land of Israel since the end of the nineteenth century. The general outline of the conclusions drawn from this narrative of justification for these gaps is fairly clear (although this is not the case regarding the details of these conclusions): if the victim of robbery has always been striving to recover the item of which it was robbed, then the party possessing this item should have been aware that it is holding stolen property. The narrative assumes that the entire

property—the Land of Israel and its political sovereignty, that is, its political institutions—belong to the robbed Jewish people. The latter do not need apologize for their return to its stolen land; moreover, they are even allowed to expect the Arab possessors silently to acquiesce in their return and submissively to await instructions. The Arab occupiers can have no complaint at all about the physical return of the proprietors to their property since the Arab occupiers are robbers,<sup>14</sup> albeit not the initial ones. The current conception of the Zionist narrative of Jewish history, in addition to common historical knowledge, may allow one to conclude that the Arabs stole the Land of Israel from the Jews after the Romans had previously robbed them and after the Byzantines inherited this theft from Rome.

Perhaps it should be noted that the victim of the theft in the opening story of Israel's Declaration of Independence is the Jewish collective and not individual Jews. The Declaration begins with a narrative about the *Jewish people*. Of course, afterward it speaks of Jews as *individuals*, and not only as a collective, but these individuals are referred to as acting in the name of the collectivity, not on their own account as individuals. Dinur, too, says that the Land of Israel was stolen from the *Jewish people*. According to him it is the Jewish people, namely, the Jewish collective, who “tried to grasp the palm branches” of the Land of Israel. This collectivism must be presupposed by the historical-proprietary argument, for this argument can be sound only if the assumption that nations, not individuals, are the basic subjects of political morality is sound. Let me explain: even if the Jews were the owners of the Land of Israel in the seventh century, and its invasion by the Arabs could then be considered as an act of robbery, how is it possible to conceive of the individual Arabs living in the Land of Israel in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries as responsible for that robbery? And how is it possible to consider the Jews scattered around the world in those centuries as the legatees of the Jews who were the proprietors of the Land of Israel in the seventh century? This could be possible only if the existence of the individual Arabs of the Land of Israel who have lived in it in recent centuries is conceived of as the long arm of the Arab nation that conquered the Land of Israel in the seventh century, and only if the existence of the individual Jews of the world in recent centuries is conceived of as the long arm of the Jewish nation that was its owner then. Under this conception, then, the protagonists of the argument are not the individual Arabs and individual Jews of the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries but rather the historical collectives themselves to which these

individuals belong. In other words, the moral ontology underlying the historical-proprietary argument is collectivist ontology. According to it, the basic, primary subjects of morality are not individuals but national collectives. Isaiah Berlin describes this ontology as follows:

The essential human unit in which man's nature is fully realized is not the individual, or a voluntary association which can be dissolved or altered or abandoned at will, but the nation; that it is to the creation and maintenance of the nation that the lives of subordinate units, the family, the tribe, the clan, the province, must, if they are fully themselves, be directed; for their nature and purpose, what is often called their meaning, are derived from its nature and its purposes.<sup>15</sup>

Berlin characterizes the ontology under consideration as one in which nations are conceived of as living organisms. One may extend this metaphor and characterize the individuals of which nations consists as the cells of this organism. This ontology may have interpretations that view the individuals comprising the national organism as having neither independent existence nor independent value outside their collective, in just the same way as the cells of a living organism have no life or value outside the organism of which they are part. More moderate possible interpretations might view human individuals perhaps as having value independently of their being cells of the national organism, but nevertheless as secondary and subordinate to the value of the nation.

### *3.2.2. The Moral and Practical Implications of the Proprietary Argument*

The proprietary argument gives rise to a number of quandaries. One of them, as I noted above, concerns the truth of two of the factual premises from which the conclusion of this argument is meant to follow. According to this conclusion, Jewish ownership of the Land of Israel never expired: the Jews lost their physical possession of it because they were forced to do so, and they always hoped and strove to regain it. However, mainstream Zionist historians and spokesmen maintain that these premises are false. Another quandary arising from the proprietary argument pertains to the theory of justice upon which the ancient Jewish ownership of the Land of Israel could be based. According to the argument, this ownership originates in the fact asserted at the

opening words of Israel's Declaration of Independence, namely, that "Eretz-Israel [Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people." As stated above, and as I show in detail below, this fact can serve as a basis for determining the geographic site for realizing a nation's right to self-determination. It cannot serve as a basis for rights of ownership over a territory and over a political entity. In the meantime, however, I will focus on what to me seems to be the main difficulty arising from the proprietary argument: the acts of gross injustice to which this argument has drawn the Jews and Israel in the past and which it condemns them to continue to carry out in the future. The necessity of carrying out gross injustices stems from the combination of the proprietary framework and the collectivist ontology underlying the current interpretation of the Zionist narrative.

The theories of justice and moral ontology underlying proprietary Zionism can provide important explanations for two central components of the hegemonic Zionist position regarding the rights of the Arabs living under Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. They can explain the almost unanimous consensus within mainstream Zionism against granting *collective* rights to Arabs living in the Jewish state, certainly not rights explicitly based on their historicity and nationhood in Palestine.<sup>16</sup> According to the proprietary conception, the Arabs *as a historical collective* must be understood as those who stole the Jews' land, and thus it is not at all possible to even think about granting them collective rights; for this would be tantamount to granting rights to a thief over the object of his theft. Conversely, the type of justice and the collectivist moral ontology underlying proprietary Zionism can explain the fierce controversies that frequently arise within mainstream Zionism on issues concerning the *individual* rights of the Arabs in the Jewish state. The Arabs can be considered as the plunderers of the Land of Israel qua a collective and not necessarily qua individuals, and, therefore, hegemonic Zionism cannot produce a clear and definitive response to the question whether they ought to be granted individual rights and, if so, which rights. The answer depends on various questions to which proprietary Zionism does not have a uniform answer: Is the individual Arab no more than a cell in the organism of his nation, with no existence or value outside of it? And if his nation is not eligible for any rights at all, should he also not count as a rights bearer? Or, perhaps, the individual Arab, though of secondary value relative to his nation, is nevertheless a bearer of moral value? If so, what is the nature of this value, and which rights does it justify granting? Moreover, even if the granting of such rights could be justified, to

what extent does this have to be subordinate to pragmatic considerations stemming from the need to prevent the Arab collective from raising its head again and renewing its theft of the land from its masters?

The answer to the last question is, of course, subject to considerations arising from changing circumstances. However, those among the supporters of proprietary Zionism who are not moved by pragmatic considerations to cede any part of the land west of the Jordan River are divided only on questions such as whether the Arabs of Judea and Samaria (which Israel has controlled since 1967) should be allowed to continue living there, or whether they should be expelled, or whether they should have the right to decide for themselves on issues such as education and sanitation. Not one of those adhering to the proprietary interpretation of Zionism who is not moved by pragmatic considerations believes that the Arabs living in Judea and Samaria should be granted collective rights recognizing their Palestinian nationhood and historicity.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, all mainstream Zionist parties reject the granting of collective national minority rights to the Arabs citizens of pre-1967 Israel.<sup>18</sup> Tzipi Livni, a former foreign minister of Israel known for her moderate mainstream Zionism, once enjoined the Israeli Arabs to express their nationhood outside Israel.<sup>19</sup> When the former state comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat suggested in a public lecture adding to Israel's national anthem (the substance of which is wholly Jewish) a section with which the Arab citizens of Israel could also identify, there was a protest walkout from the hall: Rehavam Ze'evi, the head of the party that supported the expulsion of the Arabs from Israel, was almost arm-in-arm with Yizhak Navon, a former president of Israel who in his youth was Ben-Gurion secretary.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, the Labor Party with which Yizhak Navon affiliates himself and the group of parties that today follow the path taken by Rehavam Ze'evi are fiercely opposed on issues concerning the individual rights of Israeli Arabs—for example, their individual right to continue to live in Israel, their right to family unification, their right to vote in general elections without declaring loyalty to the Jewishness of the state, and so on.<sup>21</sup>

These controversies may be interpreted as manifestations of the disputants' conflicting beliefs concerning the dependence of the value of individuals on the value of the nation to which they belong. Some of the contestants would seem to believe that the Arab individual has a value distinct from and independent of the value of his nation and should therefore be granted some rights, unlike their nation. Other disputants completely subjugate the value of the individuals to the value of the



nation, and thus, having denied their collective rights, find no difficulty in negating their basic individual rights as well.

As noted, these controversies may not stem solely from the contestants' conflicting positions on the issue of whether nations or individuals constitute the basic units of political morality. Arguably they also derive from different assessments of the risk that if the Arabs are granted basic individual rights they will gain the capacity to rob the Jews of their land once again. Consequently, even those who believe that individual Arabs have value distinct from the value of their nation maintain that this value should be made subordinate to the risk they pose to the Jews because of their national belonging.

Since the Six-Day War, Israel has been determined to take control of those parts of Judea and Samaria that are classified by the property law applying there as "state lands."<sup>22</sup> This Israeli determination combined with its laxity in preventing settlers from taking over lands that are the private property of individual Arabs, and with the resilience demonstrated by the settlers themselves to take control of these lands, are all reflections of the practical significance of the proprietary theory of justice and the collectivist moral ontology that underlie the proprietary interpretation of the Zionist narrative. It is the legitimacy with which this interpretation endows the state and the settlers' takings that could explain the boldness with which the settlers steal Palestinian private lands. Settlers of an idealistic nature who are far from being common criminals—and I assume that most of them fit that description—would meticulously shun such robbery if they thought it really was robbery. Their resilience is intense because they believe that their taking control of these lands is to be considered not theft of land but rather its redemption. Moreover, it is a redemption that they carry out not for self-serving reasons but rather to promote the good of the collective to which they belong.<sup>23</sup> Settlers of a criminal nature—and I assume they are few—derive great pleasure from their deeds since they know they will be rewarded by their kin and not be seriously punished by the state authorities.

State officials and the army do demonstrate laxness regarding the theft/redemption of these lands because they oscillate between conceiving of themselves as representatives of a military occupation subject to international law that is committed to enforcing the private law of the particular territory that they occupy, and as representatives of the state of the Jewish people of which, according to proprietary Zionism, the settlers are the best children, those redeeming its lands from plunderers and robbers. State officials and the army, it should be noted, do not

demonstrate laxness when the issue is “state lands” in Judea and Samaria. Such lands, by virtue of the way they are defined in the positive land law of the Occupied Territories, belong to the collective. They cannot belong to the Arab collective because the Arabs enjoy no collective property rights in the Land of Israel. Only the Jewish collective can have such rights.

Israel is doomed to continue to act in all these ways as long as its policy is inspired and shaped by the proprietary interpretation of the Zionist narrative. The logic of this interpretation endorses these modes of behavior, and only pragmatic considerations and physical constraints can prevent them. The Arabs, both those within the 1967 borders and those in the territories occupied since, will continue to be the victims of this interpretation. For everything regarding the Arabs as a collective, they are assured of stability: it is certain that all their demands for collective rights will be rejected. In contrast, the attitudes toward their individual rights will fluctuate owing to the vagueness of the collectivist doctrine on the issue of the status of the individual versus the collective. Owing to this vagueness, on each relevant occasion one must re-evaluate the dangers anticipated in case individual rights are or are not being granted to the Arabs living in the Land of Israel. This fluctuation will also be affected by the changing political power of the parties holding this or that version of the collectivist doctrine or making this or that forecast of future events or this or that evaluation of the weight of the relevant pragmatic considerations.

When the Labor Party was in government, and perhaps even in major circles of the Likud regime, the Arabs could expect relative generosity toward their individual civil and political rights, both because certain leaders of these parties were wavering between the proprietary conception of Zionism and its less extreme hierarchical interpretation, and because of the presence of individualist and pragmatic concerns in the mainly collectivist beliefs of their leaders. However, the change of generations in the Likud’s leadership and the rise to power of parties to the right of the Likud, as happened in the Eighteenth Knesset elected in 2009 and the Nineteenth Knesset elected in 2013, has threatened these rights. This threat may abate if these parties lose power in favor of the Likud, but it will be exacerbated should these parties gain further power. The individual rights of the Arabs in the Land of Israel will always be subordinate, or even subjugated, to debates among the Jews over the civil and political rights they are eligible for and to the fluctuations in the political power of those holding these or other positions on this issue. Initiatives to detract from these rights within the 1967 borders

of Israel will have to go through a parliamentary and judicial review in order to be put into effect. In the Occupied Territories they do not have to overcome such hurdles. Jewish individuals have violated Arabs' civil and political rights in the past, and they will probably continue to do so in the future. The authorities' protection against these violations will always be dependent upon the complex interplay of personal and political forces in the governmental system.

It is not only Israeli Arabs and the Arabs of the territories who have been exposed to all these uncertainties since 1967. I mentioned that Menachem Begin allayed the fears of King Hussein of Jordan about his government's intentions by noting, "We, as a result of the Holocaust, do not have the strength and therefore do not have the desire to realize our right to Transjordan."<sup>24</sup> In other words, according to Begin, the Jewish proprietary right over Transjordan has not expired. This means that when the Jews have accumulated enough strength, they will also have the will to realize it, and then they will do so. If this should happen, the dynamics familiar from west of the Jordan will repeat itself to its east. The Arabs will enjoy no rights at all as a collective, and as individuals their rights will depend on the fluctuations of political power among the various parties that represent the different shades of hegemonic Zionism.

The collectivist ontology underlying proprietary Zionism threatens mainly the Arabs, but not only them; it also threatens the democracy of Jewish society in Israel. This ontology is antidemocratic, for the meta-ethical presuppositions of democracy are individualist and not collectivist. According to these presuppositions it is human individuals—not collectives—that are the basic units of morality. Equality among individuals and the freedom of individuals constitute the main values that inform democracy. It grants every individual an equal share in determining policies and imposes on politics the constraints of human and civil rights. A morality whose basic unit is the individual human being does not necessarily deny the value of collectives; it only derives this value from that which individuals ascribe to collectives. It is the opposite of the ethics underlying the proprietary argument, which in its extreme form derives the value of the individuals from that of the collective. Not only Israeli outlaw settlers but even mainstream politicians accept the antidemocratic presuppositions of the proprietary argument. As we know, since the Six-Day War Israel has been in control of the entire area west of the Jordan River, and since then settlers as well as mainstream politicians have been saying that Israeli governments elected by the majority do not have the authority to cede Land of Israel territory. They claim that the "mandate" to relinquish

territory does not belong to any one Jewish generation, not even to the present one; it belongs to the Jewish people as one whole throughout the ages. They think that the governments of Israel are not intended to represent the people who elect them in Israel, but rather the Jewish people in its entirety as it ought to be interpreted according to the Bible and other important Jewish texts. The statements below, written after Israel's unilateral "disengagement" from the Gaza Strip in 2005, which included the evacuation and dismantlement of all Israeli settlements there, are typical:

The shock and upheaval among those faithful to the Land of Israel stem from many factors, but they are particularly deep since this is the first time that the state—which purports to speak in the name of Zionism and the Jewish people—has relinquished areas in which the birth of the people occurred. In this sense, there is an essential difference between the cession in 1948 and the present one. Then, as in the 2,000 years of exile, we simply did not have enough power. This time, we are in possession of the land—and whoever pretends to speak in our name signs the historical waiver, for the first time since the formation of the Jewish people.

The meaning of this waiver, in itself, will propel many to disengage themselves from any commitment to acts of the state. A government that will relinquish Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, and the Old City, will no longer represent the entirety of the Jewish people throughout its generations. And most important, an Israeli state that will persist in its estrangement from Shiloh, Anatot, Mitzpah, and the City of David [all biblical spots where settlements were established in the last few decades], will ultimately come to self-destruction—or at least to the destruction of its Zionist structure.

It is impossible to maintain the Zionist idea and the inherent privilege it grants to the sons of the Jewish people, without connecting to the sources which has nursed it—the Bible, Jewish culture, and the Land of Israel. Whoever is undergoing a process of disengaging from all these is already situated today beyond the Zionist line. A few of them still call themselves "Zionists," but there is no connection at all between them and Herzl or Ben-Gurion.<sup>25</sup>

The blunt antidemocratic flavor of this text and the blunt antidemocratic interpretation it ascribes to Zionism by assuming that the proprietary conception is its only viable interpretation are characteristic not only of the settler who authored it. They are also characteristic of wholly "normative" politicians from mainstream Zionism who express similar antidemocratic sentiments.<sup>26</sup> They, too, argue that in their decisions on matters concerning the ownership of the Jewish people over the Land of Israel they are answerable to the entirety of the Jewish people and not to a majority among the public participating in their election.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.3. Hierarchical Zionism

The history of the nationhood-property symbiosis that exists between the Jews and the Land of Israel is deeply embedded in the consciousness of those who have been educated within the framework of mainstream Zionism, namely, most Israelis. For most of them, it serves as the main argument for the Jewish right to hegemony within the Land of Israel. However, as noted above, this is not the only argument in favor of that right. Israel's Declaration of Independence justifies itself by invoking two additional arguments, one based on the persecution suffered by the Jews and the other based on the universal right to national self-determination.<sup>28</sup> Prominent spokesmen of mainstream Zionism interpret this right as a right to a nation-state and as a basis for hegemony. According to Ruth Gavison, the legal scholar that was already cited at the beginning of this chapter, the Jewish state "is the state in which the Jewish people realizes its right to self-determination, or in other words: Israel is the nation state of the Jewish people."<sup>29</sup> A "nation state—a state whose institutions and official public culture are linked to a particular national group—offers special benefits to the people with whom the state is identified. At the same time, it puts those citizens who are not members of the preferred national community at a disadvantage."<sup>30</sup>

As mentioned above, while the proprietary argument for a hierarchy between Jews and non-Jews in Israel is popular among the Israeli "men in the street," the argument based on the hierarchical interpretation of the universal right to self-determination is invoked mainly by academics from the disciplines relevant to politics and members of academic professions that serve mainstream policy.<sup>31</sup> It is this argument on which they mainly rely when discussing the status of the Jews vis-à-vis the status of the Arabs in Israel. They seem to consider the historical arguments invoked by the Declaration of Independence—the historical connection between the Jews and the Land of Israel and the persecutions from which the Jews suffered—to be additional arguments reinforcing the argument from self-determination.<sup>32</sup>

#### *3.3.1. Self-Determination as a Basis for Hegemony: A Comparison with the Proprietary Argument*

The argument for hegemony based on self-determination is an ahistorical argument. Unlike historical proprietary rights, groups are entitled to national self-determination not by virtue of unilateral appropriations

they carried out during their particular history, but by virtue of their belonging to a certain general category, in our case nations, and by virtue of general considerations such as the needs that membership of those categories entails. The self-determination argument differs from the historical argument in not being grounded in proprietary justice, which derives rights mainly by invoking the unilateral acts of acquisition and revolves mainly around the relations between people and objects. In contrast, the self-determination argument is grounded in justice, which concerns mainly the relationships between human beings, not those between humans and objects. It is a system of justice that seeks to govern the distribution of goods among individuals or groups by reference to general criteria such as material need and human freedom and dignity. The right to self-determination is one component in a theory of distributive justice pertaining to the division of political power and the territories of the world among its inhabitants. According to this theory, the basic units for the purpose of this distribution must be national groups or peoples, not other types of collectives such as social classes or trade unions. Other components of this theory address issues such as the appropriate scope of the political power that must be allotted to these groups and of the geographic territories where they will exercise their political power.

The moral implications of hegemony based on the hierarchical conception of the right to national self-determination are much less terrifying than those of proprietary-based hegemony. First, hegemony based on self-determination will pertain only to the institutional aspects of Jewish rule in the Land of Israel, not to its territorial facet. The hegemony in question will therefore not necessarily apply over the entire territory of the Land of Israel, and thereby would not threaten all the Arabs (and other non-Jews) who live in Palestine and possibly also the Kingdom of Jordan.<sup>33</sup> It will threaten only those residing within the borders of the area in which the Jews exercise self-determination. Second, hegemony based on self-determination cannot result in shocking injustices like those to which the proprietary argument can lead: unlike proprietary rights, which primarily are rights of control over objects, rights to self-determination and autonomy (as well as rights to govern and to political sovereignty in general) are rights of control over people.<sup>34</sup> If hegemony follows from such rights, it must be subject to the constraints of constitutional and human rights that come in one piece with the rights of control over people. That being the case, grounding Jewish hegemony in Israel in the right of self-determination rather than in proprietary justice makes it harder to contemplate the expulsion of the

Arabs from Israel (let alone from the entire Land of Israel), the violation of their private property rights, the making of their political rights conditional upon loyalty to Israel's Jewish character, and the commitment of other gross injustices, some of which Israel actually does commit and others of which are repeatedly proposed by political parties in Israel. From the perspective of the proprietary argument, they are not injustices at all. However, from the perspective of those who ground Jewish hegemony in the hierarchical conception of the right to national self-determination, most of these injustices are unconscionable. Perhaps this is one of the main explanations for the difference between the intensity of the oppression of the Arabs in territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and the intensity of the oppression of those within the 1967 borders. The key enforcers of Jewish hegemony within the 1967 borders are legal officials; if my claim is correct that they justify this hegemony by reference to the argument based on self-determination rather than the proprietary argument, then this reveals the source of the protections that they (especially the judges among them) have erected against the oppression of non-Jews in Israel.

The academic spokesmen of hierarchical Zionism, too, stress the importance of these protections, even more vehemently than members of the law-enforcement community. For example, Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein boast about decisions of the High Court of Justice, such as *The Committee of Heads of Local Arab Councils in Israel v. The Ministry of Construction and Housing*.<sup>35</sup> The court in this case "instructed the state to take steps to ensure that the budget allocated to the Arab sector by way of Project Renewal financing for . . . upgrading of existing housing projects should not be less than that due to it pro rata to its proportion of the population."<sup>36</sup> They also believe that the Arab public in Israel is justified in demanding official, explicit recognition as a national minority and in demanding certain collective rights rather than merely individual rights.<sup>37</sup> Also, Ruth Gavison says, admonishingly, that

it is unacceptable that in all the years since the state was established hundreds of new Jewish settlements were constructed, and not even one Arab settlement. The great gaps between the budgets for the Jewish and Arab education system were documented in the State Comptroller's report. . . . Beside the inequality in the allotments, there is inequality in the division of power. . . . The Arabs suffer from striking underrepresentation in the public service sector, among the economic elite.<sup>38</sup>

Yet these writers, judges, and many others who support Jewish hegemony in Israel by invoking the hierarchical conception of the right to self-determination believe that the right to self-determination can serve as a basis for some inequalities that in their eyes are justified. As they see it, this right means the right of the Jews to a nation-state, which is identified as solely (or almost solely) Jewish in its public sphere, in its symbols, language, anthem, immigration policies, and the “right to a monopoly [that the Jewish people have] over the state’s entire public and symbolic space.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, even though the hierarchical interpretation of the right to self-determination sanctions injustices that do not come close to the dreadful oppression and injustice resulting from the proprietary conception, it nevertheless does condemn Israel to enforce inequality on a daily basis. In the name of a constitutional principle whose point of departure is inequality, it denies the Arabs a collective presence in Israel’s political, symbolic, and public spheres.

### *3.3.2. Self-Determination as a Basis for Hegemony: The Arguments*

The spokesmen for the hegemonic interpretation of the right to self-determination believe that it is possible to justify this inequality.<sup>40</sup> Their justifications for it derive not from the moral values embodied in the right to self-determination, but rather from two other sources: one is purportedly conceptual; the other is practice-based. The conceptual argument runs as follows: the right to self-determination, by its very *meaning*, is the right to a hegemonic nation-state. The Jews have a right to self-determination in their state. Therefore, the Jews have the right to hegemony in their state.<sup>41</sup> The practice-based argument may be summarized as follows: many ethnonational groups, such as the Germans, Greeks, Latvians, and Serbs, conceive of the states in which they realize their right to self-determination as states within the framework of which they are entitled to hegemony over other groups. Hence, it follows that the Jews, too, are entitled to hegemony over other groups living in their state.<sup>42</sup>

Both arguments fail. The conceptual argument fails because it is based on a false premise, according to which the right to self-determination is by its very meaning a right to a hegemonic nation-state.

International law and political theory alike recognize or discuss two distinct senses of the right to self-determination with regard to



ethnonational groups, namely, a right to self-rule and a right to secession. It is important to distinguish between the two since they are distinct and very different rights. The right to secede is the right to carry out the one-off act of withdrawing from one state and joining another state or establishing a new one (for example, as the Slovenians did when they seceded from Yugoslavia and established Slovenia, and as the Albanians of Kosovo did when they seceded from Serbia and established independent Kosovo). It is effected mainly in the international sphere. In contrast, the right to self-government is a right to enjoy an ongoing institutional state of affairs that has constitutional implications for the state in which the group enjoys this right, and sometimes also international implications.<sup>43</sup> These two senses of the notion of self-determination do not imply a right of ethnocultural nations to a “monopoly over all the state’s public and symbolic space.” The right to self-government does not imply it because self-government can be limited to specific governmental domains or to particular groups or territories within the state. The right to secede from a state and establish an independent one likewise does not automatically result in the right of the seceding group to hegemony in the state it has established. The right to secede could be justified on remedial grounds for groups that are being dispossessed or discriminated against in the states in which their members live.<sup>44</sup> From this justification it certainly does not follow that the right to secede is intended to allow the seceding groups to impose similar deprivations and discrimination on other groups living in the state they have established. The population of Macedonia had the right to secede from Yugoslavia and to establish an independent state, but the ethnic Macedonians of Macedonia erred when they interpreted this right as the right to exclude the Albanian ethnic minority within the borders of Macedonia from a presence in its public sphere, as well as the right to deny this minority a share of political power. After the European Union pointed out to the Macedonians their mistake, they had no choice but to correct it as a precondition for being admitted to the EU.<sup>45</sup>

This example—and there are many more like it<sup>46</sup>—can help explain the problem with the second argument adduced by the supporters of the hegemonic interpretation of the right to self-determination, namely the practice-based argument. According to this argument, many ethnic groups exercise hegemony in the states in which they enjoy self-determination, and therefore it is legitimate for the Jews to do the same in Israel. Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein devote most of their book *Israel and the Family of Nations* to this

argument.<sup>47</sup> They try to show that Jewish ethnocultural hegemony, as it is institutionalized in Israel, is akin to many similar cases the world over. The argument that bursts forth through the many cases they cite is the well-worn argument “Everybody does it,” an argument highly favored among other spokesmen for mainstream Zionism.

One may contest the validity of many of the examples these writers rely on. For example, Yakobson and Rubinstein mention Greece’s preferential immigration policy for ethnic Greeks and consider it analogous to the Israeli Law of Return; but they omit to note that the Greek policy does not bar individuals who are not of Greek origin from entering Greece and acquiring citizenship there.<sup>48</sup> They refer to Germany’s preferential treatment for immigrants of German ethnic origin,<sup>49</sup> but they omit to mention that this does not apply to all ethnic Germans, for example, to Americans of German ethnic origin, but only to East European ethnic Germans and mainly to citizens of the former Soviet Union who suffered discrimination under that regime. Yakobson and Rubinstein also omit to mention that Germany and Greece are each the homeland of a single ethnonational group: Germany for the Germans and Greece for the Greeks.<sup>50</sup> Israel, in contrast, controls territories that are homeland to both Jews and Palestinians. That being the case, Israel should draw analogies not necessarily from Greece and Germany but rather from other multinational countries such as Britain, Switzerland, Canada, Romania, Slovakia, and Macedonia. As a country with liberal pretensions, perhaps it is worthwhile for Israel to draw analogies from the first three of these and not from the rest. To be sure, when people plead that “everybody does it,” they are normally trying to excuse some action that is unjust rather than intrinsically just. If asked why we do not give or take bribes, we would naturally respond that “bribery is prohibited,” not that “most people don’t give or take bribes.” Only if we do sometimes give or take bribes are we likely to point out that bribery is quite widespread. We can thus see why those attempting to justify Israel’s hegemonic interpretation of its right to self-determination so often point out that almost the whole of humanity lives within hegemonic nation-states rather than trying to justify hegemonic nation-states on their merits. They do not consider the values upon which self-determination could be justified and the question whether these justifications imply a hegemonic conception of this right. The specific justifications for this right cannot provide a basis for the hegemonic conception of the right to self-determination in a way that allows for hegemony of one homeland group over other groups. They

allow such hegemony to exist between homeland groups and immigrant communities, not between homeland groups themselves.

### *3.3.3. Self-Determination in the Land of Israel: Why There? All over There?*

One of the advantages of proprietary Zionism in clarifying the status of the Jews in the Land of Israel is that it justifies in one strike their institutional status as a self-determining people there, the realization of this self-determination there rather than elsewhere, its realization there despite Arabs having lived there, and the territorial scope of this self-determination. If the Jews' ownership over the Land of Israel since antiquity has not expired, it is clear what their status in the Land of Israel is: the status of masters. It is clear why they have such status in the Land of Israel and not elsewhere, for it is over this land that they have ownership. It is also clear why the almost exclusive demographic and cultural presence of the Arabs in the Land of Israel at the end of the nineteenth century need not have dissuaded the Jews from returning there—the Arabs in the Land of Israel have been holding property stolen from the Jews since they invaded it in the seventh century; it is also obvious that the territorial scope of Jewish self-determination applies to the entire land, even if for pragmatic reasons the Jews do not take physical possession of all of it.

In contrast, if the ahistorical right of the Jews to self-determination is the basis for their institutional status in the Land of Israel, it is only their institutional standing that is then established. Since at the inception of Zionism few Jews lived in the Land of Israel, and the inhabitants and public culture of that land were mainly Arab, and since the Arab cultural and demographic presence in the Land of Israel is still solid and weighty today, filling the gaps in the Zionist narrative must address the following issue: Why was the ahistorical right of the Jews to self-determination realized precisely in the Land of Israel? Why was it justified to realize it there despite the almost exclusive demographic and cultural presence of the Arabs in that site? What should be the territorial scope of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel? In contrast with the proprietary argument, the argument based on self-determination does not have the resources to provide answers to these questions. The academic spokesmen of hierarchical Zionism do not address these issues sufficiently clearly and systematically. They don't even distinguish among them. They mention the historical connection between the Jews and the Land of Israel

and the history of persecution of the Jews, but treat these as secondary supports for the argument based on self-determination rather than as sources for filling the aforementioned particular gaps in the morality of the Zionist narrative.

Thus, for example, Jakobson and Rubinstein devote few pages in their book to the historical ties between the Jews and the Land of Israel, and to the “historical right” of the Jews in that land. However, they do not sufficiently clarify the role of these ties and this right in the justification of Zionism. They do mention, and rightly so, that these ties and right cannot serve as the sole or the main basis for the legitimacy of the Jewish state.<sup>51</sup> They also stress, justifiably and in line with many others, a distinction: “between a state demanding the sovereign territory of a neighboring state based on a claim of historical right, on the one hand, and a homeless people trying to return to his ancient homeland—not at the expense of the sovereign territory of any state but rather a territorial framework defined from the outset with the aim of enabling the establishment of a national home.”<sup>52</sup> This quotation implies that, despite their reservations, Jakobson and Rubinstein would consider the historical right as an acceptable basis for the legitimacy of the Zionist claim to the Land of Israel—in contrast, for example, to the claim of Otto von Bismarck, the chancellor of Germany, to Alsace-Lorraine at the end of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Yet Jakobson and Rubinstein are quick to qualify their remarks. To what they say in the quotation above they immediately add, “Nevertheless, the very fact that a territorial claim based on historical arguments was being raised, against the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants of the territory involved, was problematic for the international community.”<sup>53</sup>

It seems that what troubles Jakobson and Rubinstein with regard to the raising of territorial claims based on historical rights is the anticipated response of the international community rather than the problematic nature of this demand in itself. Even if we fully agree that the international community’s expected response must be seriously taken into account, Jakobson and Rubinstein have still not addressed the issue of whether Zionism was right in encouraging Jews to settle in the Land of Israel by virtue of their “historical right” *despite the resistance of its Arab inhabitants*. Jakobson and Rubinstein’s emphasis on the potential of this justification to provoke international opposition indicates that they have doubts about Zionism’s invoking this argument. However, given that they have written an entire book in order to justify Zionism, one cannot assume that this is what they really believe.

Yakobson and Rubinstein likewise do not address the issue of the territorial scope of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. In their statements quoted above they go along with invoking historical right as the basis for territorial demands in cases where a homeless people returns to its ancient home “not at the expense of the sovereign territory of any state but rather a territorial framework defined from the outset with the aim of enabling the establishment of a national home.”<sup>54</sup> Undoubtedly the lands of the Kingdom of Jordan are territories of a sovereign state, and therefore there is no doubt that between Yakobson and Rubinstein on the one hand and Menachem Begin, for example, on the other there is a significant practical disagreement on who should have sovereignty rights over Transjordan. As we saw above, Begin relinquished the exercise of the Jews’ historical ownership right to Transjordan only for reasons of akrasia; he did not give up on the right itself. When his successors acquire the capacity and the desire to realize that right, they will attempt to do so. In contrast, Yakobson and Rubinstein cede not only the realization of the historical right to Transjordan but also the very right itself, and for reasons of world public order. Thus, it is guaranteed that their followers will not demand it again.

But what do Yakobson and Rubinstein think about the West Bank territories (those designated by official Israel by their biblical names “Judea and Samaria”)? If the territorial framework that, in the words of Yakobson and Rubinstein, was “defined from the outset with the aim of enabling the establishment of a national home” for the Jewish people in the text that the League of Nations issued in 1922 for the British Mandate is the decisive territorial framework, it may be that the settlements founded after 1967 are still within the bounds of the legitimate territorial realization of the historical right as Yakobson and Rubinstein see it; these areas are included in the Mandate that the League of Nations granted to the British. However, if the decisive territorial framework is the one defined by the partition decision of the UN General Assembly in November 1947, then even the territories the Jews conquered in 1948 beyond the 1947 partition lines do not have to be part of the Jewish state. Perhaps Yakobson and Rubinstein believe that the Jews are no longer homeless, at least since the conclusion of Israel’s War of Independence, and therefore have not been justified since then in invoking the historical right argument for territorial expansion; for Yakobson and Rubinstein are convinced that only homeless peoples are eligible to invoke it. If so, the settlements on the West Bank after 1967 are not legitimate. Even so, it is not clear what Yakobson and Rubinstein would

reply to someone who believes that the building of the Jewish home did not end in 1948. If they do not completely deny the legitimacy of the historical right, perhaps it is still possible to continue to build the home within the territorial framework that was “defined from the outset with the aim of enabling the establishment [of that home].” In other words, Yakobson and Rubinstein do not address the moral issue that since the end of the Six-Day War has become the most important and urgent issue in filling the normative gaps in the Zionist narrative: Are the settlements in the territories conquered at that time legitimate?

Ruth Gavison, who like Yakobson and Rubinstein justifies her stance regarding Jewish hegemony with a hierarchical conception of the right to self-determination, also invokes the history of the persecution the Jews and the history of their ties with Eretz Israel. In her case, as well as in theirs, it is not clear what roles these histories play, or what force they have, in justifying the realization of the Jews’ right to self-determination. To the question whether they justified the attempt “to establish . . . a community and human infrastructure for sovereignty in Eretz Israel or in parts of it,” she replies that “as long as they employed legal, non-violent means, *the Jews were at moral and legal liberty*” to do so.<sup>55</sup> According to her, the Arabs, who were almost the sole inhabitants of the country, had similar liberties. When speaking about liberties, she is using the concept elaborated by the legal theoretician Wesley Hohfeld: rights one has not because the law has granted them by imposing obligations on others in order to satisfy them, but because it has not explicitly denied them; that is, rights to activities that the law has not prohibited.<sup>56</sup> Since the law contains a general prohibition on the use of violence, legal liberty-rights are important: they delineate the boundaries of legitimate competition. If two people see a wallet lying on the sidewalk, neither of them has a right to this wallet such that the other person has to respect, but each person is at liberty to pick it up, thereby preventing the other from doing so, as long as he does not do so violently.<sup>57</sup> In Gavison’s view, Eretz Israel is the wallet. In her opinion, both the Jews and the Arabs had the right—legally as well as morally—to pick up this item, that is, to establish there a community that would become self-determining.

However, were the Jews really at “legal and/or moral liberty” “to create a community and human infrastructure for sovereignty in Eretz Israel or in parts of it”? Did the Arabs have only the *liberty* to do so but not also a fully fledged right to carry this out (while others are under specific obligations to support them or at least not to stand in their way)? In order to answer the first of these questions, namely, whether the

Jews were at *legal* liberty to realize their self-determination in Palestine, there is no need to peruse the statute books of the Ottoman Empire, which governed the territories of the Middle East until its demise after World War I. It is sufficient to be aware of some elementary landmarks in the history of Zionism, such as that one of Herzl's first diplomatic moves was to seek from the Turkish (Ottoman) sultan a charter for settling Jews in Palestine. Had the Jews been at the legal liberty that Gavison awards them, almost certainly Herzl would not have become embroiled in an episode that caused him great disappointment and frustration.<sup>58</sup> History books for high schools in Israel report that in the beginning of Zionist settlement, as early as 1881, the Ottoman government set "limits intended to halt the growth of the *Yishuv* [Jewish settlement] in the Land of Israel and to prevent it from settling in territorial compactness and to turn into a separatist national minority . . . on 8 April 1884 the 'Sublime Porte' [the Ottoman Foreign Ministry] published a firman [a decree by the sultan] that forbade the entry of Jews to the Land of Israel and permitted the entry only of pilgrims for thirty days."<sup>59</sup> The prohibitions were reduced or expanded alternately, and after the First Zionist Congress in Basel, "on 17 May 1898, a general, total ban on aliyah was declared."<sup>60</sup> In other words, during most of the early days of Zionism, the Jews did not have what Gavison calls legal liberty "to try to establish an infrastructure for sovereignty;" not only that, they did not even have *legal liberties as individuals* to immigrate into Eretz Israel.

What about a *moral* liberty "to create a community and human infrastructure for sovereignty in Eretz Israel or in parts of it"? Gavison responds with a peremptory yes to this question, too. However, is it really appropriate for political morality to allow communities to settle in territories inhabited by other communities and to establish sovereignty over such communities, as long as they do not do so violently? Is it morally justifiable to permit settled communities to resist attempts by immigrant communities to impose sovereignty only by political and economic means and not by violence? If we reply affirmatively to this question, we shall be conveying news that will be welcomed by all communities the world over that wield economic and political power, since it would be giving the stamp of approval to colonialism subject to the limitation on the right of the settling power to use military force; it would mean that Germany has the right (of course, only of the liberty type) to establish an isolationist, German colony in Greece, so long as it doesn't use military force to that end; it would mean that the French

have a similar right with regard to Portugal. It follows from Gavison's views that Greece and Portugal cannot legally prohibit Germany and France from establishing colonies in their territories, since such a ban would enable them to use force to prevent Germany and France from utilizing their moral liberties.

When she speaks about moral liberties, perhaps Gavison is referring to what H. L. A. Hart—following Jeremy Bentham—called “naked privileges,” that is, privileges that exist in the state of nature (in Hobbes's sense). In this state there is no law (in the positivist sense of the word), no legal obligations, no legal prohibitions regarding any action; thus there is legal liberty to carry out any action. These are “naked” privileges, which are not protected in any way by a general prohibition against violence.<sup>61</sup> In this state of nature, there is also no law that prohibits violence. It is only within this framework that there is any meaning to Gavison's position according to which the Jews and the Arabs had nonlegal liberties to try to establish for themselves a political community in Eretz Israel / historic Palestine. It is not clear whether Gavison can accept this meaning of the concept of a liberty, a liberty that exists in the Hobbesian state of nature, since she defines liberties in a manner that includes the prohibition on acting violently against the possessor of the liberty. That being the case, it seems to me that Gavison's meaning remains vague.

### 3.4. Egalitarian Zionism

The three arguments listed in Israel's Declaration of Independence—the universal right to national self-determination, the historical tie between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, and the persecutions the Jews suffered—serve as the sources for filling the gaps in justifying the Zionist narrative for both proprietary Zionism and hierarchical Zionism.<sup>62</sup> They play the same role for egalitarian Zionism, but as in hierarchical Zionism and unlike in proprietary Zionism, it is not the historical link between the Jews and the Land of Israel and its interpretation as a proprietary tie that serve as the linchpin in filling the gaps, but the right of the Jews—in common with all other peoples—to national self-determination. Yet, unlike hierarchical Zionism, and following my criticism of the way this version of Zionism interprets the right to self-determination, I will argue for an egalitarian interpretation of this right. After that, I will argue that the role played by the historical tie between the Jews and the Land of Israel and by the persecutions



of the Jews in justifying Zionism as a political idea is more complex and fertile than the supporters of hierarchical Zionism and proprietary Zionism allow. I shall show that the historical link with the Land of Israel and the historical persecutions of the Jews can serve as sources for answering the main questions regarding the status of the Jews in the Land of Israel that the right to self-determination cannot answer by itself: (a) Why were the Jews justified in effecting this right precisely in the Land of Israel? (b) How can it be that the realization of the right was justified, even though the land was primarily Arab in its culture and demography? (c) What should be the territorial scope of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel?

Finally, I will argue that if one accepts my answers to these three questions, then, along with additional highly important considerations to be presented, they provide a basis for realizing the rights to self-determination of the Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel mainly in two separate states. The demographic profile of each state will enable each group to be dominant, though not necessarily exclusive, in one of these states. This dominance follows from considerations of equality rather than from the very meaning or from the general practice of the right to self-determination as is the case with the Jewish dominance in Israel according to the hierarchical Zionists. Furthermore, the dominance in question does not necessarily imply a “monopoly on all public and symbolic spheres of the state,” as the supporters of hierarchical Zionism conceive of it.

### *3.4.1. National Self-Determination: The Egalitarian Interpretation*

The right to self-determination of ethnocultural groups is a right that derives from their members’ interest in adhering to their formative or ancestors’ culture, in leading their lives within the framework of their culture, and in preserving the multigenerational dimension of their culture. This is a universal right based on the fact that the interests justifying it are currently shared by many of the members of all ethnocultural groups. Most people living today desire to live within the framework of their culture. It is important for their well-being, since their various choices and endeavors are meaningful only, or at least primarily, within this culture.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, most people desire also to ensure the continued existence of their particular culture. They need to know that their culture

will probably continue to exist and thrive. Hopelessness about the continued existence of their culture might easily undermine their faith in the meaningfulness of their own endeavors.<sup>64</sup>

These interests people have in adhering to their culture, in living within its framework, and in preserving its multigenerational dimension are usually tied up with their historic homeland. It is not at all clear, however, that members of groups with such cultures that live in a given state must enjoy hegemony over other, similar groups living under the same state in order to satisfy the interests under discussion. Significantly, those contemporary writers who argue that a nation-state is a *desirable* means for protecting people's cultural interests do not succeed in proving that it is a *necessary* means for achieving this goal. At most, they show that it is the best available means for protecting the interests in question, and in this respect is superior to multinational states, whose component ethnocultural groups would each be more secure living in a separate nation-state.<sup>65</sup> However, I am not certain even whether this latter contention is correct. The question whether a proposed set of means for protecting people's interests in their culture are optimal or not depends on many factors. These include not only the size and the wealth of the group to which they belong, but the adaptability of this group to shifting circumstances, the degree of solidarity of members of the group and of their commitment to its culture, and the nature of neighboring ethnocultural groups. Hence the futility of generalizing and the need to address each case individually.

However, even if the nation-state were in general or in any particular case the optimal arrangement for allowing individuals to flourish within their ethnocultural group, the argument would not end there, for two reasons. First, arrangements that are suboptimal may still be adequate for realizing intended goals. Second, however ideal the nation-state for allowing people to realize certain interests, those interests are hardly likely to be people's *only* interests. As well as desiring to cultivate their cultural inheritance and trying to bequeath it to future generations, people have an equal interest in being treated fairly and with respect. It is not obvious that this interest is universally served by the hegemonic interpretation of self-determination. If so, the hegemonic interpretation of self-determination should be rejected. In states inhabited by a number of homeland ethnocultural groups, realizing the hegemonic interpretation of self-determination by one group will be detrimental to the interests of members of other homeland groups in being treated with respect and as equals. By its very definition, granting hegemony to one group means denying it to the others and treating them not as equals.

I have mentioned that the status of immigrant communities on this issue is not the same as that of homeland groups. This is so for two reasons. The less important one is that immigrant communities are constituted as a result of a voluntary choice of their members. By choosing to migrate, their members relinquished their right to self-government within their original culture in the state to which they migrated and the right to maintain their culture there.<sup>66</sup> The more important reason, however, in my opinion, stems from the identity tie that usually exists between ethnonational cultures and their homelands. The interest of members of ethnocultural groups in existing as nations within the cultural framework of their group and in maintaining it for generations is tied to their historic homeland. Hence, members of immigrant communities usually have no such interest in the countries to which they migrate. That being the case, refraining from granting them self-government rights in these states within the framework of their original culture, and granting these rights only to members of homeland groups, cannot be considered as treating the immigrant communities unequally. Refraining from granting them these rights is similar to refraining from allocating medicine to people who suffer from no disease.<sup>67</sup>

The relations among homeland communities in the same state cannot be equivalent to the relations between homeland communities and immigrant communities. For example, in Canada groups such as the anglophones, the francophones, and the First Nations enjoy self-government rights. None of them enjoys hegemony over another within the country as a whole by virtue of constitutional and other legal arrangements. Each of them is self-governing and is able to live within the framework of its culture and preserve it for generations. This is not the case with Jewish, Sikh, or Ukrainian immigrants who live in Canada. The languages of the Canadian homeland groups and their symbols are those that dominate the public sphere in Canada. The territorial and institutional dimensions of the Canadian homeland groups' right to self-government are of course affected by their size: the presence of English-speakers in the public spheres of Canada is much larger than that of the French-speakers, and therefore their ability to influence security and foreign policy is much greater. These advantages, however, are not produced by special privileges that stem from the very meaning of the right to self-determination. They arise because the number of English-speakers in Canada is incomparably larger than the number of French-speakers. The case of Switzerland is very similar: the presence of German- and French-speakers in the public sphere of this country is much more salient than that of the Italian- or the

Romansh-speakers, since the former are more numerous than the latter. Accordingly, their influence is also greater. Members of the homeland groups in Switzerland have advantages and privileges relative to Turks and Slavs who live there, but these are not privileges that homeland groups have relative to other homeland groups in this country. Members of the Swiss homeland groups did not migrate there voluntarily. More importantly, no country in the world other than Switzerland can serve their interest in living within the framework of their culture and history. Their interests in their nationhood are tied to this country and not to any other country, while the interests of the Swiss of Slavic or Turkish origins in their original nationhood are tied to other countries, which can serve these interests. The right to self-determination must, therefore, be a right to hegemony in some respects, but the hegemony in question is that of homeland groups over immigrant groups, not the hegemony of homeland groups over other homeland groups living in their countries. The same also holds for Belgium: the Flemish and the Walloons there have rights to self-government and cultural preservation that result in advantages over immigrant communities living in their country, but not vis-à-vis one another. Since the Flemish and Walloon populations in Belgium are more or less equal in number, and since neither of them has special needs that justify granting advantages to it over the other, they have no advantages deriving from these empirical facts. Belgium, therefore, is a binational state both in principle and in political reality, unlike Canada and Switzerland, which are multinational in principle but in which some of their homeland groups are politically dominant because of their size.

All the above must apply to the Jews and the Palestinians in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine. Both groups deserve to be granted the privileges of self-determination within this country because both are homeland groups in it, each in its own way. The identity of each of them as a nation is tied to it. However, the privileges in question are privileges that each of them must have relative to immigrant groups, not privileges of one of them relative to the other. It may be appropriate to partition the Land of Israel / historic Palestine into two states such that in each of them one of the groups will have greater presence and power. But this inequality between them in each state would stem not from a hierarchical and nonegalitarian interpretation of the right to self-determination, but from the numerical advantage of one of the groups relative to the other within each state, and perhaps even from other differences. Below I will discuss this possibility, but first let me explain why it was

appropriate for the Jews to establish their self-determination precisely in historic Palestine, why it was fitting to do so despite its Arab character and inhabitants, and what the appropriate territorial boundaries are of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel.

### *3.4.2 The Land of Israel of All Places: History as the Source of Identity and Not as a Basis for Property*

The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.<sup>68</sup>

This paragraph, which opens the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, was cited in the first part of the present chapter. I argued there that proprietary Zionism reverses what is stated in this paragraph. By telling a story about the Jews' primacy in the history of the Land of Israel, and of a deed to this land granted to the Jews by the Bible (the Old Testament), this Zionism argues for a Jewish property right over this country. However, the story here is not that of the Jews' primacy in the history of the Land of Israel, as most Israelis are accustomed to thinking, but of the primacy of the Land of Israel in the history and identity of the Jews. Nor is the story here one of a deed to the Land of Israel granted to the Jews by the Bible (the Old Testament), as Israelis are accustomed to claiming. It is in fact the story of the Jews granting the Bible from the Land of Israel to the whole world. Moreover, even if the first paragraph was to tell the story of the Jews' primacy in the Land of Israel and of a deed to this land granted to the Jews by the Bible, this would not have been sufficient to grant them ownership over this Land. I shall immediately clarify this. However, I shall argue that the story that the first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence actually tells—namely, the story of the primacy of the Land of Israel in the history and identity of the Jews, and that of the Jews granting the Bible from the Land of Israel to the whole world—can serve as the basis for selecting the Land of Israel as the appropriate site for the realization of the Jews' right to national self-determination.

The primacy of nations in the history of certain territories—a primacy that mainstream Zionists love to stress with regard to Jews' status in the Land of Israel—cannot serve as a basis for nations' ownership of these territories. Jean-Jacques Rousseau expressed the reasons for that

lucidly with regard to the first occupancy practices for seizing territories common among European kings of his day:

How can a man or a people seize an immense territory and keep it from the rest of the world except by a punishable usurpation, since all others are being robbed, by such an act, of the place of habitation and the means of subsistence which nature gave them in common?<sup>69</sup>

These words are also applicable to the primacy of territories in the histories of nations.<sup>70</sup> However, the primacy of territories in the history and identity of nations can serve as a basis for the determination of the geographical location in which the nation's right to self-determination is realized. This is so because if self-determination itself is not interpreted as equivalent to independent statehood, then the fears expressed in the quotation from Rousseau lose much of their weight. This is particularly true if considerations such as material needs and human freedom and dignity serve to determine the institutional and territorial dimensions of particular nations' rights to self-determination. Based on principles of justice, territories and political power could be allocated to nations according to the size of their respective populations, the nature of their cultures, the specific needs of the cultures, the degree of a nation's commitment to its members, or how this nation treats those who are not members. Within such a framework, historical rights could serve as a consideration for selecting the specific geographical location where self-determination is to be realized. The area designated for a nation's self-determination may be larger or smaller than the historical territory of that nation. This depends on substantive considerations of distributive justice pertaining to the size of the territories to which each nation is entitled. If these considerations determine the division of the territories of the world along national lines, and if historical rights are interpreted as indicators for sites of self-determination, and not as a basis for the right to sovereignty, then the duties that correspond to these rights do not threaten the livelihood and autonomy of the potential duty-holders. The latter would be forcibly excluded from the particular areas where other nations exercise their right to self-determination; but these areas would be no larger than those from which they would in any case be excluded following any just distribution of the territorial rights accompanying self-determination among national groups.

The primacy of territories in the history of a nation should be relevant to selecting the locations of nations' self-determination, not only

for these pragmatic reasons but also because people for whom national affiliation is highly significant set great store by continuing association with these territories. Loss of homeland can lead to a sense of alienation and intense nostalgia. The strong significance of such territories in people's national identities suggests that they form an essential link to the right to national self-determination.<sup>71</sup>

It should be stressed, especially in case of the Jews and the Land of Israel, that these considerations can remain valid even in the event that direct contact with the historical territory has been lost. Committed members of a nation retain a sentimental tie with their formative territory even if they have ceased to occupy it since the place still constitutes a part of their identity. Arguably, physically separating the group members from that territory resembles forcibly dispersing the members of a kinship group. Since these continue to make up people's identities, there is good reason to situate self-determination in the formative territory even when the original physical connection has been broken.

An argument similar to the one I have just made with regard to the normative significance of the primacy of the Jews in the history of the Land of Israel and the primacy of this Land in Jewish history can also be made with regard to the normative significance of the Bible as the Jews' deed of ownership to the Land of Israel and the Land of Israel as the place from which the Jews "gave to the world the eternal Book of Books." The deed to the Land of Israel that the Bible bestowed upon the Jews does indeed create a right, but this right can be valid only among religious communities for whom the Bible constitutes their Holy Scripture: Orthodox Jews and Evangelical Americans.<sup>72</sup> It was not without reason that the Declaration of Independence ignores this deed of ownership, since it purports to make humanist arguments that would be cogent universally. The fact that from the Land of Israel the Jews bequeathed the Bible to the world—as opposed to the fact that the Bible bequeathed the Land of Israel to the Jews—could be the basis for a universal argument on which the Jews could rely when they selected the place for realizing, not proprietary territorial rights, but their ahistorical and universal right to self-determination. The fact that from the Land of Israel the Jews gave the world the Bible identifies the land with the most important Jewish contribution to human civilization. Stressing this fact means stressing a pivotal component of the identity of the Jews in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world.<sup>73</sup> The right to self-determination is linked to peoples' interest in maintaining their identity and in living their lives within its framework. Thus, if it is desirable for the Jews to

adhere to their identity, to live within its framework, and to maintain it over the generations, or if it is desirable to enable them to do so, then it is desirable also that they do so in the Land of Israel, with which they are identified as a historical collective.

*3.4.3. The Land of Israel Despite Its Arab Population:  
Global Justice, the Persecution of the Jews,  
and the 1967 Borders*

I have interpreted the historical link of the Jews with the Land of Israel not as a basis of their proprietary rights over it but as the basis for the selection of this land as the place in which the Jews' ahistorical right to self-determination is to be realized. According to Israel's Declaration of Independence, they have this right "like all other nations." This right was interpreted above as a universal and equal right of *homeland nations* to self-rule in their homeland. The claims that the Jews' rights in the Land of Israel derive from the universal right to self-determination and that historical ties with a territory are a basis for its selection as the geographic location for realizing the self-determination presuppose an ideal theory of global justice among nations for the distribution of their cultural and political rights. It is from this theory of justice that the right to national self-determination and the historical tie as a consideration for selecting the territory for realizing this right draw their normative force.

However, we must remind ourselves that even if we were to assume that the general principles of this theory of justice are clear, their implementation would face insurmountable difficulties in the world as it is. This is so because this world lacks legislative institutions to draft these principles in sufficient detail to allow their implementation, judicial institutions to decide disputes that might arise over the interpretation of such principles, and above all institutions for enforcing these principles on all the subjects of the justice at issue, namely, the nations of the world. In other words, in order for justice to be achieved in distributing the goods required for the implementation of national rights, there is a need for most nations in the world to coordinate their actions by adhering to a comprehensive system of principles that could help to settle these types of issues. Performing one isolated action according to one isolated principle that is supposed to be part of a comprehensive and institutionalized system could well be compared to collecting income tax from one taxpayer only. Even if the taxation rate could be



justified, collecting it from just one individual only would still be unjust. It seems, therefore, that circumstances in which there are no institutions for applying a system of justice to all its subjects in a coordinated manner justify suspending activity on the basis of this justice. It seems that such suspension should have applied to the Zionist plan for establishing self-determination for the Jews in the Land of Israel.<sup>74</sup> In other words, even if the formative tie that a particular nation has to a given territory should ideally be a reason to make that territory the site for the realization of the nation's self-determination, in our nonideal world considerations of justice, namely the equal distribution of burdens and benefits to all parties involved, compel the suspension of any action according to this ideal in cases where the nation in question does not actually reside in its formative territories.

To see this, consider the argument that Saudi Arabia should share oil revenues with very poor countries such as Somalia. This can be a legitimate principled position, but it need not follow from it that Somalia or any other poor country is entitled to seize a share of Saudi oil wealth by force. Arguably, other oil-rich countries, like Kuwait, should share their wealth; and other poor countries, like Chad for example, should benefit from it. Perhaps wealth derived not only from natural resources but from human capital should also be shared in this way. Perhaps the distributional issues raised by these considerations should be regulated by universally accepted principles and administered and enforced consistently by a set of international public authorities. However, as long as such public authorities do not exist, any single and unilateral action taken against a party subject to these principles would be unjust, at least in some respects, and might have violent consequences regardless of whether the justice of the principle itself is undisputed.

The latter argument seems to me compelling, and under normal circumstances should persuade members of nations to eschew irredentist ambitions. However, I would venture to argue that if there really is no other way to achieve their self-determination, or at least to conduct tolerable lives as individuals, members of a national group might nevertheless reasonably appeal to the principles of ideal global justice among nations. Arguably, an emergency could legitimize removing the suspension that must normally apply to these principles. It could legitimize invoking the historical rights argument or, at least, excuse those acting on it from liability.

As we know, the persecution of the Jews in Europe in the nineteenth century continued despite their emancipation during the course of that

century. In the twentieth century, too, the persecutions went on, culminating in the Holocaust. Europe presented the Jews with extremely limited opportunities to achieve self-determination, as envisioned by the Bund, or even to be assured of their dignity or even their survival as individuals.<sup>75</sup> Since they were persecuted, they were surely allowed to take their bloodshed and the trampling of their dignity as established facts. On the other hand, the bloodshed that would be caused by their return to their historical homeland, even though it could almost certainly be predicted, was not yet a *fait accompli*. It could have been accompanied by the hope that perhaps they would be able to defend themselves and their dignity as well as to put an end to the bloodshed. They had no such hope in the places in which they dwelled. They could have told themselves that the partial injustice that they would commit by establishing self-rule in their homeland, they and other nations would repair when the time came.

The Jews, thus, had a justification that can be called remedial—a justification based on the necessity to rescue themselves, and particularly their dignity—to realize their primary right to self-determination and to realize it in their historical homeland, even if they were not actually present in it.<sup>76</sup> The necessity that, according to the current account, supports resorting to the historical rights argument is very similar to the “necessity” defense in criminal law. This defense is often invoked to justify acts that would be legally and morally prohibited in normal circumstances, or at least excuses those committing these acts from liability. An example would be the justification for someone mortally wounded breaking into a closed pharmacy to obtain a life-saving drug.<sup>77</sup>

With regard to this argument the Arabs might wonder, “Why our pharmacy?” The response is either that it contains the medicine needed, or that it contains better medicine than found in other pharmacies (that is, places such as Uganda, East Europe, Argentina). That is to say, the medicine is unique, or is at least better than any other medicine. If what I argued in the previous section is sound, then it seems that an attempt to realize self-determination in the formative territory has a better chance of success than any attempts to realize self-determination in other territories might have. This account should have stressed from the start the necessity defense in general and the pharmacy analogy in particular. It was the Jews’ urgent need to safeguard their survival and dignity that overcame or brushed aside the arguments against achieving Jewish self-determination in Palestine. This was not therefore an effect of their right to self-determination in itself and of the ordinary justification

of this right, that is, people's interest in living within the frameworks of their cultures and determining their destinies within these frameworks.<sup>78</sup>

This juxtaposition of the historical ties the Jews have with the Land of Israel and the history of the persecution of the Jews can serve as a basis for answering not only the question of why was Palestine the appropriate place for the realization of the Jews' right to self-determination even though its population and culture were Arab. It also answers the question of the territorial scope of this right. If we agree that the necessity created by the persecution of the Jews is what tipped the case in favor of realizing their right to self-determination in the Land of Israel despite its being Arab demographically and culturally (or in favor of exempting them from responsibility for the wrongness of this act), then the territorial scope of their self-determination there cannot exceed the borders that were set when this necessity actually existed, that is, Israel's borders as determined at the end of the 1940s. These borders were delineated first by the UN General Assembly's Partition Plan in 1947 and later by the armistice agreements of 1949. These agreements ended a chain of events that occurred as a result of the Partition Plan: the refusal of the Arabs to accept this plan, and the ensuing war between the Arabs and the Jews. The borders set by these agreements and nineteen years of stability as well as the relative growth in strength that the Jews enjoyed after these boundaries were determined, in addition to their spectacular victory in the Six-Day War, ended the necessity that grounded the justification for the establishment of Jewish self-determination in Palestine/Israel. These borders therefore should define the territories for Jewish self-determination in this country.<sup>79</sup>

#### *3.4.4. Jewish and Palestinian Self-Rule: Principled Equality and Division of Political Power*

Even though this necessity had ended with the Six-Day War, Israel was not very careful to maintain the realization of its self-determination within the 1949–67 borders. Since the 1970s, it has persistently settled hundreds of thousands of Jews beyond them. This persistence can be explained only as an expression of Israel interpreting its Zionism according to the proprietary conception and certainly not according to the egalitarian interpretation. If the claims that I have tried to defend about the equal right to self-determination of homeland groups are sound, and if Israel wants its Zionism to be just, it can follow one of two paths. It

can agree to the establishment of one state to the west of the Jordan River in which both nations will govern together and each will enjoy autonomy equal to that of the other. Owing to the small differences in numbers of Jews and of Arabs in this state, the division of power between the two groups will have to be egalitarian, not only in principle but in the actual distribution of the collective goods that have to be divided between them: political power and presence in symbols of the state and in its public sphere. The other path for realizing the equality between the Jews and the Palestinians is the establishment of two states. According to my arguments above, their territorial and demographic profile must be based on the 1967 lines. The demographic profiles of the states that will exist in areas immediately west and east of the 1967 borders will allow each of the two nations a political and cultural prominence in one of these states.

My view is that in order to realize the equal rights of the Jews and the Palestinians to self-determination in Israel/Palestine, they need to adopt the second path rather than the first. One significant reason for this is that most of the members of each of the two groups prefer to live in a country in which its group constitutes the majority and enjoys political hegemony. Other grounds, perhaps even more important for preferring this solution, derive not from the mere preferences of the two groups' members, but essentially from facts relating to the history and current nature of the conflict between them. The most significant and complex fact is that the conflict between the Jews and the Palestinians is a conflict between two groups most of whose members deny the very legitimacy of the presence of the other group in a land they consider wholly theirs, or at least the legitimacy of the other's claim to equal status. Most Jews understand the Zionist story according to the proprietary interpretation, which is committed to conceiving of the Arabs as a plunderer nation. Most of those who do not espouse the proprietary interpretation support the hierarchical conception according to which the Palestinians must bear the burdens of Jewish self-determination.

Most of the Palestinians and most of the Arabs generally do not accept the Zionist narrative in any of its conceptions. They rightly cannot accept the proprietary and the hierarchical conceptions, which oscillate between total dismissal of the Arabs in the Land of Israel and conceiving of their status as inherently inferior to that of the Jews. These interpretations are an insult to Palestinian dignity and threaten the welfare of Palestinians both individually and collectively. However, in my opinion, the Palestinians will have to accept the egalitarian conception of

Zionism presented here if the Jews endorse it. It also has a better chance than the others of being accepted by them.<sup>80</sup>

The chance of the egalitarian interpretation being accepted by the Palestinians will grow stronger the more that interpretation comes to be accepted by the majority in Israel and by the Israeli leadership, and after it does everything necessary for it to be accepted, namely recognizing the various prices the Palestinians paid for the realization of Zionism and compensating them for these prices with the help of other countries and international organizations. However, even if the Jews, and particularly their leadership, were to officially endorse the egalitarian conception of Zionism and the historical and institutional implications of that conception, and even if the Palestinians were to officially accept the Jews under their egalitarian Zionist identity, it will not be possible practically to put it into practice in conducting political life in a single framework in which the two groups' political power would be equal; within each of these groups, there are—and will be for the foreseeable future—subgroups with enough motivation and political power to frustrate this mutual acceptance.

Additional considerations supporting the establishment of two states stem from a number of complex facts. One is that relationships of trust between adversaries in disputes will generally not emerge unless the conflicts themselves are resolved, and then only after enough time has passed and the two parties have attempted to build such relationships. This is true irrespective of which party was originally responsible for the conflict. Inasmuch as this truism applies to all conflicts, it also pertains to the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. Second, at least from the Israeli Jewish perspective, the issues over which Jews, Palestinians, and Arabs in general must trust one another are not minor ones but rather touch on the Jews' very physical existence and their survival as a distinct society exercising self-determination in the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Third, the Jews in Israel may soon cease to make up a majority in the state, a possibility that generates considerable anxiety among Israeli Jews. And whereas the Jews are a small minority in the entire Middle East, Palestinian society belongs to the entire region's ethnocultural identity. In view of these three well-known facts, the Jews have good reason to believe that the Arabs in general and the Palestinians specifically would ultimately not respect the Jewish people's interests in their survival as a distinct society in the Middle East. As long as the conflict remains unresolved and as long as there are no relationships of trust among the parties, both of them must maintain political frameworks

that allow each party to retain its own separate political decision-making power and the ability to protect itself. From the Jews' perspective, this means that it is better for them to live within the framework of a state with military might in which they constitute a substantial majority: a state all or most of which is located to the west of the 1967 borders.

This is the minimalist stance of the majority in Israel (which is adopted by this majority not because it currently subscribes to egalitarian Zionism, but for mostly pragmatic reasons). In contrast, the interpretations the Israeli majority gives to the Zionist narrative testify to its unwillingness to come to terms with the need to grant self-government rights to the Palestinian minority in the state west of the 1967 borders. This minority has been living in the territory of the state since before 1967, and therefore the state will have to grant self-government rights to it. It is entitled to such rights by virtue of its being a homeland group as much as the Jewish majority is such a group. Consequently, this state cannot be Jewish in the sense that Justice Elon speaks of in the Ben-Shalom decision, namely a state that is *only* Jewish.<sup>81</sup> However, it can be Jewish in more modest senses. It can be such first of all in the sense that the Jews living in it—in contrast to Jews living in the United States, for example, or Britain—will be entitled within its framework to self-government rights that will allow them to live within the framework of their culture, to maintain it for generations, and to take part in the government of this state.<sup>82</sup> Second, the state would also be a *mainly Jewish* state, since it will have a Jewish majority that, for the reasons to be immediately explained, will enjoy limited means to preserve itself as a majority within that state. A Jewish majority would justify Jewish dominance from the perspective of equality itself, since a numerical advantage obviously justifies an unequal division of various resources, including political power and presence and representation in the public sphere, in state symbols, and in many other domains. As for the special needs the Jews have for maintaining a majority and which the Palestinians do not seem to have, these stem from the fact that the Jews are a small minority in the entire Middle East, and the fact of the Jewish-Arab conflict. These two facts give rise to security concerns justifying the preservation of the Jewish majority in the state west of the 1967 borders and control over its security forces in the foreseeable future. Such measures are not always unjust. They are adopted, for example, in the reservations for the Native Americans in North America because of the enormous relative strength of the majority culture among whom they live and because of the threats this majority culture imposes on their interest in living within

the framework of their culture. Also, the francophone nation in Quebec, for example, adopted such measures, mainly in the realm of collective language rights, because its weakness relative to the English-speaking majority in North America could pose a threat to the interest of the members of the francophone community there to live within the framework of their culture. Despite the significant differences between the situation of the Jews in the ethnocultural demography of the Middle East and that of the native minorities in North America, there are some points of similarity that also justify adopting certain measures to protect the Jews' ability to sustain self-determination within the framework of their culture in the Middle East. Certainly the similarity between the condition of the Jews in the Middle East and that of the francophones in North America corroborates this.<sup>83</sup>

It is important to reemphasize that the advantages vis-à-vis the Arabs noted above that the Jews enjoy or are entitled to according to egalitarian Zionism—control of security, measures to ensure a majority, and advantages deriving from their very being the majority—do not make egalitarian Zionism equivalent to hierarchical Zionism. The baselines these two types of Zionism employ for distributing cultural and political goods between Jews and Arabs in the mainly Jewish state are different. Egalitarian Zionism's baseline is arithmetic equality. Deviation from it must be supported with reasons produced by a reasonable conception of justice. Hierarchical Zionism's baseline is Jewish privilege. According to it, the priorities just mentioned, and other priorities, are not based on the Jews' special needs but on the purported meaning that hierarchical Zionists ascribe to the right to self-determination and its general practice. Also, according to hierarchical Zionism, in a state in which there is a Jewish majority, only the Jews can be eligible for self-determination, not the Palestinians. From its perspective, the Palestinians' right to self-determination is fully exhausted by its being realized outside the Jewish state, in another state that exists in Palestine / the Land of Israel. Conversely, from the perspective of egalitarian Zionism, Arabs living in a state that is principally Jewish are entitled to self-government within it, even if there is another state in which the ethnocultural nation to which they belong realizes its right to self-determination. Moreover, the Jews in a state that is mainly Jewish are entitled to advantages not because it is only they who are entitled to realize their right to self-determination there and because of the purported meaning of this right. They are entitled to these advantages because they constitute the majority in this state, and because of their special needs as people belonging to a distinct

ethnocultural minority community in the Middle East, needs that the Palestinians living in this state do not have. In other words, whereas hierarchical Zionism accounts for the Jews' priority over the Palestinians in the mainly Jewish state in the way the advantages of the nobility over the people were explained in prerevolutionary France, egalitarian Zionism justifies these advantages in a way similar to the justification of granting medicines to the sick rather than to the healthy.

For the reasons explained above, egalitarian Zionism holds that the advantages the Jews are entitled to within the exercise of their right to self-determination apply only within the spheres of demography and security. The demographic dominance of the Jews and their control over the military do not justify detracting from the equality in distribution of resources and in the allocation of jobs and equal opportunities. Moreover, they do not even justify withholding collective rights from the Arabs on issues unrelated to demography and control of military strength such as autonomy in certain areas (e.g., education) and rights for representation in the public sphere.

There is no reason why the Arabs in Israel should not exercise such autonomy, subject to the relevant constraints that must apply to all citizens of Israel. Denying such autonomy to the Arabs does not contribute to the security of the Jews. It does not enhance their security and does not pertain to the reasons for which the Jews fear for their security. To the contrary: such denial nurtures the grounds for Arab antagonism and thus for Jewish fears. The same applies to the denial that the Arabs face in matters concerning their collective representation in the public sphere of Israel and its symbols. They should be fairly represented according to their percentage in the population in general and according to the strength of their presence in different parts of the state.<sup>84</sup> Just like the denial of autonomy in educating their younger generation, denying the Arabs a presence in the public sphere of the state does not contribute to the security of the Jews and does not affect their demographic condition. Like the denial of autonomy in education, it does the opposite. Because of its oppressive nature it nurtures the grounds for Arab resentment.<sup>85</sup>

In addition to the above, I should also mention that according to egalitarian Zionism, the advantages that the Jews in Israel should enjoy in the spheres of demography and security must be constrained by the requirements of human rights. For example, beside the Law of Return, a number of measures for promoting demographic goals and increasing the Jewish majority have been proposed and implemented in recent years in Israel. During the term of the Fifteenth Knesset, right-wing member



of Knesset Michael Kleiner introduced a draft bill intended “to encourage people that do not identify with the Jewish character of the state [i.e., Palestinian citizens of Israel] to leave.”<sup>86</sup> The bill did not reach a plenary discussion in the Knesset and therefore lapsed. However, during the incumbency of the Sixteenth Knesset, the Israeli government later introduced a bill—which was passed—to amend the Israeli Citizenship Law in a manner that would deny Arabs who are Israeli citizens and who have married Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories the right to live in Israel with their spouses and children.<sup>87</sup> In contrast to the priorities in immigration granted to Jews by the Law of Return, which can be put into effect without violating the human rights of Israeli citizens, Jews and Arabs alike, the law denying Arabs the right to family unification, and not only Kleiner’s proposed bill, is detrimental to these rights.<sup>88</sup> Within the framework of the political and demographic dominance to which the Jews are entitled on the basis of the arguments mentioned above, the measures facilitated by this law to preserve or enlarge the Jewish majority should be prohibited. It goes without saying that even worse measures, such as birth control or expulsion, cannot be adopted to preserve ethnonational majorities.

To sum up: the tripartite justification for Zionism that I set out at the beginning of this section—a justification based on an egalitarian distribution of rights to self-government among nations, on the justifiability of realizing these rights in territories with which nations have identity ties, and on the necessity created as a result of the persecution of the Jews—provides answers to all the important questions arising from the moral gaps in the Zionist narrative. It provides an account of the institutional aspects of Jewish self-government, of the issue of why self-government was realized precisely in the Land of Israel even though Arabs have been living there, and of the issue of its territorial scope. To be sure, it does not do that in one stroke, as does proprietary Zionism. However, unlike proprietary Zionism, it does so on the basis of justifications one could accept and defend.

The advantages of egalitarian Zionism over the proprietary and the hierarchical interpretations are not exhausted by filling the gaps in the morality of the Zionist narrative. Egalitarian Zionism has advantages also in filling the factual gaps of this narrative. It enables the Zionist historiography of Judaism and of Zionism to be more faithful to the histories of these two phenomena. Moreover, it may serve as a more stable basis for a future arrangement of peaceful coexistence between Jews and Palestinians in the Land of Israel. These advantages of the egalitarian

version of Zionism apply not only with regard to the mainstream versions of Zionism discussed in this chapter but also with regard to the stance that most of the post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism adopt toward Zionism. I demonstrated some of these claims in chapter 2, when discussing the Zionist idea as an interpretive idea of Judaism and the Zionist movement as one that realized this interpretive idea and seeks to continue doing so. I shall continue to demonstrate this in chapter 5, after presenting three versions of post-Zionism in the following chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 4

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### Three Post-Zionisms

#### 4.1. Between Hegemony and Post-Zionism

In chapter 1 I said that it is the aim of the book to reject both mainstream interpretations of the Zionist narrative and post-Zionism's utter negation of this narrative. The transition from the previous chapter to this chapter is the zenith of this rejection: Having rejected mainstream interpretations of Zionism and having elucidated its egalitarian interpretation, I now present and reject three versions of anti-Zionist post-Zionism and the arrangements they propose as replacements for Zionism. In chapter 5 I continue to argue for my rejection of both mainstream Zionism and post-Zionism by elaborating on some major advantages of the egalitarian interpretation over its rivals, both Zionist and post-Zionist.

All post-Zionist critics of Zionism stress its colonialist nature and all reject the continuation of Jewish national self-determination in the Land of Israel. Some of them also contest the justifiability of Zionism's historical undertaking to establish such self-determination in the first place. Most of the post-Zionist writers to be discussed below invoke two groups of arguments in order to support their rejection of Zionism: (*a*) conceptual and historical arguments that deny the possibility of conceiving Judaism in terms of nationhood; and (*b*) moral arguments stemming from universal morality and from Jewish history and tradition condemning various aspects of Zionism.

I begin my discussion of post-Zionism in the second part of this chapter by presenting those arguments of its contenders that purport to reject the very justifiability of Zionism's undertaking to establish Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. Following this, I will discuss

the arguments with which post-Zionist writers reject the legitimacy of the ongoing realization of Jewish self-determination in Israel, and the arrangements they propose for replacing it. Some of them maintain that Israel should transform itself into the state of an all-inclusive *Israeli civic nation* (rather than remaining the state of the *Jewish ethno-cultural nation*). They are Israeli intellectuals who reject the very possibility of Jewish nationhood and who rely on what they take to be the demands of liberal political morality. I will call their position *civic post-Zionism* and discuss it in the third part of the chapter. Other Israeli intellectuals who reject the very possibility of Jewish nationhood focus mainly on the wrongs committed by Zionism against Mizrahi Jews and Palestinians. Relying mainly on postcolonial theory, they believe that Israel must grant these groups multicultural rights in order to make up for the wrongs perpetrated against them. I will call this position *post-colonial post-Zionism* and discuss it in the fourth part of the chapter. The third version of post-Zionism is advocated largely by non-Israeli Jewish intellectuals, most of them American. They argue that all Jews, including Israelis, should adopt diasporic identities. Unlike civic and postcolonial post-Zionists, those belonging to this third group do not deny the *conceptual possibility* of conceiving the Jewish collectivity as a nation. They reject, however, the *morality* of this conception. They advance several arguments. First, Jewish history is primarily diasporic and this history produced many commendable ways of life and values that are much superior to nationalist ideals. Second, the achievements of Zionist Jewish nationalism have come at the price of gross injustices and the establishment of a hegemonic and oppressive regime. Third, Zionist Jewish nationalism could not in the past, and cannot in the present and future, be realized without maintaining this type of regime. The writers making these arguments conclude therefore that Jewish identity not only outside Israel but also within it should revert to its diasporic version. I will call this version of post-Zionism *neodiasporic*. It is discussed in the fifth part of the chapter. Throughout this chapter I argue that many of the premises of the post-Zionist arguments are at least partially sound. Yet, I maintain, none of these arguments in fact supports the conclusions that the post-Zionists seek to draw from them—that Zionism should be wholly abandoned and replaced by a civic or a postcolonial or a neodiasporic vision for Israel and the Jews. What the arguments do support is the need to replace the mainstream versions of Zionism realized currently by Israel with the egalitarian version as it has been developed in this book. The post-Zionist civic, postcolonial, and neodiasporic visions

of Israel and the alternative nonnational identities they propose for both Israeli and non-Israeli Jews can be accepted at most as auxiliary visions to be added to the realization of Jewish ethnocultural nationhood in Israel, not as replacements for it.<sup>1</sup>

## 4.2. Contesting Zionism's Historical Project

Post-Zionists employ two arguments against the justifiability of the process by which Israel was established. One, of an antiessentialist or conceptual character, rejects the very idea of conceiving of the Jews in terms of nationhood and territoriality. The other is a quasi-moral historical and sociological argument. It is focused on portraying the historical Zionist movement as a predominantly colonial rather than national phenomenon. I will show below that these arguments fail. The first of them fails because it presupposes the proprietary-essentialist interpretation of the Zionist narrative and ignores its other interpretations. The second one fails mainly because it ignores the need to distinguish between the justifiability of various policies employed by Zionism as a historical movement and the justifiability of describing these policies as colonial.

### 4.2.1. *Did the Jews Constitute a Nation by the End of the Nineteenth Century?*

Does rejecting the possibility of describing nineteenth-century Jewry either as a nation (as does Ram) or as a territorial or a genetic nation (as do Evron and Sand respectively) entail that Zionism's aspiration to establish Jewish self-determination in Palestine, starting from the end of the nineteenth century, was unjust at that time? This seems to be what Ram, Evron, and Sand believe.<sup>2</sup> My view is that the justice of Zionism's aspiration to establish Jewish self-determination in Palestine can be undermined by denying that the Jews constituted a nation if the only way to justify the Jews' return to the Land of Israel is by resorting to proprietary Zionism's argument that Jewish ownership of Palestine qua the Land of Israel never lapsed. If this nation was not at all in existence at the end of the nineteenth century, as Ram assumes, how could this return, which got underway at the end of the nineteenth century, be justified as the return of the nation that was the owner of this land in antiquity? How can it be just if the Jewish settlers in the Land of Israel claimed descent from the nation that owned the land in antiquity, but in fact have hardly

any genetic link with it, as Sand believes? And how can this return be just if these settlers conceded their territoriality and did not seek, in the long period between antiquity and the late nineteenth century, to return to their ancient land, as Evron thinks?

Nevertheless, the justice of Zionism's aspiration to establish Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel in the late nineteenth century can be grounded in an argument much closer to actual Zionist history than the arguments advanced by proprietary Zionism. This argument combines the universal right to national self-determination and the primacy of the Land of Israel in the identity of Jews (who were nonterritorial in the nineteenth century, whether or not they were the genetic descendants of the ancient Jews) with, first, the fact that the Jews of the late nineteenth century formed a partial case of a nation (as made clear in chapter 2); second, the fact that as a result of the decline of religion and their emancipation they suffered from problems related to their collective identity; and third, the fact that they suffered the indignities of persecution as a foreign nation. Post-Zionists, of course, may feel that this complex argument does not provide a sufficient justification for the Zionist aspiration—but the burden is upon them to discuss this justification, and this they have not done. It should be noted that it is of no consequence to this justification whether or not Jews in the nineteenth century and the centuries preceding it constituted a nation in the full sense of the word, or whether they were genetically identical to the ancient Jewish nation, or whether they never gave up aspiring to return to the Land of Israel since ancient times. This justification rather assumes that the fact that by the end of the nineteenth century the Jews constituted a borderline case of a nation (in the senses discussed in chapter 2) made it feasible for them to behave as if they were a nation and to demand that others treat them as such, and in this way to solve the practical problems they were facing at that time. Choosing such a solution to their current problems then did not require that they constitute either a fully fledged nation or a nation that was genetically identical to the ancient Jewish nation, nor indeed did it imply that they should have consistently striven to return to the Land of Israel since antiquity onward, ever since the ancient Jewish nation ceased to exist in that land. In the argument that combines the partial nationhood of late nineteenth-century Jews with their actual needs then, with the right to self-determination, and with their identity affiliation to the Land of Israel, the question of the justness of their return is not one of proprietary historical justice. It is a matter of global distributive justice, which

purports to meet their needs as these emerged from the late nineteenth century until the creation of Israel.

It is peculiar that the post-Zionists miss this point. Uri Ram, whom I have been treating as their main representative for a number of reasons, defines nationalism, among other things, as “collective identity consciousness which selects past materials for purposes of current political needs.”<sup>3</sup> He says that this definition of nationalism is consistent with the primordialist theory of nationalism, according to which nationalism “is a crystalized expression of cultural tradition or ancient or at least lasting ethnic identity,” as well as with its modernist theory in which nationalism is “a functional equivalent of communal frameworks that modernity destroyed (by industrialization, urbanization, mobilization, secularization etc. . .).”<sup>4</sup>

If this is true—that is, if not only according to the primordialist but also to the modernist theory of nationalism, to which the post-Zionists adhere, nationalism uses materials from the past to serve the needs of current politics—then Ram and the other post-Zionists should have addressed the issues of political morality pertaining to the use which Zionism made of materials from Jewish history. Since their doctrine is essentially normative and moral rather than descriptive and sociological, post-Zionists should have asked themselves the following question: Given the frequently changing conditions of European Jewry (and subsequently the conditions of the Jews in Israel and elsewhere—in America, in Africa and in Asia) since the end of the nineteenth century until the establishment of Israel, did the political contingencies justify the selection of materials from the Jewish past that was made by Zionist politics, rather than, for instance, the selection of such materials made by Bundist politics, or by Dubnow followers, or by the Jewish masses who made a political decision to mind only their own business and to migrate to the United States? Post-Zionist writers hardly raise these issues of political morality. They seem to believe that their anti-essentialism—according to which nations emerge as a result of human needs existing in one time or another by using pre-existing historical materials—is a stance with which they can dismiss and perhaps also undermine (with considerable justice, I believe) the nationalist essentialism of proprietary Zionism. What the post-Zionists forget, however, is that their own anti-essentialism gives rise to certain questions of political morality which require a response. They forget that anti-essentialism does not automatically entail an anti-nationalist moral stance but rather replaces the conceptual-ontological question “Is a certain group a nation?” with a moral question: “Is it just for a certain group

to consider itself a nation under certain conditions and to take certain measures in order to realize this nationhood?" I observed in Chapter 2 that Gellner, unlike the Israeli post-Zionist academics whom he so deeply influenced, did not lose sight of this important truth. As one of the founding fathers of modernist nationalist theory, Gellner was sensitive to the issues of political morality pertaining to the emergence of nationalism in general in the late 18th century and the emergence of Zionism specifically a century later.<sup>5</sup>

#### *4.2.2. Has Zionism Always Been Colonialist?*

Another issue regarding the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative concerns its interpretation as an act of colonialism. Post-Zionist scholars devote extensive research efforts to the areas of the history and the descriptive sociology of colonialism in order to denounce Zionism's aspiration to Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. In past centuries, colonialism has meant the occupation of foreign lands by European countries for purposes of economic and strategic gain. At least since the end of World War II it has become synonymous with the political and social evils perpetrated by the West against Third World peoples. Quite a few post-Zionist authors, therefore, have joined in an academic attempt to prove a similarity between Zionism and European colonialism.<sup>6</sup> Two of them—Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled—though they admit that “the fact that Zionism is a national movement is incontrovertible,” yet argue that “simultaneously with being a national movement, it was also colonial movement.”<sup>7</sup> While their research purports to be scientific and theoretical, and they declare that it is not meant to “serve as means for censuring Zionism, or for condemning it morally and making it repent,”<sup>8</sup> they are aware that it in fact censures Zionism, condemns it morally, and expresses remorse for its primal sins. “Viewing the settlements in the territories [occupied since 1967] as a colonial enterprise is common to many researchers [Shafir and Peled point to the researchers Moshe Lissak and Yehoshaphat Harkabi] who on the one hand do not accept the description of Zionism as colonial for the period prior to 1967” and on the other hand consider Israeli settlement on the territories occupied in 1967 as a corruption of Zionism. For Shafir and Peled, “Israeli history did not restart in 1967, and the colonial Athena wasn't born springing perfect from her non-colonial father Zeus's head.”<sup>9</sup> For them, that is, Zionism was corrupt from its outset, perhaps even in its very aspiration to create a Jewish colony in the Land of Israel.



I would not like to intervene in the detail of the sociological debate between these two schools of sociologists, namely, those who take the view that only the post-1967 Zionism is equivalent to colonialism, and those who believe that Zionism was colonial in its very conception. I believe that both sides are wrong both sociologically and morally. In their sociological debate both sides rely on a comparison between different types of European colonialism—for instance, “settlement in a land in which the settlers are foreign to the local population”; settlement conducted “under the aegis of another country”; settlement by “military means”; “exploitation and expropriation of the native population”; “the colonialism of a plantation colony”; “the colonialism of an ethnic plantation colony”—in order to prove or disprove the applicability of these types of colonialism to the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, before or after 1967. The controversy creates the impression that the contenders are aiming at “all or nothing” distinctions, as though the issue is whether Zionism was and still remains fully colonialist, or whether it is nothing of the kind and never has been. To me it appears that what is at stake is a distinction of degree, namely, whether Zionism has been wholly colonial, or only somewhat colonial, or somewhere between those two. There always had to be a certain degree of colonialism (in the sociological-descriptive sense of the word) in the Zionist venture, for, after all, the Zionist endeavor must have involved one ethnocultural group’s taking up residence in a land where another group had been residing for generations. The new settlers had no intention to blend in with the local population and to integrate themselves into its culture: they aimed to establish a society both nationally and culturally separate and distinct. The initiative grew subsequently more colonial because the settlers used military means in order to prevail over the native population as a result of the latter’s resistance to the former’s actions. The Zionist project became even more colonialist (in the descriptive-sociological sense) after 1967 because the settlement in the territories occupied since then occurred with the patent backing of a homeland state outside these territories (i.e., Israel). The Jewish settlement in Ottoman and then Mandatory Palestine between 1882 and 1948, if it is actually correct to describe it (from a certain point onward) as a settlement under the auspices of a homeland state (the United Kingdom, according to Peled, Shafir, and others), was much less clearly colonialist.<sup>10</sup> This sociological dispute between Lissak and Harkabi on the one hand, who believe that only the post-1967 settlement is “an act of colonialism” (in the descriptive sense), and Shafir and Peled on the other hand, who think that pre-1967 settlement too was

“an act of colonialism,” therefore appears to me like the famous dispute between those who believe that the word “bald” refers only to someone who has lost all his hair and those who think that someone who has some hair left on his temples also qualifies. In truth, both are bald, one more so than the other.

So much for the descriptive-sociological dispute. Then there is the moral controversy between these two adversaries on the issue of whether Zionism was corrupt from its beginning because of its very aspiration to create a Jewish colony in the Land of Israel, as Shafir and Peled believe, or whether corruption set in only after 1967, as Lissak and Harkabi believe. But it is not the degree of Zionism’s colonial nature (sociologically speaking) that can decide this matter. Zionism’s justness depends on the justness of its national objectives and on the question of whether these objectives justified the colonial means it used in order to achieve them. The answer to this question cannot be based merely on the fact that a considerable part of these efforts were colonial, for these means were adopted to realize Zionism’s national objectives. That Zionism had (and still has) national objectives is, as Shafir and Peled told us, “a fact that no one can dispute.”<sup>11</sup> If the colonial means Zionism used as it established a Jewish settlement in late nineteenth-century Arab Palestine was adopted in order to achieve national objectives, then those who believe that Zionism’s national objectives are justified cannot assume that Zionism is unjust only because it also adopted this colonial means, even if it involved some injustice. This is because, given the condition of the Jews in the late nineteenth century, it would not have been possible to realize Zionism’s national objectives without creating a Jewish colony in the nineteenth-century Arab Land of Israel. To think otherwise is tantamount to thinking that it is just to levy income tax from people without taking from them the fruit of their labor. Taking the fruit of their labor, as such, involves an ostensible degree of injustice; however, whoever believes that taxation can have just goals and that taking from the fruit of people’s labor for this purpose is justifiable will not consider this to be theft, that is, wrongful appropriation.

It is, in this sense, not the colonialism that researchers attribute to Zionism that makes it corrupt—neither the colonialism that Harkabi and Lissak attribute to it post-1967 nor the colonialism that Shafir and Peled attribute to it from as early as 1882. Both claims put the cart before the horse, as the question whether Zionism was corrupt in each of these phases hinges on the question of the justness of its national objectives in each of these phases, and on the justness of certain colonialist means it

used to attain these objectives. Whoever thinks that the national reasons that early Zionism had for establishing a Jewish colony in the Land of Israel justified the establishment of this colony will think that its establishment was just. This, however, does not entail that he or she will think that other colonial means used by this colony in the course of its development were also just. Certainly, Zionism dispossessed Arabs even before 1967 and exploited them too, and there certainly was a degree of injustice in these colonial means or outcomes. They would have involved injustice even if they were not colonialist.<sup>12</sup> And yet from this it doesn't follow that Zionism's very aspiration, starting from 1882, to establish a Jewish colony in the Land of Israel was an unjust means to achieve its national objectives or that these national objectives were unjust, just as it does not follow from the fact that there are unjust taxation laws that taxation is intrinsically unjust, no matter what the projected use of tax revenue. To show that Zionism's primary colonial act—the establishment of a Jewish colony in the Arab Land of Israel—was unjust, it must be shown that the national goal for the sake of which it was performed was unjust or that applying this means in order to achieve this goal was unjustifiable. Peled and Shafir do not even discuss these issues of justification. They are of the opinion that the very interpretation of the primary Zionist act, establishing a Jewish colony in Palestine, as an act of colonialism shows that it was unjust.

Lissak and Harkabi's statement that it is Israel's post-1967 settlements that are colonialist must be criticized along the same lines. These settlements are not corrupt because they are colonial. If what I argued in chapter 3 is correct, namely that the proprietary interpretation of Zionism is the only one that can justify these settlements, and if I am right in arguing that this interpretation corrupts Zionism, then the colonial nature of the post-1967 settlements is corrupt. It is, in other words, not the colonialism of the post-1967 settlements that implies their corruptness, but the other way around: it is because the post-1967 settlement project is corrupt that its colonial nature is corrupt.

I hope I have succeeded in showing that the two main arguments which post-Zionist scholars use in order to deny the justifiability of Zionism's aspiration to create a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel—the argument that denies that the Jews constitute a nation and the argument that describes the Zionist endeavor as essentially colonialist—do not succeed in furnishing grounds for the above conclusion. However, the post-Zionists also repudiate the continued existence of this by-now-established self-determination. As noted, some

of them would like to replace this established self-determination with self-determination in the form of an Israeli civic nation, while others would like to replace it with postcolonial compensatory multicultural arrangements or neodiasporic organization and ways of life. I now turn to these approaches.

### 4.3. Civic Post-Zionism

The “era of the post,” writes Uri Ram, is the era during which the “ethnic nationalism dominant in Israel, according to which the people as an ethnocultural entity is identical with the ‘state’ as an administrative-constitutional entity,” must be replaced with “territorial nationalism, according to which it is possible to separate nation and state in such a way that communal (or cultural, religious, ethnic, etc.) belonging will not be constitutionally protected (though it could go on existing voluntarily on the level of civic society).”<sup>13</sup> For Ram, in other words, Israel should really not perceive itself, as it does, as the realization of the Jewish collective’s right to self-determination, and even more so: it should also stop regarding itself as the realization of the right to self-determination of its own Jewish population. According to Ram and some other post-Zionist writers, at the constitutional level of the State of Israel neither world Jewry nor even Israeli Jewry itself ought to be protected. Like the Jews in many other places in the world, and like non-Jewish groups in Israel, the Jews in Israel are free to form their own associations. The liberal principle of freedom of association allows them to do so in the very same way that it allows soccer teams and people who share religions to form their own associations.

Post-Zionist writers present three main arguments to support the above thesis. First, they assert that there is a fundamental contradiction in Israel’s perception of itself as a state that is both “democratic and Jewish.”<sup>14</sup> Second, they claim that the liberal ideal of state neutrality requires separating (ethnocultural) nationality and state probably for the same reasons that it requires a separation of church and state.<sup>15</sup> Third, they invoke the alleged moral superiority of civic-territorial nationalism—such as the type of nationalism embodied by the United States or France—over ethnocultural nationalism, such as that of Germany or Serbia.<sup>16</sup> Two major normative concerns underlie these arguments against the continued Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. One is a concern for equality. The other is a concern for freedom.

While the criticism from equality is sound, it does not entail the conclusion the post-Zionists try to derive from it: relinquishing Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. The freedom-based critique could have led to this conclusion, but the premises of this critique, as I shall later show, are not sound.

#### *4.3.1. Jewish Self-Determination and Equality*

When the post-Zionist writers argue that Israel's Jewishness conflicts with its claim to being a democratic state, they do not mean to argue that the principle of majority rule is being violated in Israel, or that its citizens have not been granted rights such as the right to vote or to be elected, the right to assembly, or the right to free speech. What they do mean is that in the case of the Arab citizens of Israel, these rights have to a great extent been emasculated, while Jewish citizens enjoy immunity from any Arab intervention in their pursuit of their interests as Jews. The Arabs in Israel have the right to vote and to be elected, but they are constitutionally prevented from advancing their collective interests as Arabs, since they cannot vote and be elected for the purpose of promoting their group interests as a homeland ethnocultural group in Israel. Only the Jews in Israel have this right.<sup>17</sup> The alleged conflict between the Jewishness of the state and democracy thus refers to the unequal distribution of political power between Jews and Arabs.

The post-Zionists' accusation concerning Israel's infringement of the value of liberal neutrality and their accusation emanating from the superiority of civic nationalism to ethnocultural nationalism also in the end boil down to complaints concerning a violation of equality. If the state identifies with the members of one ethnocultural nation and is not neutral among all the ethnonational groups to which its citizens belong, it allows the citizens who belong to the nation with which it identifies a full life within the framework of their culture, in all domains: the economic, the cultural, and the political. At the same time it limits the ability of those citizens who don't belong to the nation with which it identifies to fully live in the framework of their culture.<sup>18</sup>

This critique, if perceived as a critique of mainstream Zionism, is simultaneously too feeble and too strong with regard to this kind of Zionism. It is too weak to the extent that it is targeted at the proprietary version of mainstream Zionism, the one common among the public at large and its politicians. Yet it is too strong in relation to the hierarchical

conception of the right to self-determination held by the academic spokesmen of mainstream Zionism.

The post-Zionist critique is too feeble in relation to proprietary Zionism, since this Zionism condemns Israel not only to inequality between its Jewish and Arab citizens, but also to the perpetual violation of the human rights of Palestinians living in the Land of Israel. In his book *The Law of Peoples*, John Rawls distinguishes among various types of peoples regarding their moral perfection.<sup>19</sup> At the top of the ladder, he positions “liberal” peoples—those who maintain democracy and equality among their members. After them, he ranks peoples that he calls “decent”—the type that does not maintain democracy and equality but instead imposes a hierarchy of rights pertaining to different groups and communities. However, these peoples at least protect the human rights of those under their rule. Rawls’s third category, which is important for our discussion, is that of “outlaw” states—those states that threaten peace by attempting to expand their spheres of influence and by their violation of the basic human rights of the people inhabiting their territories.

If what I said in chapter 3 about the role played by proprietary Zionism in Israeli politics is correct, Israel should not only be categorized as a country that is neither liberal nor egalitarian, but as a state that is not even “decent.” If the theory underlying Israeli politics is proprietary Zionism—and in view of the settlement policy, there is no other way to interpret the theory underlying current Israeli politics—it seems that Rawls’s third category, not necessarily the second, is a more apt characterization of present-day Israel. To settle for the post-Zionist critique that there is a contradiction between Israel’s Jewishness and its democratic nature in a way that turns it into a nonegalitarian society is to voice too feeble a claim and to miss criticizing what most needs to be criticized.

Conversely, if the post-Zionist critique is aimed at the hierarchical interpretation of Zionism, the type that relies on the hegemonic conception of self-determination, this critique is exaggerated. Although its premises are well founded, the practical conclusion that the post-Zionist writers draw from these premises does not follow. Israel, according to the conception held by Ruth Gavison, Amnon Rubinstein, Alex Jacobson, and others, is by their own admission a nonegalitarian, hierarchical society, a country that is “linked to a particular national group . . . [and] offers special benefits to the people with whom the state is identified. At the same time, it puts those citizens who are not members of the preferred national community at a disadvantage.”<sup>20</sup> However, the practical

conclusion that the post-Zionist writers draw from this critique, namely, that Jewish self-determination in Israel should be relinquished, does not follow from the condition of inequality implied by the hegemonic conception of self-determination. What does follow is that the hegemonic conception of self-determination must be replaced by its egalitarian conception. According to this conception, since both Jews and Arabs in Israel are homeland groups, they should both, as a matter of principle, be granted hegemony vis-à-vis communities of immigrants but not vis-à-vis each other. On the other hand, for circumstantial considerations the Land of Israel must be divided between Jews and Arabs into two states, one that is mainly Jewish while the other is principally Palestinian. Jewish dominance in one of these states, and Arab dominance in the other, would be justified because of numbers and special needs, which are equality-based reasons for inequality, and not because there is something about the principle of self-determination that makes it hierarchical as a matter of principle.

#### *4.3.2. Jewish Self-Determination and Freedom*

In actuality, and despite the opposite impression they create, post-Zionist writers are aware that the inequality forged by the hegemonic interpretation of the right to self-determination does not entail the need to totally remove the Jewish presence from the constitutional level of the state. In response to the possibility of a binational state, Uri Ram says that one should not confuse the current situation, in which there might be a justification for demanding national equality, with the ideal state of affairs from the post-Zionist perspective, in which nationality will have no constitutional or statist standing. It may be that under the present state of affairs, in a country that is binational by the composition of its population, binational governance would be more democratic than mononational governance. Yet there is no need to promote a solution that does none other than double by two the mononationality and in fact perpetuates the oppressive nationalist structures of control of each by itself and vis-à-vis the other.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, the problem of inequality is a problem that could be solved by granting constitutional status not only to the Jewish group but also to the Arab group.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, according to Ram, this still leaves the problem of freedom. He believes that ethnocultural governmental structures are “oppressive structures” in relation to the individuals under

their rule, even if they maintain equality between different national groups.

The fact that Ram is concerned with impeding freedom rather than equality is underscored in many of the statements he makes in his discussion of the Israeli Supreme Court (sitting as the High Court of Justice) decision *Ornan v. Minister of Interior*.<sup>23</sup> In this case, the Court considered a petition by many Israeli celebrities to instruct the state to register them as “Israeli” under the rubric *Nationality* on their identity cards rather than as “Jewish.” Ram describes this petition as expressing the post-Zionist conception that seeks to replace ethnic nationality (the Eastern European and German models), according to which Israel is the state of the Jewish people, with civic nationality (the French-American model), according to which Israel is a state of its citizens (and inhabitants) and only theirs.<sup>24</sup>

When this petition seeks “to ground the principle of nationality on the principle of citizenship,” says Ram, “it is endeavoring to apply to national identification the basic principles of democracy—personal choice (and not state coercion) and recognition of a range of alternatives (and not restriction of given possibilities).”<sup>25</sup> That is, the problem in the Jewishness of Israel is not simply in its Jewishness, but in this Jewishness being the realization of ethnocultural nationalism, a nationalism that will remain a problem even if Israel ceased to be mono-ethnonationalist and became bi-ethnonationalist. “The binational principle sanctifies nationalism instead of proposing a worthy alternative to it,” Ram says.<sup>26</sup> “From the democratic point of view,” he adds, “it is fitting for a state to represent analytically abstract citizens rather than cultural communities.”<sup>27</sup>

But is such a state possible? And would such a state actually serve the freedom of its citizens? These questions took center stage in the debate between the major political theories of neutralist liberalism that aroused great interest from the 1970s onward, in particular John Rawls’s theory of justice, the nonliberal responses to neutralist liberalism called “communitarianism,” as well as the intraliberal responses to them, namely, those that have been called “liberal multiculturalism” and “liberal nationalism.” This debate is an elaborate replica of the famous clash between Enlightenment and anti-Enlightenment thinkers that preceded it by two hundred years. However, the main novelty in the current debate is that arguments against neutralist liberalism are being invoked not only by the opponents of liberalism, but also by writers within the liberal camp: liberal multiculturalists and liberal nationalists.



Their arguments—expressed in thousands of articles and hundreds of books that have appeared since the 1980s—are scarcely mentioned by Ram. Yet these arguments justify negative replies to the two questions set out at the beginning of this paragraph. Even if “it is fitting for a state to represent analytically abstract citizens rather than cultural communities,” such a state is humanly not really feasible. The alternatives that one might consider as approximating it mostly would not serve human freedom, at least no more than states that serve citizens belonging to cultural communities.

A number of writers have already noted that states cannot be neutral with respect to their support for culture in the same way as they can perhaps be neutral with respect to religion.<sup>28</sup> The reason is that it is impossible to avoid giving preference to a particular language or particular languages spoken by their citizens. Preferring certain languages over others is an unavoidable practical necessity. As a result, in a multiethnic and multinational state, the state cannot be neutral with regard to its citizens’ interests in adhering to their original languages and cultures. In actual practice, the state’s choice of one particular language over other languages means demonstrating preference for the cultural group that speaks that language. The fact that their language has been chosen makes it possible for members of that group to adhere to their culture and to sustain it for generations, while the same possibilities are denied to other citizens.

On the practical level, there is no way out of this predicament. The ideal that states should be neutral in the cultural sense is therefore necessarily unattainable, and it has not been, and cannot be, implemented by any state. In this context, Will Kymlicka noted the language policy implemented by the United States, which is “the allegedly prototypically ‘neutral’ state.” In the United States, there is a legal requirement for children to learn English in schools. Knowledge of English is a condition imposed on immigrants for receiving citizenship, and it is also a condition for employment in government. Kymlicka further noted that the borders of the states in the United States and the dates on which new states joined the Union were intentionally determined in a manner that would ensure an English-speaking majority in these states. According to him, these requirements and decisions “have played a pivotal role in determining which ethno-linguistic groups prosper, and which ones diminish.”<sup>29</sup> As for France, the situation is even more striking: the aspiration to preserve and promote French culture is manifestly a part of the political agenda of this civic nation-state; it is an aspiration that guides

its political and budgetary decisions. France is a country that enacts regulations to protect its singers' chansons by placing quotas on the broadcasting of foreign music by its radio stations. Similarly, it protects its filmmakers by providing them with massive subsidies. France does this for cultural reasons, not economic reasons. France could relinquish this cultural protectionism, but it could not refrain from adopting a language, or a small number of languages, as its language/s. This means that cultural neutrality is a possibility that countries cannot really opt for.

Moreover, states whose citizens are divested of their culture and which allow human freedom to be realized in a manner disconnected from actual concrete cultures are not only impossible—they are also undesirable. The closest approximation to the ideal of the cultural neutrality of states that one might realistically think of is the adoption of a single language and culture by all the countries in the world. If all humankind had one common culture, culture-based inequality among people belonging to different cultures within the framework of the various existing states would not arise, and people would then not be limited culturally from moving from one place to another the world over. Yet obviously such a reality, which in certain respects would enhance the freedom of individuals, would diminish it in other respects: first and foremost—relative to the prevailing state of affairs today—it would reduce the range of options open to people regarding the choice of ways of life and lifestyles. Yet beyond that, creating a reality in which there is only one culture and language in the world would block people's freedom to live within a framework of cultures with which they identify and within which they have a sense of historical belonging. The interest that masses of people everywhere currently have to cling to their original culture as well as their interest in maintaining it for generations, should they wish to do so, is for these people an interest at least as important as the interest of people belonging to a particular gender to continue to belong to that gender, if they wish to do so, or the interest of people with this or that sexual orientation to continue living according to it, should they wish to do so. These are pivotal human components of identity. For those persons for whom these components of identity are important, politics and law must maintain political and legal realities that allow them to continue to cling to these components of their identity. The existence of political and legal realities that do not allow people to adhere to those components of identity that have a decisive influence on people's welfare means the oppression of those people, in effect a violation of their freedom, dignity, and welfare. Just as no political or legal reality

should be maintained that threatens the ability of people whose sexual orientation is homosexual to realize this orientation, there should be no political or legal reality that threatens the ability of people whose cultural identity is Jewish national to realize that identity. Relinquishing Jewish self-rule in the Land of Israel—and for reasons I listed in chapter 3, even relinquishing Jewish majority—would pose a threat to the ability of all those masses of Jews who are interested in preserving their national identity to realize this interest. It seems to me, therefore, that not only would the post-Zionist proposal to waive this constitutional protection not promote freedom, but it would even critically violate the freedom of many Jews.

Of course, this is not to be understood as saying that any legal means is appropriate for advancing the majoritarian aim. In chapter 3, I mentioned several means that to my mind are inappropriate. Moreover, I am convinced that refusing to register citizens who wish to be listed as Israelis as their nationality and not Jewish is indeed an improper legal means to preserving Jewish identity on the political and constitutional level in Israel. Such means harms freedom. But as I have mentioned a number of times, one must not confuse the issue of the justness of the goal of maintaining Jewish self-determination in Israel with the issue of the justness of one means or another for promoting this goal. The justness of the goal does not mean that all means proposed to advance it are just, and the impermissibility of this or that means for the advancement of a given goal does not mean that the goal is unjustified.

#### 4.4. Postcolonial Post-Zionism

Postcolonial post-Zionists, like their civic relatives, believe that the “time of the post” is a time in which the ethnic nationalism that dominates Israel should be replaced. However, they believe that it should be replaced not by an Israeli civic nation that erases all legal differences between cultural and other groups, but rather by a multicultural, multcentered nation in which it is mainly the groups that were oppressed by Zionism that are granted legal status. Postcolonial post-Zionists are mainly interested in the conditions and status of the Mizrahi Jews. They are also interested in the Palestinians. They believe that the Palestinians must be granted a legal collective status in Israel. However, they justify this belief on the basis of the Palestinians’ suffering at the hands of Zionism, not because they constitute a distinct ethnic nation residing in its homeland.<sup>30</sup>

This radical thesis of postcolonial post-Zionism has three components. First, it opposes Jewish ethnonational self-determination in Israel. The main representatives of this position, Yehouda Shenhav and Yossi Yonah, explain that they oppose the continued existence of this group's self-determination because they regard it as a way to constitute an identity "that facilitates the cultural, political and economic hegemony of Western Jews in Israel."<sup>31</sup> Second, the postcolonial post-Zionists object to the replacement of Jewish ethnonational self-determination in Israel with a self-determining civic Israeli nation.<sup>32</sup> They oppose it because they believe that liberal democracy and civic nationalism are unable to secure "the basic rights of all members of the citizenry of the state and its residents regardless of their religion, gender, race, nation and ethnicity."<sup>33</sup> Third, postcolonial post-Zionism supports a policy of granting a special legal status to oppressed groups in order to repair the injustice done to them in the past. They justify their support for this policy by resorting to the "emancipatory value of identity and historical narrative to oppressed groups which can justify the risk of granting them essentialist status."<sup>34</sup>

The concerns underlying Shenhav's and Yonah's justifications of the three components of their thesis, as expressed in the above quotations, are similar to the concerns that motivated the civic post-Zionists. They are concerns for equality and freedom. There is, perhaps, one additional concern: a concern for human dignity. Civic post-Zionists focus on the inequality between Jews and Arabs resulting from the very fact that Israel conceives of itself as a Jewish state, and on the infringements of freedom suffered by both Jews and Arabs as a result of their being legally obliged to regard themselves as members of one of these two groups. Postcolonial post-Zionists, in contrast, focus on much more severe and far-reaching violations—violations of social, economic, and cultural equalities and freedoms—not merely legal equalities and freedoms, and not just the freedoms of Arabs, but also those of Mizrahi Jews, ultra-Orthodox Jews, immigrant workers, and other groups. The marginalization of these groups, or even their relegation to an existence outside the margins of Israeli society as a result of the Zionist enterprise becoming Israel's main agenda—to put postcolonial post-Zionist rhetoric very succinctly—has reduced the freedom of the members of these groups by a pincer movement: It has done so externally by reducing the range of choices open to them in Israel's social, economic, and cultural domains, and internally by undermining their sense of self-worth as a result of their marginalization.

There is truth in all these criticisms. But I believe it builds on an accumulation of many half-truths. Moreover, as always happens with

half-truths, postcolonial post-Zionists combine these half-truths with a great deal of confusion. Their criticism mainly fails to establish the first and most important component of postcolonial post-Zionism from the perspective of this book and the one on which I will focus from here on: its opposition to Zionism and to the continued existence of ethnocultural Jewish self-determination in Israel. As mentioned above, postcolonial post-Zionists oppose this self-determination because they consider it a way of constructing an identity that facilitates the hegemony of Western Jews in Israel. If this claim is correct, it is so only with regard to the way in which Zionism as a historical movement has constituted this identity; it does not hold for Zionism as a political idea (and ideal), that is, an idea that attempts to constitute and maintain ethnocultural self-determination for Jews in Israel.

#### *4.4.1. The Oppression of Mizrahi Jews: Zionism as a Historical Movement and Zionism as a Political Idea*

The claim that Zionism is a means of constituting identity whose purpose was to facilitate the hegemony of non-Oriental Jews in Israel cannot be based on any of the interpretations of the Zionist political idea that have been introduced in this book: the proprietary, the hierarchical, or the egalitarian. Though all three versions justify the cultural, economic, and political hegemony of one specific group in Israel, it is a hegemony of Jews over non-Jews. Not one of the versions of Zionism even remotely justifies the hegemony of Western Jews over Oriental Jews in Israel. Proprietary Zionism justifies a great deal more than the hegemony of Jews over non-Jews: it entails a perpetual violation of the human rights of Arabs—something postcolonial post-Zionists totally ignore, as do their civic colleagues. Proprietary Zionism also entails the hegemony of Jews over Jews—not, however, necessarily of Western Jews over Jews from Arab countries, but rather that of Jews from the Land of Israel over Jews from the diaspora, mainly Western Jews like, for instance, American Jews. Hierarchical Zionism does justify Jewish hegemony over all non-Jews in Israel, including Arabs. Egalitarian Zionism, though it does not justify the hegemony of Jews over Arabs in Israel, since both Jews and Arabs constitute homeland groups there, yet justifies the hegemony of both Jews and Arabs in Israel over immigrant communities, non-Jewish and non-Arab alike. However, this is rather a hegemony

of homeland nations—both Arab and Jewish—over immigrant communities. Moreover, egalitarian Zionism justifies such hegemony only in certain domains, such as the cultural presence in the public sphere and in national symbols. It does not justify such hegemony in the social and economic spheres.<sup>35</sup>

As mentioned above, if there is a grain of truth in the post-Zionists' claim that Jewish ethnonational self-determination "is a means for facilitating the cultural, political and economic hegemony of non-Oriental Jews over Oriental Jews in Israel," then it holds for Zionism as a historical movement rather than as a political idea. However, we need to distinguish here between the Western Jewish hegemony over Mizrahi Jews in Israel in the period in which this hegemony was an unavoidable necessity in certain areas and therefore should not be condemned, and the periods and areas in which this hegemony was avoidable and therefore should be condemned. It is especially important to distinguish between the means that are appropriate for putting an end to such a hegemony and for compensating for its past injustices, and the means that are not appropriate even if they are being used for such compensation.

Jewish nationalism originated in Europe, and its political thought is distinctly European. All the thinkers, writers and practitioners who are considered the precursors of the Jewish national movement—from Zvi Graetz, Moshe Hess . . . to Theodor Herzl . . . and Ahad Ha'am—were based in Europe. Shlomo Avineri, who traces the history of Zionist thought in his study of the intellectual sources of the Zionist movement, does not cite even one Arab Jew who exercised a formative influence on the movement. . . . Furthermore, Jewish national historiography arose in mid-nineteenth century Europe as a branch of modern European—and particularly German—historiography.<sup>36</sup>

What Yehouda Shenhav writes in this passage about European Jewry's precedence in conceiving the Zionist idea and in realizing it historically is doubtless true. He also mentions their "precedence" in the intensity of the persecution to which they were exposed, and he is right to criticize Zionism's claim that Mizrahi Jews, too, were persecuted. This is what Zionism argued when it gave disproportionate importance to the single pogrom suffered by Iraqi Jews.<sup>37</sup> Shenhav argues that persecution could not at all serve as a motivation and as a justification for Zionism in the case of the Jews living in the Arab world, at least not in the period leading up to Zionism. Shenhav's list of reasons for the precedence of Europe and its Jews in the history of Zionism, namely,

that Europe's Jews were indeed persecuted and played a primary role in the conception and execution of the Zionist enterprise, should be supplemented by the fact that it was European history as a whole and the various corners into which it pushed the Jews that generated Zionism: the decline of religion, the failure of the European emancipation of the Jews and the emergence of nationalism as both a historical phenomenon and a political idea in the wake of the transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy. The primacy of European Jews in all these aspects of Zionism both as a political idea and as a historical movement granted them the "first mover" advantages enjoyed by any entrepreneur over those who join in later in pursuing his idea or ideal or project. Some of these advantages are unavoidable and justifiable for the first stages of the realization a project; others flow either from entrepreneurs' abuse of these advantages or from their prejudices. And yet neither the justifiable nor the unjustifiable advantages in the Zionist case belong to the Zionist idea as such. Every injustice that resulted from these advantages should be stopped and compensated for, as well as everything that was justified at the time but is no longer so. This might well have to be achieved by means of compensatory postcolonial multiculturalism of the type Shenhav and Yonah suggest. From all this, however, it does not follow that the Zionist idea of Jewish ethnonational self-determination in the Land of Israel should be abandoned. Compensatory multiculturalism for the communities of Mizrahi Jews, Arabs, ultra-Orthodox and immigrant workers in Israel can coexist with ethnonational self-determination of the Jews in Israel. The two need not be viewed as necessarily mutually exclusive.

I would have liked to compare the logic of the argument that the idea of Jewish ethnonational self-determination in the Land of Israel must be given up because of evils committed by European Zionism against Mizrahi Jews to the logic of an argument that we should no longer respect the values of freedom and equality that inspired the French Revolution because that revolution used terror in order to implement them. However, post-Zionists will protest against such an analogy: They will rightly remind us of the huge difference in importance between the ideas of freedom and equality on the one hand, and the idea of ethnonational self-determination on the other, to which they will add that the notion of ethnonational self-determination is doomed, by its very nature, to infringe human equality, freedom, and people's sense of self-worth. It cannot but do so because, they believe, it is tainted by the worst intellectual sin ever: that of essentialism.

#### 4.4.2. *The Oppression of Mizrahi Jews: Zionism and the Sin of Essentialism*

Essentialism, in social or political thinking, may indeed be a great sin, if not a crime. As far as I can see, it is especially so in two types of cases. Of the first type are cases in which those who endorse it conceive of social entities like a nation, state, or family as if they were natural: “alleged entities [that] are supposed just to be there, like Mount Everest, since long ago,” in Ernest Gellner’s words.<sup>38</sup> It gives rise to confusions and misconceptions because those who subscribe to “normative essentialism” tend to confuse it with “descriptive essentialism” (see chapter 2.3.2) and are thus prone to produce the type of myths that Zionist historiography invented. Zionist historiography shifted from the late nineteenth-century interpretive-normative claim according to which, since the Jews were a borderline case of a nation, they were justified in interpreting their collective existence in national terms and to conduct themselves as if they were a nation, and embraced the claim that the Jews have always been a fully fledged nation and never ceased being one. As previously mentioned, it was because of this claim that official Zionist historiography and the historiography disseminated by Ben Zion Dinur were misleading with regard to the Jews’ expulsion from the Land of Israel and their attempts to return to it, and played down and concealed parts of the diasporic history of the Jews (“the historiographic negation of exile”). If one is cautious enough not to confuse normative essentialism and descriptive essentialism, the need to peddle these historiographic falsehoods disappears. If my arguments in chapter 2 are correct, then the view that the Jews should conduct themselves as a nation and that others should treat them as a nation does not need to rely on the claim that the Jews never really ceased to be a fully fledged nation. It may acknowledge that they stopped being a nation in the full sense of the word for many centuries, and find it sufficient to claim that the history that the Jews have experienced in the course of these centuries, together with the conditions that evolved toward the end of the nineteenth century, justify their attempt to revert to being a nation again in the full sense of this word. Such an interpretation of Zionist essentialism, as I will later explain in more detail, steers clear of historiographically underplaying the exile, and avoids the spread of myths about the Jews’ expulsion from the Land of Israel and their uninterrupted striving to return to it.

Essentialism in social thinking may constitute a major intellectual and practical sin also when those who are in its grip relate to human



individuals as if, because of their very nature, they had to belong to certain types of communities or participate in certain types of social practices. Gellner illustrates this in the case of nationalist essentialism, according to which “A man must have nationality as he must have a nose and two ears; a deficiency in any of these particulars is not inconceivable and does from time to time occur, but only as a result of some disaster, and it is itself a disaster of a kind.”<sup>39</sup>

It is easy to see how such a perception of the relations between social entities—whether nations or other collective entities like religious communities or families—and human individuals can end up constraining human freedom and violating equality. If the family or the nation is part of human nature in the same way as a person’s eyes and ears are part of his nature, we would tend to think of them as social modes of being in which people must take part. We tend to think of people who do not generate a family or who refrain from national affiliation as though they were suffering from some terrible flaw that must, if possible, be fixed. The road leading from this to applying internal and external coercion so as to make individuals fit into these modes of existence is very short. However, one could think of nations and of families as essential for human beings in more modest ways. For instance, one could think that most people as we know them wish to take part in these modes of existence, or that the characteristics of most people as we know them now are such that these modes of existence are important for their well-being, so that political and social structures should be maintained that facilitate their existence and allow people to belong to them. One should remember that even human beings as subjects of social or political thinking are not human beings in the biological sense only but social constructs based on normative essentialism. The essence of human beings as it is conceived by morality and criminal law is a social construct that does not exist in everyone who is human in the biological sense: Not every person who has forty-six chromosomes and thousands of genes in each chromosome is capable of distinguishing between right and wrong. And yet this capacity is characteristic of most individuals who are biologically human, and it distinguishes them from individuals belonging to other species. I assume this is why being able to distinguish between right and wrong is conceived to be the essence of human beings for the purposes of criminal law and morality. I assume that psychoanalysis views other human characteristics as essential for its purposes, and the same goes for other disciplines and cultural domains.

According to the Zionist political idea, the characteristic of Jews that deserves to be considered as their essential characteristic for the purposes of political morality is their being associated with a Jewish nation that existed in the Land of Israel during antiquity. This “normative essentialism” was converted by mainstream Zionism into descriptive essentialism in ways that have misled not only Zionist historiography but, even more so, Zionist politics. Since Zionism as a political movement has assumed that the essential characteristic of Jews is nationhood in the Land of Israel, it forced (and would still force if this were feasible) many Jews to live in the Land of Israel. It follows from essentialist-proprietary Zionism that Jews must live in the Land of Israel. When it has the opportunity, it also forces them to act accordingly. In the 1950s this is what it did with many Jews from Islamic countries. It did so because they were Jews, not because they were Arab Jews, as Yehouda Shenhav calls them. It did the same in the 1990s with many Russian Jews. It made them migrate to Israel even though they wanted to migrate elsewhere. These grave mistakes on the part of Zionism deserve every condemnation. However, it doesn’t follow that the idea of Jewish ethnonational self-determination in the Land of Israel should therefore be repudiated. If it is interpreted in the way that egalitarian Zionism interprets it, there is nothing in the nature of this idea of Jewish self-determination that is likely to give rise to injustices of the type committed by the historical Zionist movement acting under the proprietary-essentialist interpretation of the Zionist idea, including the injustice perpetrated against the Mizrahi Jews. I therefore return to the analogy between rejecting the idea of ethnonational Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel because of the injustices inflicted by the Zionist movement on the Mizrahi Jews, and rejecting the values of freedom and equality because during the French Revolution they were implemented by means of terror.

There are additional reasons why postcolonial post-Zionists need not oppose the normative essentialism associated with Zionism. One of these reasons is consistency with other positions they hold. Postcolonial post-Zionists don’t emphatically oppose the granting of essentialist status to groups. They are willing to grant it to Mizrahi Jews in Israel for what they call “emancipatory reasons.” Admittedly, they panic when they do so, a panic that is felt, for instance, when they define the Mizrahi entity as a “non-essentialist entity” and few lines later as an entity that has “essentialist status.”<sup>40</sup> However, if we take seriously the current post-Zionists’ manifest willingness to grant social entities “essentialist

status” for purposes of emancipation, then there is every reason for them to grant such status to a Jewish ethnic nation as well. First, Zionism itself justified the “essentialist status” of nationhood it granted the Jewish collective by invoking the need to emancipate the Jews. Yonah and Shenhav argue with regard to Mizrahi Jews on similar lines to the way many Zionist thinkers argued with regard to Jews generally. When Judah Leib Pinsker called the essay he wrote and which became formative for Zionism *Autoemancipation*, he surely referred in this title to the justification that according to Yonah and Shenhav may justify essentialism.<sup>41</sup> Second, if arguments in favor of emancipation can sanction (normative) essentialism, it is hard to figure out why human needs and values other than those connected with liberation do not qualify as justification.

Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith explain the rise of nationalism in the modern era by humans’ need to transcend their mortality, a need no longer met by religion.<sup>42</sup> Other theoreticians attribute the power of nationalism to different human needs and interests, for instance, people’s need to adhere to central components of their identity<sup>43</sup> or their need to hope that their endeavors are lasting rather than ephemeral.<sup>44</sup> It is under the banner of these legitimate needs that people, justly, “invent” (or “imagine”) social entities that meet their needs and reflect their values. The social entity that goes by the name of “state” comes, among other things, to meet the need for security. A need for a slightly different type of security is addressed by the institution of the family. These two social entities also contribute to the advancement of other values. The life span of various social entities is determined by the degree of constancy of the values and needs they serve. The historical life spans of the social entities called “nations” may be shorter than the life spans of the social entities called “states” and longer than what Yonah and Shenhav require for the Mizrahi-Jewish entity in Israel. Still, all these three social entities exist, each with its own justifications. Some of these entities are more contingent than others, but this is not why “essentialism” should be more justified in some cases than in others. Diverse life spans, degrees of constancy, and contingency also mark the various natural kinds and species, especially the biological ones. The species that Darwin observed on the Galapagos Islands have existed for a much shorter duration than biological species in other parts of the world; and yet both the former and the latter are natural species with an “essentialist status,” that is, with properties without which they would not be distinct from other types and species. The current critique of the post-Zionist position, by the way, also holds against Gellner, not only against the post-Zionists.

What follows from this critique is that the difficulty with social entities does not pertain to their essentialist status, but rather to the normative issues involved in the justification of their essentialist status, that is, the normative issues involved in choosing one of their characteristics as a distinctive feature significant for some needs rather than others. Jewish ethnonational self-determination in the Land of Israel cannot be negated only on the grounds of its choosing nationhood in the Land of Israel as essential for the liberation and other goals of the Jews. It must also be shown that such normative essentialism is generally unjustified, or that it is unjustified in the particular case of the Jews. Post-Zionists do not discuss these issues.

#### 4.5. Neodiasporic Post-Zionism

Judith Butler, Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin—the first three American Jews, the latter an Israeli—also reject the national self-determination of the Jewish collective in Israel. They seek to replace it with a diasporic or even exilic self-determination that they deem appropriate not only for Jews living outside Israel but also for those who live in Israel.<sup>45</sup> In holding this view, they do not intend to idealize any historical exilic reality or to argue that Jews outside and within Israel should revert to a state in which they, rather than others, are actually oppressed and persecuted.<sup>46</sup> To the best of my understanding, they make two claims. The first is that the main lesson that the Jews should draw from their history of persecution is that they must not persecute others. This should be contrasted with the Zionist view according to which the main lesson to be drawn from the Jews' history of persecution is to not allow it ever again to occur in their own case while they are helpless. The second neodiasporic claim is that Jews should renew their diasporic ethos of scholarship, antimachoism, delicateness, consideration, and containment of others, as opposed to the militarized and jingoistic ethos that Zionism encouraged them to develop.<sup>47</sup>

The notion that it would be better for the Jews to continue their existence as diaspora groups in the world rather than as a national group in Palestine was voiced by several prominent Jewish thinkers before the establishment of Israel and also during the first few decades of its existence. Hegel's conception of Judaism's spirit as embodied in perpetual estrangement from the world and from a territorial homeland was later endorsed by Jewish thinkers such as Herman Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig,

and George Steiner.<sup>48</sup> They opposed Zionism in the name of this conception of Judaism. However, Cohen and Rosenzweig, who were active in the first two or three decades of the twentieth century, couldn't intend their diasporism as an ex post call for relinquishing a post-Holocaust, already existing, fully fledged Jewish nationhood in Palestine.<sup>49</sup> For his part George Steiner, who argued for diasporism in the late 1960s, seemed to intend it as an assertion of the ethical superiority of a diasporic Jewish existence over a nationalist one, without wholly rejecting the coexistence of Jewish nationhood in Israel.<sup>50</sup> This is not the case with the thinkers I dub here "neodiasporic." Their diasporism requires that the political, social, and legal environment that has been established by Zionism in Israel be completely eradicated so that Jews there and in the world who are interested in interpreting their Jewishness in terms of nationhood would no longer be able to hold on to this interpretation and realize it.

The neodiasporic scholars differ sometimes in nuance, and sometimes in more than just nuance, in their choice of what aspects of the pre-Zionist diasporic Jewish life contemporary and future Jews and Israel should build into their existence. They also differ in the fine points of the arguments they make for their position. However, they all share the view that the Zionist historical experiment of realizing a nationalist interpretation of Jewish existence is a failure that brought about a moral catastrophe; that it was in fact doomed from a very early stage to be such a failure; and that this experiment should therefore come to an end. Jewish existence, they believe, requires a new interpretation, one that grows out of values deriving from or based upon pre-Zionist diasporic Jewish history.

Judith Butler is arguably the most radical advocate of this type of post-Zionism. This is exemplified by the title of her book *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*. The title expresses the book's principal thesis—it calls on the Jewish people to sever its ties to Zionism completely, in the name of Jewishness itself.<sup>51</sup> Butler restates Zionism's crimes, most centrally the extensive and violent dispossessions of the Palestinians in 1948, the capture of Palestinian territories in 1967, and, since then, the ongoing expropriation of Palestinian land for the purposes of constructing the separation barrier and the expansion of Israeli settlements.<sup>52</sup> She believes that Zionism has a "structural commitment to state violence" and to the crimes it perpetrates.<sup>53</sup> Israel, she claims, is ruled by the principle of Jewish sovereignty even though it is not, demographically, fully Jewish. As such, it must struggle in order to maintain the Jewish demographic advantage over its non-Jewish minorities. This,

she claims, “requires three processes pertaining to the Palestinian people: minoritization, occupation, and expulsion.”<sup>54</sup> These processes are ongoing, and Israel, in her view, fundamentally depends on them for its existence.<sup>55</sup> The only way to change it is to renounce Israel in its current form, which, in Butler’s view, is equivalent to renouncing Zionism.

Butler maintains that this renunciation is an ethical imperative, on the grounds that a precondition of ethics is departing from ourselves and responding to the “claims of alterity.”<sup>56</sup> But one of the central things that Butler seeks to do in her book is to demonstrate that this defining truth of morality, in the case of the Jews, follows not only from general ethics but also from the particular diasporic history of the Jews. In other words, she seeks to derive a universal ethical obligation from the particular Jewish history and argues that it is therefore particularly incumbent on Jews to abide by this obligation. The Jews’ history as a people without territory of their own required them to construct an identity that encompassed the non-Jew. Butler’s opinion is that the same requirement exists today, not only outside Israel and the Palestinian lands it occupies but also within them. She thus proposes establishing a binational regime in these areas. But, notably, she does not mean bi-nationalism merely on the level of the desirable political and legal arrangements of Israel/Palestine. Such bi-nationalism, as she notes, has been proposed again and again from the dawn of Zionist history to the present day.<sup>57</sup> Her plan is much more radical. She proposes bi-nationalism on the level of the individual identities of all the persons living in Israel/Palestine—both Jews and Arabs.<sup>58</sup> The polity that should be established in this country is not one of individuals whose collective identities are mutually exclusive Jewish or Palestinian identities, but rather of individuals who realize Jewish-Palestinian bi-nationalism on the level of their personality identity. Butler sees the adoption of such an identity as an “anti-identitarian project.”<sup>59</sup>

Butler’s position is radical on two levels. She transforms the individual ethical requirement of stepping outside oneself and responding to the demands of otherness from a requirement for *consideration for the other* while preserving one’s personality identity into a demand to *include the other* by abrogating one’s former personality-identity. The individual is expected to craft a new, hybrid self, composed of both her former self and the self of the other. If I understand Butler correctly, she turns the common moral demand addressed to polities to establish institutional bi-nationalism in countries that are conceived by two groups as their homeland, into a postnationalist demand addressed to individuals,

calling on them to become citizens with binational identities within an institutional political framework that is not itself binational.

Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, who together with some Israeli post-Zionists dispute what they see as the autochthonic vision of Judaism embedded in the Zionist narrative of pre-Zionist Jewish history,<sup>60</sup> also cite Zionism's moral failure as their reason for opposing it. They, too, believe that this failure was inevitable and that it tarnishes Jewish culture.<sup>61</sup> Like Butler, they seek to replace it with a refurbished interpretation of Judaism as a mainly exilic and diasporic experience. But in addressing Zionism's moral failure, they emphasize different aspects from those cited by Butler. In their analysis, the profound inequality endured by non-Jews, Palestinians in particular, in Israel is more salient than their dispossession and expulsion. "Within Israel, where power is concentrated almost exclusively in Jewish hands, this discursive practice [for example, caring for the feeding and housing of Jews and not "others," which is justified within conditions of Diaspora] has become a monstrosity whereby an egregiously disproportionate measure of the resources of the state is devoted to the welfare of only one segment of the population. . . . Practices that in Diaspora have one meaning, have entirely different meanings under political hegemony."<sup>62</sup> Daniel Boyarin also differs from Butler with regard to those characteristics of the exile that current and future Jews should reclaim. She stresses Jewish Diaspora experience as a basis for the urgency of coupling individual Jews' personality-identity with the personality-identity of the others with whom Jews share a physical space, which in the case of Israeli Jews will take the form of a binational Jewish-Palestinian personality-identity. Boyarin writes at length about the gender ambiguity of the Diaspora Jew. The ideal Jew of the exile was a "sissy," a delicate full-time Talmudic scholar rather than a warrior. Nothing could be further from the masculine-aggressive autochthonic men that Zionism fostered in the spirit of European colonialism.<sup>63</sup> In addition to analyzing texts written by figures such as Freud and Herzl, Daniel Boyarin frequently cites ancient rabbinic texts. Butler, for her part, draws inspiration and arguments largely from her analysis of texts written by modern Jewish sages such as Franz Rosenzweig, Emmanuel Levinas, Primo Levi, Walter Benjamin, and Hanna Arendt. Beyond these differences, however, the post-Zionism of Butler and the Boyarins reaches the same political and ethical conclusions and uses very similar arguments. Nationalist Jewish identity à la Zionism needs to be replaced, they claim, with an individual and

collective Jewish identity based on a reinterpretation of Judaism and Jewishness as predominantly diasporic. The reason is the inexorable moral failure of Zionism.

A diasporic or rather exilic post-Zionist position closely related to that of Butler and the Boyarins has been given a robust and detailed statement by Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin in his “Exile within Sovereignty: Toward a Critique of the ‘Negation of Exile’ in Israeli Culture.”<sup>64</sup> “The concept of the exile,” he writes at the start of his article, “will be presented and developed below as an ethical-cultural position allowing Jewish self-determination that turns toward those denied elements of the present, allows for their open existence, and recognizes their point of view.”<sup>65</sup> By “denied elements of the present” he probably means the denials implicit in the Zionist notion of the negation of the exile (which is discussed at length in chapter 6 below)—the disregard of the Arab presence in the Land of Israel before and since the inception of Zionism, and the negation of the current validity of values that regulated Jewish life during its long history outside the Land of Israel.<sup>66</sup>

By rejecting the Zionist principle of the negation of the exile and speaking of “exile within sovereignty,” Raz-Krakotzkin expresses a wish for the return of the Israeli Jews to what, in his opinion, was a central characteristic of Jewish existence and consciousness during the exile, namely adopting a critical distance from the acts of the majority in the countries where Jews lived. Jewish consciousness benefited from this distance as a result of the Jews being always a minority.<sup>67</sup> The Jews, he argues, always defined themselves “on the basis of their encounter with the conceptual language of the dominant culture and on the basis of taking a critical stance regarding that culture.”<sup>68</sup> This form of self-determination was anchored in a “symbiosis” with the other, the Gentile. The same approach ought to be adopted in Israel/Palestine, Raz-Krakotzkin maintains. Jews should seek a symbiosis with the other, namely, the Palestinian. Butler’s position, we saw, expresses a similar idea. Both she and Raz-Krakotzkin emphasize the specific Jewish relevance that this imperative enjoys. For Raz-Krakotzkin this imperative is directed not only at the personal and political sphere, but also at the sphere of historiography. He adduces Walter Benjamin’s critique of the view according to which Western history is a chronicle of progress, a view that expunges the point of view, history, and values of those oppressed by the West. He also adduces Benjamin’s demand for a rewriting of history in a way that incorporates the point of view of the oppressed, both by describing historical facts as they actually occurred and also by granting



recognition to the social realities and to the values of the oppressed. Raz-Krakotzkin offers the concept of “exile within sovereignty” as an attempt to assimilate Benjamin’s view of history and its writing to the self-conceptions of Israeli Jews. “The Jewish past,” he claims, “enables the creation of an alternative approach of this kind, perhaps because this is not a historical phenomenon of ‘absolute repression,’ of a voice totally silenced . . . [the Jewish collective] is a collective that, despite being perceived and explicitly defined as a tolerated minority . . . did not generally belong to the lowest and most oppressed classes in the society in which it lived. . . . The Jews preserve a history that does not remain silent.”<sup>69</sup> The implication is that the Jews have reasons, and perhaps even are especially qualified, for producing a historiography and a reality that express not only their triumph over their own oppression but also the fact that they oppressed others in order to achieve their victory.

The surface difference between the neodiasporic position and the position of the other post-Zionists discussed in this chapter is rather obvious. It lies in the nature of the alternative that they offer to Zionism. Civic and postcolonial post-Zionists propose to turn Israel into a state of the civic Israeli nation or to a state that institutes postcolonial multiculturalism so as to repair injustices inflicted by Zionism on Mizrahi Jews and Palestinians. Neodiasporic post-Zionists, in contrast, wish Israeli Jews (as well as of Jews outside Israel) to interpret their existence as diasporic rather than a national existence, and to recognize its substance in light of the history of the Jewish exile. But this apparent difference grows out of a much more profound difference between these forms of post-Zionism. Unlike the civic and postcolonial post-Zionists, the neodiasporic post-Zionists recognize the existence of Judaism or Jewishness as a nonreligious identity, in both the individual and the collective spheres. They treat the Jewish collectivity as a valuable collectivity that it is worthwhile to preserve. Moreover, their recognition of this collective and their concern for its reputation and perpetuation seem to be among their central motives for rejecting Zionism and for proposing an alternative to it. For these writers, Judaism is not merely a source of anti-Zionist *values*, but also a source of a particular Jewish *interest* in countering Zionism. The implications of the civic and postcolonial post-Zionist positions are diametrically opposed to these neodiasporic concerns and motivations. As chapter 6 demonstrates, civic and postcolonial post-Zionists deny the possibility of acknowledging any nonreligious Jewish identity and advocate the dissolution of such existence for those who imagine it, both within Israel and outside it.

Neodiasporic post-Zionism is completely different. Exile within sovereignty, Raz-Krakotzkin argues, is a mode of Jewish self-determination. For him this holds for all Jews, not just for those in Israel. The same is true of Butler and the Boyarins.<sup>70</sup>

These differences between neodiasporic post-Zionism and the other two forms of post-Zionism follow partly from the major difference between the arguments they make in order to justify their concern for providing an alternative to Zionism. One such argument is shared by all forms of post-Zionism and also by egalitarian Zionism. It is the argument that stresses the injustices committed by Zionism against the Palestinians, the need to stop perpetrating these injustices, and the need to make up for them. However, civic and postcolonial post-Zionists rely heavily also on a form of anti-essentialism that rejects not only Jewish nationhood but any conception of Jewish individuality and collectivity that is not religious. The anti-essentialism of the neodiasporic thinkers does not deny the existence of such nonreligious Jewish identities. To the contrary, the Boyarins enthusiastically assert it and discuss at length what they take to be the appropriate interpretation of its nature.<sup>71</sup> Raz-Krakotzkin criticizes civic post-Zionism for denying it.<sup>72</sup> And Butler's argument for a diasporic alternative to Zionism necessarily assumes it.<sup>73</sup> These thinkers either argue explicitly or presuppose implicitly that Judaism or Jewishness exists as an individual and collective nonreligious identity. Their extensive preoccupation with the question of how to interpret Judaism or Jewishness nonreligiously necessarily presupposes an experience that is the subject of their preoccupation and that is worth preserving or recreating.

Regarding its preoccupation with issues pertaining to the interpretation of the nonreligious individual and collective Jewish identity, neodiasporism is more similar to Zionism in its various forms than to the other types of post-Zionism.<sup>74</sup> All forms of Zionism and neodiasporic post-Zionism recognize the nonreligious Jewish identity and seek to perpetuate it—which the other forms of post-Zionism do not. The difference between diasporic post-Zionism and essentialist-proprietary Zionism in this regard is like the difference between egalitarian and proprietary Zionism. While proprietary Zionism views nationhood as the essence of Judaism, diasporic post-Zionism and egalitarian Zionism view it as only one possible interpretation of Jewish individuality and collectivity. The difference between the neodiasporic approach and egalitarian-Zionist approach is that the latter takes the nationalist conception of Jewish existence as morally possible and legitimate (under

the constraints discussed in this book), while neodiasporic post-Zionism categorically rejects this interpretive option.

As we saw above, the neodiasporic thinkers reject it for two types of reasons. The first stem from what Zionism has done and according to these thinkers is doomed to do perpetually to non-Jews and also Jews in the Land of Israel. The second consists of reasons deriving from the lessons of pre-Zionist Jewish history. I have already mentioned (in chapter 2) Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin's view that "the biblical story is not one of autochthony but one of always already coming from somewhere else."<sup>75</sup> They continue: "Traditional Jewish attachment to the Land, whether biblical or post-biblical, thus provides a self-critique as well as critique of identities based on notions of autochthony."<sup>76</sup> Moreover, as we saw above, the Boyarins, Butler, and Raz-Krakotzkin also argue that Jewish pre-Zionist diasporic history created modes of existence and produced values that are much more congenial than those produced by Jewish history since the inception of Zionism: the inclusion rather than the exclusion of others, scholarship rather than militarism, delicateness rather than valor. It would thus be best to set aside the nationalist interpretation of individual and collective Jewish identity and to adopt a diasporic one. It would be best to cast off Zionism.

Do these arguments really lead to the neodiasporic conclusion? My answer is, unsurprisingly, no. Let me begin with the arguments arising from the injustices that have been committed and are still being committed by Zionism against the Palestinians. I am not convinced that the advocates of diasporic post-Zionism themselves believe that the fact that Zionism has committed major injustices and established a shameful regime of inequality in Israel is sufficient reason for doing away with Zionism. My impression is that the neodiasporic post-Zionists are themselves aware that the injustice and inequality they point to are facts that, in and of themselves, require only recognition and repair. They mandate compensation for the loss and for the suffering caused by Zionism's unjust treatment of the Palestinians, and cessation of the profound inequality that has long prevailed between Arabs and Jews. Were they not aware that this is the appropriate remedy, Butler and the Boyarins would not bother to argue that the injustices inflicted by Zionism and the inequalities it perpetuates are inexorable or that Zionism requires them "structurally." Indeed, if Zionism were structurally committed to the crimes that it committed, Israel would have to cease being a Zionist state. But Butler and the Boyarins offer no real support for this claim. Butler says that, since Israel is committed to

Jewish sovereignty even though its population is not entirely Jewish, it is compelled to persist in committing injustices today of the type that it committed in the past. That being the case, she argues, Israel needs to cease to exist in its present form. Israel must thus discard Zionism.<sup>77</sup>

But this argument overlooks the most elementary distinctions that moral and political philosophy offers for evaluating the moral status of Zionism. Butler, like other advocates of neodiasporism, makes no distinction between Zionism as a political theory for the Jewish people and Zionism as a historical movement. While Butler and the Boyarins note that there were, historically, versions of Zionism that they could accept, they make no distinction between the question of the rightness of specific interpretations of Zionism as a political theory for the Jews and the question of the wrongness of other such interpretations. Nor do they distinguish between the question of the justice of historical Zionism as a whole and the question of the justice of specific policies pursued by historical Zionism or particular steps it took for advancing its goals. They ask no questions about the relationship between the justice of Zionism as whole and the justice of its particular policies and actions. If the uses I have made in this book of these distinctions are sound, then it would be appropriate to accept the neodiasporic post-Zionists' claim that injustice is structured into Zionism and that the Zionist state must necessarily continue to commit such injustices—but only Zionism in its proprietary and hierarchical interpretations. Given the demographics of Israel/Palestine, and of Israel within its 1967 borders, hierarchical Zionism is indeed committed, by the definition of its principles, to maintaining inequality between Jews and Palestinians. Likewise, proprietary Zionism is committed to committing gross violations of Palestinian human rights on a daily basis.

But if my arguments in this book and in *A Just Zionism* are sound, it is not the case that egalitarian Zionism is committed in principle to inequality and to the violation of human rights. It thus seems that the neodiasporic conclusion does not really follow from the well-founded premises of some critiques of Zionism voiced by Butler, the Boyarins, and Raz-Krakotzkin. These critiques entail only that the proprietary and the hierarchical interpretations of Zionism should be opposed. They should be rejected as political ideas, and since they have informed Zionist history in recent decades, they need to be resisted politically. But this does not mean that egalitarian Zionism should be rejected. Those who are convinced by egalitarian Zionism and seek to realize it need to struggle for an Israel within borders based on those of 1967 that conceives of

itself as principally but not exclusively Jewish. According to egalitarian Zionism, this Israel will recognize the justice of the Palestinian opposition to its unjust aspects and will remedy them appropriately—in particular the expulsions of 1948, the ongoing occupation and settlement that began in the 1970s, and the inequality between Israel's Jews and Arabs within the 1967 borders.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, according to egalitarian Zionism this Israel will not only acknowledge the justice of the Palestinian opposition to its unjust aspects, but also express understanding toward Palestinian opposition to the just aspects of Zionist history, an opposition that was justifiable despite the justice of Zionism under its egalitarian conception.<sup>79</sup>

Something similar needs to be said about the constructive, noncritical aspects of the neodiasporic proposal concerning the need to shape Jewish life and identity in light of values such as the inclusion of others, antijingoism, and scholarship. However, before we address this constructive neodiasporic proposal, it must be noted that my response above to the neodiasporic post-Zionist critique of Zionism speaks also to the increasing number of prominent Anglo-American Jewish intellectuals who, while not post-Zionists in the terms of this chapter, have over the last decade given up on Zionism. Among them are Tony Judt, Jonathan Friedland, Ian S. Lustick, and Anthony Lerman.<sup>80</sup> Like the post-Zionists discussed in this chapter, they argue that Zionism is committed in principle to inequality between Jews and Arabs and to violations of human rights, and that for this reason it should be discarded. They make this claim, however, on the assumptions that a two-state solution to the Jewish-Palestinian conflict ceased to be a viable option at the beginning of the 2000s and that Jews will not, demographically, constitute a majority in a single state comprising all of historic Palestine. Under these circumstances, Jewish sovereignty will involve ongoing violation of human rights. These intellectuals do not offer a principled objection to the political idea of Zionism as do the post-Zionist thinkers discussed here, according to whom the Jews cannot be considered as constituting a nation, Zionism has been predominantly colonial rather than a national enterprise, and the Jews should privilege a diasporic rather than a nationalist interpretation of their collective identity. On the contrary, the intellectuals listed above see themselves as having been Zionists up until a decade or two ago. They ceased to be Zionists just around the turn of the century because they believe that for the reasons mentioned above it was only then that Zionism took on a structural commitment to discrimination and exclusion.

I think that these intellectuals' assumption that the demographic situation that has emerged in Israel/Palestine in recent decades is irreversible in a way that rules out a two-state solution is misconceived. The concept of irreversibility in this context is not a natural or logical one but is rather a function of social, political, and moral cost. A computation of the political, social, and moral costs of accepting a single state in the current demographic situation, versus those of changing the demographic facts by establishing boundaries that will enable two states to exist, will, I am fairly sure, show that it will be a long time before the costs of establishing two states exceed those of a single state. This estimation is based on facts and on the moral implications of the anticipated facts, which I cannot address here.<sup>81</sup>

However, even if my intuitive judgment on these factual and moral issues is wrong, these intellectuals have been too hasty in their transition from disbelieving in the practicality of the two-state solution to altogether rejecting liberal Zionism and the maintenance of Jewish national self-determination in Israel/Palestine. They assume that Jewish nationalism there necessarily requires a state with a Jewish majority. But that is simply not the case. It is not true in the context of the general concept of ethnocultural nationalism, of which Zionism is a specific case;<sup>82</sup> neither is it true in the context of Zionist history.<sup>83</sup> Giving up the idea of two states between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, one of which would have a clear Jewish majority, does not mean consent to establishing, in that same territory, a civic state devoid of Jewish nationalism. The single state could be binational, that is, one in which each of two national groups enjoys national self-determination, and in which the Jews would be a majority in part of the land and possess significant political power. In fact, in its early stages Zionism did not ask for any more than this. It was the historical fact of European anti-Semitism in the 1930s and 1940s that rightly induced the Zionist movement to aspire to more. The historical circumstances that Zionism has produced since 1967 by settling Jews in territories that were meant to become a Palestinian state may well compel it to be extremely modest in the political arrangements it can demand. An aspiration to Jewish self-determination in a binational state is still a Zionist aspiration, both on the level of the Zionist political idea and on the level of Zionism's historical phenomenology. Such a state would, in any case, not be the same as an Israel in which nationhood would be civic only, as advocated by these intellectuals. It would be more like Belgium or the former Czechoslovakia rather than like France, the United States, or South Africa.

However, let me return to the more fundamentalist post-Zionist neodiasporism and to its constructive thesis, namely, that Jewish life in diaspora has produced values and teaches lessons that should replace the nationalist lessons Zionism derives from Jewish exilic life, and that these neodiasporic values and lessons should shape Jewish personal and collective identity. The neodiasporic post-Zionists highlight the capacities and traits that have been developed throughout the Jewish history of exile such as the ability to live together with non-Jews, the ability to persist as a political minority critical of the majority, the high status accorded to education and scholarship, and a refined and antimacho concept of masculinity. These are clearly products of the experience of Jews outside their homeland; and there can be no denying that these are positive capacities and traits. However, it is hard to see why the Jews should be satisfied with these alone. Zionism highlights the unwelcome aspects of Jewish homelessness and offers a remedy for the Jews' utter dependence on the compassion of others. It points to the need for the reestablishment of a pervasive Jewish territorial culture to correct the diaspora predicament in which Jews had to restrict themselves to a narrow range of activities and occupations. The fact that the historical Zionist movement painted a distorted picture of the exile as wholly negative is a reason to correct that distortion and to adopt a more nuanced view of the value of life within the framework of an independent, encompassing, territorial culture by integrating it with the positive aspects of Jewish life in the diaspora. It is not a reason for discarding Zionism and the values that it promotes under reasonable interpretations of these values.

In calling for a return solely to values that have developed from the positive aspects of the diaspora while disregarding the lessons Zionism learned from the negative aspects of diaspora life (i.e., the need for Jewish independence and self-defense) the neodiasporic thinkers commit the same error that Zionism committed as it developed historically. They seek to privilege some lessons and values taken from the diaspora over others. Zionism as it has been realized in practice has flouted the importance of respect for and the inclusion of minorities in the name of Jewish sovereignty. It has elevated aggression and militarism as elements of Jewish identity while marginalizing scholarship and intellectual achievement. Neodiasporic post-Zionism disregards the value of Jewish independence and the value of maintaining a Jewish societal culture pervading all aspects and spheres of life, including the military—which can flourish only in a self-governing territory. But there is no reason why these values cannot coexist. The contours of egalitarian Zionism on the

issue of the status of the Jews and Arabs outlined above express a way of doing this in the Jewish state and its environs. Egalitarian Zionism's interpretation of the Zionist principle of the negation of the exile, to be discussed in chapter 6, offers a way of doing so with regard to Jewish life around the world.

Let me conclude this chapter by referring to anti-Zionist post-Zionism generally, under all its forms discussed above. It rejects the legitimacy of the ongoing realization of Jewish national self-determination in Israel. It advocates creating a political reality that endangers the ability of great numbers of people living in Israel to live within the framework of their national identity despite their interest in doing so. Putting at risk the continued existence of political and legal realities that allow people to realize the major components of their identity—especially those required for their well-being, and sometimes for their freedom—may be justified only in the case of identities that by their very nature are oppressive toward others. The examples of a male chauvinist identity and the identity of the white supremacist to which I referred in chapter 1 are cases in point: a political and legal reality should not tolerate the realization of these identities. As I have already mentioned above, if the post-Zionist demand for the dismantling of Jewish self-determination in Israel is interpreted as being addressed at the proprietary interpretation of this self-determination, it is then a wholly valid demand, since the proprietary interpretation of Zionism transforms the oppression of Arab people living in Israel/Palestine into part of the “genetic code” of Zionism. But this is surely not the case with the interpretation of Zionism I have been advocating. This interpretation draws the sting from post-Zionism.

The move I made in this chapter against post-Zionism's normative argument resembles, in some sense, the move I made in chapter 2 against its historiographical argument. There I argued that post-Zionism's criticism of Jewish nationalism (at least as the Israeli proponents of post-Zionism make it) is valid as long as it is addressed to the thesis that dominated mainstream Zionism from the 1930s: Ben Zion Dinur's thesis that nationhood is the essence (in the descriptive sense) of Judaism, and that this has never stopped being the case from antiquity, including in the nineteenth century. In order to establish this thesis, Zionist historiography had to deploy a false narrative about the expulsion of the Jews from the Land of Israel by the Romans, about their constant yearning to return to it, and about the negation of the exile. This critique loses its sting when one considers Zionism as it really was at its outset: an attempt to inspire the late



nineteenth-century Jewish collective, scattered as it was in communities that developed diverse cultures and histories, to invoke its partial nationhood in order to solve the weighty and urgent problems its members were facing and to become a fully fledged nation. If, in other words, we think about the real historical contexts in which Zionism emerged and developed, and about the objectives that could justifiably be adopted in these circumstances, the ahistorical and immoral nature of both proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism becomes apparent. The interpretation of Zionism that I proposed in chapter 3 is, in these two respects, diametrically opposed to them. I will further elucidate these points in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

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# Egalitarian Zionism

### 5.1. Egalitarian Zionism and Its Rivals

Several moral and theoretical advantages that egalitarian Zionism enjoys over its rivals—both Zionist and post-Zionist—became apparent throughout the discussions in the previous chapters. Chapter 2 clarified the advantages egalitarian Zionism enjoys over proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism from the viewpoint of their conceptual foundations and the social ontologies they presuppose. While proprietary Zionism on the one hand rests its demands on the idle assumption that the Jews as a world collective have never ceased to constitute a fully fledged nation, and while post-Zionism on the other hand insists on denying any sense in which the Jews could and can be considered a nation, egalitarian Zionism adopts an intermediate position between the two. It conceives of the Jews in the centuries preceding Zionism and in the years since its inception as constituting a partial case of a nation. This conceptual construal reflects what Judaism really was both in the centuries leading to the inception of Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century and today. It also helps in clarifying and emphasizing the interpretive moral role and the creative historical role of the Zionist idea and movement in turning some of the Jews into a fully fledged nation in Israel and in solidifying a national component for the Jewish identity of many Jews outside Israel.

In chapter 3 I discussed the advantages of egalitarian Zionism over proprietary Zionism from the perspective of the theories of justice they are based upon and the moral ontologies assumed by these theories. While proprietary Zionism assumes a theory of justice that allows collectives to unilaterally seize “immense territory and keep it from the rest

of the world,”<sup>1</sup> the theory of justice on which egalitarian Zionism rests doesn’t allow unilateral “fact creations” that have significant practical and moral consequences without taking into account other individuals and collectives, their equal needs, their freedoms, and their human dignity. As for the moral ontology presupposed by this theory of justice, it assumes the natural and intuitive understanding, or at least the liberal understanding, that individuals and not nations or other types of collectives are the basic units of political morality, both as subjects and as beneficiaries. Proprietary Zionism’s assumptions are the opposite.

In chapter 3 I hope to have shown also that egalitarian Zionism derives from the theory of justice upon which it is based conclusions that are more consistent with this theory than those of hierarchical Zionism. In chapter 4 I did the same with regard to the various versions of post-Zionism. Although hierarchical Zionism and post-Zionism do not presuppose, or are not accompanied by, inherently questionable moral ontologies and political moralities, as proprietary Zionism is, they nevertheless arrive at conclusions supporting significant inequalities or dismissals of important human interests, without justifying these inequalities or dismissals. I hope to have shown that egalitarian Zionism avoids all these serious failures.

The purpose of the present chapter is to explicate some important specific implications of the aforementioned advantages that egalitarian Zionism has over its Zionist and post-Zionist rivals and to identify certain additional important advantages it has over them. Some of these advantages pertain to the historiography of the Jewish past, the Zionist past, and the requirement of consistency with this past. Other advantages pertain to the future course of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict. In the first part of this chapter I will mainly discuss issues of the first type, those relating to the historiography of the past and consistency with it. In the second part I will clarify the implications of the different approaches to Zionism discussed in previous chapters for the stability of the possible end-state solutions they can provide for settling the Jewish-Palestinian conflict.

## 5.2. Zionist Consistency and Historiography

Both post-Zionism and proprietary Zionism are detached from Zionism’s real historical and moral contexts. I will demonstrate here this detachment by discussing their rejection of the two-state solution for

the Jewish-Palestinian conflict based on the pre-1967 borders and their blaming those who support it for either Zionist or liberal inconsistency. Subsequently I will explain how the egalitarian interpretation I proposed in chapter 3 of the gaps in the morality of the Zionist narrative allows for a nonfalsifying historiography, both of the history of Zionism itself and of the history of the Jews before Zionism.

### *5.2.1. The Moral and Historical Value of the Pre-1967 Borders*

To remind ourselves: I argued above that the territorial dimension of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel must be based on the borders drawn in the period when the necessity to establish this self-determination, as a result of the persecutions of Jews, was at its peak: the borders to which Israel and the Arab states agreed in the armistice of 1949. With these agreements, which were reached few years after the Holocaust, Israel's War of Independence came to a close. The borders that were drawn then have since been called "the Green Line" or "the 1967 borders."<sup>2</sup> Leftist Zionists and many observers of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict are of the opinion that the conflict must be settled by the establishment of two states along borders based on those of 1967. Many of them ground this position in pragmatic considerations or on moral intuitions. The egalitarian interpretation of Zionism that I have put forth here—while attributing a major role to the Jews' identity tie with the Land of Israel in the justification of Zionism—offers a detailed principled justification, and not merely a pragmatic/intuitive one, for this position. Both the proprietary Zionists and the post-Zionists criticize this stance, relying mainly on two arguments. One holds that a two-state solution is not practical given the demographic and the socio-economic conditions that emerged in Israel/Palestine after 1967. The other claims that dividing the land along the Green Line is inconsistent with both the history and the morality of Zionism.

I am interested here in the second argument, of course, and in both its branches. As for the first argument, I only note in passing that it has a point, but it is not sufficient for establishing its conclusion. Redividing Israel/Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, after Israel has littered the territories it occupied with settlements, is definitely a practical obstacle that is hard to overcome. The practical, moral, and political conclusions that follow from this are, in fact, not clear. If the circumstantial reasons on which I relied in chapter 3 to support the creation of two

states west of the Jordan River are sound, then the practical problems that will arise if a joint Jewish–Palestinian state in the land west of the Jordan River is established will be many times more difficult to solve than those that will arise if this land is redivided on the basis of the 1967 borders. The problems arising from this redivision are to be preferred to the problems a joint state would introduce. Their duration would be short and clear—namely, until Israel/Palestine is redivided. But in a joint state either one side would be subjugated by the other, or alternatively the joint state would be in a virtually permanent state of paralysis because its government would be unable to reach decisions. Proprietary Zionism’s and post-Zionism’s claim that the huge difficulties in reaching a two-state solution are a reason for avoiding it therefore implies an attempt to avoid dealing with a great but temporary problem at the price of tolerating a practical problem that is both bigger and more long-lasting. But my main issue here is, as said, not the practicality of the two-state solution, but that of its morality and historicity.

“What exactly is the difference between Ofra [the large settlement in Samaria], and Beit Dagan [a town within the Green Line], which is situated on Beit Dajan [the Arabic name of the village that preceded the current Israeli town Beit Dagan and existed until 1948]? . . . Do the 19 years from 1948 to 1967 make one settlement moral and the other immoral?”<sup>3</sup> These questions have been posed countless times. This particular quotation is of Yehouda Shenhav, who was interviewed for an article published in the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz* on July 15, 2010. The subject of the article was the “surprising vision” of a binational state espoused by leading figures of the Israeli right wing.<sup>4</sup>

Shenhav, whose book *Beyond the Two State Solution*<sup>5</sup> also expresses an objection to the partition of the land west of the Jordan River into two states, cites remarks similar to and perhaps even more pungent than his own by Uri Elitzur, an important activist among the settlers: “You [that is, the Zionist Left] expelled the Palestinians in 1948, did not allow them back, established settlements on top of all their villages, and afterward built a separation fence, and then you come to us with complaints, even though we never destroyed even a single village on the West Bank—not even one—to build a settlement.”<sup>6</sup> Elitzur and Shenhav complain about the inconsistency, if not the hypocrisy, of Israel’s Zionist Left, which on the one hand supports the borders that remained intact until 1967 and on the other hand sharply disapproves of the settlements built beyond them since 1967. Both argue that opposition to the post-1967 settlements is inconsistent because Zionism settled Jews in Israel at the expense of the

local Arabs beginning with its inception, not just since 1967; and even if the post-1967 settlements result in injustices, the injustices committed by Zionism in 1948 and the decade following it are graver: it settled Jews on privately owned Arab land, and, worse, it uprooted masses of (local) Arabs from their homes and prevented their return.

Only those who believe that the Zionist narrative is about a nationhood-property symbiosis between the Jews and the Land of Israel will spot an inconsistency here. And those who foster this position are on the one hand the adherents of proprietary Zionism and on the other hand the adherents of post-Zionism.<sup>7</sup> The adherents of proprietary Zionism adopt Zionism because of this interpretation. In contrast, the post-Zionists reject Zionism because this is how, in their opinion, Zionism must be interpreted. As far as the proprietary Zionists are concerned, consistency makes them conclude that if the injustices committed in 1948 are acceptable, then clearly the injustices committed by the post-1967 settlements are acceptable. Hence they support one state in which the Jews—the masters—continue committing these acceptable injustices—which have been perpetrated daily since 1967—and should the Lord or any other authority so wish, they will also commit injustices of the kind that occurred in 1948. For the post-Zionists, by contrast, consistency demands the opposite conclusion: If Zionism is proprietary and hence it must be rejected, then neither the injustices of occupation committed post-1967 nor, certainly, the suffering of those who were expelled in 1948 should be continued. Hence they support the one-state solution: All of Palestine's refugees will return, the Jewish settlers who came after 1967 will stay where they are and the same goes for the Jewish settlers from before 1948. As a result, civic post-Zionists, following the Marquise de Clermont-Tonnerre in believing that it is imperative that “the Jews should be denied everything as a nation and granted everything [only] as individuals,”<sup>8</sup> think that the French Revolution's vision of emancipation should be implemented in the case of the Jews, not merely those of eighteenth-century France but also those in twenty-first-century Judea, Samaria, and Philistia. Other post-Zionists, under the influence of postcolonial theory, are of the opinion that this stage can be reached only once a multicultural, multicentered regime has been installed that will grant rights to the groups that were oppressed by Zionism. And of course, the neodiasporic post-Zionists plan for Israeli Jews is that they should become exilic in their own country.

If the tripartite justification for Zionism I have advanced in this book is appropriate, then support for the foundation of two states on the basis

of the 1967 borders does not suffer in the slightest from the inconsistency that Shenhav the post-Zionist and Elitzur the proprietary Zionist charge it with. According to this justification there is a huge difference between the post-1967 settlements and Zionism's injustices until then. The post-1967 settlements are wholly incompatible with a just interpretation of the Zionist idea. The pre-1967 wrongs, by contrast, though they may in themselves seem harsher than those committed after 1967, may have been viewed at the time and could today be regarded as perhaps significant albeit local contaminations in the realization of a just idea. These wrongs committed in the course of the realization of the idea need not call into question the essential justice of it.<sup>9</sup> This distinction is a particular case of the general distinction between justifying a given practice or a rule and justifying a particular act under a given practice or a rule, as explained in chapter 1. The distinction is very similar to the one between *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*.

Thus, there is no contradiction between claiming that the British bombing of Dresden in World War II was a gross atrocity and claiming that this atrocity was committed in the course of a just war, even sublimely just, no less than the war against the Nazis. By the same token, the wrongs committed by Zionism before the post-1967 settlement project—the acts of exploitation and dispossession in the early stages of Zionism, including the atrocious expulsion of seven hundred thousand Palestinians during Israel's War of Independence—can be acknowledged (and compensated for) without making it impossible to view Zionism as a movement that is on the whole just. In 1948–49, when the so-called 1967 borders were set, Zionism realized the right of the Jews to self-determination in their historic homeland after centuries of persecution. This form of Zionism could be deemed just, even sublimely just, even though it committed crimes along the way. It is impossible to say the same about the post-1967 settlements since it is impossible to justify them on the basis of an imminent threat to human life and dignity. As their supporters indeed argue, they can be justified on the basis of the proprietary interpretation of Zionism, and it seems that they can be justified only on that basis.

Some might well argue that even if Zionism can be justified on the grounds of a persecuted nation's urgent need to establish for itself a home, Zionism would still be proprietary. This is the case, they will argue, because what actually motivated Zionism and its leaders before 1967 was its proprietary interpretation. This interpretation is the one that drove the leaders of the Zionist movement, and everything they did

after the inception of this movement—or at least since the 1930s—was inspired by it. There is indeed plenty of evidence that proprietary Zionism played an important role in motivating many of the most prominent Zionist leaders and activists even before the 1930s.<sup>10</sup> But this does not warrant the conclusion that Zionism was then in general proprietary, for two reasons. First, and less important, the leaders who were inspired by proprietary Zionism were not inspired only by it; they were also guided by the more modest interpretations of this ideology.<sup>11</sup> Second, and much more important, the question of which objectives we attribute to Zionism as a movement hinges on historical interpretation, which in its turn depends on the goals not just of its leaders but also on those of its membership, on the goals of the Zionist movement as they were expressed in official statements of it, and on the goals that one can (morally, among other things) attribute to its actions and policies given the reality within which it was acting.

It therefore seems reasonable to interpret the brunt of pre-1967 Zionist activity in light of the objectives that egalitarian Zionism ascribes to it: the establishment of a national home for a persecuted people. Israel's politics since 1967—settlement and the entrenchment of the military occupation that sustains it—cannot be thought of as having this objective. The settlements and all the activity around them cannot be interpreted as anything other than proprietary. Thus, those who wonder whether to accept and collaborate with the main action of pre-1967 Zionism and that after 1967 should receive different answers for these different periods and, more specifically, for what was attained in them. One should join forces with pre-1967 Zionism in general and with the existence of a national home for the Jews in Palestine / the Land of Israel and simultaneously correct and compensate for the injustices committed during and after its establishment. One must not collaborate with the settlements after 1967 and the occupation they perpetuate. Post-Zionism, as rendered by Shenhav's academic publications, his political statements in the *Ha'aretz* interview, and his book *Beyond the Two-State Solution*, mainly contrives to do the opposite. In the *Ha'aretz* interview and in the book he colludes with the settlements, whereas the theory-based systematic arguments in his academic writings entail his opposition to Jewish ethnonational self-determination in the Land of Israel.

It is important to understand that the apparent collaboration between the proprietary Zionists and the post-Zionists—who accuse the advocates of the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders of being inconsistent—stems not only from the moral aberrations that are innate



in the proprietary justification of Zionism, but also from the historiographical aberrations that are characteristic of both groups. The proprietary Zionists drop the Jews into late nineteenth-century Palestine straight from the Bible in order for them to receive the deed to the land given to them in this book. They further have it that the Jews were expelled from the Land of Israel by the Romans shortly after the Bible was completed, thus ignoring almost everything that befell the Jews in the interim. After all, “Even after the ground they stood upon was swept away from under the feet of the Jews and they were dispersed among the nations and were absorbed among the kingdoms, the complete unity of the Hebrew nation did not come to an end,” as Dinur teaches us.<sup>12</sup> Therefore “The different exiles . . . will be explained as ‘episodes’ in the life of the nation, as transition periods, for which the aspiration of the people to return to its Land must be emphasized,” we are told by the Educational Encyclopedia published by Israel’s Ministry of Education.<sup>13</sup>

The post-Zionists, because they reject Dinur’s essentialism and the falsifications of the Zionist historiography that have been taught to generations of Israelis under Dinur’s inspiration, also distort Jewish history. However, they do so in the opposite direction. Unlike the proprietary Zionists, they drop the Jews straight into the Land of Israel, but apparently from Mars rather than from the Bible, and in order to foment the *Nakba* (*catastrophe* in Arabic) against the Palestinians. As Shenhav says in *Beyond the Two-State Solution*, he wishes to shift the discussion of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict from the “paradigm” that is enshrined at “the time of the Green Line” (that is, Israel as it was between 1949 and 1967) to the “historical origins of the conflict,” the Palestinian *Nakba* of 1948.<sup>14</sup>

If the analysis I have proposed here of the justification of Zionism and the establishment of Israel is correct, then Shenhav in his own way does exactly what proprietary Zionism does in its own way. Each skips the historical origins of Zionism, which lay in the situation of Europe’s Jews in the nineteenth century. Shenhav’s suggestion to shift the discussion of the Jewish-Palestinian conflict from the “paradigm” grounded in the “time of the Green Line” to the historical roots of the conflict, which he identifies as the Palestinian *Nakba* of 1948, is nothing but a suggestion to shift the discussion *outside the range* of the conflict’s historical roots. The conflict began neither in 1948 nor in the Bible. It stems from the birth of Zionism in late nineteenth-century Europe and has endured ever since. In his book, Shenhav criticizes the yearning of people like Israeli former politician Yossi Beilin and Israeli writer David Grossman

for the Israel of 1949–67, “the time of the Green Line.” Such yearning, he says, is “[nostalgia] for a sense of morality and righteousness.”<sup>15</sup> He asks: “Was Israel so beautiful and just in the eyes of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees deprived of their homes during the War of 1948 and barred from returning to them afterward? And of the Palestinians within the Green Line, who had to live under oppressive military occupation until 1966? And of the Mizrachim [Jews from Arab countries], who were forced to live outside the urban centers and became the spine of what we refer to as the Second Israel?”<sup>16</sup>

Arguably, from the viewpoint of Zionist history, the time of the Green Line and of the 1967 borders is infused with deep historical and moral significance, though not because Israel was faultless during that period. The period’s deep moral significance stems from Zionism’s success in carrying out its goal—namely, achieving self-determination for the Jews in the Land of Israel—when it could still be justified on the basis of the three justifications cited in Israel’s Declaration of Independence. The goal of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel was not achieved until 1948, and after 1967 can no longer be invoked in order to justify Zionist policies and actions. It is not surprising that Yossi Beilin and David Grossman are nostalgic for that period. There are people who want justice to be done for them, and after it is done they do not wish to take part in corrupting it. In this case, due to the proprietary Zionism that has dominated Israel since the Six-Day War, this seems to be no longer possible. I wholeheartedly share their nostalgia.

### *5.2.2. Zionist Historiography Revisited*

The moral justification of egalitarian Zionism that I have been advancing here yields a principle for a moral periodization of Zionist history from its inception until the present. This principle divides the history of Zionism into the pre-1967 and post-1967 periods. However, it has two additional implications for Zionist historiography. The less important implication pertains to the Zionist writing of Zionist history since the inception of Zionism. The other, which is of crucial importance, pertains to the Zionist writing of Jewish history preceding Zionism. As for the Zionist historiography of Zionist history, there is reason for concern that events occurred and actions were taken in this period that deserve strong moral condemnation. As a result, controversy surrounds the questions whether these events really did occur and whether these actions were really taken. The most glaring example of such controversy

concerns the events that led to the emergence of Palestinian refugee problem in 1948.<sup>17</sup> Official Israeli historiography of the 1948 war claims that the seven hundred thousand Palestinians who left their homes at that time and who, with their offspring, became refugees, did so because their elites encouraged them to leave.<sup>18</sup> The Palestinians themselves, and also the Israeli historians known as the New Historians, claim that most Palestinians left because they were expelled as a result of the terror inflicted by the Israeli army during the war. If this was really the case, then historians who subscribe to Zionism on the basis of its egalitarian justification, for which I have argued, need not really deny this truth. Recognition that the Palestinian refugees were expelled does not really risk impairing the justice of Zionism as a whole. Great injustice was inflicted, but not such as would undermine the general justification of the Zionist idea and its realization by the Zionist movement at the time that this injustice was committed. For the sake of Zionism and its justice, it would be better to cleanse the resulting stain by acknowledging its existence rather than by denying it.

As I mentioned above, the effect that the egalitarian interpretation of the gaps in the justification of the Zionist narrative should have on the Zionist writing of Jewish history prior to Zionism should be even greater than its effect on the Zionist writing of Zionist history. On this issue there is a wide gulf between historians who would subscribe to egalitarian Zionism and those who subscribe to proprietary Zionism. The proprietary Zionists have peddled three major falsehoods: they claimed that the Jews were expelled from the Land of Israel by the Romans; they argued that the Jews never stopped striving to return to the Land of Israel; they negated exile not only in the moral sense but also in the historiographic sense and have actually dropped it from history. In chapter 2 I discussed one of the major reasons why the historians subscribing to proprietary Zionism, headed by Dinur, produced these falsehoods. It must have been their belief that Zionism cannot constitute a national movement unless the collective that owns it is a fully fledged nation. Since the Jewish collective—at least by the end of the nineteenth century—did not possess the basic characteristics of a national group—a common territory, a pervasive culture, and a shared legacy of remembrances that the members of the group are willing to perpetuate—the historians of proprietary Zionism fabricated the falsehoods of forced expulsion, the negation of the exile, and the constant yearning for a return. These falsehoods were intended to allow the Zionist movement to claim, on the one hand, that it had not been the

Jews' own wish to have no territory and no shared pervasive culture, and, on the other, that in fact they did have a shared legacy of remembrances that they were willing to foster: the remembrances of a past existence in the Land of Israel and the wish to return there and resume that existence. These falsities were superfluous. In order for Zionism to form the national movement of the Jewish collective, that collective did not have to be a nation in the full sense of the word at the inception of this movement. Being a nation in only a partial sense, and being justified in desiring to become a nation in the full sense of the word, were sufficient for this purpose. There is no doubt that at the inception of Zionism Jews constituted a borderline case of a nation. While they were not a fully fledged nation in the nineteenth century, they were perceived, by themselves and by others, as having been a nation in antiquity. In addition, their desire to revert to being a fully fledged nation was justified by the waning of religion as the core of their collective identity, the failure of their emancipation, and their persecution.

The common, mainstream, proprietary justification for Zionism constitutes another motive for the falsifications produced by the Zionist official historiography. If the Jews were absent from the Land of Israel for more than a millennium after leaving it between the seventh and the eleventh centuries, and if during these centuries of absence they were mainly busy living their lives in their places of residence, how then could they argue that they never ceased being the owners of the Land of Israel, as they had been in antiquity, even though they had been physically disconnected from it since the first half of the Middle Ages? The claims that they were expelled by the Romans and that they persistently yearned and actually strove to return to the Land of Israel, as well as the claims of which the negation of the exile consists, are also meant to answer this question. However, Zionism needs all these falsehoods only if it is based on the proprietary argument: only then is the onus on Zionism to prove that statutes of limitation do not apply to the ancient Jewish ownership of Israel. If, however, Zionism is rooted in the tripartite justification central to its egalitarian version, none of this needs to be proven. The central component of this justification is the right to self-determination—a right that follows from a needs-, freedom- and dignity-based universal distributive justice among the world's nations, not from proprietary justice based on unilateral historical appropriations performed by particular peoples. The other two components of the tripartite justification—the historical association between the Jews and the Land of Israel and the persecutions suffered by the Jews—also invoke a needs-, freedom-, and

dignity-based global theory of justice as opposed to unilateral appropriations by particular peoples. According to this argument, the Jews would have been justified in establishing their self-determination in the Land of Israel even if they had no ownership there in antiquity and even if any such ownership had expired. To sustain the argument that the Jews were right when at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth they took it upon themselves to establish their self-determination in the Land of Israel, it suffices to show that in recent centuries Jewish identity, both in the eyes of the Jews themselves and in the eyes of others, was tied up with the nation that emerged in the Land of Israel during antiquity. Whoever justifies Zionism with this argument has no use for the claim that the Jews were expelled from the Land of Israel in ancient times or the claim that they stuck to their aspiration to return ever since. He also need not negate the exile in the way it is negated by proprietary Zionism. Such a person need not believe either in a genetic continuity between the Jews of antiquity and the Jews of later centuries.

The threefold justification of Zionism I proposed here makes a better fit with the text of Israel's Declaration of Independence than does its proprietary justification. This proposed justification renders redundant the Declaration's second paragraph as well as the first part of the third paragraph—which in order to justify the creation of the state declare, "After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion," and that "impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland."<sup>19</sup> However, if these paragraphs are indeed misleading, then making them redundant only gives one an edge over the proprietary interpretation of Zionism, whose justification for Zionism must feed off these falsehoods. By contrast, the justification currently proposed does not read into the first paragraph of Israel's Declaration of Independence what those who hold the proprietary interpretation read into it. According to the egalitarian justification, the paragraph is not about the antecedence of Jews in the Land of Israel but rather, as it is in fact, about the antecedence of the Land of Israel in Jews' sense of identity ("Eretz Israel [Hebrew: The Land of Israel] was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and national identity was shaped").<sup>20</sup> Also, according to egalitarian Zionism, the paragraph is not about a title deed bestowed on the Jews by the Bible but rather, as it is in fact, about the title deed on the Bible that the Jews in the Land of Israel

bestowed on the world (“Here [in the Land of Israel] they . . . gave to the world the eternal Book of Books”).<sup>21</sup> In other words, unlike the proprietary justification, the egalitarian justification can be reconciled with real history; it is also more faithful to what one should stay faithful to in the Declaration of Independence of Israel.

To sum up: the tripartite justification of Zionism that I have introduced here respects the historical facts related to the rise of Zionism as a historical movement. It tells the story of individuals whose collective identity waned through the decline of religion, and who were persecuted because of their identity. Hence they attempted to make use of a real interpretive possibility and transform their collective identity, which by this time was mainly religious, into a predominantly national identity. Within the framework of this story no claim is being made that the Jews were expelled from the Land of Israel. It is likewise not claimed that they always strove to return there. Nor again does this story require the historiographical negation of the exile. On the contrary: we may admit, perhaps even proudly, that exile existed as a varied and valuable experience.

### 5.3. Zionisms, Post-Zionisms, and Peace in Israel/Palestine

John Rawls notes that one reason to prefer a given conception of justice over another is the power of that conception to naturally motivate people to follow it if it is implemented by the institutions of their society. Rawls believes that the capacity of a conception of justice to engender such motives is an advantage because the existence of these motives allows for stability in social cooperation. Conceptions of justice that do not have this advantage cannot fulfill one central role conceptions of justice have to fulfill, namely, to constitute a framework for social cooperation.<sup>22</sup> Rawls cites the example of utilitarianism, which promotes the greatest happiness of the community. One implication of this conception of justice is that some of those who are subject to the social institutions implementing it may have to accept being the slaves of the other subjects if this could be shown to increase the total happiness of the community. This, for Rawls, suggests a powerful reason for not adopting utilitarianism as a theory of social justice; for, as human psychology teaches us, it would, among the victims of these implications, trigger motivations to refuse cooperation with the system and with other members of their society. This then would negatively affect the stability of

the system and its capacity to promote cooperation among its subjects, a cooperation that is purportedly one of the aims of justice.

Though Rawls's argument was made with regard to the stability of intracommunal institutions and arrangements, it also applies to intercommunal arrangements that aim to prevent friction between groups. It can, therefore, be transposed into our context, allowing us to put a practical icing on the multilayered cake of the theoretical advantages of egalitarian Zionism that I have been presenting so far: the advantages of its conceptual foundations, the social and moral ontologies underlying it, the theory of justice that informs it, and the historiography it assumes. The additional advantage of the egalitarian conception of Zionism that I would like to emphasize here on the basis of Rawls's insight is that a settlement of the conflict between Jews and Arabs based on egalitarian Zionism is likely to be a great deal more stable than settlements based on the other versions of Zionism and approaches to it, because it would be grounded, first, in assumptions pertaining to the equality between the parties *at the time the conflict emerged*, and second, in the need to create an equality of status within the framework of the *arrangements for ending the conflict* between them. All the other approaches are unable to achieve this, and as a result any settlement based on them is likely to be unstable and eventually to collapse.

### 5.3.1. *Proprietary Zionism and the Jewish-Palestinian Settlement*

Proprietary Zionism's point of departure is that the Jewish nation is the owner of the Land of Israel. From there it proceeds to the conclusion that the status of the Arab or the Palestinian nation in the Land of Israel is that of a plunderer. This conclusion spawns a whole spectrum of positions within proprietary Zionism itself. According to the limiting rightist position, all Arab individuals living in the Land of Israel and the collective to which they belong count as plunderers and hence they must be removed from the land. According to the limiting "leftist" position within proprietary Zionism, only the Arab collective is the plunderer, not the individual members of this collective, so that full civil rights may be extended to individuals but no rights whatsoever on the collective level. The limiting rightist position is irrelevant to the current discussion as it concerns the stability of arrangements for *coexistence* between Jews and Arabs in light of the various versions

of Zionism, while proprietary Zionism's rightist position—the removal of all Arab individuals from the Land of Israel—though it might produce supreme (internal) stability for Israel, is not an arrangement for Jewish-Arab coexistence but rather for *exclusive Jewish existence*. All the arrangements to the left of this position are, at least in a certain sense, marked by coexistence.

In the present discussion I will focus on the limiting leftist position within the spectrum of proprietary Zionism because it is the most generous position this type of Zionism can generate with regard to the status of Arabs relative to that of Jews in the Land of Israel. It ensures full civil rights to Palestinian individuals as well as, perhaps, group rights of the kind that are commonly being granted to minority immigrant groups in Western countries; however, no such collective rights whatsoever would recognize the Palestinians as a historical-political entity in the Land of Israel.<sup>23</sup> Given some psychological truisms about human beings—such as that they are eager to advance their own interests, that they like to regard themselves as just, that they are hurt and become hostile when their rights are violated—this leftist position, and all others to the right of it within the spectrum of proprietary Zionism pertaining to the present issue, will defeat any attempt to forge a settlement based on coexistence between the two sides. There are three reasons for this. First, the Palestinians who lived in Palestine, no less than the Jews in the centuries preceding the inception of Zionism, cannot be expected to agree to a settlement of the conflict that deprives them of the status of a homeland nation. It seems even less likely that they would concede to being thus deprived while the same status was granted to the Jews. Second, the Palestinians cannot be expected to agree to a settlement that assumes that at the time when their conflict with the Jews began they were plunderers of the country or occupied it as stolen property whose rightful owner was the Jewish people. Third, imagine that proprietary Zionism were, on purely pragmatic grounds, to show more generosity toward the Palestinians with regard to their future status—more generosity than its internal logic allows—and were to propose a settlement that grants them the collective rights of an historical nation in the Land of Israel. The fact that such a settlement would be based on pragmatic grounds rather than on considerations of justice would arouse Palestinian anger against such an agreement and motivate them to act against it the moment the balance of pragmatic considerations were to shift in their favor.



Moreover, since, according to proprietary Zionism, when the conflict began the Arabs constituted a nation of plunderers who since then have been in possession of stolen property, a purely pragmatic compromise would engender (perhaps even more powerful) hostility and antagonism also among the Jews. Among the Jews who adhere to proprietary Zionism there will always be those who think that any interpretation to the left of their own (which requires the expulsion of all Arab individuals from the Land of Israel) is unjust. If the Jews are the owners of the Land of Israel and the Arabs are its plunderers, there will always be people who lack the intelligence to distinguish between the Arabs as a collective and the Arabs as individuals, or those to whom such a distinction seems immaterial in view of the doctrine of national property that they espouse. They will always wonder what the point is of allowing even a single Arab individual to reside in the Land of Israel; and their puzzlement and reluctance will only grow the more rights the Arabs are granted.

If the future settlement proposed by the limiting leftist version of proprietary Zionism were to be realized, namely, that Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel are to live in *one state* in which the Arabs have only individual civil rights while the Jews have both individual rights and collective rights, this would give all the sources of instability mentioned above a large chunk of meat to sink their teeth into. Many Arabs would refuse to accept the authority of a political entity that casts their nation in the role of plunderer, and many Jews would refuse to recognize the rights granted by the state to individuals belonging to the plunderer nation. They would revolt against it in the name of what they believe is the constitutive ideology of this state, and try to rescue the state from itself. In fact, this is how things have indeed been evolving in Israel/Palestine since 1967. It is mainly for these reasons, together with the fact that most Jews in Israel/Palestine adhere to proprietary Zionism and the fact that most Arabs in this country seem to adhere to a Palestinian nationalism that is the mirror image of proprietary Zionism, that I support a two-state solution in which each of the two groups enjoys clear political dominance in one state, even though egalitarian Zionism is fully compatible with any type of binational solution.

Israeli leaders who are proprietary Zionists may diverge from the implications of their ideology and agree, for pragmatic reasons of some type or another, to take part in the establishment of two separate political entities in Israel/Palestine. In one of them, an Arab minority would remain. According to the limiting leftist version of proprietary Zionism,

this minority would have to be granted individual civil rights but no collective rights. The other entity would have a dominant Arab majority or even be exclusively Arab. In such a settlement, it would be easier to overcome problems of instability inside either one of these entities. However, if future generations continued to be cradled in the lap of proprietary Zionism rather than being educated along the lines of egalitarian Zionism, instability would find other outlets in the relations between the two entities. In other words, if on the issue of the Land of Israel Zionism is proprietary and nevertheless endorses a two-state solution with the Arabs merely for pragmatic reasons, such a solution would be unstable by definition. Past Zionist history has already borne this out. The Zionism sponsored by most Jews is proprietary, and it would appear that this is one of the reasons why the United Nations' partition plan of 1947 was not upheld. It is also the main reason why the armistice agreements of 1949 that defined the "Green Line" borders between Israel and its neighbors totally collapsed when the pragmatic conditions of 1967 allowed this outcome (as they continue to do).

I mentioned that most mainstream Zionists are proprietary Zionists who are willing to sacrifice, on pragmatic grounds, what their Zionism actually demands. At many points, Ben-Gurion was like this; his current disciples in the party calling itself *National Left* are like this, and, in his Bar-Ilan speech, Binyamin Netanyahu also spoke along these lines. If my analysis is correct, the arrangements that they propose will prevail for as long as the pragmatic considerations for which they propose these arrangements prevail. Once there is a change in the balance of this cluster of considerations, however, such arrangements would, like those before it, fall into the trap of events of the type that have taken place in Israel/Palestine since 1967.

### *5.3.2. Post-Zionism and the Jewish-Palestinian Settlement*

Post-Zionism, like proprietary Zionism, comes in many versions. The status that these versions are ready to grant to the Jews and to the Arabs within the end state of the conflict, and surely the respective roles and responsibilities they ascribed them when the conflict arose, are not always clear. In a sense, the limiting leftist version of post-Zionism, that of Uri Ram, the only intellectual who explicitly declares himself to be a post-Zionist, is a mirror image of the limiting leftist version of proprietary Zionism. Just as proprietary Zionism supports granting individual

civil rights, but not collective rights, to Arabs in the Land of Israel, so Ram supports granting individual civil rights, but not collective rights, to Jews in Israel/Palestine.

This mirror image, however, is far from being as perfect as it may at first appear to be, since proprietary Zionism aims to grant individual civil rights only to the Arabs in a state that patently expresses the collective *Jewish* right to self-determination, while Ram's post-Zionism aims to grant individual civil rights to both Jews and Arabs in a state that patently does not express the collective right to self-determination of any ethnonational entity, not even an Arab one. This is what a "state of all its citizens" in Ram's view amounts to. In such a state, the Arabs, too, would have no collective rights, but only individual civil rights that are equal to those of the Jews.

The difference between the civic-only status of the Jews in the post-Zionist state and the civic-only status of the Arabs in the proprietary Zionist state is in terms of equality one between night and day. This does not ensure, however, that a settlement based on the civic-only status of individuals belonging to each group would not cause stability problems in this "state of all its citizens." First and foremost, it would cause trouble because it does not fit with the way in which most Jewish individuals and most Arab individuals experience their identity and their aspirations with regard to that identity. Most consider their ethnonational belonging as central, if not crucial, to their national identity. They would therefore not be greatly motivated to go along with any political solution that failed to give expression to this belonging, even if such a solution avoided inequality between the groups. Second, even if this state did not explicitly discriminate against Jews in its constitution and principles in the way that proprietary Zionism intends to discriminate against Arabs, it is very likely, in the demographic reality of Israel/Palestine and the Middle East, that the outcome of this version of post-Zionism for the Jews would resemble the outcome of proprietary Zionism for the Arabs: Jews would have individual political rights only in a state that effectively allowed collective expression for Arabs only. (This may happen, for instance, if the language that dominates the public sphere and the public authorities of that state is Arabic; this may come to pass not because the state's constitution determines it but as a result of the demographic reality.) In this case the Jews would be disaffected not only because they lived under political and legal arrangements that did not enable them to properly realize their main identity but also because they lived under

political and legal arrangements that discriminated against them in favor of another homeland group.

Certain post-Zionist authors, as mentioned above, support final state arrangements that differ from that of the “state of all its citizens.” Some of these arrangements follow from the postcolonial compensatory multiculturalism that informs these writers’ work and recommends multicentered, multicultural arrangements for the groups that have been oppressed under Zionist rule, mainly Arabs and Oriental Jews; some versions of post-Zionism support the granting of group rights to both Jews and Arabs regardless of compensatory considerations. However, these versions are presented in a way that is at odds with the theoretical foundations of the arguments of their advocates. They support collective language rights and collective representation rights in the public sphere of Israel/Palestine to the point of advocating a fully fledged binational regime.<sup>24</sup> Clearly, so-called post-Zionist proposals for end-state arrangements that include collective representation rights in the public sphere for the two ethnocultural groups living in the Israel/Palestine will not be vulnerable to the kind of instability to which the post-Zionism of a “state of all its citizens” is exposed. If, according to postcolonial post-Zionism, each of the two sides will enjoy fully fledged collective status within an end-state arrangement, then these “post-Zionist” arrangements will be tantamount to the future binational solution that egalitarian Zionism might have proffered were it not for the reasons that made it propose a two-state solution. (Recall that in chapter 3 I listed demographic, historical, and psychological reasons why egalitarian Zionism should support a two-state solution.) It is exactly here that post-Zionist writers in their proposed end-state arrangements ignore what the history of the conflict teaches us about the agents of instability for the end-state arrangements between the parties to the conflict.

Post-Zionism is unclear about the history of the conflict, as its spokesmen fail to discuss in detail the issue of the justice of establishing the Jewish community (*Yishuv*) in Palestine as a nationalist project starting in the late nineteenth century. Ram does not deal with this question at all; Shenhav thinks that the conflict started with the Palestinian *Nakba* of 1948 and does not discuss the issue of the justice of Zionism in its early stages; Sand takes one sentence to reject the justice of Zionism’s attempt to create a Jewish settlement in Palestine; and Shafir and Peled, while conceding that Zionism was also a national movement, treat it mainly as a colonial venture. Hence the general picture that post-Zionism paints of the status of the parties at the onset of the conflict clearly appears as the

mirror image of proprietary Zionism's position on this issue. Whereas proprietary Zionism views the Jews as the robbed owners and the Palestinians as plunderers or as occupiers of stolen property, the post-Zionists turn the picture upside down: they see the Jews as the plunderers and the Palestinians as the ones who were robbed.<sup>25</sup>

If this claim is correct, then the status post-Zionism ascribes to the Jews at the onset of the conflict is, like the end-state status it projects for them, a source of instability. Here, too, post-Zionism functions as a mirror image of proprietary Zionism. According to proprietary Zionism, as I mentioned above, the Arabs are the plunderers of the land. It is reasonable to assume that many Arabs will want no truck with arrangements that depict them as plunderers. It is also reasonable to assume that many Jews will refuse to cooperate with arrangements that grant rights to plunderers. Post-Zionism, according to which the Jews are the plunderers while the Arabs are the plundered, generates a solution with (inbuilt) instability problems that are identical to those of proprietary Zionism. The reversal in the roles of perpetrator and victim between the Arabs and the Jews makes no difference in this matter.

To this criticism the post-Zionists may respond as they did in the case of the argument about an inverse symmetry between them and proprietary Zionism regarding the status of the parties within the end-state arrangements. There they argued that, in contrast to proprietary Zionism, which offers the Arabs individual political rights in a state that is constitutionally declared Jewish, they propose to give the Jews individual political rights in a state that constitutionally is ethnoculturally neutral and that is a "state of all its citizens." To the claim that their depiction of the Jews as plunderers at the inception of the conflict might be a source of instability for the end-state solution, they would respond by arguing that whereas proprietary Zionism assumes a social and moral ontology within which nations precede the individuals constituting them and therefore determines at least a major part of the moral responsibility of these individuals, post-Zionism, by contrast, assumes that individuals' main moral responsibility is for their own actions, not those of the nation to which they belong. Therefore, the post-Zionists would argue, even if those Jews who individually participated in the social construal of Zionist Jewish nationalism from the end of the nineteenth century are responsible for the dire outcomes of this nationalism, they will, from the moment they cease being Zionists and divest themselves of Jewish nationalism, have to pay only the price of their personal contribution to these outcomes. Then the Jewish nation that expropriated the Land

of Israel from the Arabs will cease to exist. All that will remain is individual Jews who are members of an Israeli nation. Those Jews who in the future live in Israel/Palestine will not have to feel responsible for the injustices of Zionism, and Arabs will not be justified in complaining that too many rights are granted to Jews despite their belonging to a nation of expropriators. That nation will not exist then, and those Jews who live in Palestine/Israel will most definitely not belong to it.

This possible defense on behalf of post-Zionism is based on some important moral distinctions between it and proprietary Zionism. Nevertheless, when discussing the *practical issue* of how likely the different end-state arrangements proposed by the various approaches to Zionism are to be stable, we must remember that these moral distinctions are of only minor importance. Social psychology being what it is, in which people's ethnonational identities play a salient role in the way they are identified by themselves and by others, a proposed end-state arrangement for the conflict between Jews and Arabs in Israel/Palestine that presupposes that the Jews robbed Palestine or part of it from the Arabs internalizes a narrative that will harm Jews even if they stop being Zionists and no longer regard themselves as members of the Jewish nation. Such a narrative weakens Jews' motivation to accept an arrangement that will be built on this presupposition and will stimulate Arab opposition to the rights it grants to Jews.

### *5.3.3. Hierarchical Zionism and the Jewish-Palestinian Settlement*

The chances that hierarchical Zionism could serve as the basis for future peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews are incomparably greater than those of both proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism. This is due to the status it gives to both sides for the end-state arrangements it proposes, not due to the future implications of how it conceives of their status at the inception of the conflict. If my conjecture that the national consciousness of most Jews in Israel is mainly a Jewish or a Jewish-Israeli ethnonational consciousness is correct, then the future status hierarchical Zionism proposes for the Jews in the State of Israel—hegemony over the Arabs—will surely arouse less antagonism among them than the status that post-Zionism would grant them in a Jewish-Arab “all its citizens' state,” and than the status that egalitarian Zionism would grant them in a constitutionally nonhegemonic state that is predominantly Jewish

in its demography. As regards the Arabs, even though the proponents of hierarchical Zionism are not clear about the details of the territorial partition between the two self-determining collective entities in Israel/Palestine, it is very clear that they believe the Arabs are entitled to territorial self-determination there. They recognize, that is, the legitimacy of a future collective Arab existence in the Israel/Palestine, or at least in part of it. They believe the Arabs should have no collective existence as a political-historical entity only within that part of the Land of Israel to be assigned to a Jewish state. In that part they promise them an existence as individuals in full possession of rights. It is obvious that the Arabs have both moral and pragmatic reasons for agreeing to live under such an arrangement, and that they are incomparably more likely to agree to such an arrangement than to the conditions offered by proprietary Zionism. If, however, egalitarian Zionism's stance is right, and the Arabs in a state that is predominantly Jewish should also have a collective status, then hierarchical Zionism's denial of these rights is necessarily unjust. This injustice will create an element of instability within the political system that hierarchical Zionism proposes as an end-state solution. Given the current predominance of proprietary Zionism, it is quite likely that the Arabs would initially welcome the arrangements proposed by hierarchical Zionism: after all, it would greatly improve their condition. It is also very likely, however, that such an arrangement would come apart as soon as its unjust components began to unfold.

This element of instability inherent in hierarchical Zionism's conception of the end-state arrangements joins another source of instability, which stems from this type of Zionism's conception of the status of the parties to the conflict at its inception. Ruth Gavison's interpretation of this issue implies great difficulties in achieving stable, peaceful coexistence between the parties to the conflict. As mentioned above, she believes that the two parties to the conflict each had Hohfeldian liberties to realize their self-determination in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine, as if this territory were a purse lying lost on the pavement with each party equally entitled to try to pick it up. In contrast to proprietary Zionism and to post-Zionism, both of which conceive of one of the parties as an owner of the land and the other party as its plunderer, the conception of the parties as contestants for a "territorial purse" does not defeat coexistence by delegitimizing in advance the very presence of the other party in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine. Gavison recognizes the legitimacy of the existence of both sides on this land. However, conceiving of

the legitimacy of their presence there as legitimacy of contenders over a lost purse that they both discover simultaneously implies that the parties are entitled to physically annihilate one another. The reason for this is that the liberties they have to seize the purse, as I showed in chapter 3, can be interpreted neither as legal nor as moral liberties. They must be interpreted as the liberties that exist in a Hobbesian state of nature: liberties to employ any means, including violence, to overcome one's adversary. This would mean a perpetual war between the parties.

The parties may, of course, reach an agreement to end this war of mutual annihilation whose validity would rest on pragmatic rather than principled moral considerations. Its stability would thus depend on the stability of those pragmatic considerations. It could therefore amount only to a *modus vivendi*, as indeed it would be under the terms hierarchical Zionism proposes. As I argued above, the substance of the end-state arrangements proposed by hierarchical Zionism is not entirely just, and therefore could not be as stable as it would be if it were fully just.

To this list of factors making for instability in the proposals of hierarchical Zionism, another should be added. Unlike the other conceptions of or about Zionism, hierarchical Zionism lacks the internal resources to determine the territorial boundaries of the political unit or units it proposes. Proprietary Zionism must conceive of the borders of Greater Israel as the territorial borders of the one state it envisions; post-Zionism conceives of the territory currently under Israel's control as the territorial unit relevant for the one-state solution it proposes; and egalitarian Zionism considers the borders that were drawn at the peak of the emergency that justified the achievement of Jewish self-determination in historic Palestine at the end of the 1940s as the borders between the two states that it would propose. In contrast, hierarchical Zionism has no internal resources that generate a rationale for determining Israel's borders. It maintains that an end to the conflict between the two parties involves not justice but pragmatic considerations only. But the vicissitudes of these considerations are likely to cause the conflict to flare up again. If from the perspective of hierarchical Zionism's inner logic the conflict lacks a clear resolution and its discontinuation or continuation is a matter of pragmatics only, why would things be different in the matter of the boundaries of the contested space? They too have to be grounded in pragmatic considerations that by their very nature cannot be stable.



#### 5.3.4. *Egalitarian Zionism and the Jewish-Palestinian Settlement*

Within the framework of the egalitarian Zionist approach, all sources of instability in the end-state solution that are inherent in the other versions of Zionism and approaches to it almost completely disappear. They are almost wholly absent both for the end-state status it projects for the parties and for their status at the onset of the conflict. As for the end-state status, egalitarian Zionism makes neither the Jewish collective nor the Arab collective disappear from Israel/Palestine. It avoids undermining the interests of members of these collectives in realizing the ethnocultural component of their identity, which post-Zionism explicitly does with regard to both groups. Nor does it give rise to the likely offense that unequal satisfaction of these interests would give to members of the disadvantaged group. This is a form of discrimination that proprietary Zionism explicitly entrenches in constitutional terms with regard to Arabs, while post-Zionism risks provoking it in the social domain against Jews. Egalitarian Zionism, moreover, recognizes not only the collective rights of the Arab majority in those parts of the Land of Israel / historic Palestine where an Arab state will be established, but also the collective rights of the Arab minority in the parts of the country where the predominantly Jewish state will be established. In doing so it avoids the instability that hierarchical Zionism is prone to create within the predominantly Jewish state. In other words, unlike the arrangements proposed by the other versions of Zionism, those proposed by egalitarian Zionism purport to create a collective coexistence anywhere in the country where individuals belonging to either of these collectives reside. They are not arrangements for a singular collective existence in some part of the country, and they most definitely are not arrangements for a singular collective existence in the whole of the land. Egalitarian Zionism does not run the risk that any individuals, anywhere in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine, might be disaffected by the absence of political expression for their collective existence.

All this clearly follows from what I have said so far about the status of both parties within the framework for the *end-state arrangements* that egalitarian Zionism proposes. Less obvious in their detail are the *future advantages* of egalitarian Zionism over its rivals as a result of its conception of the parties' status at the time of *the inception of the conflict*. Unlike proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism, which attribute the full blame for the conflict to one of the parties and regard the other party as

the victim of the former's criminality, and unlike hierarchical Zionism, which regards the adversarial parties as possessing the same liberties in seizing the same lost property that they both discovered simultaneously, egalitarian Zionism tells the story of *two victims*. In its narrative the Arabs feature as bystanders who have had the bad luck to be living in a territory with which the Jews have a national identity bond, thus becoming the innocent victims of the Jews. The Jews in their turn are victims because their settlement in the Arab Land of Israel's territory in the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century is the outcome (within the egalitarian interpretation) of an emergency created by their persecution in Europe—an emergency analogous to the case of a critically injured person who breaks into a pharmacy in order to lay his hands on some medicine that may save his life.

Moreover, and this is a point that I did not stress when presenting the egalitarian interpretation above, it is by virtue of this interpretation that the Zionist narrative provides a justification not only for the Jews' settling in Palestine but also for the Arabs' resistance to this settlement. We can return to the analogy of the pharmacy break-in. There are two obvious differences between the simple case of someone forcing his way into a closed pharmacy in order to get at a life-saving medicine and the Jews' need to achieve self-determination in the Land of Israel. The first is that when someone breaks into a pharmacy in order to save his life, he does so in order to take a certain specific drug from the shelf and then to get out. In the case of the Jews' settlement in the Land of Israel, it was not quite clear what the medicine was, only that it was not on the shelf and that it did not involve getting out of the pharmacy again—rather, it meant settling down in, at least, part of the pharmacy, and perhaps in all of it. We can invoke the analogy of the raft, on which the survivors of a shipwreck need to save themselves from drowning even though there's already another survivor on the raft. Should the Arabs have watched passively as the Jews climbed onto the raft—on which they themselves were already sitting—not knowing whether this would eventually mean that they'd occupy the raft together or whether they would all end up being pushed overboard?

The second crucial difference between ordinary cases of pleading necessity (the pharmacy break-in) and the case of the Jews' settling down in the Land of Israel is that ordinary cases occur within the framework of domestic systems of law. Such law may (and usually does) determine and implement principles of compensation that refund all or part of the cost incurred by pharmacists as a result of the law's permitting injured parties

to break into their shops. It can, for instance, accomplish this by imposing an obligation on the party who injured the burglar to compensate the pharmacy owner. But at the global level there are no legislative, judicial, and law-enforcement institutions such as exist within states. Thus, when the Jews decided to realize their right of self-determination in the Land of Israel as a result of their persecution in Europe, there was no authority that could demand that European states compensate the Arabs for the price the latter paid for the former's persecution of the Jews or ensure that such compensation was paid. Moreover, if my justification of the Jews' settling in the Land of Israel is sound, then the Arabs who lived in the Land of Israel fell victim to the emergency created by Europe's persecution of Jews for a reason based on the principle of international justice regarding the distribution of national rights. According to this principle, nations are entitled to self-determination in their historical homeland. In the absence of effective global legislative, judicial, and executive institutions, no one could have taken responsibility for distributing the cost of the realization of the Jews' right to self-determination in their historical homeland, which was Arab at the time of Zionism's inception, between the Arabs and the other nations of the world. All nations, it should be remembered, are the subjects of global distributive justice, and they should all participate in shouldering its burden. All the differences I have just listed between ordinary cases of pleading necessity and our case constitute good reasons for the Arab resistance to the Jewish, Zionist-initiated settlement in the Land of Israel, in spite of the justness of this settlement. These differences allow each party to claim to have justice on its side at the time the conflict erupted, *in spite of* the justness of the other party's cause and not *because of* the other party's injustice. They may even morally oblige them to acknowledge the justice of the other party's cause simultaneously with claiming the justice of their own.

Thus there is a clear difference between egalitarian Zionism on the one hand and proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism on the other. According to proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism, each side claims the justice of its cause at the time the conflict erupted because of the other side's injustice, not in spite of the other side's justness. This is why the end-state arrangements that the parties are capable of offering each other on the basis of these versions of Zionism are not arrangements for the two collectives' coexistence but rather arrangements in which only one of the parties enjoys a collective existence. They are also arrangements into which the unjustness of the other's collective presence in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine is built and thus acts as an

inexhaustible source of dissatisfaction among one of the parties. By contrast, the end-state arrangements that egalitarian Zionism can propose, and that would be based on equality of collective status and on time and space limits deriving from the necessity that justified the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, are arrangements that provide for the full collective coexistence of the two sides. Moreover, these arrangements allow each party to internalize, in addition to the justness of its own presence in the country, the justness of the presence of the other party, in a way that does not motivate either party to break the agreement.

Egalitarian Zionism enjoys this advantage not only over both proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism but over hierarchical Zionism as well. Hierarchical Zionism, unlike proprietary Zionism and post-Zionism, does not assume that the conflict stems from an absolute asymmetry between the sides from the point of view of justice, that is, from the absolute guilt of one party and the absolute innocence of the other party. To return to the example of the struggle between two passers-by for a purse, what we have here, indeed, is a symmetry between the contestants that fails to generate any motives for peaceful coexistence between them. On the contrary, they are entitled to treat each other violently. There is no authority whatsoever that can intervene to put an end to the violent contest, whereas the pragmatic considerations that may cause it to stop are by their nature such that they can move the parties only to agree to suspend the conflict, not to resolve it. Egalitarian Zionism, by contrast, espouses a narrative in which the Jews and the Arabs cannot be likened to passers-by who are fighting over a found purse. Rather, the Jews are victims of their dire European history who tried to rescue the security and dignity of themselves and their descendants. The Arabs are the victims of these victims. In the formative years of the conflict the Arabs might have paid a price that, from their perspective, would have been fatal, and hence they were entitled to resist paying it. The symmetrical status of the parties at the inception of the conflict follows not from their being equal competitors but from their shared experience of necessity: the Jews were trying to escape persecution, and the Arabs were trying to avoid paying the price of that attempt. In that sense, the origins of the conflict can serve as a resource for the general contours of its just resolution. But if, as in the example of the contested purse, one ignores the origins of the conflict, grounds can be found only externally to the origins of the conflict for pragmatically suspending it, not for resolving it.

So far I have argued that there are huge differences in degree of stability between the end-state arrangements that follow from egalitarian

Zionism and those that follow from the other two versions of Zionism. Egalitarian Zionism has a huge advantage over its rivals. Unlike them, it doesn't inherently contain the seeds of an unstable agreement. Yet it cannot (as indeed no other moral position can on any issue) promise absolute stability, for two reasons. First, as is true for all positions—including moral positions—there is no way of making sure that everyone who is supposed to accept them actually does so. Recall the psychological truisms I mentioned earlier, namely that people like to advance their own interests and to consider themselves just, and that they hence tend to be insulted and turn hostile when they believe their rights are being violated. In the light of those truisms, the chances of egalitarian Zionism bringing about a stable end-state solution to the Jewish-Palestinian conflict are greater than those of the other versions of Zionism because it stands a better chance of being accepted by *more individuals on both sides*. The stability of the arrangements it proposes, however, depends on their active acceptance—rather than on the likelihood of their acceptance—by *sufficiently large numbers* on both sides. I would not like to argue right now, at the time this book is being written, that egalitarian Zionism is likely to be actually welcomed by sufficient numbers of people on both sides, but only that this likelihood is greater than those of the other two versions. This is why I believe that a two-state solution is cardinal at this point in time, as proprietary Zionism is deeply ingrained among the Jews, while the same is true for its mirror image among the Arabs.<sup>26</sup> Coexistence within one entity seems to be impossible unless one of the parties oppresses the other. Political partition between most Jews and most Arabs in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine would neutralize the practical likelihood of extensive oppression on a day-to-day basis. It would also allow the political leaderships of both sides to remold the consciousness of their memberships concerning the origins of the conflict. The chances that egalitarian Zionism will take root among numerous individuals on both sides will increase as a result of educative efforts. Only then will peaceful coexistence be possible, whether it is in the form of a binational state or of two states.

The second reason why egalitarian Zionism cannot wholly warrant the stability of the arrangements it proposes stems from the inevitable linguistic and moral vagueness attending these arrangements and the narrative of egalitarian Zionism (as would attend any human arrangements and narratives). In the egalitarian interpretation of the Zionist narrative the Arabs had a number of grounds for justifiably resisting the establishment of the Jewish colony in the Palestine, even

though the establishment of this colony was justified. One justification derives from the fact that they could know neither the projected territorial proportion of this settlement nor the extent of the risk that they would be “driven into the sea” (or into the desert)—they, that is, rather than the Jews, who usually claim this risk for themselves. Another justification follows from the fact that the necessity-driven Jewish settlement in Palestine occurred under circumstances in which the Arabs could anticipate that no one would force the world’s nations to share with them the price of Zionism or, more specifically, force the European nations to compensate them for the emergency they created and which transformed them, the Arabs (and not merely the Jews), into victims. These justifications for the Arab resistance to Zionism raise major questions regarding any settlement between Arabs and Jews. For instance, did the first justification (the well-founded worry that they would be “driven into the sea or the desert”) lose its validity with the UN General Assembly’s partition decision of 1947, leaving them in possession of part of the “raft,” and rendering their war against this decision unjust, regardless of the two other reasons for their opposition that I cited? Do these reasons suffice to justify their continued resistance, and is such resistance still warranted today? After all, the world has not taken it upon itself, until this very day, to share the price of Zionism with the Arabs; and quite a few of the nations of Europe that participated in the persecution of the Jews have not assumed responsibility for compensating the Arabs for the exigency that turned them into victims as well. These questions must be discussed if we are to clarify—and thereby perhaps increase—the degree of stability generated by the egalitarian interpretation, as opposed to the other interpretations, of the Zionist narrative in the end-state settlement of the conflict between the parties. For my part, I believe that what I have said serves to show that the extent of stability yielded by the egalitarian interpretation exceeds that which is afforded by the other interpretations. While these other interpretations and approaches inherently contain the seeds of unstable agreements reached on their basis, this is not the case with the egalitarian interpretation of Zionism.

## CHAPTER 6

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# Jewish Nationalism, Israel, and World Jewry

### 6.1. World Jewry: Exile or Diaspora?

The Zionist narrative conceives of the Jews in Israel as part of world Jewry, and of world Jewry as a continuation of the Jewish nation that came into being in the Land of Israel during antiquity. The Zionist narrative also argues that the modern Jewish community, which gradually formed in the Land of Israel from the end of the nineteenth century, envisaged enabling Jews to resume a full life within the framework of their common Hebrew culture and to enjoy the self-determination to which they were entitled by virtue of their nationhood and in light of the persecutions from which they were suffering. Chapter 2 presented the ways that mainstream Zionism, egalitarian Zionism, and post-Zionism interpreted the factual gaps in this story, concerning the unity, the nature, and the history of its protagonist. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 presented these respective versions' interpretations of the gaps in the morality of the Zionist narrative, especially with a view to clarifying the status of the Jews in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine relative to that of the Arabs who lived there at the inception of Zionism and who continue to live there today.

The interpretations of the factual and moral gaps in the Zionist narrative affect not only the distinction between the status of the Jewish collective and that of the Arabs in the Israel/Palestine; they equally affect the status of the Israeli Jewish collective relative to that of world Jewry. In addition, they affect the status of world Jewry in Israel. According to the Zionist narrative, the modern Jewish community in Israel that

gradually came into being from the end of the nineteenth century aspired to enabling Jews a full resumption of life within the framework of their common Hebrew culture. This claim, along with the Zionist narrative's account of the status of the Land of Israel as the ancient homeland of the Jewish collective, reflects a principle that was crucial to Zionism and indeed was virtually identical to it in its early stages. This is the notion of "the negation of the exile." Zionism adopted this principle because of "all the catastrophes, hardships, tribulations, miseries . . . the hostilities of generations and the enmity of nations, the envy of the unenlightened and the scorn of the enlightened, the mockery of crowds and the violence of rapists, the offences of competitors and the hatred of the rejected",<sup>1</sup> which was central to the lives of European Jews and which caused Zionism to suggest itself as the solution to their calamities and afflictions.

From its inception Zionism was beset by debates about how to interpret the doctrine of the negation of the exile. Under a maximalist interpretation, it entailed an absolute rejection of any Jewish life outside the Land of Israel; it was a principle, that is, according to which *no Jew should live outside this land*.<sup>2</sup> Under a minimalist interpretation it entailed that *not all Jews should live outside the Land of Israel*, denying, that is, only that the totality of Jewish existence should lie outside this land. It demanded that their self-determining core be situated there, rather than that all Jews should reside there.<sup>3</sup>

The maximalist interpretation came to dominate mainstream Zionism from at least as early as the 1930s. At this point both the very existence of Jews outside the Land of Israel and the way of life characteristic of that existence were rejected. This rejection resulted in an authoritarian and condescending attitude on the part of the Jewish *Yishuv* in the Land of Israel toward anyone who had failed to draw the proper conclusion from the maximalist interpretation of the Zionist principle of the negation of exile by settling in the Land of Israel. This attitude softened from the 1980s onward.<sup>4</sup> Since then, questions concerning exile have been discussed from a less judgmental and peremptory perspective than that of the negation of exile.<sup>5</sup> They are now considered under the heading of "Israel-Diaspora relations." This transition from a "negation of the exile" discourse to a "relations with the diaspora" discourse implies a move away from the maximalist interpretation of the negation of the exile toward its minimalist interpretation.

In the second part of this chapter I argue that, from the perspective of the essentialist–proprietary version of Zionism, this transition



from a maximalist to a minimalist interpretation of the negation of exile cannot be explained by principled considerations. Proprietary Zionism is maximalist with regard to the status of the Jews in the Land of Israel relative to the status of world Jewry outside the Land of Israel for reasons similar to those it is maximalist with regard to the status of the Jews relative to that of the Arabs inside this land. I will show how this maximalism is entailed by proprietary Zionism's interpretation of both the factual gaps and the moral gaps in the Zionist narrative. These interpretations make it impossible for this type of Zionism to refer to Jewish communities outside the Land of Israel as part of a "diaspora," let alone to approve of their ongoing existence. Proprietary Zionism must view the Jewish communities outside the Land of Israel as manifestations of "exile" that should be eradicated. Its activists softened their maximalism in light of pragmatic considerations and tactical considerations, and because of the decisive physical constraints imposed by the geographical distance of Diaspora Jews from the Land of Israel. When these constraints do not apply, as I will later show, proprietary Zionism does not hesitate to show the rigors of its worldview.

In the third part of this chapter I discuss the post-Zionist position on the issues at hand. For reasons to be immediately explained, I actually discuss there almost exclusively the Israeli versions of the post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism: the civic and the postcolonial versions, that is, not the diasporic version that is sustained mainly by some American Jewish scholars. Whereas the Zionist principle concerning Jewish life outside Israel is called "the negation of the exile," the principle that informs the predominant Israeli post-Zionist stances should be called "the denial of the diaspora." The theoretical foundations of these stances entail a rejection not merely of the very conceptualization and ontology that underpin any talk of a Jewish *exile* and thus any talk about the negation of either Jewish existence outside the Land of Israel; equally, the very conceptualization and ontology underlying any talk of a Jewish *Diaspora* must be resisted. As in the case of proprietary Zionism's absolute negation of the exile, the civic and the postcolonial versions of the post-Zionist position on the diaspora, too, are both entailed by its interpretation of the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative and supported by its conception of the moral gaps in this narrative. Neodiasporic post-Zionism cannot entail these conclusions. It does not deny the existence, the value of the existence, or the value of preserving the existence, of an individual or a collective nonreligious Jewish identity.

Its position is that Jewish identity should be preserved as a diasporic or exilic identity not only with regard to Jews outside Israel, but also with regard to Israeli Jews. The advantages and disadvantages of this position have already been discussed in chapter 4.5.

The implications of egalitarian Zionism for the issue of Israel and world Jewry is discussed in the fourth part of this chapter. Egalitarian Zionism will adopt on this issue an intermediate position between that of proprietary Zionism and the post-Zionist positions. Unlike the civic and the postcolonial versions of post-Zionism, and like the neodiasporic version of this position, egalitarian Zionism does not entail a denial of the exilic nature of Jewish existence prior to the success of Zionism, nor does it entail a denial of Jewish diasporic existence since this success. However, unlike neodiasporic post-Zionism, it rejects the position according to which a diasporic existence should be an all-encompassing Jewish ideal, such that it should also be realized by the Israeli Jewish community. On the other hand, unlike proprietary Zionism, egalitarian Zionism does not imply an utter negation of any Jewish existence outside the Land of Israel. This enables this type of Zionism to interpret Jewish existence outside Israel, concurrent with a political and a Hebrew-cultural Jewish existence in Israel, as diasporic rather than exilic, and to support its continued existence as such.

## 6.2. Proprietary Zionism: Negation of Exile and Denial of Diaspora

Just as it has maintained that the histories of diasporic Jewish communities should be disregarded or played down in Jewish historiography, proprietary Zionism necessarily maintains that Jewish life outside the Land of Israel must be either negated or played down, now and in the future. This absolute negation of the exile is implied by all the theoretical layers that make up this essentialist–proprietary Zionism. This negation has two implications. First, from the perspective of the general Jewish collective in the world, any Jewish communities that continue to exist outside the Land of Israel cannot be equal in status to the Jewish collective in the Land of Israel. Second, the lives of individual Jews who are willing to go on living in exile cannot be equal to the lives of those who have elected to live in the Land of Israel. I will show that these positions indeed follow from proprietary Zionism, and I will then demonstrate their realization by Israeli policies and their expression in Israeli discourse.

### 6.2.1. *An Utter Rejection of Jewish Life outside the Land of Israel*

Two theses were at the heart of the essentialist interpretation of the Zionist narrative discussed in chapter 2 (an interpretation that has merged with proprietary Zionism, as explained in chapter 3). The first thesis is based on a social ontology according to which the Jewish collective is a nation by virtue of its essence; the second thesis is historiographical and argues that the Land of Israel was at the core of the lives of the Jews, even when they resided outside it. As we saw in chapter 2, the second thesis helped to ground the first. It facilitated the claim made by essentialist-proprietary Zionism that the Jewish collective had the characteristics of a nation even when its members had not shared a common territory, culture, and heritage within whose framework they could strive to live and to go on living together. The claim that the essence of the Jewish collective is national, and the historiography on which proprietary Zionism grounded it, entail—both separately and even more so jointly—the utter negation of Jewish life outside the Land of Israel. If it is true that the Land of Israel never ceased to be the heart of Jewish existence, why is it that Jewish communities outside the Land of Israel continue to flourish, and that their members do not return to it even now that Jews are in charge of a Jewish state there? Their not doing so constitutes an existential refutation of the historiography of proprietary Zionism on a daily basis. To ward off such constant refutation, this type of Zionism is obliged to exhort all Jews to return to the Land of Israel and to belittle the status and value of the lives of those who refuse to do so.

Where essentialist ontology joins its supportive historiography, the resulting negation of the exile grows more radical as it turns the centrality of the Land of Israel to Jewish existence from a contingent historical fact into a primordial feature of the nature of Jews, while also transforming their present existence outside the Land of Israel into a betrayal of that nature, an abnormality, and a perversion. Let me repeat Gellner's words: In terms of their essentialist ontology, nations are a

natural, God-given way of classifying men . . . [an] inherent though long-delayed political destiny; a political version of the doctrine of natural kinds; . . . alleged entities [that] are supposed just to be there, like Mount Everest, since long ago, antedating the age of nationalism.<sup>6</sup>

Assume that the nature and essence of the Jewish nation wholly turn on the connection between the Jews and the Land of Israel. Then, in

order to rectify the defects that afflict the nation because of its physical disconnection from that essence—as well as to the psychic neurosis to which it has fallen victim, as the author A. B. Yehoshua would have it—the entire Jewish nation must return to the Land of Israel.<sup>7</sup> Only there will it cease to stray from the “God-given way of classifying men,” as Gellner puts it.

Proprietary Zionism’s commitment to the rejection of any Jewish existence outside the Land of Israel follows not merely from its perception of the ontological status of the Jewish nation and its homeland but also from its perception of the role of nationality in individual people’s lives. Again, I return to Gellner: “A man must have nationality,” he says in the name of the nationalist ideology of which essentialist Zionism is a particular instance, “as he must have a nose and two ears; a deficiency in any of these particulars is not inconceivable and does from time to time occur, but only as a result of some disaster, and it is itself a disaster of a kind.”<sup>8</sup> Nationalist essentialism, in other words, means that national collectives are a creation of nature, and that each individual’s belonging to these collectives is, moreover, part of such an individual’s nature exactly in the same way that his or her bodily parts are. If individual Jews wish to keep intact their nature and avoid being maimed, or if they want to live as befits their nature, then they must live in the Land of Israel. Jews who accede to a life outside the Land of Israel are no different from people who agree to live their lives without nose and ears. Johann Gottfried Herder, the eighteenth-century German philosopher who could be considered a major contributor to the formation of essentialist ethnocultural nationalism, argued along similar lines. According to him: “The Arab of the desert belongs to it, as much as his noble horse and his patient indefatigable camel.”<sup>9</sup> If this applies to the Arabs’ belonging to the desert, then so it does to Jews’ belonging to the Land of Israel. Jews who live outside the Land of Israel are like camels living in the Alpine snow. Unfortunately for the Jews, this is exactly their predicament: The numbers of Jews living outside the Land of Israel far exceeds the number of camels living in the Alps. Still, the Jews’ adjustment to life outside the Land of Israel is tantamount to accepting a life divorced from one’s own nature and the nature of one’s kind.

Just as proprietary Zionism’s utter negation of the exile follows from the social ontology upon which it is based as well as from the historiography concomitant to this ontology, it also follows from the proprietary theory of justice at its foundation and the moral ontology presupposed by this proprietary justice. The negation of exile is entailed by the proprietary

character of this type of Zionism because the presence of as many Jews as possible in the Land of Israel is required for the full physical realization of Jewish collective ownership over it. If only some Jews return to the Land of Israel, the Jewish collective will be unable to fully occupy it physically or to fully realize its ownership over it. This argument, it could be claimed, is instrumental: The negation of exile follows from the Jews' proprietary right to the Land of Israel because their presence there is required for the sake of the full physical realization of this right. The moral ontology underlying this proprietary justice furnishes an even more solid basis for the utter negation of exile, as it maintains that the presence in the Land of Israel of all Jewish communities and all individual Jews is required not just as a means for realizing the proprietary end but as an end in itself.

The essential human unit in which man's nature is fully realized is not the individual, or a voluntary association which can be dissolved or altered or abandoned at will, but the nation; that it is to the creation and maintenance of the nation that the lives of subordinate units, the family, the tribe, the clan, the province, must be due, for their nature and purpose . . . is derived from its nature and its purposes.<sup>10</sup>

This description by Isaiah Berlin of the moral ontology underlying nationalist ideologies like proprietary Zionism was introduced in chapter 3. There, my argument was that proprietary Zionism must rely on this moral ontology, for how else could it hold the Arab individuals who have been living in the Land of Israel from the nineteenth century until the present responsible for the Arab invasion of the seventh century (part of the Muslim conquest of the Levant), even if the Jews owned the Land of Israel in antiquity or until this invasion? How can the Jewish individuals who were dispersed throughout the world during these centuries be considered the heirs of the Jews who lived in the Land of Israel in the seventh century? This can be achieved only if the essence of the lives of individual Arabs who resided in Palestine in past centuries is reduced to their belonging to the nation that invaded the Land of Israel in the seventh century, and if the essence of the lives of Jewish individuals throughout the world during past centuries is their belonging to the nation that was, at the time, robbed of the Land of Israel. This is exactly the collectivist argument that Berlin describes so aptly: "The essential human unit in which man's nature is fully realized is not the individual . . . but

the nation ... the lives of [its] subordinate units ... their nature and purpose ... is derived from its nature and its purposes.”<sup>11</sup>

If both the nature and the destiny of the Jewish nation hinge on the Land of Israel, the same is the case for the nature and destiny of its parts, the Jewish collectives and individuals who are dispersed throughout the world. All of them must pledge themselves to the Land of Israel. Indeed, as long as they don't do this and as long as they don't realize their true nature and destiny, they prevent not only their own redemption from exile, but also the full redemption from exile of the entire collective and of those parts of it, both communities and individuals, who already reside in the Land of Israel. The process of redemption must be completed for the entire collective. For essentialist nationalism this collective is precisely like a biological organism: If only its legs and trunk are in the Land of Israel while its ears and nose are outside it, it is not only these ears and nose that suffer but the legs and trunk too. Hence it is the duty of the Jewish individuals and communities outside the Land of Israel to return to it, a duty they owe not merely to themselves but also to all the Jewish communities and individuals who have already returned to the Land of Israel. If they fail to do so, they will be left without legs and trunk while also depriving those communities and individuals who did return to the Land of Israel of ears and noses. If all this obtains, it indicates that from the point of view of proprietary Zionism the transition from speaking about the “negation of exile” to speaking about “Israel-Diaspora relations” is impossible *in principle*. And this is not all: For proprietary Zionism talk of “Israel-Diaspora relations” is impossible not only as a matter of ontological principle but also conceptually. Unlike the notion of “exile,” “diaspora” is morally neutral. To define a community and its constituent members as a diaspora community means that they are part of a larger collective whose center lies elsewhere, without any presumption that there is anything wrong about this. However, to describe a community and individuals as being “in exile” means that they are absent from the center of their collective and, worse, that there is something wrong with that absence. Proprietary Zionism conceives of Jewish existence outside the Land of Israel as wrong, and hence it characterizes this existence as exile and not as diaspora. Proprietary Zionism, in other words, morally rejects the condition of Jewish exile and also denies the conceptual possibility of a Jewish Diaspora. According to it, any Jews who live outside the Land of Israel don't live in a diaspora but strictly in exile.

### 6.2.2. *The Transition from the Discourse of the “Negation of Exile” to the Discourse of “Israel-Diaspora Relations”: The Constraints of Reality*

Proprietary Zionism’s interpretation of the Zionist principle of the negation of exile may be characterized by maximalism; yet mainstream Zionism has refrained in recent decades from openly expressing it, and it most certainly has usually refrained from action intended to realize it. Even mainstream Zionist parties that are explicitly proprietary (for instance, the Likud Party) avoid their maximalism on the issue of the negation of exile in the same way as they avoid fully realizing their territorial maximalism on the issue of the Land of Israel. This holds true even when mainstream Zionism is in power. Its restraint with regard to territorial maximalism reflects mainly pragmatic and tactical considerations. However, on the issue of relations between Jews in the Land of Israel and those outside it, the restraint also reflects severe physical constraints. Most of the Land of Israel is under Israel’s direct control and the entirety of it is under its influence. Present-day Israel, in which proprietary Zionism holds sway, refrains from seizing full control over the whole Land of Israel and from imposing its sovereignty on all those parts of it which are already under its control, but not because it believes that imposing its sovereignty is morally questionable. Its restraint mainly arises from the political consequences of the moral objections such a step would provoke throughout the world. When it comes to the maximalism related to the negation of exile, physical realities are far more decisive than mere pragmatic or tactical considerations. Unlike the territories of the Land of Israel and its inhabitants, whether they are Jews or Arabs, the majority of Jews outside Israel are neither subject to the direct control of Israel nor within its sphere of influence. Physical reality prevents essentialist-proprietary Zionism from making such Jews do what it would actually have them do, namely, migrate to the Land of Israel.

However, along with this physical constraint, mainstream Zionism also has some pragmatic and tactical reasons for not seeking the migration to Israel of all Western Jews, especially American Jews. Israel has a very strong interest in the support this group of Jews can offer it, mainly the political support of the US Israel lobby and the momentum it can add to US support for Israel. The fact that North American Jews are outside Israel’s sphere of influence prevents Israel from attempting to coerce them to migrate to the Land of Israel; moreover, it is

in Israel's interest for most of them to remain where they are. Israel, given its policies toward the Arabs, and informed as these policies are by proprietary Zionism, could hardly survive without the support of the United States. Pragmatic considerations thus prevent Israel from aspiring to realize its principled maximalism with regard to the negation of exile wherever it concerns American Jewry. It is for this reason that Israel does not unflinchingly, regularly, and officially articulate the principled position that follows from proprietary Zionism regarding American Jewry, namely, that its members should migrate to Israel. A reality in which such expressions cannot have any practical meaning, along with pragmatic considerations that largely neutralize the basic will to give them practical meaning, explain the transition from the discourse of exile to the discourse of diaspora. It explains the silence that characterizes the relationships in the last few decades between proprietary-Zionist Israel and American Jewry on the issue of the latter's migration to Israel. This was not how things looked in the decades between the 1930s and the 1970s, and it is not the case as regards Israel's relations with non-Western Jews since the end of World War II. With regard to non-Western Jews, proprietary Zionism has been willing to almost literally enforce what lawyers call "a specific performance" of its principles.

#### 6.2.2.1. Forcing Jews to Migrate to Israel

The most patent example of proprietary Zionism's willingness to literally enforce its principle of the negation of exile is Israel's policies regarding the Jews of the Soviet Union after that country collapsed in the early 1990s. Hundreds of thousands of Jews, the majority of whom were not Zionists, wanted to emigrate from the collapsing state because of the prevailing anti-Semitism, economic chaos, and absence of personal security. Israel's prime minister at the time was Yitzhak Shamir, whose entire life was devoted to the scrupulous realization of proprietary Zionism.<sup>12</sup> Under Shamir's leadership and on his initiative, Israel put up a struggle to prevent the United States from granting these Jews refugee status and to make it refuse them entry—with the sole aim of presenting the Jews of the former Soviet Union no alternative but to emigrate to Israel. The Shamir government argued that refugee status could not be granted to Jewish persons who escaped from their country of citizenship when a Jewish state existed: Israel was their true (and proper) state. The US



government, therefore, could not treat Jews fleeing from the disintegrating Soviet Union as true refugees and offer them refugee status.<sup>13</sup> In other words, when Israel enjoyed a measure of control over Jews' destination of migration from the diaspora, and when there was no pragmatic reason not to coerce them to migrate to the Land of Israel, it did not hesitate to implement essentialist Zionism to the letter.<sup>14</sup> To all this, of course, one must add the fact that many of the Jews who migrated to Israel from the disintegrating Soviet Union were settled in the territories Israel occupied in 1967, and that this 1990s immigration wave also encouraged more Israeli Jews to settle in these territories. This enforced migration to Israel not only was based on the essentialist-collectivist component of proprietary Zionism but actually was conducive to the implementation of its proprietary component.

This episode is a significant one, but it is neither unique nor accidental. It comes at the end of a concatenation of other similar actions. In the 1970s, too, as a result of the *détente* between the United States and the USSR,<sup>15</sup> many Jews were allowed to leave the Soviet Union for the first time in fifty years. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), established in the United States back in the late nineteenth century in the wake of the great waves of Jewish migration from Russia, tried to help former Soviet Jews to migrate anywhere they wanted, including America. It opened an office in Rome that, treating them as refugees, offered them help and, in the US tradition of protecting human rights, was committed to absorbing into the United States those who wished to migrate there. The opening of the HIAS office in Rome caused a drop in Soviet Jewish migration to Israel. The Jewish Agency (which since 1929 has been the primary organization responsible for the immigration and settlement of Jews from the diaspora into Israel) called this drop in Hebrew a *neshira*, a fall or shedding, as though these ex-Soviet Jews were leaves from a Jewish tree that could grow only in Israel. The Jewish Agency and the Israeli government responded to this "shedding" by winning over the American Jewish leadership with the argument Shamir would use later on: The existence of Israel and Jewish refugee status are incompatible notions. They even prevented Soviet Jews who left their country from stopping over in Europe and flew them directly to Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Constraining Jews to migrate to Israel on the basis of arguments derived from the conceptual and ontological logic of proprietary Zionism is the ultimate practical realization of this Zionism's maximalism on the issue of the negation of exile. This maximalism has prevailed for decades. Wherever it was not hindered by reality constraints and pragmatic

considerations, the Israeli leadership did not hesitate to force individual Jews to do what is entailed by proprietary Zionism's principled stance on the negation of exile. One may observe less extreme expressions of this principled position in the arrogance to the point of contempt displayed toward Jews who did not migrate to Israel and in the authoritarianism bordering on dismissiveness that marked the attitude to Jewish communities that remained in exile.

#### 6.2.2.2. Authoritarianism and Arrogance toward Diaspora Jews

From its very inception, Israel's Zionist leadership implemented two types of policy vis-à-vis diaspora communities outside its control. It treated the non-Zionists among them pragmatically, in response to changing circumstances. It did so as long as it could resist the impulse of its principles. It treated those members of diaspora communities who were Zionists in the way prescribed by the principles of proprietary Zionism. While it exploited the former group, it subjugated the latter. The most striking example of this is Ben-Gurion's policy toward the US Jewish leadership in the decades following the establishment of Israel. Ben-Gurion agreed not to treat in accordance with his Zionist beliefs those Jews who, as non-Zionists, were not subject to his Zionist authority. He needed their political support for Israel and their mediation between himself and the US government. He published a declaration according to which US Jews owed loyalty not to Israel but only to the United States, on the grounds that the predicament of such Jews was one of a diaspora, not of exile, and that Israel had no right to interfere in their affairs. Ben-Gurion made this clear in the course of an exchange with Jacob Blaustein, president of the American Jewish Committee that represented the non-Zionist organizations of American Jewry. The exchange occurred in the early 1950s. From then until the end of his premiership in the mid-1960s Ben-Gurion's Zionist impulse made him deviate rather frequently from his word. He was then forced time and again to restate the principles he set out in his exchange with Blaustein.<sup>17</sup>

These declarations that he was willing to make to the leaders of American *Jewry* in the 1950s, Ben-Gurion was at that time not willing to make to the leaders of the American *Zionists*. These leaders did not interpret Zionism according to its essentialist version. In their understanding, the ideology did not require each and every individual Jew, by virtue of his or her Jewish essence, to migrate to the Land of Israel. They viewed living in Israel as an option that autonomous Jewish individuals

should be able and at liberty to choose, but not as one that they were necessarily obliged to embrace. Forty years later the American Jewish leadership, under pressure from Israel, refrained from advocating this same position in the case of Soviet Jews who wished to emigrate following the collapse of their country. In relation to themselves, by contrast, Zionist American Jews maintained this position from the 1950s onward. This position required them to invest in educating their youth toward national Jewish consciousness and teaching them the Hebrew language. Such an education would enable young people to choose between migrating to Israel and understanding their Judaism as an ethnic nationality secondary to their main nationality, namely American civic nationality. Abba Hillel Silver, the leader of the US Zionists in the 1940s and 1950s, believed that this was the appropriate Zionist agenda for Diaspora Jewry. This type of “an independent and egalitarian Zionist agenda for the Diaspora,” says Ofer Shiff in his book *Zionism of the Defeated: Abba Hillel Silver’s Journey beyond Nationalism*, stood no chance of being approved by the Israeli leadership. Ben-Gurion believed that the sole Zionist action open to Jews from outside the Land of Israel was aliyah (immigration)<sup>18</sup> and settlement. Education toward national Jewish consciousness and Hebrew proficiency, enabling individual Jews to choose whether to make aliyah or to stay put, was not sufficient, according to Ben-Gurion, for the purposes of realizing one’s Zionism.<sup>19</sup>

These imperious and arrogant expressions from Israeli essentialist Zionism toward American Jewry did not subside at the end of Ben-Gurion’s leadership, during which the mainstream enjoyed unlimited predominance. In some senses these expressions became more imperious and arrogant as they evolved from imposing proprietary Zionism’s interpretation of Jewish nationalism to imposing the predominant interpretation of the Jewish religion among the proprietary Zionists, namely, the orthodox interpretation. The Israeli High Court of Justice ruling in the matter of the Western Wall Women, which prevented Jews belonging to non-Orthodox streams from praying at the main Wailing Wall site, and the Knesset’s attempt to legislate against recognition of conversions by non-Orthodox Jewish streams, are more recent illustrations of the same thing.<sup>20</sup> Moshe Katsav, Israel’s former president, offered an excellent instance of the willingness to force the Orthodox interpretation of Jewish religion on US Jews, most of whom belong to the Reform movement. To demonstrate Israel’s nonrecognition of the non-Orthodox interpretation prevalent among these Jews, he refused to address the president of America’s Reform Jews, Rabbi Eric Yoffie, with the Hebrew

term *rav* (rabbi) at the 2006 Zionist Congress in Jerusalem. The only title he would use was the American pronunciation, “Rabbi.”<sup>21</sup>

Israel’s condescension toward Jewish individuals and communities outside the Land of Israel is expressed in many additional ways. In chapter 3 I mentioned a collaboration between representatives of the avowedly and principled essentialist Right and representatives of a center—which is perhaps less aware of, and explicit about, the meaning of the worldview underlying its positions. These groups combined to protest against the idea of adding another stanza to Hatikvah, Israel’s national anthem, one with which the country’s Arab population might identify. A similar collaboration can be observed on a further issue. Rehavam Zeevi, an Israeli politician (assassinated in 2001 by Palestinians) who also objected to a proposal to put an end to the exclusion of Israel’s Arab population from the Israeli anthem in 2000, used in 1997 the anti-Semitic epithet *yehudon* (“little Jew” or “Jew boy”) with reference to the Jewish US ambassador to Israel, Martin Indyk, for representing the United States even though he was a Jew.<sup>22</sup> Taking the part of Yitzhak Navon, who joined Zeevi in the said protest against changing Hatikvah, the author A. B. Yehoshua represents the center in regard of its arrogant attitude toward US Jewry. He titled an important article he published in the late 1970s “Exile, the Neurotic Solution.” Applying a collectivist conceptualization, he discusses the Jewish collective’s *pathology*, talks about the Diaspora Jew as “a limited being, incomplete and obstructed,”<sup>23</sup> a creature, that is, lacking both ears and nose, and makes suggestions that carry a whiff of the autocratic, in the vein of Ben-Gurion’s expressions concerning what was called above “an egalitarian Zionist agenda for the diaspora.” “Were the State of Israel to stop sending teachers, educators, and emissaries to Jewish communities that do not meet a minimum *aliyah* quota—perhaps these dramatic acts would make an impression and would help place the issue of the Golah [Hebrew for exile] at the forefront of Jewish consciousness.”<sup>24</sup> Within the space of one statement he opposes the independent diaspora agenda of Western Jewry as well as expressing a willingness almost to force them to migrate to Israel. Yehoshua revisited these issues and notions many years later in his 2006 rebuke against American Jewry, delivered during a symposium marking the American Jewish Committee’s Centennial Symposium.

You are playing with Jewishness—plug and play. . . . You are changing countries like changing jackets. . . . You are not doing any Jewish decisions. . . . Jewish-Israeli identity has to contend with all the elements of life via the

binding and sovereign framework of a territorially defined state. And therefore the extent of its reach into life is immeasurably fuller and broader and more meaningful than the Jewishness of an American Jew whose important and meaningful life decisions are made within the framework of his American nationality or citizenship. . . . And in the future, in another century or two, when China is the leading superpower, why shouldn't some Jews exchange their American-ness or Canadian-ness for Chinese-ness or Singaporean-ness?<sup>25</sup>

This reproach seems to assume that the identity of all Jewish individuals is above all a Jewish identity, whether or not they elect to perceive it as the main constituent of their identity. Furthermore, it implies that Jewish individuals' Jewish identity is mainly national and not, for instance, religious—whether or not they elect to interpret it so. Yehoshua's argument also seems to assume that people are obliged to realize their ethnonational identity fully, not merely in part, whether or not they wish to do so. These are the tenets of the social and the moral ontology underlying essentialist-proprietary Zionism, and these are the expressions of its despotic nature.

### *6.2.3. The Legal Status of Diaspora Jews in Israel: The Law of Return and the Citizenship Law*

Proprietary Zionism's utter negation of the exile, nevertheless, is also reflected in phenomena that at least on the face of it are the opposite of despotism. These phenomena pertain not to the status of the Jewish Israeli collective relative to that of the Jews outside Israel, but rather to the status of the Jews outside Israel in Israel as this is realized by Israel's Law of Return and the Law of Citizenship. These laws surely have the appearance of welcoming and empowering Jews living outside Israel.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, by means of the changes I propose below in these laws on the basis of egalitarian Zionism, they might become empowering and welcoming. However, in their current form they may have been considered empowering and welcoming only during the first decades of the State of Israel, in the still recent, tangible aftermath of the persecution of Jews. This is not the case in the last few decades. Since the 1970s it seems that they could be justified as they stand only on the basis of the worldview underlying proprietary Zionism. Let me explain.

The Law of Return grants every Jew the right to immigrate into Israel. It grants this right regardless of whether the particular individuals taking advantage of this right are motivated to do so for reasons related to the

Jewishness of the State of Israel. For example, when any specific Jews seek to immigrate into Israel, no one checks whether they have been persecuted for their Jewishness or whether they have any personal interest in living within the framework of an encompassing Jewish culture. By granting every Jew a *right to immigrate* to Israel, the Law of Return does not leave the state the discretion to balance the interests of any individual Jews wishing to immigrate against the interests of its existing Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. Such balancing would be possible if the law granted Jews only *immigration advantages as part of periodic immigration quotas*.<sup>27</sup> Israel's Citizenship Law grants every Jew who immigrates to Israel under the Law of Return the status of citizenship and a whole gamut of political, social, and economic rights that go along with this status. The law awards all of these advantages without making them in any way conditional upon qualifications such as a minimal period of residency, acquiring the language (Hebrew), becoming acquainted with Israel's problems, sharing the fate of its citizens and especially of its Jewish citizens, or any degree of involvement in Israeli society and culture. As in the case of the Law of Return, the Citizenship Law does not leave the state any discretion and does not allow it to refuse these advantages to any particular Jews.

Israel's Law of Return and Citizenship Law seem to assume the following: (a) by virtue of being Jewish, Jews living outside of the Land of Israel necessarily have an interest in living in Israel regardless of anything related to their specific individual lives or aspirations; (b) this interest in living in Israel is an extremely important one and is incalculably greater than the ordinary interests of Jews already living in Israel. The interests Israeli Jews have because of their Jewishness must prevail over any other concerns they might have, such as economic or educational concerns; (c) the interests of non-Jewish citizens of Israel or non-Jews living in the Land of Israel are null and void and are not to be taken into consideration at all when the issue of the immigration of Jews to the Land of Israel is at stake.

In current conditions, as opposed to those obtaining in Israel's early history, these assumptions can be grounded only in the social and moral ontology of proprietary Zionism. According to essentialist social ontology, and according to the symbiosis that proprietary Zionism posits between the Jews and the Land of Israel, a Jew who does not live in the Land of Israel can be likened to a person without nose and ears. As there is no need to check for each and every person who lost his nose and ears whether he is actually interested in recovering them, it is unnecessary to check for each and every Jew who lives outside the Land of Israel

whether his actual interest is to immigrate: this is self-evident. If, moreover, the need of every Jew to immigrate to the Land of Israel is as pressing as a person's interest in reproducing his nose and ears, it is reasonable not to have to balance, in each and every case, between that interest and the ordinary interests of those Jews and non-Jews who already live in the Land of Israel. In such emergencies, time and other resources need not be squandered on processes of deliberation. All these assumptions (including the one according to which the interests Israeli Jews have in the Jewish component of their existence prevails over their other interests) are also entailed by the collectivist moral ontology that forms the basis of proprietary Zionism. If "the essential human unit in which man's nature is fully realized is not the individual . . . , but the nation,"<sup>28</sup> then clearly the supreme interest of Jews in the integrity of their nation prevails over any interest they may have as individuals. This integrity can be attained only when the entire nation is present in the Land of Israel. It is therefore not difficult to avoid balancing their individual interests against their interest in the immigration of Jews to the Land of Israel, each time these interests clash; it is a foregone conclusion that the Jews' interest in immigration trumps all other interests.

The despotic and antidemocratic nature of all these implications stemming from the underlying assumptions of the Law of Return and the Law of Citizenship in Israel as they are worded and practiced today hardly require any further elucidation. According to these assumptions, what is most important for people is not the satisfaction of their preferences and the choices they make as individuals, but rather their involuntary membership in their ethnonational collective, a collective whose aims prevail over the personal interests of those who belong to it and renders the personal or other interests of others who do not belong to it void of any practical significance. If those who hold on to proprietary Zionism ruled world Jewry, and if they could act unhindered by reality, they would wish to move all Jews to the Land of Israel. Certain factions that are currently promoting this type of Zionism would indeed not hesitate to put it into effect.

### 6.3. Post-Zionism: Denial of both Exile and Diaspora

There is no doubt that the aspirations of the civic and postcolonial versions of post-Zionism regarding the Jewish Diaspora do not resemble those of

proprietary Zionism. Yet here, too, these versions of post-Zionism join proprietary Zionism in a unity of opposites: They also strive to nullify the Jewish exiles and Diasporas. However, unlike proprietary Zionism, they are not informed by the belief that any Jewish community outside the Land of Israel is an exile and can never be considered a diaspora. Rather, the advocates of civic and postcolonial post-Zionism deny Jewish communities outside the Land of Israel the status of either exile or diaspora. This, I show, follows from the post-Zionist stance toward the gaps in the facts of the Zionist narrative discussed in chapter 2. Moreover, to be on the safe side, the civic and postcolonial post-Zionists also recommend the disintegration of Jewish communities qua ethnonational diaspora communities if such communities insist on conceiving of themselves thus. This, I will show, follows from their stance toward the gaps in the morality of the Zionist narrative.

### *6.3.1. The Denial of Jewish Diasporic Existence*

There are two theses that constitute the core of the Israeli post-Zionists' approach to filling the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative of Jewish history. First, the Jewish collective is not a nation. Second, this collective is not even one unified collective. These two theses entail that there have never been any Jewish exiles or Diasporas, at least not in the past few centuries. The term "exile communities" generally refers to communities who belong to one people and originate in one single homeland and who are living as uprooted communities. The notion of "diaspora communities" also refers to communities that belong to one people and originate in one homeland. However, in contrast to exile communities, diaspora communities are not living as uprooted communities. Since prominent spokesmen of Israeli post-Zionism deny the claim that the Jewish communities of the past few centuries belong to one single collective and nation, they are committed to rejecting not only the claim that the Jewish communities in the world are communities in exile but also that they are diaspora communities.<sup>29</sup> For these post-Zionist writers, Judaism is merely a religion. Hence, just as one would not regard Catholics in Britain and in the United States as "Catholic Diasporas," or Buddhists in the United States and in India as "Buddhist Diasporas," so Jews in Britain and in the United States should not be considered "Jewish Diasporas." The claim that a given community is a diaspora presupposes that the national homeland is still populated by a core community belonging to



this particular nation, that the core community and the diaspora share the same national or ethnic identity, and that the core community has a special status in relation to the diaspora community. However, Israeli post-Zionists reject all these presuppositions. In other words, for them the issue of the relationship between the Jewish community in the Land of Israel and a worldwide Jewish collective constitutes a pseudoproblem, not a real one. There is neither a conceptual foundation nor a reality that justifies raising it.

Many of the arguments underlying this position resemble those adduced by the Jews who opposed Zionism at its inception, namely, secular Jews who wished to become fully assimilated among the nations within which they resided, religious Jews in the same countries who wanted to preserve themselves as religious rather than ethnonational communities, and Bundist or Dubnowist Jews who desired to establish distinct Jewish cultural nations or communities within their countries of residence. Still, the position of Jews who rejected Zionism in its formative years certainly did not emerge in a theoretical debate concerning a social ontology or conceptualization of the question of how to catalog the Jews as a social entity. It evolved as a stance in an interpretive-practical debate between them and the Zionists about how to solve the problems Jews were facing as a result of the decline in their religious identity, the persecution they experienced in Europe, and the fact that the emancipation of the Jews in Europe failed to solve the Jewish problem. In contrast, the rejection of Jewish nationhood by the Israeli post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism is not merely a stance in this interpretive-political debate. They argue for their rejection of Jewish nationhood by using considerations that also derive from social ontology and a conceptual analysis. This rejection follows from their conceptualization and their understanding of the existence of the Jewish collective in the nineteenth century as well as today. This ontological and conceptual position is questionable with regard to nineteenth-century Jewry, and it is certainly groundless today. The fact that its theoretical foundations imply a denial of the existence of a Jewish Diaspora in the centuries before Zionism only further highlights the nonsensicality of this position.

It could be claimed that the Jews have a “copyright” to the phenomenon of diaspora. The Jews were the only people to have a diaspora until the beginning of modernity, when they were joined by the Armenians and the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire. The Jews even have a copyright, as it were, to the very concept of this phenomenon that later became prevalent in human culture, that is, the Greek word

*diaspora*, which originates in the translation in the Septuagint of one of the curses in chapter 28 of Deuteronomy: “Then the Lord will disperse you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other.” The post-Zionists may argue that the term can be applied to the diaspora only of a people that still exists in its original homeland, as it was indeed used to describe the Jewish Diaspora in antiquity and the Armenian and Greek diasporas in the Ottoman Empire. Without detracting from the Jews’ copyright, as it were, to the notion of a national diaspora, the post-Zionist might argue that once there was no longer a core group of Jews living in the Land of Israel as a nation in its homeland—either in the seventh or in the eleventh century<sup>30</sup>—and once the communities outside the Land of Israel that originally derived from this core group began to differ in the territories they lived in, their histories, cultures, and languages, they should no longer be called the “Jewish Diaspora,” for the Jews as a people had stopped existing. They might even argue, as Shlomo Sand does, that the Jewish communities of recent centuries are not really diasporas genetically originating in a Jewish ethnocultural core group in the ancient Land of Israel,<sup>31</sup> and hence it is not appropriate to describe them as a Jewish Diaspora. The weakness of these responses is conspicuous. If a nation’s dispersal among nations “from one end of the earth to the other,” with a surviving homeland core group, is considered a curse in Deuteronomy, it may most definitely be considered a curse once this nation no longer possesses such a nucleus. Even if the genetic origin of the Jewish Diaspora of the past centuries cannot be traced back to the Jewish ethnoreligious and ethnocultural core group in the ancient Land of Israel, this does not invalidate its ethnic continuity. If one accepts Max Weber’s interpretation of the notion of ethnicity, ethnic continuity depends not on the shared genetic roots of a group’s members but on *its shared belief* in having such roots.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, one might respond to the denial of the Jewish Diaspora, derived as it is from the denial of Jewish nationhood in the pre-Zionist era, in the same manner as I responded to the denial of this nationhood in chapter 2: Even if it is true that the Jews before Zionism did not constitute a nation in the full sense, they were a nation in a limited or partial sense. If this is plausible with regard to Jewish nationhood, then it must also be plausible for the notion of a Jewish Diaspora. As I argued in chapter 2, by the nineteenth century the Jews constituted a borderline case of nationhood as they had been a nation in the full sense in the ancient world and due to the centrality of this fact to both their own sense of identity and that held by others. Similarly, they also constituted

a borderline case of diaspora. Though by this time they did not possess a national core group in their homeland, they did possess such a group in antiquity, and this fact was central to their own sense of identity and that held by others in the nineteenth century and centuries before that.<sup>33</sup>

All these arguments in support of conceiving of pre-Zionist Jewish communities throughout the world as a Jewish Diaspora are much more forceful today. While it could be argued that in the late nineteenth century the Jewish communities throughout the world constituted a diaspora merely in a partial sense of the word because of the absence of a national nucleus in their homeland at the time, then today world Jewry is a clear-cut case of a diaspora. First, a core group whose nationhood is indisputable has been revived in its homeland: It is a community with one shared pervasive culture, a common territory, and a “common legacy of memories” that large numbers of its membership wish to maintain. Second, the core group in Israel is a nation according to all major analyses of this concept. Moreover, according to Earnest Renan’s analysis, many members of the diaspora communities themselves would be included within this nation. A multitude of Jews all over the world identify with a legacy shared with Israeli Jews, that is, the legacy of a continued existence of an independent Jewish political entity within the framework of a Jewish culture in Israel. Their identification with this legacy is an important component of their Jewish identity. In many different ways, they try to contribute to the continued existence of this entity.

In chapter 2 I argued that in light of these facts world Jewry constitutes a much stronger case of a national collective today than in the late nineteenth century. Still, at issue here is not whether world Jewry constitutes a nation, but rather whether its communities outside Israel constitute a diaspora. The very same facts that make the Jewish Diaspora communities in the world constituents in a worldwide collective that is only partially a nation make these constituents paradigmatic cases of Jewish Diasporas. These facts are, on the one hand, the central role that the Israeli Jewish nation plays in the shared sense of identity of Jewish communities outside Israel, and, on the other hand, their non-participation in the general Hebrew-Jewish culture and territory of the Israeli-Jewish people. It should be remembered that, by definition, a diaspora must belong to the nation only in a marginal sense. Otherwise it would be part of the nation’s core group.

Certain post-Zionists find it hard to digest the possibility that world Jewry might be perceived as a nation in a partial sense of the word on the grounds that its nucleus in Israel is a nation in the full sense and that its

diaspora outside Israel is national only in a peripheral sense. The quotation below is from Shlomo Sand, who criticizes Alexander Yakobson and Amnon Rubinstein's defense of the national character of the world Jewish collective in their book *Israel and the Family of Nations*:

Throughout the book, the genuine attachment that many Jews feel for Israel is presented as a national consciousness. This lack of discrimination between, on the one hand, an attachment based largely on painful memories and post-religious sensibility with a touch of tradition and, on the other hand, desire for national sovereignty diminishes the work. Unfortunately, the authors seem unaware that nationality is not merely a sense of belonging to some collective body; it is more than a feeling of solidarity and a common interest, for otherwise Protestants would be a nation, and so would cat lovers. A national consciousness is primarily the wish to live in an independent political entity. It wants its subject to live and be educated by a homogeneous national culture. That was the essence of Zionism at its inception, and so it remained for most of its history until recent times. It sought independent sovereignty and achieved it.

... But since the Jewish masses are not keen to live under the Jewish sovereignty, the Zionist arguments have had to be stretched beyond all national reason. The weakness of today's Zionist rationale lies in its failure to acknowledge this complex reality.<sup>34</sup>

Not even one sentence in this quotation is correct. For instance, Sand argues that the Jews outside Israel are not eager for national Jewish sovereignty, but he's misguided in this regard: The Zionists among them, who dominate the Jewish communities outside Israel, are eager for such sovereignty even if they themselves do not wish to live within its framework. Sand argues that what the Jews outside Israel feel is no more than a sense of belonging to the Jewish collective. To this one might respond that if many of them—who play influential and leading roles—are eager for Jewish national sovereignty in Israel, what they feel is more than a mere sense of belonging to the Jewish collective. Sand argues that the essence of Zionism at its inception was that all the Jews would “live and be educated by a homogeneous national culture” and “in an independent political entity,” but at least one of Zionism's formative thinkers, Ahad Ha'am, believed that if many Jews lived in their historical homeland—that is, the Land of Israel—within the framework of a pervasive Jewish culture, this would suffice to maintain a world Jewish collective as a national collective. The views of other Zionist leaders were also more complex than Sand would admit.<sup>35</sup> Special attention should be paid to the end of the

above quotation, when Sand suggests that Yakobson and Rubinstein fail to “acknowledge this complex reality,” when large numbers of Jews are not keen on living under Jewish sovereignty. However, it is exactly this complex reality that Yakobson and Rubinstein discuss.<sup>36</sup> It may be—as I argued in chapter 3—that not all the conclusions they draw from that reality are appropriate, but they most certainly recognize the peripherality of the Jewish Diaspora’s nationhood and the fact that it is only Israeli Jews who could be considered a nation in the full sense of the term. They thus acknowledge the complexity of this reality; it is Sand who fails to acknowledge it. From the undisputable premise that a Jewish nation, including its diaspora, is not a nation in the full sense of the word, he commits the fallacy of concluding that the Jewish collective is a nonnation in the full sense of the word.<sup>37</sup>

### 6.3.2. *The Dissolution of the Jewish Diaspora*

Civic and postcolonial post-Zionisms imply not only that there are no ethnonational ties between the Jewish Diaspora and the Jewish collective in Israel, but also that this diaspora must eventually disintegrate if it insists on conceiving of itself as a diaspora. This suggestion is entailed by their position regarding the gaps in the morality of the Zionist narrative. According to this position, granting special legal and constitutional status to the ethnic Jewish nation of Israel infringes the equality between its Jewish citizens and those of its citizens who belong to other ethnic or ethnonational groups, and perpetuates “the oppressive nationalist structures of domination.”<sup>38</sup> In doing so it also violates the freedom of both its Jewish citizens and the members of other ethnonational groups. If this is what post-Zionism proposes with regard to the constitutional status of Israeli Jews in Israel, it would most certainly propose similar policies with regard to the legal status of Diaspora Jews, both in their country of residence and in Israel. For if their ethnonational existence were given such legal and constitutional recognition in the diaspora, in the form, for instance, of multicultural rights that recognize their distinct culture, it would seem that this would also violate equality and freedom in these countries. In addition, if the ethnonational existence of Diaspora Jews also receives legal recognition in Israel, for instance by means of rights that make immigration to Israel more feasible to them than to non-Jews, then this would have a detrimental effect on the equality between Israel’s Arab citizens and its Jewish citizens.

### 6.3.3. *Diasporic Existence and the Impairment of Equality*

There is no doubt that the manner in which the status of Diaspora Jews is realized in Israel—which to a considerable extent is the outcome of its interpretation by proprietary Zionism—seriously and unjustifiably violates civic equality in Israel. The Law of Return and the Citizenship Law grant Diaspora Jews, who are not citizens of the state, the right to migrate to Israel and become its citizens. In granting these rights, these laws leave the state almost without any say in considering its citizens' interests regarding the immigration and naturalization rights of Diaspora Jews. The immigration rights of the latter constrain the sovereignty of the state as defined by the Law of Return and the Law of Citizenship. At the same time, Israel denies such rights to its Arab population, both by not granting them through its own laws and by preventing the establishment of a state in which Palestinians may grant themselves such rights. No doubt this constitutes a major violation of equality. However, it does not follow that the constitutional status Israel grants Diaspora Jews should be annulled, but rather that the details of this status should be revised, as should also be the details of the general political framework within which it is realized. They must be changed so that they stop expressing what is currently a dismissive attitude toward Arabs living in Palestine / the Land of Israel and toward their interests. The general political framework should be changed in the spirit of the solution for which I argued in the discussion of egalitarian Zionism in chapter 3, namely a two-state solution in which a large Palestinian minority would enjoy collective rights within a state that is principally Jewish. I will discuss the details of the appropriate status of the Jewish Diaspora in Israel—one that will neither suppress nor discriminate against Arabs—in the next part of this chapter.

The infringement of equality that arises from recognizing special rights for Diaspora Jews in their countries of residence warrants a similar response. The problems for the value of equality that are created by such recognition are at the heart of the debate on multiculturalism in Western countries.<sup>39</sup> Such problems are not unique to the Jewish Diaspora or to any other cultural minority, and also apply to religious communities, communities defined by sexual orientation, and others. Specific legislation for these communities—as opposed to universal “color-blind” legislation for all individual citizens—would necessarily raise issues pertaining to equality, for it implies differential legislation for citizens on the basis of belonging to communities that

are subcommunities of the citizenry. If exemptions from certain laws are not granted, however, this also raises equality-related problems, because here the consequence is a situation in which some citizens are entitled to live in accordance with the customs of the subcommunity to which they belong (that is, the majority community) while members of other communities (that is, minority communities) are not allowed to live in this manner.<sup>40</sup> In Britain, Sikhs from the Punjab who became British citizens were exempted from the prohibition on carrying kirpans (swords or daggers) in the public sphere, which is a restriction British law imposes on all other British citizens. Some people argue that this exemption creates inequality between British Sikhs and other British citizens since the exemption grants Sikh citizens more personal security in the public sphere than it does to other citizens. There are others, by contrast, who believe that even if Sikhs were not exempted from the prohibition against carrying knives in public, equality would still be violated because the ability of members of the Sikh community to maintain their cultural customs would be undermined while other British citizens could continue practicing the customs of their culture. The same kind of difficulty pertains to questions such as whether Jews should be allowed to practice their dietary laws, especially Kosher ritual slaughter in those countries where Kosher slaughtering practices are prohibited by animal protection laws, or whether Muslim women should be allowed to wear veils or the hijab, and whether such customs as female circumcision should be outlawed.

Indeed, the value of equality constitutes a consideration both in favor of and against legislation for specific communities. The question of whether or not to allow these exceptions thus becomes a question of balancing: One side of the scales is occupied by the weight of the values that this particular law protects—the very law from which the legislator has considered exempting some cultural group—and of the expected damage to these values as a result of this exemption. On the other side of the scales is the weight we ought to attribute to the value of people's allegiance to their original culture and identity along with the intensity of the expected damage to this value of allegiance should they be compelled to uphold a law that runs counter to their cultural tradition.<sup>41</sup> There may be additional complications. For example, should an ethnic or religious minority be granted the right to preserve its tradition not only in view of the damage expected to the values protected by the specific law from which they seek exemption, but also in view of the damage expected to the value

of allowing the members of the majority to adhere to their traditions and culture and live within the framework of their culture? At times such attempts to balance conflicting considerations could result in clear outcomes, but often the outcome is far from unequivocal.<sup>42</sup> For the purpose of the present discussion, it should be stressed that on all these issues the value of equality is neutral. It cannot serve as a basis for solving practical problems concerning particular practices of minority groups that are not homeland groups. Obviously, this also applies to Jewish Diasporas in countries all over the world.

#### *6.3.4. Diasporas and the Damage to Freedom*

Post-Zionists' fears about the damage to freedom likely to result from the legal and constitutional recognition of the Jewish Diaspora within the diaspora countries themselves and in Israel are groundless, as are their fears of the likely damage to equality. In my opinion, if the members of national diasporas preserve their ethnic identity and communality to a certain extent, along with their civic identity and communality, this would bolster both their own freedom and that of other members of their civic nation, as well as the freedom of the citizens of the state in which their ethnic group realizes its national self-determination. These freedoms become bolstered, moreover, in two respects: the range of choices available and the authenticity of the choice ultimately made.

The first respect in which these freedoms are reinforced is the following: If the cultural interests of members of an ethnonational diaspora group are protected in the country of their civic nation as well as in the country of their ethnic nation, the scope of options for choosing ways of life broadens, mainly for them but also for the other citizens in both their civic and their ethnic states. The ways of life that all of these individuals can opt for become more diverse and more easily accessible. If, for example, American Jews are allowed to live Jewish lives, this way of life becomes more accessible to them as well as to other Americans who are not Jewish. If Israel has legal arrangements, such as priorities in immigration for Jews, that make it more amenable to the immigration of Jews from the United States, ways of life in general and especially Jewish ways of life in Israel become more varied, thus granting more freedom of choice to both Jewish and non-Jewish Israelis. This would enrich their culture and would improve their intercultural mobility.



Second, granting legal status to diaspora communities both in the country of their civic nation and in the country of their ethnic nation would significantly contribute to the authenticity of their members' choice to live the main part of their lives within one of these nations. Their choice (the choice of American Jews, for instance, to live the main part of their lives either in the United States or in Israel) must be more authentic than that of members of ethnic or civic nations that have no nation other than in the country where they are citizens, or those that have no ethnic diaspora outside that country (for instance, the choice of French people to live most of their lives in France, or the choice of Bhutanese people to live most of their lives in Bhutan). The latter is not a real choice. To clarify this issue, let us revisit Ernest Renan's account in "What Is a Nation?" discussed in chapter 2, and its misguided influence on the post-Zionists, as well as, in fact, on many generations of nationalism scholars, and not only the Israelis among them.<sup>43</sup>

### 6.3.5. *Diaspora, Voluntarism, and Nationalism: A Reconsideration of Renan's Subjectivist Conception of the Nation*

As mentioned above, according to Renan, a group does not transform into a nation as a result of the "objective" fact that group members share a language, a pervasive culture, and a territory, but as a result of the "subjective" fact that the group members choose to view a given heritage that they all share as their common heritage and to pursue it together. Shlomo Sand writes, "There is scarcely a single study of the idea of the nation that does not mention Renan's famous assertion that 'the existence of a nation is . . . a daily plebiscite.' His insistence on the voluntary and political dimension of collective modern identity was without doubt a novelty in 1882."<sup>44</sup> The question, however, arises whether this collective national identity that Renan refers to—the choice of members of nations to consider a certain heritage as formative of their identity and the wish to foster this heritage—is the result of voluntary choice. Another question would be whether this choice is really a daily plebiscite.

If there is any case in which the response to this question could be positive, then it must be that of diaspora members of ethnic nations. To a lesser extent, the response could also be positive for members of core groups of ethnic nations in their homeland. Before I go on to argue for this thesis, it is important to note that what Renan took to be a case of a

“daily plebiscite”—which scholars after him classified as the case of the territorial-civic nation—is not really any such thing.<sup>45</sup> Most members of nations of the two types mentioned above—for example, most French or most Bhutanese people—who elect to go on belonging to their nation do so because they grew up within it in a way that has made their culture a central component of the way they view the world and function in it, and because they have reached an age in which the reasons to avoid replacing this identity-component usually outweigh the reasons (if there are any) for changing it. Most French citizens elect to value their heritage and to maintain it for reasons that are not unlike their reasons for remaining on French territory, continuing to speak French, and leading their lives within the framework of French culture.

Many French people do so without ever considering whether they should go on like this, and many others may do so because their lives are rooted in France; because they would perhaps find it hard to gain fluency in another language, because they are firmly rooted in French culture and in their country, a culture and a country that they have learned to love. Changing all these things would certainly be difficult for them and is usually unnecessary. Of course, all this also obtains for the Jews living in Israel.

Renan was right when he argued that for a group to qualify as a nation its members must “have the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common.” However, those who argued that for a group to qualify as a nation its members must have a common language and share a culture were also right. A group must share both the sociopsychological and the sociolinguistic/sociocultural attributes in order to be considered a nation. Nevertheless, it does not follow that for most nations the sociopsychological attribute is subjective and voluntary while the sociolinguistic/sociocultural characteristics are objective and involuntary. It seems to me that most scholars who have categorized the two attributes according to the subjective-objective distinction were both misguided and misleading because the two features are usually equally subjective and voluntary as well as objective and involuntary. A Jew who has reached adulthood in Israel could stop appreciating the national heritage on which he was raised and could stop wanting to be a part of it. Indeed, he might also sever his ties with the Hebrew language, even though the fact that he is a Hebrew speaker is as “objective” a fact about him as his appreciation of the Zionist heritage and his wish to pursue it might have been.

My present critique of the tendency that has taken root among generations of scholars to interpret Renan’s sociopsychological component

in the definition of the nation as the basis for attributing voluntarism and free choice to membership in the nation is almost identical to David Hume's critique of John Locke's theory regarding the justification of the duty of obedience to the state. Locke argued that this duty is based on the tacit consent of those who lived in the state. He thought this tacit consent could be deduced from the very fact that they lived in the state. In this context, there is hardly a scholarly book on the duty to obey the law that does not contain the following quote from Hume:

Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artizan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert, that a man, by remaining in a vessel freely consents to the dominion of the master; though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean, and perish, the moment he leaves her.<sup>46</sup>

Note, however, Hume's additional statement immediately following this quotation, which is not cited as frequently:

The truest tacit consent of this kind, that is ever observed, is when a foreigner settles in any country, and is beforehand acquainted with the prince, and government, and laws, to which he must submit: his allegiance, though more voluntary, much less expected or depended on than of a natural born subject.<sup>47</sup>

The "acquaintance with the prince" and the "laws" mentioned by Hume must be replaced by the acquaintance with culture, language, and heritage. Acquaintance with the government, as he puts it, should be replaced with easy conditions of immigration to the country in question. Once these adjustments are made, Hume's words adequately describe the situation of the members of an ethnic diaspora group who, while integrating into their civic nation, are also educated in the spirit of their ethnic nation's culture, and for whom immigration to the country where their ethnic culture prevails is legally and otherwise easily available. If this obtains, then any decision on their part to go on living within the framework of their civic nation, or a decision to move to the place where their ethnic nation has realized its self-determination, is more voluntary than the decisions of those members of their civic nation who do not belong to an ethnic nation living elsewhere and decisions of members of ethnic nations who have no diaspora. To some extent, the existence of national diasporas increases the freedom of their members to choose

their ethnic nationality as well as the possible choices available to members of their ethnonational core group. The choice of the latter either to continue residing in a country where their ethnonational core group has realized its self-determination or to live elsewhere becomes more authentic. This at least is the case when the ethnicity they share with the members of their diaspora is a basis for solidarity between members of the diaspora group and members of the core group, which might make it easier for members of the core group to settle in countries that are already home to their ethnic diaspora.

#### 6.4. Egalitarian Zionism: Negation of Exile and Affirmation of Diaspora

Both proprietary Zionism and the Israeli versions of post-Zionism reject the possibility of categorizing Jewish communities outside Israel as diaspora communities. For proprietary Zionism Jewish existence outside the Land of Israel is always exilic, never diasporic. For the Israeli post-Zionists the Jews do not constitute a nation and therefore their existence outside Israel cannot be considered either exile or diaspora. Egalitarian Zionism, and also neodiasporic post-Zionism, are exempt from these doctrinal consequences.

Neodiasporic post-Zionism is exempt from them both because, in its spokespersons' view, the Jewish collective as a whole, including its Israeli component, must conceive of itself as an exile or as a diaspora, and because these spokespersons do not seem to attribute much importance to the distinction between exile and diaspora.<sup>48</sup> Egalitarian Zionism attributes great importance to this distinction. In its view, prior to the creation and consolidation of Israel, Jews outside it were in exile, and ever since they have been in the diaspora. In what follows I concentrate on explicating these consequences of egalitarian Zionism and their implications regarding Israeli policies towards world Jewry.

##### *6.4.1. Exile Is Over and the Diaspora Is Welcomed*

###### 6.4.1.1. Exile Is Over

The principle of the negation of exile is as constitutive of egalitarian Zionism as it is of proprietary Zionism. However, unlike proprietary Zionism, it interprets the negation of exile as the negation of a *total*

Jewish existence outside Israel, not as a total negation of *any* Jewish existence outside Israel. According to egalitarian Zionism, before Zionism established a sovereign existence within the framework of a comprehensive Jewish culture in Israel, it was appropriate to refer to the Jewish life outside the Land of Israel as one of exile. Once, however, Zionism instituted a mode of sovereign Jewish existence in Israel, Jewish life outside it was no longer exilic but rather diasporic. This conclusion follows both from the theoretical assumptions with which egalitarian Zionism fills the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative, and from the philosophical and normative assumptions with which it fills the moral gaps in this narrative. The transition of the Jews outside Israel from a state of exile to a state of diaspora is implied by the social and moral ontologies underlying egalitarian Zionism because the exile it negates, unlike the exile that proprietary Zionism negates, is not a condition in which an entity named “the Jewish nation” is taken as a social entity or an organism which, together with its communal and individual constituents, is considered as torn from its essence so long as it subsists outside the Land of Israel. According to the social and moral ontologies of egalitarian Zionism, exile is the condition of living individuals who wish to stay attached to their culture, to live within its framework and to put an end to their persecution, but who are not in possession of a political entity within which they can do these things. This was the situation of Jews before the creation of the state of Israel. Since, as a consequence of the establishment and consolidation of Israel, the world’s political and legal reality now includes Israel, every Jew is able to live within a Jewish culture and to protect himself or herself from persecution, and so Jews—whether they live in Israel or outside it—can no longer be considered to be in exile. Their existence outside Israel may be considered as diasporic at the most.

That Jewish life outside Israel is diasporic rather than exilic is also implied by egalitarian Zionism’s analysis of the concept of the nation. Again, the exile it negates is not that of a collective which is a nation by virtue of its essence and whose severance from nationhood in the Land of Israel is tantamount to being cut off from this immutable essence, an exile that cannot be remedied unless the whole collective, including all its constituents, returns to this land. Egalitarian Zionism negates the exile of a collective that was perceived by many of its members and by the world in general as a nation in the full sense—that is, one with a shared territory, a pervasive

culture, and a heritage—only in antiquity; it negates the exile of a collective whose transformation back into a nation was a means for many of its members to live within the framework of a national Jewish identity and to put an end to their persecution. When Zionism achieved its major goal, a Jewish nation re-emerged with a territory, a culture, and a heritage of its own in which all Jews can participate. Therefore, every Jew in the world who wants to adhere to her or his Jewish identity by interpreting it as a national identity can fully satisfy this wish by living in Israel or by maintaining another form of attachment to it. Jews are therefore no longer living in exile even if they do not live in Israel.

It is also from the viewpoint of its underlying historiography that egalitarian Zionism has no reason to consider a Jewish presence outside Israel as exile. The exile it negates is not the exile that allegedly resulted from the expulsion of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel in the first centuries AD, and their alleged unsuccessful but persistent efforts to return to the Land of Israel. The exile that egalitarian Zionism negates is the result of an expulsion that actually took place: the Jews' expulsion from Europe, which occurred time and again from the late Middle Ages, not in a remote past, and which culminated in the Holocaust. This exile is also the outcome of the erosion of European Jews' ability to adhere to their identity and live within a framework of a Jewish culture. This erosion was caused by historical processes such as the decline of religion and the transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy, none of which was directed specifically against Jews.<sup>49</sup> But egalitarian Zionism cannot continue negating the exile that was the result of the Jews' expulsion from Europe, for a number of reasons. First, this expulsion achieved its objectives over and beyond what the European nations that conducted it could have imagined; second, Zionism succeeded in establishing a safe haven for some of the refugees of that expulsion; and third, it is to be hoped that Europe learned its lesson and will not again expel Jews. Though processes of secularization and industrialization endangered Jews' ability to adhere to their identity and to live within a framework of a Jewish culture in exile, the triumph of the Zionist movement provided the solution to this exile that the Zionist idea envisaged: Jews living outside Israel nowadays have the option to live within the framework of a secular Jewish culture in Israel. Therefore, the historiography accompanying egalitarian Zionism excludes the possibility of viewing the contemporary presence of Jews outside Israel in terms of exile.

The same holds for the theory of justice that underlies egalitarian Zionism. The exile it negates is not one that results from the physical separation of the Jewish nation from a land over which it has a property right. It is rather the exile of Jewish individuals who, like many individuals belonging to other nations, wish to live within the framework of their own culture and to be self-governing in a territory that is their historical homeland, but who cannot do so. Those Jews who regard their identity as national and would like to live the main part of their lives in the framework of this identity can now do so. Such Jews, therefore, are not in exile, even if they do not actually realize this option.

Let me sum up: From the perspective of egalitarian Zionism the Zionist principle of the negation of exile remains valid, but the reality to which it is supposed to apply—in contrast to the reality to which it is supposed to apply according to proprietary Zionism—has ceased to exist.<sup>50</sup> From the perspective of egalitarian Zionism there is no longer any Jewish exile. The existence of Jews outside Israel is diasporic rather than exilic.

According to egalitarian Zionism, therefore, the transition from the discourse that views Jewish existence outside Israel as exile to a discourse that views it as diaspora is not merely terminological or semantic in character. It has, in fact, a far-reaching practical consequence, since the condition of exile, unlike the condition of diaspora, is by definition a condition that must be negated and annulled. From the point of view of egalitarian Zionism, however, the transition is attended by even more far-reaching practical consequences: Various aspects of this version of Zionism imply that, once a sustainable Jewish political collective existence has been established in the Land of Israel, additional Jewish existence outside it should be approved of, welcomed, and respected by Israel's Jews on equal terms.

#### 6.4.1.2. The Affirmation of the Diaspora

Many components of the egalitarian account of Zionism imply an affirmation of the continued existence of Jews as a diaspora community. The most prominent among these components are the individualist moral ontology underlying this account and the liberal theory of justice on which it is based. According to this ontology and theory of

justice, political and legal arrangements that facilitate more authenticity and broaden (to some extent) the range of options for individual choice are preferable (other things being equal) to arrangements that allow individuals less authenticity and a narrower range of options open for their free choice. An individualist moral ontology and a liberal theory of justice support the continued existence of Jewish communities outside Israel as diaspora communities. This is because the existence of ethnonational diasporas makes a genuine choice of nationality available to individuals belonging to ethnocultural nations that have diasporas and who are also members of the civic nations where they live. It also extends the range of alternatives available to them in the matter of choosing their nationality and its modes of expression, in contrast with the alternatives suggested by proprietary Zionism, on the one hand, and post-Zionism, on the other. In contrast to instances of what Ernest Renan and other students of nationalism would usually regard as subjective and voluntary nationalism, instances, that is, of territorial-civic nations, Renan's vision of the nation as a "daily plebiscite" is more likely to be realized among members of ethnic nations' diasporas or among members of the core groups of these nations who live in their homelands. Their freedom to choose between their ethnic nation and the civic nations of the countries in which they currently live—the freedom of French Jews, for instance, to choose whether they want to live in France or in Israel—is more extensive, and hence more real, than the freedom of choice of people who were raised within one national culture and who don't have a national affinity to people who have an additional nationality. Both post-Zionism's negation of the Jewish Diaspora by envisioning Diaspora Jews' assimilation into their civic nations and proprietary Zionism's negation of the diaspora—which seeks the incorporation of the Jewish Diaspora into its ethnic nation—make it impossible to maintain the range of nationhood options available to individual Jews, or indeed the depth of the voluntariness of this choice. Hence, egalitarian Zionism regards it as better for Jewish national existence to take the form of a double existence: a limited Jewish nationhood outside Israel and a fully fledged Jewish nationhood in Israel.

Another reason for this preference stems from the practical implications for the Palestinians of egalitarian Zionism's positions on the issue of the territorial and the institutional dimensions of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. The appropriate territorial



scope of Jewish self-determination is the one that was consolidated at the end of the 1940s, at the peak of the necessity for self-determination that the Jews faced during and after World War II. This territorial scope was defined in 1949 by the Green Line demarcating Israel from its neighbors. I doubt that this territorial scope would allow for all the members of the world's Jewish collective to assemble together in the Land of Israel. In addition, the institutional dimensions of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel / historic Palestine must take into account the equal status of the Arab collective in this land. Here, too, I doubt that such a consideration can be reconciled with the gathering of all the world's Jews into one territorial nation in the Land of Israel.

Earlier I mentioned in passing a pragmatic reason why proprietary Zionism supports the continued existence of a Jewish Diaspora, a reason that clashes with its principled position regarding the negation of exile. The continued existence of a Jewish Diaspora is instrumental for proprietary Zionism as currently realized by contemporary mainstream Zionism. The political influence of the Jewish Diaspora on the foreign policies of its various countries of residence can be of use in realizing a goal whose importance for proprietary Zionism exceeds that of the negation of exile: obtaining more extensive physical control by Jews over their property, that is, the Land of Israel. It is this principle that the settlements in the territories Israel occupied in 1967 realize, and it is not clear whether they would have been able to do so but for the influence of US Jews on their country's policies and the contribution of billions of dollars by Diaspora Jews. This argument in favor of the continued existence of a diaspora follows from proprietary Zionism's approach to the difference between the status of Arabs and the status of Jews in the Land of Israel. The logic underlying it is the precise opposite of the logic that underlies egalitarian Zionism's support for the continued existence of the Jewish Diaspora. The Jewish Diaspora is useful for proprietary Zionism not because it serves the interests of the members of this diaspora but because it serves proprietary Zionism in undermining Arab interests, and helps to expel them from the Land of Israel or dominate them within it. In complete contrast, egalitarian Zionism supports the continued existence of a diaspora out of consideration for the interests of the diaspora members themselves and of the Palestinians.

Additional arguments in favor of a Jewish existence in the form of a core national group in Israel and a diaspora outside it, as opposed to an

all-Jewish existence in the Land of Israel, are practical and intra-Jewish in nature. They are tied to the security of Israeli Jews and the preservation of their self-determination. Even if Israel stops implementing proprietary Zionism, and even if it ceases to give its non-Jewish subjects and neighbors, as it has over recent decades, reasons (according to egalitarian Zionism) for their enmity against it, it is still by no means clear that it will achieve this desired security. As it has seemed now for a long time, and as seems likely for the foreseeable future, the existential threat to Jews in Israel surpasses the existential threat to Jews outside it. Therefore, in securing the continuation of Jewish life as such it does not appear particularly wise “to put all Jewish eggs in one basket,” that is, in Israel. The existence of a Jewish Diaspora, moreover, allows for a distribution of the risks to which Jewish life is prone; it even makes the continued existence of Jews in Israel more secure by providing them with economic aid and, even more important, political aid. Under the current hegemony of proprietary Zionism, Israel is abusing this support, from the point of view of egalitarian Zionism: It uses American Jews to persuade their government to support the settlements, that is, the implementation of proprietary Zionism. And it uses the contributions of US Jews to fund the settlements. Nevertheless, egalitarian Zionism might itself require economic and political aid from the Jewish Diaspora to resist threats to the just goal of that Zionism, namely, the survival of Jewish self-determination in Israel under the appropriate territorial and institutional conditions. Jewish historical experience demonstrates that the continued existence of such self-determination is in the interests of Diaspora Jewry, exactly as it is in the interests of Israeli Jews that Diaspora Jewry should continue in existence.

For egalitarian Zionism, therefore, the notion of the negation of exile has lost its relevance: there is no more exile to be negated. Egalitarian Zionism even claims that the existence of the Jews in the diaspora should be maintained alongside their national existence in Israel. These positions raise some questions about the status of the Israeli Jewish nation in relation to that of the diaspora. They also raise questions about the status of diaspora members in Israel. I will now make use of the social and moral ontologies, the conceptualization of nationality, the Jewish historiography, and the theory of justice that underlie egalitarian Zionism in order to show that some policies regarding both the status of the Israeli Jewish nation as opposed to that of the diaspora, and the status in Israel of members of the diaspora, can be derived from these theoretical layers of egalitarian Zionism. The policies I will

propose differ radically from those that proprietary Zionism promotes. As we saw, the policies of proprietary Zionism stem from the physical constraints applying to the realization of its conception of the negation of exile. On the one hand, these constraints are of no relevance in the case of Jews who wish to migrate to Israel. These Jews are therefore granted an automatic right of immigration and, if they realize this right, an automatic right to citizenship. On the other hand, the physical constraints that prevent proprietary Zionism from carrying out its interpretation of the negation of exile force this type of Zionism to adopt an authoritarian and arrogant attitude toward those Jews who do not migrate to Israel. By contrast, the intellectual and moral foundations of egalitarian Zionism may serve as a source of entirely different codes of behavior.

#### *6.4.2. The Status of Israel Relative to the Jewish Diaspora and the Status of Diaspora Jews in Israel*

##### 6.4.2.1. Israel as a National Core Group and the Jewish Dispersal as a National Diaspora: Ernest Renan, Ahad Ha'am, Theodor Herzl

In chapter 2 I explained that the nationhood of Jews who live outside Israel is partial, not fully fledged. It is partial in several senses: First, Diaspora Jews constitute a part of Jewish nationhood because they are members of a collectivity that used to be a fully fledged nation in the past, or at least because this collectivity is being identified in the present as having been a nation in this fully fledged sense in the past. Second, having been a nation in the past is, in the present, one of the main facts by reference to which they are identified both among themselves and in relation to others. (According to Raz and Margalit, this is a central, but not the only, feature of groups that are entitled to self-determination.) Third, world Jewry is a nation in a partial sense according to Renan's interpretation of this notion:<sup>51</sup> Many Jews around the world share with Israeli Jews the desire to uphold the independence of the Jewish state, and view it as a continuation of the Jewish nation that existed in the Land of Israel in antiquity. Among other things, they share this heritage as a result of the persecution and the genocide that the Jews suffered in Europe. Sharing this heritage and the desire to contribute to its continuation in Israel helps them in recuperating from the horrors of this genocide and persecution, both symbolically and practically.

In the first two senses of Jewish nationhood, all Jews belonged to a Jewish nation in the partial sense even before the rise of Zionism, and all Jews outside Israel—not only the Zionists among them—have been part of a Jewish nation also subsequent to the successes of Zionism. The Jews of Germany did not share (and do not share now either) a territory and a pervasive culture with Jews outside Germany, and, prior to the rise of Zionism as well as during its first decades, most of them did not wish to conceive of their nationhood as Jewish, nor did they want to share a common heritage with Jews elsewhere. Yet in the past as in the present, they cannot alter the fact that they were and are part of the Jewish nation because they were and are part of a group that is perceived both by many of its own members and by others as having been a nation in antiquity. Moreover, their being Jewish was one of the main facts by reference to which both non-Jews and Jews identified them and explained their conduct—which is still largely the case today. This fact, too, they cannot alter at present, and certainly they did not manage to change it before they were annihilated as Jews, even if they intensely wished to change it.

We have here, then, two senses in which Jewish nationhood is partial. Though Zionism could make its case for Jewish nationhood on the basis of these two senses in which the Jews were partially a nation, and though its achievements strengthened the practical effects of the Jews being a nation in these two senses, these were not the senses of Jewish partial nationhood that Zionism aspired to and created. However, it did create the mode of Jewish existence in which the third sense of partial nationhood applies to Diaspora Jews, that is, Renan's sense. Zionism created on behalf of the world Jewish collective a subgroup of Jews constituting a Jewish nation in the full objectivist sense of this word, namely, a group that shares one pervasive culture and one territory, and enjoys self-government. By creating this fully fledged Jewish nation in Israel, Zionism enabled all members of the Jewish collective to join one legacy of remembrances, the legacy expressed by the Zionist narrative of Jewish history. Herein lies the difference between Zionist Jewish nationalism and the Jewish nationalism of the Bund. Were it not for the Holocaust, the Bund might have succeeded in establishing a Yiddish nation in Eastern Europe. However, the Bund did not purport to constitute a nation with whose heritage Jews, as such (namely, non-Eastern European Jews), could identify. This is not the case for the Hebrew Jewish nation that Zionism strove, successfully, to create in the Land of Israel. In this sense, the Jewish community in Israel enjoys a special status vis-à-vis other Jews in the world. It is the only Jewish community in the world in whose legacy all Jews in the world can share. Thus

the Jewish nation in Israel is the only Jewish community that can serve as a center for the Jewish Diaspora.

This center is “spiritual” not only in Renan’s sense as just explained; it is “spiritual” also according to Ahad Ha’am, while in the terms Herzl used it is a political center.<sup>52</sup> For world Jewry, Israel may constitute a political center with two major objectives: First, it may serve as the land of their choice if they wish to live within the framework of a culture that is theirs in one important sense, namely their ethnonational affiliation. Second, it may serve as a refuge if they are or feel persecuted. The establishment of the State of Israel was meant to provide a solution not only to the “problem of Judaism” but also to “the ‘problem of the Jews.’”<sup>53</sup> Jews in Israel can no longer be persecuted without being able to stand up for themselves, to bring to bear political and military force, and to come to their own defense. Even if Israel cannot ensure the physical survival of the Jews and cannot ensure that they will not suffer from persecution, it can ensure that, if they are so threatened, the Jews will be in a position to resist and to defend themselves—they will at least not have to surrender their human dignity.

As for the “spiritual” nature of the center in Israel as conceived by Ahad Ha’am, the Jewish character of life in Israel encompasses most of the domains of personal as well as public life. Thus, it relates to politics, agriculture, the military, the academy, high culture, literature, art, law, and more. In this it realizes what Ahad Ha’am envisioned, “the creation in its native land of conditions favorable to its development: a good sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in every branch of culture, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature.”<sup>54</sup> This spiritual center pervades all spheres of life of those living within its framework: in it they study, they eat, they spend their leisure time, they form personal relationships, they love, pay taxes, and so forth. Ahad Ha’am expresses this notion by saying that the Jewish spiritual center in the Land of Israel is expected to create the conditions “for all-encompassing national life,” by way, among other things, of “fully educating the members of this nation within the atmosphere of this national culture, which will then penetrate into the depth of their souls and enhance their spiritual constitution to the extent that it makes its mark in their entire personal and social lives.”<sup>55</sup> These two features of the national culture—its pervasive nature, and the mark it leaves on the identity and personality of the individuals who share it—probably gives Jews who live in Israel better opportunities to reproduce a rich Jewish culture on a daily basis than the opportunities to do so enjoyed by Jews living outside Israel.

#### 6.4.2.2. The Centrality of Israel: Internal Responsibility, not External Authority

What then, are the practical implications of Israel's centrality for world Jewry? In his above-quoted speech to US Jews, A. B. Yehoshua addresses the issue in a manner that resembles Ahad Ha'am's vision of Jewish life in the Jewish homeland:

We in Israel live in a binding and inescapable relationship with one another, just as all members of a sovereign nation live together, for better or worse, in a binding relationship. We are governed by Jews. We pay taxes to Jews, are judged in Jewish courts, are called up to serve in the Jewish army, and compelled by Jews to defend settlements we didn't want or, alternatively, are forcibly expelled from settlements by Jews. Our economy is determined by Jews. Our social conditions are determined by Jews.<sup>56</sup>

Yehoshua's words also resemble Ahad Ha'am's with regard to how deeply the Jewish-Israeli culture penetrates the lives of Israeli individuals. However, unlike Ahad Ha'am's, Yehoshua's words, within the context of the speech in which he uttered these words, read as an admonition. He seems to believe that his words produce in the private sphere a decisive reason for Jews outside Israel to shift their lives to Israel. The context in which he speaks seems to indicate that on the public level he believes that Israel grants the Jews who live there the authority to excoriate other Jews for not living there. This rebuke and excoriation seem to resonate with the essentialist moral and social ontologies underlying proprietary Zionism, according to which a person's Jewishness comes before her or his humanity, both existentially and morally speaking; an individual Jew is first and foremost a member of the Jewish people, and becoming an Israeli Jew—the individual epitome Jewish nationhood—is the one and only way for each and every Jew to realize her or his essence and ultimate good.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, if you are but a cell in the organism of your nation, then you had better be connected by the same tissue to the other cells of the organism—other Jews—and you had better do with them as a national organism is wont to do: conduct an economy, adjudicate, implement policies—even fall ill, that is to say, participate in what A. B. Yehoshua himself seems to view as a disease of this organism, namely the settlements in the West Bank and their defense.<sup>58</sup>

According to egalitarian Zionism, by contrast, a person is by no means a cell in her or his ethnic nation's organism, and the latter's existence does not take precedence over the former. Egalitarian Zionism assumes that

Jews qua individuals precede the Jews qua a people, both existentially and morally, and that their Jewishness is only one among many components of their identity, even if many Jews consider it a central component. Even if they are keenly interested in this identity component—and it should be stressed that not every individual Jew shares such an interest—it is only one among many other, no less important, interests, which may compete with it. It is only when living within the framework of their ethnonational group is compatible with their other interests, and when a certain balance is achieved between these interests, that their interest in their ethnic nation may become decisive and lead them to live within this framework or otherwise contribute to its flourishing. In order for the balance among these interests to be tipped in favor of living within the framework of one's ethnonational culture, what is decisive is the expected substance of living that way, not merely the feasibility of doing so, as Yehoshua seems to believe. The question as to whether one defends settlements or vacates them is of crucial importance for Jews who consider participating in the experience of Jewish nationhood in Israel.<sup>59</sup> This is true of Israeli Jews, but it is true especially of Diaspora Jews, whose lives are not rooted in Israel and who have no existential reasons to participate in its national life. I must stress that I am referring here to Diaspora Jews who consider participation in Israel's existence not merely by moving to live there, but also through identification with its legacy (in Renan's definition) while they live in the diaspora.

Therefore, for egalitarian Zionism the main practical conclusions to be drawn from the fact that Israeli Jews constitute the core national group of the Jewish collective are the absolute inverse of those drawn by essentialist Zionism. For essentialist Zionism the very feasibility of living within the framework of a pervasive Jewish culture in Israel—regardless of its contents—establishes an obligation on every Jew to shift his or her life to Israel; it requires Israel to more than encourage Diaspora Jews to immigrate, or at the very least to admonish them, where they do not themselves understand that this is their duty. From the point of view of egalitarian Zionism, by contrast, the very existence of a pervasive Jewish culture in Israel amounts to no decisive reason for any Jew to move to that country, nor is it a sufficient reason for them to identify with it. Their identification with it, that is, their adherence to the diasporic Jewish nationhood in the Zionist sense of this concept, also depends on the specific meanings Israel bestows on a legacy with which they are able to identify.

To conclude: Israel's centrality in Jewish nationhood relative to the Jewish Diaspora neither affords it any authority nor justifies any

arrogance on its part. It is, on the contrary, a position that burdens Israel with the responsibility for the meanings it bestows upon the legacy it claims to maintain also in the name of the diaspora: the renewed presence of Jews in the land with which they identify and are identified, in which they are sovereign and live within their own culture. Israel has such a responsibility first and foremost to itself rather than to the diaspora. However, in a secondary though important sense it does have such a responsibility to the diaspora as well, especially for those members of it who identify with the Zionist legacy. As the content of Jewish existence in Israel grows less attractive to the diaspora, so the likelihood of diasporic Jews moving to live there will dwindle along with the likelihood of their even identifying with the legacy of their ethnic core nation there. Rather than moving from the diaspora to live in Israel, they will lose their sense of identification with Israel.<sup>60</sup>

Some of the many responses to Yehoshua's address at the centenary conference of the American Jewish Committee clearly bear this out: "Don't take our support for granted," commented Samuel Freedman, a professor at Columbia University's School of Journalism, to Yehoshua, and he recounted the following:

One summer in the early 1970s, my best friend made the obligatory summer trip of an American Jewish teenager to Israel. He returned to New Jersey relieved of his virginity but otherwise unimpressed . . . he complained to me about the rancorous debate in the Knesset, the rugby scrum for bus seats, the paratroopers who bedded all the choicest tourist girls. . . . "It's like a whole country of Sicilians," he concluded, "except they're all Jews."<sup>61</sup>

Friedman seems to regard the content of Jewish individual life and manners in Israel as decisive for Diaspora Jews' identification with Israel. Much weightier in this matter, of course, is the content of public life in Israel, its constitutional self-understanding in questions relating to the status of its Arab minority, and its international conduct. The neodiasporic post-Zionism of the Boyarin brothers and Judith Butler that I discussed in chapter 4 actually emerged as a reaction to Israel's policies in these areas. As I noted there, in the last few years other Jewish American intellectuals have reacted similarly.<sup>62</sup> And to these groups we should add the many young Jews whom Peter Beinart memorably described as responding to the US Jewish establishment demand to "check their liberalism at Zionism's door" with "checking instead their Zionism at liberalism's door."<sup>63</sup> All these groups believe that Zionism as it has developed in Israel



inherently entails inequality and the systematic breach of human rights. They therefore conclude that Zionism as a whole should be repudiated and that Israel should become a state that does not realize Jewish self-determination but merely equal citizenship for Jews and Arabs.

Even if, as I argued in chapter 4, the inferences upon which these conclusions are based are not entirely sound, the very fact that the views they express are becoming common among the intellectual elites of American Jewry and among its youth confirms egalitarian Zionism's conception of the negation of exile, and weakens the proprietary conception of this notion. For the very fact that these views about Zionism are becoming more and more common indicates that it is not the mere existence of a Hebrew-speaking Jewish collective in historic Palestine, regardless of its values, that will attract Jews all over the world to identify with Israel and its national heritage. It is the substance of those values and heritage both in the private and in the public domains that might bring this about. The Zionist principle of the "negation of exile" shouldn't be interpreted as a metaphysical negation of the very being of Jews outside the Land of Israel, but as a negation of the content of concrete historical Jewish life, as real flesh-and-blood people lived it in Europe in the twentieth and nineteenth centuries and before. Jews, in these times, lived a life marked by persecution and oppression while being unable to look after their own interests—the very same concrete life that the writers Brenner and Berdyczewski depicted in their novels, and as does Ben Zion Dinur in the quotation above. From the moment Israel was established and Jews who lived outside it had a choice to live in it, and from the moment that Jewish life outside Israel was no longer what it used to be during the centuries leading up to the twentieth century, there was no more exile to be negated. Therefore, the question whether to adopt a positive attitude toward living in Israel has come to depend on the quality of Jewish life in Israel and not on its existence as such. In other words, as the negation of exile and the affirmation of Israeliness by essentialist Zionism both depend on the negation of the very existence of Jewish life outside the Land of Israel, and not on the content of life outside Israel, egalitarian Zionism's negation of the exile and its affirmation of Israeliness depend on the content of life in both locations and not on their mere existence. According to egalitarian Zionism, rather than putting its trust in its being Jewish as such, when it comes to negating exile Israel should fear that the contents of its Jewish existence will come to serve as grounds for the negation of Israeliness. The despair that Anglo-American Jewish intellectuals and American Jewish young people have expressed recently

with regard to Israel and Zionism confirms this claim. The advantage of egalitarian Zionism over its essentialist counterpart in this respect is that egalitarian Zionism implies this point by virtue of all the layers of its philosophical and moral foundations, while essentialist Zionism denies it by dint of all the layers of its philosophical and moral foundations.

As a political movement, Zionism has historical reasons to acknowledge that, in the absence of a motivation derived from the content of Jewish existence in Israel, it has little chance to be attractive to Diaspora Jewry. Though Zionism succeeded in establishing a fully fledged Jewish, Hebrew-speaking nation in Israel, as well as a Jewish nation in a partial sense of this word in the diaspora, insofar as it is a historical movement Zionism has no exclusive claim on these achievements. It cannot claim that the crystallization of the fully fledged Jewish nation in Israel was the result merely of the power of attraction of the Zionist idea as such. Nor has the political action of the movement that tried to implement this idea furnished the main impulse for its success. The Zionist idea and the Zionist movement seem to have prevailed mainly owing to two factors. The first was the closure of America's gates to Jewish immigrants in the 1920s: this greatly increased the numbers of the so-called *fourth wave* of migration from Eastern Europe to Palestine and contributed to the consolidation of the Jewish settlement there in the 1920s. The second was European anti-Semitism in the 1930s and 1940s, which fed into the *fifth wave* of migration and subsequent waves, and that completed and stabilized this important Jewish settlement.<sup>64</sup> The same is true of the second great achievement of Zionism, namely, the consolidation of the Jewish nation in the diaspora in the subjective and voluntary sense of this word—the one Zionist sense of the diaspora nationhood of the Jews. However, this, too, Zionism cannot claim as its own merely by virtue of its attractiveness as a political idea. This nation was consolidated as a result mainly of the Holocaust. Most US and other Western Jews were not Zionists until the 1940s. They actually opposed Zionism. It was only the shock of the Holocaust and the creation of Israel that silenced that opposition, which was vocal until the late 1940s and roused masses of Jews (and non-Jews alike) worldwide into recognizing the importance of the Zionist idea and of its realization.<sup>65</sup> The Zionist idea, in other words, succeeded not simply because of the positive attraction of the notion of Jewish life and Jewish self-determination among the Arab masses in the Middle East, but also as a result of the closure of America's gates to the Jews and the persecution of Jews in Europe. These two events deserve the strongest censure, and the possibility of their recurrence deserves the

strongest opposition. Clearly, it would not be right to rely on their recurrence to preserve the achievements of Zionism.

In order for Zionism's first historical achievement, that is, the creation of a fully fledged Jewish nation in Israel, to be sustainable, the content of the life of Israeli Jews need not be attractive to most of them. Their lives are rooted in Israeli Jewish experience anyway, and for most of them it is the only, or at least main, existential option. The predicament facing most of them is not so unlike that of the farmers and craftsmen David Hume had in mind in his critique of Locke's aforementioned thesis about the consent given by those who live in the state to the government of that state. This, however, is not the case for Zionism's second achievement: maintaining the involvement of the bulk of the Jewish Diaspora in the legacy of autonomous Jewish life in Israel. Diaspora Jews are not motivated to identify with the Zionist narrative of Jewish history and existence in the same decisive and simple manner as Israeli Jews are. They are not molded as their Israeli counterparts are by an education in the Zionist narrative from early childhood. Their basic economic and social interests are not tied to Israeli society and economy. They are not tied to it linguistically, as Hebrew is not the first language of most of them; for the majority of them the memory of the twentieth century's persecutions of Jews is not a personal one or part of the texture of their daily life. With the passing of time and of generations, the memories of those who experienced the Holocaust will fade. Zionist politics, therefore, has the responsibility to offer Diaspora Jews other reasons for wanting somehow to be partners in Jewish national life in Israel. Or, at least, it has inherent reasons for wanting to avoid causing them to be ashamed of that national entity: Unlike Israeli Jews' motives for wanting Jewish national life in Israel to go on, motives related to *their very existence* and not dependent on the attractiveness of the *content of their Jewish existence* in Israel, the reasons that Zionist politics may offer Jews outside Israel for feeling an affinity with the Jewish national existence in Israel (at least if it does not want a renewed anti-Semitism and persecution to supply the motivation) must be related not to the very existence of a Jewish entity there, but to the quality of life within that entity, Jewish and otherwise.

#### 6.4.3. *The Legal Status of Diaspora Jews in Israel: The Law of Return and the Citizenship Law*

As I mentioned before, according to egalitarian Zionism, ever since the consolidation of Jewish independence in Israel, Jewish existence outside

it is no longer exilic but rather diasporic. This version of Zionism therefore rejects not only the status of superiority that essentialist-proprietary Zionism gives Israeli Jews over those who live outside it; it also rejects the status this Zionism grants Jews outside Israel in matters concerning Israel. For proprietary Zionism, as I have argued, the desire of Jews outside Israel to move to Israel places a constraint on the state's sovereignty: When it comes to the Land of Israel, Jewishness trumps all else. Its importance outweighs any interests Jews may have that are not related to their Jewishness (their economic interests, for instance), as well as any interests of non-Jews; non-Jews who are Israeli citizens or reside there are of no consequence in comparison both with its Jewish residents and with Jews who don't live there.

Egalitarian Zionism must reject these positions. But in doing so, it does not jump to the post-Zionist conclusion that argues for an unconditional annulment of Diaspora Jews' permanent legal status in Israel. Egalitarian Zionism holds that privileges granted to Diaspora Jews in the matters of immigration into and citizenship in Israel must be grounded not on the objective fact of their being Jews but on the collective Jewish justification for maintaining Jewish self-governance in Israel or on individual Jews' subjective interests and needs based on their Jewishness, such as their personal interest in living within the framework of a pervasive Jewish culture or in avoiding persecution due to their Jewishness.

According to egalitarian Zionism, the Law of Return and the Citizenship Law applied in Israel should be replaced with a general and not exclusively Jewish policy of immigration based on three principles. The first principle is that any Jew persecuted for his Jewishness should be granted the right to immigrate and become an Israeli citizen. This principle does not grant this right to people just because they are Jewish, but rather because they are persecuted because of their Jewishness. It expresses one of the main justifications for Zionism according to the egalitarian interpretation, namely, the justification emerging from the historical experience of persecution. Moreover, it is based on the principle of international law recognizing the right of refugees and persecuted individuals to asylum. Just like this general right to asylum, the principle that grants any persecuted Jew the right to immigrate into Israel also limits the sovereignty of the state and expresses decisive priority for the interest of potential asylum seekers over the interests of the citizens of the state in which they seek asylum. Yet the interests in question are the human interests in life and dignity, which Jews do not have merely by virtue of being Jewish. From the point of view of constructivist-egalitarian

Zionism, the situation of Diaspora Jews who are persecuted owing to their Jewishness would become perforce a situation of exile only if the State of Israel, which grants them the right to asylum, did not exist. For Diaspora Jews not to be living in exile, they do not need to actually live in Israel, but they must have the legal option—that is, the right—to live in Israel should they be persecuted for being Jewish.

The second principle that according to egalitarian Zionism must replace the current Israeli Law of Return and the Citizenship Law holds that Jews who interpret their Jewishness as national and therefore want to live in Israel should be granted eligibility points toward filling the immigration quotas that Israel must institute (which must also allow for immigration of non-Jews to Israel). This principle, too, is not based only on the Jewishness of those Jews but on their personal choice to interpret their Jewishness as national and to cling to their Jewish identity by living most aspects of their lives within a Jewish culture. The interest people have in adhering to their identities constitutes the liberal justification for ethnocultural nationalism in general, and therefore also for its Jewish version as borne out by egalitarian Zionism.<sup>66</sup> Jews wishing to migrate to Israel on the basis of this principle may be required to prove the sincerity of their interest in living within the framework of a national Jewish culture, for example by referring to their previous lives and aspirations. However, if the immigration quotas to Israel allow it, their request to move to Israel may be considered sufficient proof of the sincerity of their interest in living within the framework of a national Jewish culture. In any event, it is clear that Jews who migrate to Israel on the basis of this principle cannot be eligible for Israeli citizenship (immediately) upon their arrival, as is currently allowed under Israel's Law of Return and the Citizenship Law. Their right to citizenship must be conditional upon the realization of the purpose for which they were permitted to immigrate to Israel, namely, by integrating in its pervasive Jewish culture, something that may be proven through, for example, a minimal period of residence in Israel, or by a command of the Hebrew language.

It is important to stress that this principle does not grant every Jew who wants it an individual right to migrate to Israel; it only grants Jews who interpret their identity as national eligibility points toward filling the immigration quotas to Israel. This arrangement leaves the state the discretion to weigh the interests of its citizens, both Jewish and non-Jewish, against the interests of potential immigrants, and to adjudicate between these interests in the light of circumstances. Unlike the current arrangement, this arrangement does not imply that the mere Jewishness of the

person seeking to immigrate overrides the interests of the citizens of the state. The latter position is compatible with proprietary Zionism but not with the egalitarian version of this ideology.

The third principle that according to egalitarian Zionism must replace Israel's present Law of Return and the Citizenship Law asserts that, when the collective Jewish interest regarding the existence of the Jewish nation in Israel comes under threat, Jewish immigration quotas to Israel must be increased. A threat to this interest could emerge, for example, when a falling number of Jews living in Israel may endanger the ability of Israeli Jews to continue to live within the framework of a pervasive Jewish culture. In such situations, immigration of Jews to Israel should be permitted beyond the number of Jews granted the right to enter Israel in recognition of the two previous principles. This principle, too, does not presume that individuals' very Jewishness can be a sufficient reason for granting them advantages in immigration to Israel. It states only that Jewish immigration quotas should be raised if this is necessary for maintaining Jewish self-determination in Israel. This principle follows from egalitarian Zionism because it is intended to prevent the Jewish condition from reverting to one of exile, that is, lacking self-determination in the Land of Israel. In such circumstances, the Jews would again find themselves in the situation that prevailed prior to the successful realization of Zionism: They would not have a place where they could independently live within the framework of their culture. Hence, the third principle is intended to ensure the continued existence of the main achievement of Zionism, namely, the realization of the Jews' collective right to national self-determination in the Land of Israel.<sup>67</sup>



## AFTERWORD

This book has sketched the conceptual and the moral contours of the debate about Jewish nationhood and its institutionalization in Israel and elsewhere. Four principal players have been identified as parties to the debate: Essentialist-proprietary Zionism, hierarchical Zionism, constructivist-egalitarian Zionism, and post-Zionism in its various forms. Most of the leading current voices of hierarchical Zionism, egalitarian Zionism, and post-Zionism come from academic circles. Contenders for essentialist-proprietary Zionism are currently almost absent from these circles, although it had scholarly support in the 1930s. Up until that decade scholars were not prominent participants in the debate in the way they have become since then. Prior to the 1930s, the issues were argued by leaders and activists in the Zionist movement and other Jewish movements, as well as by intellectuals outside the academy—writers, poets, essayists, and journalists. There was until then hardly any academic presence in this debate simply because, until the late 1920s, no university was affiliated with the Zionist enterprise—at least not in the areas of the social sciences and the humanities. Then in 1925 the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was established and started to develop. At the same time, Zionism gained prominence both among the Jewish people and in world politics. Between the mid-1920s and the mid-1930s many Jews arrived in the Palestine; anti-Semitism and Nazism were rampant in Europe, Arab resistance to Zionism was growing, while Zionism's wish to establish a Jewish national home in the Land of Israel, which until then had been vaguely defined in institutional terms, evolved into a more consolidated, defined, and explicit wish for the establishment of a Jewish state.

The 1930s were the early teenage years of the Hebrew University. It was there that the main moral critique of Zionism's line of development was being advanced. The university's president, Judah Leib Magnes, was the foremost of these critics, and his position was shared by other major figures at the university like Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem. At the same time, as the present book has described in some detail, at the university's Department of Jewish History the philosophical and historiographical foundations were laid for what became Zionism's responses to the two main deficits that set it apart as an ethnocultural nationalism



among other national movements. The first deficit, which pertained to the issue of whether the Jews constitute a nation, was given an essentialist response. The second deficit, which pertained to the issue of justifying the realization of Jewish nationhood in historic Palestine, was given a proprietary response. The Land of Israel formed the crux of these two responses.

This theoretical foundation, which fed into the Zionist education on which generations of Israelis were raised and became the mindset of Zionist public consciousness, attracted no particular attention or criticism, either within or outside the universities, until the 1970s or 1980s. From the 1980s a new critique rose to prominence. Its main champions were post-Zionist academics who reject the three constitutive principles of Zionism, namely the assumption of Jewish nationhood; the feasibility of a justifiable version of ethnocultural nationalism in general, not just of a justifiable version of Zionism; and the justifiability of the establishment of Jewish self-determination in the Arab-populated Land of Israel. It seems to me that this criticism arose for both intra-academic and extra-academic reasons.

The intra-academic reasons are related to developments over recent decades in the study of nationalism and in cultural studies in the Western world, developments that I have referred to throughout this book. They are associated with the debate between modernist sociologists and historians of nationalism on the one hand and primordialist sociologists and historians on the other; with the debate between color-blind liberals on the one hand and liberal multiculturalists and nationalists on the other; and with the postcolonial and postmodern scholarly literature. Post-Zionist academics felt impelled to criticize Zionist historiography's essentialist response to those who questioned Jewish nationhood and the legitimacy of a Jewish state in an intellectual climate dominated by the modernist, postmodern, and postcolonial discourses.

The extra-academic reasons for the rise of post-Zionist criticism are unquestionably related to Israel's policies ever since the 1970s and their practical outcomes. In contrast with pre-1970s Zionist policies, which did not have to be interpreted in terms of the essentialist-proprietary theoretical infrastructure the early historians of the Hebrew University constructed for Zionism, the policies on the basis of which Israel has acted since the 1970s can be understood only in these terms. In other words, the practical implications of essentialist-proprietary Zionism became evident in ways that could no longer be denied; the Zionism of Israel's mainstream, the majority of whose members had been educated

in the spirit of this type of Zionism, began to realize its implications on a daily and hourly basis. Those who adhere to a humanist and liberal political morality see these implications as an ongoing and burgeoning catastrophe. This, it seems to me, is the foremost extra-academic reason for the growth of post-Zionism in the academy.

As we have seen, most post-Zionists also reject the justice of Zionism's historical effort to establish Jewish self-determination in the Palestine and believe that the self-determination already achieved should be relinquished. Essentialist-proprietary Zionism derives from its account of the justifiability of that effort a set of responses to the major questions concerning the territorial and institutional dimensions of Jewish self-determination in the historic Land of Israel. So did I within the framework of the position I named "egalitarian Zionism." These two positions establish an inherent link between their account of the justice of Zionism as an attempt to establish from scratch a fully fledged Jewish nationhood in Palestine / the Land of Israel (which was almost wholly Arab-populated in the nineteenth century) and their account of the justifiable institutional and territorial dimensions of this nationhood. The specifics of their answer to the first question determine the specifics of their answer to the second. Much of the analytic work in this book has been devoted to this link: I provide a critique of the essentialist-proprietary account regarding the justifiability of establishing Jewish nationhood in historic Palestine and thus of its account regarding the institutional and territorial character of Jewish self-determination there. I provide a constructivist-egalitarian account for these two issues.

Some people are skeptical about the value of conducting the discussion of Israel's policies in this way. One of the anonymous reviews on the basis of which Oxford University Press decided to publish this book says: "In what other country do people debate whether their country was born justly or not? One can easily argue that the United States was created through an unjust decimation of indigenous peoples, in ways that were far worse than how the Arab population of Palestine was treated by the Jews—and so too for all of North and South America, as well as New Zealand and Canada. In fact, what country was born in a just manner? . . . Is Iraq justified? Jordan? The U.S.? Brazil?" A leading peace activist has voiced a similar view on the op-ed page of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*: "What is needed now," he declared, "are not more academic and op-ed discussions by second generation immigrants about the justness of the Zionist idea, but rather a healthy indigenous patriotism."<sup>1</sup> Similar skepticism was expressed in response to my earlier book *A Just*

*Zionism* in a periodical published by Tel Aviv University's political science department and in several articles in Israeli newspapers.<sup>2</sup>

One of the reasons I think that this skepticism is wrong—perhaps the least important reason—is that it is founded on an error of fact. Australia, for example, has been preoccupied for decades with the genocide that accompanied its emergence as a settler state. Such debates also occur in the United States and in North America generally, as well as in South America. Iraq and Jordan are said to have been founded on the basis of arbitrary bureaucratic decisions or colonial intrigues. It is simply not true that Israel is exceptional regarding the polemics within and outside its borders about the justice of its foundation.

But the other reason those who doubt the very sense of discussing the justice of Zionism and the establishment of Israel are wrong is far more important. It pertains to the fact that Israel's establishment, at least if the argument of this book is sound, can be seen as just. It also pertains to the fact that mainstream Western attitudes toward Israel's establishment confirm its justifiability. This is not the case regarding the justice of colonialism and of the establishment of the New World countries. Neither is it the case with regard to the processes that have determined the boundaries and demographic composition of many postcolonial states. Colonialism and its effects have justly gained a bad reputation.

These facts along with others, such as the entirely different ratios of the size of the new populations to the size of the surviving original populations in the New World and in Israel, led to opposite political processes. In Australia and North America it has been a long time since anyone has argued (at least explicitly) in favor of colonialism as a just political idea and historical movement. And colonial ideas are not written into their constitutions. On the contrary, these countries seek to clear themselves of the crimes committed in the process of their creation by acknowledging the criminal nature of the processes that brought about to their establishment and by recognizing the national and cultural rights of their remaining indigenous communities. If my arguments are correct, Israel has gone in exactly the opposite direction. On the one hand, its creation and the goal in light of which this creation must be interpreted, namely providing a homeland for the Jews, were just. Furthermore, until not long ago the view that Israel has been justly established and should continue to exist to serve the goal for which it was established was widespread among almost all Israelis and in most Western countries. On the other hand, some decades ago Israel began pursuing a policy that corrupts not only the justice of its present and future but also the justice of its past.<sup>3</sup> It did so by imposing the

proprietary and the hierarchical interpretations of Zionism on its policies and constitutional order. In this book, I show that these interpretations are misguided. By conducting itself on the basis of these interpretations of Zionism Israel has lost sight of the injustice that its establishment inflicted on the country's original population, and violates some of the most fundamental rights of the individuals making up that population. Furthermore, by adopting these interpretations, it has doomed itself to continuing this conduct in the future.

If this analysis is correct, and this book was written among other things to discuss it, then the interpretation of the justice of Zionism and of Israel's establishment is an urgent matter, both on a moral and on a practical level. It is considerably more urgent than the discussion of the justice of the establishment of the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. It is urgent first because of the current and future moral issues it raises. Setting aside past wrongs by acknowledging them and issuing apologies—as has happened in the countries of the New World—does not, by definition, involve the commission of new wrongs in the present and future. In contrast, blemishing a just claim actualized in the past by implementing erroneous interpretations of the idea that inspired the foundation of that claim necessarily and by definition involves the commission of wrongs in the present and future. The proportional differences between the new and original populations in Israel and the new and original populations in countries of the New World increase by orders of magnitude the practical and moral importance of this difference. Had the countries of the New World avoided dealing with the justice of their establishment, and had they equivocated about acknowledging and apologizing for the injustices committed on their original populations, while at the same time refusing to grant them cultural and national rights, that would have been a great injustice. Yet the number of people who would bear the brunt of that injustice in the present and future would have been small. The Cherokees and Creeks and Inuit of North America can easily be shunted off to the margins of the political and practical lives of the United States and Canada. They constitute a very much smaller proportion of the total population than do people of European and other origins who have arrived since the time of the crimes that almost completely exterminated the original nations of those territories. But the Arab population of Israel and its environs cannot be relegated to the margins of political life in Israel without a huge, perhaps fatal, moral, political, communal, and personal price being paid by many Jews and many Arabs (and perhaps many people worldwide).

In contrast to the countries of the New World, where colonialism has long ceased to be the constitutive ideology of their political, constitutional, and legal arrangements, for many Jews around the world, and for most Israeli Jews, the ideology that led to the establishment of Israel has continued to provide the most significant ideological inspiration for the day-to-day conduct of Jewish politics. It plays this role in Israel's foreign and defense policies, its constitutional and legal arrangements, its economy, its land and immigration policies, not to mention the organization of its public spaces and symbols. Zionism shapes all these spheres of life and politics.

This reality can produce several types of response. Zionism can be accepted in the form in which it is understood by the Zionist mainstream, just as most Israelis and a great number of the world's Jews do. An alternative way of thinking about it can be proposed, as I do in this book, basing myself on the history of the Zionist idea and practice. Or, finally, one can offer coherent arguments for rejecting Zionism, as the post-Zionists try to do. What cannot be done is to claim that "what is needed now are not more academic and op-ed discussions by second generation immigrants about the justness of the Zionist idea, but rather a healthy indigenous patriotism."<sup>4</sup> People who do that not only dismiss the Zionist idea without offering any reasons for this dismissal. They also close their eyes to the fact that the political and constitutional order in which they live, or against which they struggle, is one created and continuously informed by Zionism. Without understanding and reasoning about Zionism's foundations and justifications, Israel's actions, deriving as they do from the Zionist idea, will continue to be simplistic, boorish, blind, wicked, and disastrous.

The necessity to discuss the justice of Zionism holds also for the discussion of the post-Zionist critique of Zionism, especially the critiques of the civic and the postcolonial versions of post-Zionism. It should be clear to anyone who has read this book that I utterly reject not only the essentialist-proprietary and hierarchical versions of Zionism but also the conclusions of these schools of post-Zionism. I believe they are deeply flawed. The post-Zionists, much like modernist, postmodern, and postcolonial intellectuals elsewhere, often use arguments whose conclusions do not follow from their own premises—sometimes regarding nationalism in general and at other times regarding Zionism specifically. If these conclusions should be implemented in actual reality, such a reality would be marked by great moral injustice.

However, as I have tried to show throughout this book, these comments also apply to Israeli academics' main response to the normative aspects of post-Zionism, a response I called "hierarchical Zionism." Before explaining this, I should mention another important response of Israeli academics to post-Zionism, one that I have not dealt with systematically here. This is the response of the Zionist historians who wrote Zionist history after 1967 and of the sociologists who wrote Israeli sociology prior to the post-Zionist sociologists. I omitted to discuss these responses, and mentioned them only in passing, not only because they fall outside the domain of my specialization but also because they tend not to reject post-Zionists' critique of pre-1967 historiography. In fact, these academics accept it. Where the Zionist sociologists disagree with their post-Zionist colleagues mainly concerns the moral significance of the agreed facts (the debate about whether or not Zionism is a form of colonialism). Zionist historians, rather than rejecting the facts that post-Zionists emphasize, reject their claim to innovativeness, arguing that they deal with already familiar issues. In their view, these already familiar issues are not only pre-1967 Zionist historiography's factual errors but also this historiography's influence on "the political discourse regarding the memory of the past," which is, according to these historians themselves, much at odds with the historical truth.<sup>5</sup>

The academic response to post-Zionism that I discussed at length is that of Zionist academics working in the normative domains: law and political theory. Though their main efforts sometimes tend to focus on the delegitimization of post-Zionist research in the daily press,<sup>6</sup> they occasionally try to address the issue more seriously. Making relatively little of post-Zionism's reservations concerning the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative,<sup>7</sup> they focus mainly on the post-Zionist critique of the moral components of this narrative. The approach they have developed as a result I have called "hierarchical Zionism." I tried to show that this type of Zionism is correct in invoking mainly the right to national self-determination in order to fill the moral gaps in the Zionist narrative, in contrast to the proprietary justification invoked by the Jerusalem School of historians represented mainly by Dinur. Hierarchical Zionists, however, interpret the right to self-determination as a right to one people's hegemony over another. Their arguments to this effect are grounded in comparative research rather than in basic research concerning the justifications of the right to self-determination. I tried to make two points about this strain of research. First, it is misguided even in the

terms of its own methodology. The comparisons these scholars make frequently conceal significant differences between the Jewish-Israeli-Arab case and the cases to which it is likened.<sup>8</sup> Second, even if this research were well grounded in terms of its own methodology, it is a secondary methodology whose conclusions, in this case, are not confirmed by basic research: the considerations relevant to the morality of the right to national self-determination do not allow this right to be interpreted as a right of one homeland nation to hegemony over other homeland nations in the same state. That right must be interpreted as a right granted equally to homeland nations. It may lead to hegemony only on the basis of considerations stemming from equality itself. In my opinion, the scholars I dubbed here “hierarchical Zionists” do not reach their conclusions on the basis of the logic of their research. They are driven by ideological biases, and when they disqualify the post-Zionists on grounds of being ideologically slanted they in fact do so by reference to a deficiency they share with the post-Zionists.

I must admit that, in view of the magnitude of the problems at issue and of their practical and moral implications, it is easy in these debates to get ensnared in the ideological trap that faces (all) scholars dealing with these problems. I also admit that if I were to choose into which ideological trap to fall, I would prefer the one into which the post-Zionists rather than the hierarchical Zionists fall, even though the conclusions of the hierarchical Zionists are objectively closer to my own than are those of the post-Zionists. If I had to choose where to direct my moral outrage—at Zionism’s and Israel’s actions in the course of the past forty years or at post-Zionists’ criticism of Israel—I would pick the former: it alerts us to the actual moral catastrophe that is unfolding before our very eyes. In contrast, the chances that the evil implied by post-Zionism—namely, the demise of Jewish self-determination in Israel—will occur are very slim indeed. Moreover, if this evil did ever come to pass, it would not be because post-Zionist criticism of Zionism triggers the process that brings it about, but because proprietary Zionism has dominated Israeli politics since the 1970s. If one must address moral outrage and outrage against putting the Zionist enterprise into real jeopardy, and if one must decide how to direct one’s research effort against theoretical and normative fallacies, the target should be proprietary Zionism rather than post-Zionism. Fortunately, I was not made to choose between a critique of the actions of the Zionist movement and Israel over past forty years, on the one hand, and a critique of Israel’s post-Zionist critics on the other. It seemed to me that both must be criticized and that a theory that replaces both is due.

Still, I wrote this book with a consciously and avowedly humanist and liberal predisposition. The book's fundamental assumption is that the general humanist positions it espouses are right, and if they are not, then proprietary Zionism may be the appropriate position. If the main subjects of moral value in the world are not first and foremost individual human beings but the nations of which they are members, if there is no other way to arbitrate the rightness of moral positions than within the traditions of a certain nation, and if there is no universal method for making such judgments, then this book's positions may be misconceived. I must then surely have fallen into an ideological trap related to the quarrel between moral theories that put human individuals of equal moral worth at their center and moral theories that put a particular nation at their center. Yet this, to my mind, isn't an ideological trap at all, since the values of humanism deserve incomparably more allegiance than the particular values of any nation. I hope, however, that I did not fall into a more specific ideological trap, that I did not write this book from any preconception for or against Zionism as such, so that I am slanting the values of humanism and liberalism in favor of Zionism.

It does not follow from this that I had no such preconception, and I am not sure that it has not left its marks on this book. My parents' home was intensely Zionist. From the mid-1950s until the mid-1960s I studied at an elementary school and a high school in Tel Aviv, and when I turned nineteen I served as a soldier in a brigade that fought in Jerusalem during the Six Day War. I was excited and scared at the time, and after the war, like most Israelis, I was excited, proud and happy. With such a biography, I could not be anything but a Zionist. Ever since the mid-1970s I've felt as if I'm being publicly betrayed: What has been done, since then, in the name of Zionism, saddens me deeply, and I have consistently expressed this in public. Though I am not sure how all this has affected my research, I do know that I have tried, in everything concerning Zionism and Israel's actions, to remain faithful only to what is logically implied by the basic values and worldview of humanism and liberalism. I may not have overcome my preconceptions, but the above short biographical sketch shows that even if there is reason to believe I have preconceptions, they do not originate on only one side of the prevailing controversy about Zionism.

If I am troubled by a suspicion that my writing has suffered from prejudice, then I suspect it is in favor of Zionism, not against it. This prejudice relates mainly to the question of the morality of its historical move in establishing Jewish self-determination in the Palestine / the



Land of Israel. The argument from necessity that was invoked as a major part of the justification of this move of Zionism still requires much elaboration.<sup>9</sup> It does not enjoy the level of precision characteristic of its use in criminal law for justifying otherwise criminal acts or for excusing wrongdoers from responsibility for such acts. It cannot attain that level of precision (which in its turn is far from mathematical precision) and perhaps it does not need to do so. As a result it allows for more subjective prejudice than is common among judges in the context of domestic systems of law. Moreover, the Jews' need, as a group, for self-determination in the Land of Israel, a process that began taking shape in the late nineteenth century and reached a conclusion at the end of the 1940s, was not of equal intensity during this period. The fluctuating intensities of this need called for varying degrees of ambitiousness regarding the territorial and institutional dimensions of this self-determination in the diverse phases leading up to the establishment of Israel, and varying intensities of means that were used to realize these ambitions. This further limits the degree of precision feasible in the discussion in this book regarding the role of necessity in justifying the version of Zionism I have argued for here, namely, egalitarian Zionism. Studying the role of the necessity in question must take account of the concrete circumstances obtaining within and outside Palestine in the different historical phases ever since the beginnings of Zionism. I am both unable and unwilling to undertake this Herculean task: my main interest in Zionism is not the morality of its past as such but only the implications of this past and its consequences for Zionism's current and future morality. Even if this book's version of Zionism's past morality is not entirely accurate, I believe it is morally imperative to adopt it, for two reasons. First, its alternatives—the one that wholly rejects the justice of the establishment of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel, and the one that rejects any doubt about that morality—do not appear to be either more accurate or convincing. Second, as I demonstrated in the last part of chapter 5, this is the only interpretation of the Zionist narrative that may eventually allow for stable and just peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs in the Land of Israel.

As I made clear in chapter 1, my defense of egalitarian Zionism should not imply that Jews or Israeli Jews owe it allegiance in the way they live as individuals: only that they (and not only they) are obliged not to deny other Jews and Israeli Jews the option of being thus committed. This book defended Jews' right to be Zionists and argued for the existence of

a political and social reality that enables people to realize their Zionism. It was not one of the book's objectives to argue for Zionism as the *best* choice for every individual Jew or even for every individual Israeli Jew.

Am I a Zionist? It would be a mistake to attempt to answer this question here. One purpose of writing this book was to enable people to say they don't know the answer to this question or to answer in the negative and yet not be considered anti-Zionists. Even if they answered in the negative they might support the existence of political conditions that make it possible for other people, who answer this question in the affirmative, to enact the practical implications of this answer. I tried to write this book in a manner that does not depend on whether or not I am a Zionist. I tried to write it like the heterosexual who writes about gay rights and like the man who writes about women's rights. This perspective obliges me to utterly reject proprietary Zionism, to oppose some of the central components of hierarchical Zionism, and to absolutely reject post-Zionism. It obliges me not to reject Zionism as such but to give a bystander's support to egalitarian Zionism. Since I have written such a long book in my attempt to achieve this, my readers might guess that I am not a mere bystander and that I also carry a personal commitment in the matter. I myself will have to confirm this guess.



# NOTES

## CHAPTER 1

1. For data concerning this process, see Pew Research Center, *A Portrait of Jewish Americans*. For an account of the process, see Magid, *American Post-Judaism*.
2. The term “Land of Israel” (*Eretz Israel* in Hebrew) does not merely refer to the land or territory of the State of Israel. It is the land promised to the Jewish people in the Old Testament. Jews lived and were politically dominant in many parts of it, mainly in the first millennium BC until the destruction of the Second Temple in AD 70. The term denotes most of the land that today comprises the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. Since the 1920s, it has mainly denoted the territories under the British Mandate—that is, the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. It thus overlaps with historical Palestine. In this book I use it mainly for denoting this part of the biblical Land of Israel. Another name for the Land of Israel in Jewish tradition (which appears frequently in the Old Testament and in liturgy) is *Zion*—also a traditional name for the holy city of Jerusalem. This of course explains why the ideology that is at the focus of this book is called *Zionism*.
3. Many participants in the Israeli public discussion concerning Zionism are called “post-Zionists.” This concept has been loaded with a variety of interpretations and meanings in the public discourse, as demonstrated in many newspaper articles. See, for instance, Orit Shohat, “Who Is a Post-Zionist?” [in Hebrew], *Ha’aretz*, September 1, 1995; Neri Livneh, “The Rise and Fall of Post-Zionism” [in Hebrew], *Ha’aretz*, September 19, 2001. Interestingly, very few of those whom others call post-Zionist actually classify themselves under this rubric. On this, see Ophir, *Thinking for the Present*, 258. The academic literature contains proposals for distinguishing between “rejectionist post-Zionists” and “affirmative” or “patriotic” post-Zionists. On this distinction see note 13 below. The post-Zionists with whom I’m arguing in this book are clearly those who are classified as rejectionist post-Zionists. For reasons to be explained in note 13 below, I find it theoretically and practically misleading to classify those who are called “patriotic post-Zionists” as post-Zionists at all.
4. David Ben-Gurion was a major Zionist leader in the first half of the twentieth century who later became the first prime minister of Israel. Yitzhak Tabenkin was one of the founders of the Kibbutz movement and of Ahdut Ha’Avodah that was a Zionist socialist party. After the Six Day War he was one of the founders of the Greater Israel movement. Ze’ev Jabotinsky was the founder of the right-wing Revisionist faction within Zionism. The Revisionist Zionists opposed what was considered as Ben-Gurion’s placatory approach toward the British Mandate. Menachem Begin was a Revisionist activist and Knesset member, and later became the first right-wing prime minister of Israel. For quotes from some of these figures, see chap. 3.2.

5. See chap. 2.
6. Gavison, "The Jews' Right to Statehood," 74–75.
7. Amnon Rubinstein is a prominent constitutional lawyer in Israel. He was the first dean of Tel Aviv Law School in the late 1960s, minister of education in the 1990s, and a major contributor of opinion editorials to *Ha'aretz* mainly during the 1960s and 1970s. Shlomo Avineri is a former dean of Hebrew University's Faculty of Social Sciences and a former director-general of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ruth Gavison, a law professor at the Hebrew University, served as a member of many public committees (e.g. the Shamgar Committee on the Appointment of the Attorney-General and the Winograd Commission to investigate the 2006 Lebanon War). All three are past Israel Prize laureates. The main Israeli Supreme Court judges who in their judicial decisions explicitly asserted or supported a hierarchical interpretation of Zionism are Mishael Cheshin and Menachem Elon. (Elon was also a candidate for the Israeli presidency.) Here are some illustrative quotations. Elon: "The principle of equality in civic rights and duties does not change the fact that the State of Israel is the State of the Jewish People and only the Jewish People." EA 2/88 *Ben Shalom v. The Central Election Committee* 43(4) PD 221, 272 (1998). Cheshin: "A collective right of the Arab public—as a minority group—to preserve and nurture its national and cultural identity, all with the assistance of the state authorities, is not recognized by Israeli law." HCJ 4112/99 *Adalah v. The Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yaffo* 56(5) PD 393, 459 [1999]. For an extensive discussion of the hierarchical conception of self-determination, see chap. 3.3.
8. This is proposed by Evron, *Jewish State or Israeli Nation*, 242–43; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 293–94; Ram, *Time of the "Post"*, 153–202. I am using here the notion of "color-blind liberalism" to denote the kind of liberalism according to which states should only uphold the individual and political rights of citizenship that are protected in all liberal democracies. It is opposed to "culturalist liberalism" according to which states "must also adopt various group-specific rights or policies which are intended to recognize and accommodate the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups." Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular*, 42.
9. This possibility is proposed by Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 175. The postcolonial writers inspiring them are Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak ("Can the Subaltern Speak?") and Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*).
10. The major proponents of this view are Judith Butler, the brothers Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin. Butler argues for her views mainly by analyzing contemporary Jewish sages such as Levinas, Arendt, and Benjamin. Daniel Boyarin exploits his expertise in Talmudic studies. For a detailed discussion of their positions, see chap. 4.5.
11. Meir Kahane was an American-Israeli rabbi and politician. He was the leader of Kach party, which held the view that the Arabs in the Land of Israel are not entitled to collective rights, and moreover that they should not even have the right to reside there as individuals. He called for their removal from the territory of the Land of Israel. On his views, see Ravitzky, "Roots of Kahanism." The Lehi (which is the Hebrew acronym of Fighters for the Israelite People's Freedom) was a militant underground movement founded in Mandatory Palestine, with

the aim of evicting the British authorities by force. One of the Lehi's so-called eighteen principles of rebirth stated that "the people of Israel are the sole rightful owners of Eretz Israel. This right is absolute: it has not lapsed and cannot ever lapse." Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 370. Gush Emunim was an Israeli messianic activist avant-garde movement, established after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, which initiated Israel's settlement project in the areas Israel has occupied since the Six-Day War. It called for "an immediate realization of Jewish sovereignty over the whole parts of the Land of Israel we hold, including Judea and Samaria, the Golan Heights in its current borders, the Gaza Strip, and large parts of the Sinai Desert. This should be carried out while creating a clear national consciousness that views all districts of the Land of Israel as one inseparable country." Naor, *Greater Israel*, 286.

12. I assume that this is certainly true with regard not just to Zionist leaders and activists, but also to the movement's rank and file. I wrote above that this and my previous book adopt a pure egalitarian Zionist approach. But this hardly means that I have always been an egalitarian Zionist. These books are the product of years of pondering the issues they address. Prior to those years, I too had one foot in hierarchical and another in proprietary Zionism. During the Six-Day War, at the age of nineteen, I was a soldier in the battalion of the Jerusalem Brigade that saw action in a battle at the United Nations post on the Israel-Jordan boundary in southern Jerusalem. Immediately after I was demobilized, I went to visit the Temple Mount. When an Islamic guard tried to prevent me from entering, I berated him, telling him that he could not keep me out. The Temple Mount, I told him, did not belong to the Arabs. It was ours, the Jews'. The Zionist education I had received led me to think this way. I can thus hardly claim always to have been an egalitarian Zionist.
13. As mentioned in note 3, within the Israeli political and academic discourse, not everyone who is called "post-Zionist" actually rejects the entire Zionist narrative. Scholarly literature on post-Zionism even distinguishes between post-Zionist authors who affirm Zionism and those who reject it. See Gorny, "Zionism as a Renewed Ideal," 457–59; Bar-On, "Post-Zionism and Anti-Zionism," 476; Lustick, "Zionist Ideology," 98, calls affirmative post-Zionists "patriotic post-Zionists." However, in my opinion, treating the current Jewish anti-Zionist intellectuals and those currently called "affirmative post-Zionists" as one category is misleading from both a theoretical and a practical point of view. Put simply, being a post-Zionist means that one supports a stance according to which Israel and the Jews should now move beyond Zionism. Since Zionism is the political idea that has defined the State of Israel, being a post-Zionist means that one believes that Israel should abandon Zionism as its founding idea, apparently because new insights entail that Zionist ideology should not have been adopted to begin with, or because of later circumstances that entail that the Zionist idea is no longer relevant. Yet, as Mordechai Bar-On tells us, anyone called an *affirmative post-Zionist* "would not wish to annul the current state of affairs, that is, the fact that Israel is currently a country in which the Jewish majority is the dominant group and that maintains special ties with the Jewish past and the Jewish present, in all parts of the Diaspora." Bar-On, "Post-Zionism

and Anti-Zionism,” 476. I wonder what makes this approach post-Zionist. Since the early days of Zionism, prominent Zionists have held positions that were far more modest than those supported by those who are currently called “affirmative post-Zionists”. Yosef Sprinzak, the first speaker of the Knesset (the Israeli parliament), for instance, and even Chaim Weizmann, Israel’s first president and one of Zionism’s most prominent leaders in its formative years before the establishment of the state, did not always support (the notion of) a Jewish majority. See Gorny, *Zionism and the Arabs*, 108–17, 284. If one calls “post-Zionists” the people that Bar-On and other scholars such as Yosef Gorny and Ian Lustick classify as affirmative post-Zionists only because they are critical of various aspects of Zionism and its implementation by the State of Israel, then in effect this entails that the only legitimate interpretations of Zionism are the current mainstream interpretations, and that any version of the Zionist idea that deviates from these interpretations does not really constitute Zionism. Moreover, any criticism of the practices of current mainstream Zionism is in effect a recommendation or a call to abandon Zionism. It would also deter those people who accept Zionist ideology from listening attentively to criticisms of the policies by means of which Zionism is actually implemented. In order for the term “post-Zionism” to have a clear and distinct meaning that is not replete with contradictions, it must apply only to opponents of Zionism or at least of its continued realization. However, since this is not the accepted common practice, I should make it clear that the post-Zionists with whom I am arguing in this book are only those who reject Zionism, not those who affirm it.

A major group among those actually classified as post-Zionists within the Israeli discourse, whose members were the first ones to initiate the post-Zionist polemics in Israel in the late 1980s, is commonly called the “New Historians.” These scholars present an account of the causes and the course of the Israeli War of Independence of 1948, as well as of the attitude and actions of the Zionist leadership at the time to the events of the Holocaust, that differs from the accounts presented by the Zionist establishment. However, at least in their writings about the War of Independence and the Zionist leadership’s views and actions at the time of the Holocaust, these so-called New Historians do not deal with the Zionist narrative of pre-Zionist Jewish history, or with the issues of Jewish nationhood and the justifiability of establishing its self-determination in historic Palestine. Therefore, despite the fact that the New Historians are commonly considered to be prominent members of the post-Zionist camp, I have not included them in the category of post-Zionist scholars with whom I am arguing here.

14. Boas Evron, Shlomo Sand, and Uri Ram have written books whose main point is to contest the unity, continuity, and nationhood of the Jewish collective that marks the Zionist narrative (Evron, *Jewish State or Israeli Nation*; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*; Ram, *Time of the “Post”*). In these books Evron, Sand, and Ram also question the morality of the objective that serves as the common denominator of all the versions of Zionism: the establishment of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. On this, see the detailed discussion in chap. 4.1. Yossi Yonah and Yehouda Shenhav, both in their coauthored book (Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?*) and in their separately

published works (Yonah, *In Virtue of Difference*; Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*), agree with most of the criticism made by Ram with regard to the unity, continuity, and nationhood of the Jewish collective. This constitutes the basis of their criticism of Zionist Israel. All this also entails a rejection of Zionism's central objective. Judith Butler and Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, though they don't dispute the unity and continuity of the Jewish collective and the conceptual possibility of its nationalist construction, believe that the realization of Zionism has necessarily led, and will continue to lead, the Jews to act unjustly and to commit atrocities, and therefore should stop. Yoav Peled and Gershon Shafir's analysis of Zionist history highlights its colonialist aspects while downplaying its national aspects (see Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*). All these writers can therefore be considered post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism. For a detailed discussion see chapter 4.

15. The Canaanite movement was inspired by romantic idea of renewing an ancient Hebrew culture; it aspired to form a civic nation that would integrate all of the dwellers in the Land of Israel. Hillel Kook, the Hebrew Committee of National Liberation's leader, was a revisionist Zionist arguing for the establishment of a Hebrew republic of the Land of Israel, and offering the non-Jewish residents of Palestine the opportunity to join it if they desired, thus becoming Hebrews themselves. See, for instance; Avnery, *War or Peace in the Semitic World*; Agassi, *Liberal Nationalism for Israel*; Berent, *A Nation Like All Nations*; HCJ 11286/03 *Uzi Ornan et al. v. The Minister of Interior* (Sep. 20, 2004), Nevo Legal Database (by subscription) (Isr.); CA 8573/08 *Uzi Ornan v. The Ministry of Interior* (Oct. 6, 2013), Nevo Legal Database (by subscription) (Isr.).
16. For the most recent expression of this view, see Berent, *A Nation Like All Nations*, 143–97. Berent also reviews the history of this position in the context of Zionism and lists its previous proponents.
17. The current post-Zionist rejecters of Zionism discussed in this book must also be distinguished from other Jewish anti-Zionists, especially from those who objected to Zionism at its inception. There are two reasons that make such a distinction important. The first is that a great part of contemporary anti-Zionism is academic and scholarly, originating in intellectual fashions and serious research conducted since the 1970s. It is based on postmodernist and postcolonial scholarship as well as on the work of modernist scholars of nationalism, such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and Eric Hobsbawm. (For a survey of the intellectual movements that instigated the current post-Zionist rejection of Zionism see Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 174–85.) Obviously, the opposition to Zionism at its inception at the end of the nineteenth century and until the 1980s could not have been inspired by these sources, which only emerged in the 1980s. Moreover, early Jewish opposition to Zionism arose principally not in intellectual and scholarly circles but among Jews whose values and interests (either religious values, or the universal values of the Enlightenment) motivated them to seek other solutions than those proposed by Zionism to the problems the Jews then faced, such as persecution and the threats to their collective existence. In addition, it should be noted that, for better or for worse, any arguments invoked to reject Zionist ideology today, in view of its achievements and also the wrongs it has committed, must be fundamentally different from any



- objections to Zionist ideology prior to all of that. What has happened since the beginning of Zionism does reinforce some of the arguments made by its supporters then, though some of what has occurred since then also weakens some of them. Surely arguments against the realities that Zionism aspired to create and that have already been created must differ from the arguments against the Zionist aspirations before they were realized.
18. See Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 153–202; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 307–8.
  19. See Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*; Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?*; Ella Shohat, "Mizrachim [Oriental Jews] in Israel." Shenhav, Yonah, and Shohat discuss the oppression only of Mizrahi Jews. They do not mention the oppression of East European Yiddish culture.
  20. Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 291. On immigrant workers, their exclusion, and, sometimes, their expulsion from Israel, see Kemp and Raijman, *Migrants and Workers*, 164–87; Kemp and Raijman, "Foreigners in a Jewish State," 79–110.
  21. An illustration of this is the attitude to Russian Jews in the 1990s, when efforts were often made to prevent their migration elsewhere, and thus to force them to migrate to Israel. This affair and some additional examples are discussed at some length in chapter 6.2.
  22. Examples are discussed in chapter 6.2.
  23. The Law of Return, 5710-1950, grants every Jew anywhere in the world the right to immigrate to Israel. The law was amended in 1970 to apply not only to Jews but also to non-Jewish spouses of Jews, or children or grandchildren of Jews and their spouses. The Nationality Law, 5712-1952, allows those who have immigrated to Israel under the Law of Return to receive citizenship almost automatically.
  24. For Kahane, see note 11 above. Avigdor Lieberman, an Israeli right-wing politician, is the founder and leader of the Yisrael Beytenu party. He was Israel's foreign minister during 2013–15. In 2004, Lieberman proposed an Israeli-Palestinian accord whereby areas on the border between Israel and the West Bank populated by Palestinians would be ceded to a would-be Palestinian state, while all other Israeli Palestinians would be allowed to remain in Israel if they pledged loyalty to the Jewish state.
  25. Chaim Weizmann was a leading statesman in Zionism's formative years who was later elected the first president of the State of Israel. Ahad Ha'am is the pen name of essayist Asher Ginsberg, who was one of the founders of Zionism. He regarded its political aims as an instrument for the cultural and spiritual renewal of the Jewish people. On his notion of a spiritual center in the Land of Israel, see Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet*, chap. 3.
  26. On the relatively modest nature of the Zionist demands regarding the institutional character of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel throughout the history of Zionism, starting with the Basel Program of the 1897 First Zionist Congress, through the Balfour Declaration of 1917, the British Mandate on behalf of the League of Nations from 1923, up to the negotiations with the United Nations regarding the realization of the Partition Plan as decided by its General Assembly on November 29, 1947, see Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish*

- State*, 21–23. This modest approach of Zionism is also noted in other studies, for instance, Gorny, *Policy and Imagination*, which discusses Jabotinsky's, Ben-Gurion's, and Weizmann's plans for a federation; and Galnoor, *Territorial Partition*.
27. Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State*.
  28. In a critical review of Sand's book (*The Invention of the Jewish People*) Anita Shapira writes: "Again, Sand erects a phantom—exile—and 'proves' that it never happened, something historians do not deny." Shapira, "The Jewish-People Deniers," 66. See also Bartal's critique of Sand, "The Invention of the Invention" [in Hebrew], *Ha'aretz Books*, May 27, 2008.
  29. Yehoshua, "The Neurotic Solution," 36. The paragraph from which this sentence was taken expresses far more impatience with the official Zionist stance regarding the Jews' striving to return to the Land of Israel than is reflected in this single sentence.

## CHAPTER 2

1. The quotation, which is from page 7 of the Hebrew version of Evron's book *Jewish State or Israeli Nation*, does not appear in the English version. The Hebrew edition's title is *A National Reckoning*.
2. Though like Franz Rosenzweig (a Jewish German philosopher who was a critic of Zionism at its early stages) they speak not in terms of territoriality, but rather in terms of "autochthony." See Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora," 714–25; and Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, 299–300.
3. Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*.
4. Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*; Shafir, *Land, Labor and Origins*; Shafir, "Land, Labor, and Population." Baruch Kimmerling also provided us with a sociological analysis of Zionism from the colonial perspective; however, at least in his main book on this subject (*Zionism and Territory*), Zionist colonialism is clearly presented as instrumental for, or as a byproduct of, its nationalism and not as its main characteristic. See also chap. 4.2.
5. Ram, *Time of the "Post."* Certain other writers should also be mentioned: Pappé, "Zionism in Light of Theories"; Yonah, *In Virtue of Difference*; Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*; Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* Though the work of these authors does not focus on issues concerning the nature of the protagonist in the Zionist narrative and other factual issues pertaining to it, but rather on the normative aspects of the narrative, this does not imply that they have no view on the factual gaps. They are certainly informed by the same theoretical concerns as most of their post-Zionists colleagues, especially those pertaining to the essentialism they attribute to Zionism on the whole. Let me also emphasize that the post-Zionists who extensively discuss the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative (Ram, Evron, Sand) are not short on ethical views and have a strong interest in the moral gaps in the narrative. Sand dedicates the final part of his book to a normative discussion (*Invention of the Jewish People*, 250–313), and Evron includes normative comments throughout his book (*Jewish State or Israeli Nation*). Ram

- (in his aforementioned book, *Time of the "Post"*) is the only author I am aware of who divides his attention equally between the factual and the moral gaps in the Zionist narrative.
6. See, for instance, Yehoshua, "The Neurotic Solution," 36; Shapira, "The Jewish-People Deniers"; Yuval, "Myth of the Exile"; Bartal, "Land and People"; Shimoni, "Shlilat Hagalut Reconsidered," 60–63.
  7. Dinur, *Israel in the Diaspora*, 23–24.
  8. His historiographical enterprise and its influence on Zionist education in Israel have recently been the subject of many scholarly publications. For an extensive list of these, see Dinur, *Posthumous and Other Writings*, 11n. 2. See also Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 67n. 36. My interest in researching Dinur's work is not for its own sake but for the sake of understanding one of the most prevalent interpretations of the Zionist idea. I assume one could find in Dinur's writings statements sketching a more complex figure than the one emerging from the present quotations. I nevertheless believe that the quotations included here and elsewhere in this book represent those of his positions, also espoused by others in mainstream Zionism, that left the strongest mark on the formation of the prevalent Zionist narrative of Jewish history. This narrative forms the basis of the most prevalent interpretations of the Zionist narrative.
  9. This holds both for most of those who focus mainly on the factual gaps in the Zionist narrative and for those who focus mainly on the moral gaps; for instance, Yonah, *In Virtue of Difference*, 52, 113, 126; Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 149, 152; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 259–62. It could be argued that, at least for the Israeli post-Zionists, anti-essentialism is an "article of faith." It constitutes the main theoretical basis of their radical critique of Zionism. It is an "article of faith" for them in two senses: they interpret reality in its light, and their attitude toward it is wholly uncritical.
  10. Ram is the only post-Zionist who describes himself as a post-Zionist. He devotes more attention to the theoretical assumptions of the Zionist narrative than do others, who tend to concentrate on historical details or on criticism of Zionist policies. Because he is the only post-Zionist who divides his research effort equally between criticizing the factual components of Zionist narrative on the one hand, and its moral components on the other, he "stars" more frequently than his colleagues in the present book.
  11. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 33.
  12. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 33.
  13. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 36.
  14. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 34.
  15. My argument does not imply that essences cannot serve as criteria for individuating agents, especially collective agents. It implies only that they are not *necessary* criteria for such individuation.
  16. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 19. The positivism Ram appears to reject seems to be the position that only empirically valid statements (and logical and mathematical truths) constitute knowledge.
  17. De Maistre, *Oeuvres complètes*, 74.

18. It seems that West European organizations that were involved in all-Jewish activities in different areas in the world during the nineteenth century accepted the assumption of Jewish unity. On this, among others, see Tzur, "Jew Transmigrates," 23–24. The objective of the activities about which Tzur writes was to help Jews integrate among the nations in whose midst they resided. Hence it can be considered assistance toward the disintegration of Jewish unity; but assistance toward disintegration presumes the prior unity—otherwise, what was supposed to disintegrate?
19. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 53. See also Yonah, *In Virtue of Difference*, 36; Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 149–50.
20. Gellner, *Thought and Change*, 169.
21. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 1. For a critique of Gellner on this issue and for a detailed typology of nationalist ideologies, see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 7–38.
22. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, chaps. 2–4.
23. Normatively speaking, the opposite conclusion may also be drawn: If there are eight thousand language groups in the world and not all of them can be granted a state, then not one of them must be granted a state. Moreover, when the transition from agrarian societies to industrial societies engendered the morally blameless necessity of cultural homogenization of states' populations, as Gellner argues, some of the groups found themselves forced to give up aspiring to a state of their own. Still, since in the contemporary world there is no need for homogenization because of certain features of the postmodern and postindustrial era (primarily developments in mass transportation and communication that allow access to all parts of the world), every existing group should be granted rights that equal those of all other groups within the framework of statist self-determination. For a defense of this type of stance as regards ethnocultural nations, see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 67–96.
24. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 47. It should be noted that even if Gellner is right in arguing that we cannot provide full and sufficient explanations for why the historical movement of nationalism resulted in some nations coming into existence while others did not, it is nevertheless possible to provide fuller explanations for certain cases than for others. Even Gellner's own account of the success of the nationalism of the Jewish Diaspora is fuller than the one he gives in other cases of diasporic nationhood (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 101–9). To his explanations of the success of Zionism, one may add, for instance, the intensity of the Jewish Holocaust, the powerful sense of guilt it aroused among the European nations, the weakness of the Arabs, and so on.
25. To the best of my knowledge, the possibility of dismissing their existence and value on grounds of their contingency and being substitutable was raised as an argument only against normative theories that entail such a dismissive attitude toward existing human beings, and not as an argument in favor of them. For example, the fact that hedonistic utilitarianism entails a permission to kill those who suffer and replace them with potentially happy creatures constitutes an argument against this philosophy rather than an argument in its favor.

26. It should perhaps be mentioned that the argument for rejecting here the conclusions the post-Zionists draw from Gellner's position (as well as from the positions of other modernist theoreticians like Anderson and Hobsbawm) regarding nationalism differs from the argument that is usually cited in this type of debate. Usually, opponents of post-Zionism (and of modernist and postmodern positions) invoke here the rival theory of the origins of nations and nationalism, namely the primordialist theory according to which nations have existed from ancient times; for instance, see Ben-Israel, "Reflection on Zionist History," 32–33; Ben-Israel, "Theories of Nationalism," 213–18; Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 79–82; Shimoni, "Study of Zionism," 11. This strategy implies acceptance that Gellner's modernist theory of the nation entails a rejection of Zionism's basic assumption, namely, that the Jews can be considered as constituting a nation. I think this does not follow from Gellner's account and therefore that there is no need to look to Smith (e.g. *Ethnic Origins of Nations*; or *National Identity*) in order to allow for the Zionist assumption of Jewish nationhood. The modernist theories of nationalism also allow for this assumption. Indeed, some Zionist historians seem to acknowledge this and not to worry at all about the threat that modernist theories of nationalism allegedly pose for Zionism. Shimoni discusses the emergence of Zionist Jewish nationalism by reference to Benedict Anderson's idea of explaining the rise of nations by virtue of their being imagined (Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 85–86). Yaron Tzur seems to do the same (Tzur, "Jew Transmigrates," 22–25). I develop in greater detail a similar account with regard to Gellner, not just Anderson.
27. On Jabotinsky, see chap. 3, n. 5. For Ahad Ha'am's minimalist aims, see chap. 1, n. 25.
28. For instance, Ahad Ha'am claimed that the Jewish spiritual center in the Land of Israel must create the conditions "for all-encompassing national life," by way, among other things, of "fully educating the members of this nation within the atmosphere of this national culture, which will then penetrate into the depth of their souls and enhance their spiritual constitution to the extent that it makes its mark in their entire personal and social lives." Ahad Ha'am, "Negation of the Exile," 401. He thus apparently thought that the Jews in his time did not constitute a nation in the full sense of the word (he says that the conditions must be created for a full national existence), and that they ought to become such a nation (by means of the creation of what Joseph Raz and Avishai Margalit later dubbed "an encompassing" Jewish culture. See Raz and Margalit, "National Self-Determination").
29. My distinction here between the justification for its considering itself a nation and the feasibility of its doing so is to some extent artificial because the feasibility is part of the justification. Even if I really aspired to win the 100 meters running world championship, I would not be justified in regarding myself as a potential champion or in aspiring to be one since because my age and the state of my knees I stand no realistic chance to achieve this. On the other hand, the very existence of realistic possibilities cannot in itself justify aspiring to realize them. A criminal career can be a realistic possibility for many people: this does not imply that they are justified in aspiring to one. The question whether Zionism could present the

- Jewish collective with the possibility to view itself as a nation that returns to its ancient homeland and becomes a distinct political entity there depends on the question whether this was feasible and justified. The feasibility is part of the justification.
30. When Herzl attempted to convene a national Jewish congress, various rabbis belonging to the Orthodox and the Reform movements united in a protest movement (they eventually became known as the “protest Rabbis”), for they believed that Herzl was trying to conflate “religious identity with ethnic belonging.” “The Orthodox and Reform movements meant by that to claim that their Jewish identity is merely religious and that it is based on religious affiliation and not on blood ties.” Bartal, *Cossack and Bedouin*, 220–29. For a review and analysis of opposition to Zionism on religious grounds among East European orthodox Jews before the Holocaust, see Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism*, 10–39.
  31. The research literature indicates that the Bund’s ideology regarding national-cultural autonomy for the Jews also changed direction over the years. The 1901 Fourth Convention of the Bund (which was officially established as a political party in Russia in 1897) adopted the position that the Jews constituted a *nation* and those of its members who resided in Russia should be granted “national cultural autonomy.” This stance was not accepted by Jewish Marxist revolutionaries, including the founder of the Bund. See Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 166–70; Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics*, 171–257, esp. 221–23; and Peled, *Class and Ethnicity*, 51–57.
  32. Ram, *Time of the “Post,”* 32.
  33. Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 21.
  34. The notion that Jews, because they belong to a separate people, are not entitled to citizenship in their countries of residence holds no attraction for current anti-Semites because Diaspora Jews are well integrated in their countries of residence; because of the Holocaust; and because of the great number of immigrant ethnic groups residing today in many countries. Jews are no longer an exception in this respect.
  35. *Archives parlementaires*, 754–56. Jean-Sifrein Maury’s words during that very same meeting boil down to making the same point regarding Jewish nationhood: “The word ‘Jew’ is not a name of a sect but of a nation that has laws of its own which it has been and still is following. To call the Jews citizens is analogous to allowing Danes and Englishmen to become French without granting them naturalization certificates and without them ceasing to be Danes or Englishmen.” *Archives parlementaires*, 756–57.
  36. After some time Tonnerre’s words were confirmed by the Jews in Napoleon’s Grand Sanhedrin in 1807: “A French Jew considers himself in England as among strangers . . . although he may be among Jews, and the case is the same with English Jews in France.” Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *Jew in the Modern World*, 163. A similar stance was taken by German Reform Jews in 1844. These, however, are not descriptions of reality but normative positions that were not shared by many other Jews. During the second half of the nineteenth century quite a few leading Jewish figures attempted to classify the Jewish community as being situated midway between a religious community and a national

- territorial community. For a review of this effort, see Myers, “Rethinking Jewish Collectivity.”
37. Ram, *Time of the “Post,”* 32.
  38. Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 21.
  39. Stalin, “The National Question,” 164.
  40. Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination,” 129–32.
  41. Renan, “What Is a Nation?”
  42. Renan, “What Is a Nation?” 19.
  43. For further discussions of Renan and the current issue, see chap. 6.3 and 6.4.
  44. Renan, “What Is a Nation?” 19.
  45. This example is inspired by a similar one offered by Raz and Margalit (“National Self-Determination,” 131). Their example serves to clarify differences other than the ones I discuss here between groups that are candidates for self-determination and those that are not.
  46. From this, however, it follows that the chances of the national solution succeeding in the case of the Jews were much higher than in cases such as persecuted football clubs’ fans or homosexuals. This does not imply that the national solution was appropriate for the Jewish problem at the end of the nineteenth century or that it became so at a later stage. I discuss the question of whether it was appropriate in the following chapters.
  47. Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination.”
  48. Raz and Margalit discuss not the concept of the nation but the concept of groups entitled to national self-determination. They ask which characteristics make certain groups especially suitable to become the beneficiaries of this right. The justifications which they seek for this right (defined as the right of territorial groups to govern themselves and to determine that the territories where they reside will become self-governing) are liberal justifications that are mainly focused on individual well-being. As a result, the question about the concept of the nation or of the group that is entitled to national self-determination becomes the following: “What characteristics of groups ensure that the advantages provided by the right to self-determination will significantly affect the well-being of their members?” In their opinion these characteristics are not necessarily confined to nations; they can be characteristics of ethnic groups, of tribes, and so on. However, the main examples of such groups are nations.
  49. Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination,” 129.
  50. Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination,” 129. For Raz and Margalit a “pervasive” culture is a culture that permeates and shapes the everyday life of all individuals who are part of that culture, in many domains: their language, the daily activities in which they engage to make a living, their leisure activities, their personal relations inside and outside the family, the music they listen to, their architecture, the literature they write and read, their cuisine, and so on. A Jewish life, in a Jewish homeland, as part of a pervasive Jewish culture in that sense was one of the central objectives of Zionism. Ahad Ha’am explained this lucidly: Judaism seeks “the creation in its native land of conditions favorable to its development: a good sized settlement of Jews working without hindrance in

- every branch of culture, from agriculture and handicrafts to science and literature.” Ahad Ha’am, “Jewish State,” 44.
51. Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination,” 131.
  52. From the claim that Jews in many communities had cultures that isolated them from their surroundings, but that the Jews in general, across their various diasporas, did not share one pervasive culture, it does not follow that there was absolutely no cooperation among them other than the religious kind. So for instance Hebrew, though mainly serving as a religious language—and as such it was known to all Jews who prayed—created a common language for Jews across different communities, and this had some effects on their everyday life as well as their intellectual life. Another characteristic of a pervasive culture that characterized many Jewish Diaspora communities pertains to their lines of work and livelihood. Still, these cultural components shared by Jews prior to and following the rise of Zionism cannot serve as a basis for the claim that they have shared a single pervasive culture in Raz and Margalit’s sense. As I explain in note 50 above, Raz and Margalit talk about a culture that permeates *most* domains of life and the lives of *all* members of the community (not just the elite). The fact that Rabbis and some Jewish traders in the pre-Zionist diaspora used Hebrew in their intercommunity correspondence did not make Hebrew into a language that permeated the everyday lives of the Jewish masses before and after the rise of Zionism. Nor did a single comprehensive culture evolve around the Hebrew language in which all (or most) Jews lived or live all (or most) of their lives; this has happened only in the Land of Israel and in Israel since the inception of Zionism.
  53. For comparison, think of the pervasive French culture. It is the culture of the inhabitants of France, but to an important extent it is also the culture of the French-speaking populations of Quebec and Switzerland. Members of these three groups seem to share one pervasive culture (French-speaking Africans share their language, but it would be hard to maintain that the other components of their pervasive culture are shared by francophones who live in France, Switzerland, and Quebec). Members of the these three groups do not have the second feature of what Raz and Margalit call “encompassing groups”—Swiss francophones are first and foremost identified as Swiss, or perhaps as francophone Swiss, but not as French. The same goes for Quebecois. The group comprising French, Swiss, and Canadian francophones therefore constitutes a mirror image of the indeterminacy of the Jewish group in terms of the concept of groups eligible for self-determination in Raz and Margalit’s sense. The world Jewish collective is not an obvious candidate for self-determination à la Raz and Margalit because it does not share a single pervasive culture. It can, however, be a borderline case of a group eligible for self-determination because of the very high profile that being Jewish has as a way of identifying individuals. The world collective of francophones, by contrast, is not an obvious candidate for self-determination, even though its members share a single pervasive culture. This is so, among other things, because the identity that flows from sharing French culture has a much lower social profile than the identity that flows from being a Swiss, a French, or a Canadian national.



54. As indicated in note 48 above, even if this identity component were perceived as only religious, it would have no bearing on the practical question posed by Raz and Margalit. They are attempting to characterize groups that are entitled to national self-determination even if they are not national groups. They also mention religious groups that may be eligible for this right provided they share certain characteristics. By consulting the autobiography of Marcel Reich-Ranicki, the famous German Jewish literary critic and a Polish Jew by origin, one can obtain a good sense of a conspicuous nonreligious identity component among Jews, and of the insistence on identifying, classifying, and treating Jews as such in absolutely nonmalicious contexts. See Reich-Ranicki, *The Author of Himself*.
55. Poles identify Polish Jews as Jewish, not as Polish Jews; Romanians identify Romanian Jews as Jewish, not as Romanian Jews; and so on. Jews were persecuted because they were Jews, not because they were Polish Jews or Romanian Jews. Hence they required self-determination as Jews and not as Polish Jews or Romanian Jews. It is only in Israel that Jews are identified as Polish Jews, or Romanian Jews, and so on.
56. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 30–31.
57. See Pinsker, *Autoemancipation*, 97–98. Leo Pinsker, a Russian-Polish forerunner of Zionism, in *Autoemancipation* (1882) despaired of the prospects of Jewish emancipation in Europe and called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland. Pinsker mentions Moroccan Jews, and his argument suggests that the idea for which he argues in his essay holds for them. According to him, the notion of Jewish self-governance in a separate territory holds for Jews insofar as they are Jews (he is thinking of Jewish communities that are large in relation to the people among whom they live), and not merely European Jews. See also Tzur, "Jew Transmigrates," 22n. 6. Tzur argues that, from the outset, in Zionist programs three non-European Jewish communities were slated to participate in the settlement enterprise in the Land of Israel alongside the distressed Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia: namely the Jews of Morocco, Persia, and Yemen.
58. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 52.
59. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 52.
60. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 54.
61. Gellner, *Contemporary Thought*, 169.
62. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 55.
63. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.
64. The characterization of Gellner as "aggressive" about nationalism is Anderson's, not mine, though I agree with him. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.
65. Responding, for instance, to the argument that nationalism imposes cultural homogenization, he says: "The illiterate, half-starved populations sucked from their erstwhile rural cultural ghettos into the melting pots of shanty-towns yearn for incorporation into some one of those cultural pools which already has . . . a state of its own, with the subsequent promise of full cultural citizenship, access to primary schools, employment, and all." Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 46.
66. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 35. In this he does not differ from Marx. Marx, too, had good words for the nationalism of the great industrial nations, but because he thought nationalism was an important stage in the formation of

- capitalism, which was a necessary condition for the proletarian revolution. See Nimni, *Marxism and Nationalism*.
67. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 101–9, esp. 105–9.
  68. Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*.
  69. Renan, “What Is a Nation?” 19.
  70. Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination,” 133.
  71. I return to this issue in chap. 6, which deals with the relations between the Jews in Israel and those in the diaspora.
  72. The Israeli post-Zionists deem their anti-essentialism to be a sufficient basis (though not the only basis) for the negation of Israel’s Jewish nationalism, at least in its Zionist version, which refers to the Jewish nationality not only of Israeli Jews but also that of the Jews in general. For a more detailed exposition of their specific positions on this issue, see chaps 4.2, 4.4, and 6.3.
  73. Baer and Dinur, “Our Orientation,” 1.
  74. Yehoshua, “The Neurotic Solution,” 33. Yehoshua ridicules these efforts by Dinur and mainstream Zionism. So do academic historians, who support their rejection of Dinur with systematic historical evidence. See mainly Barnai, *Historiography and Nationalism*, 57–58. For an attempt to support Dinur in a manner that to my mind makes his historiography even more ridiculous, see Morgenstern, “Longing for Zion.”
  75. On the *aliyahs* made by other rabbis, see also Morgenstern, “Longing for Zion.”
  76. On Dinur’s periodization of Jewish history, see Myers, *Re-inventing the Jewish Past*, 144–48; Ram, *Time of the “Post,”* 37.
  77. Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 1 LSI 3 (1948).
  78. Dinur, “Book of Zionism,” 14. Dinur makes even more explicit statements on the issue than this one. See the quotation in chap. 3, n. 4.
  79. Halevi, “Ode to Zion,” lines 68–69, 77–78. Rabbi Judah Halevi was a Jewish poet and religious philosopher, born in medieval Spain (c. AD 1075–1141).
  80. The story of the expulsion by the Romans and the subsequent yearning and relentless striving throughout the generations to return to the Land of Israel had an important role not only in supporting mainstream Zionism’s claim concerning the uninterrupted nationhood of the Jewish collective, but also in justifying the mainstream position regarding the institutional, territorial, and demographic dimensions of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel. I discuss this in chap. 3.
  81. Yehoshua, “The Neurotic Solution,” 33. See also Barnai, *Historiography and Nationalism*, 57–58; Ben-Sasson, “Our Right to the Land,” 22; Myers, *Re-inventing the Jewish Past*, 144–48. Here I quoted from Yehoshua rather than from academic historians because he reflects the bluntness of the public discourse, and because his public status justifies conceiving of him as a spokesman for Zionism rather than merely an observer of this movement.
  82. Yehoshua, “The Neurotic Solution,” 32–33.
  83. Anscombe, *Intention*, 69.
  84. On this, see Raz-Krakotzkin, “Exile within Sovereignty,” 50–51, as well as the sources to which he refers in 50n. 61.
  85. Yakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 79.

86. This sentence only appears in the Hebrew version of their book, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 119.
87. For a similar distinction between exilic existence and the content of this existence, see Shapira, "Negation of the Diaspora," 13; Shimoni, "Shlilat Hagalut Reconsidered," 47–48.
88. For a similar distinction between "the conception of history signified by the concept of 'the negation of the exile' and the cultural values derived from it," see Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty," 24n. 2.
89. Hendel and Levi, "History, Teaching," 257.
90. Hendel and Levi, "History, Teaching," 268. The encyclopedia, it would seem, was inspired by Dinur and almost copied his and Baer's words. See Baer and Dinur, "Our Orientation," 2–3.
91. The postcolonial literature that inspires the work of the postcolonial post-Zionists (see chap. 4.4) features the notion of "strategic essentialism." This is how Yossi Yonah presents Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's depiction of this notion: "Spivak believes that identity politics can avoid essentialism for its own sake and adopt instead 'strategic essentialism.' She stresses the importance of collective identities as a source of political empowerment and as a basis for a political change in the case of groups that are exposed to oppression and discrimination. However, she suggests that we acknowledge the incidental and accidental elements in these identities. She argues that social groups renounce their collective identity once they achieve their goals." Yonah, *In Virtue of Difference*, 52n. 13. Strategic essentialism clearly is a subclass of normative essentialism. It is embraced both for moral reasons, in order to overcome evils such as oppression and discrimination, and for reasons stemming from social reality. Yehouda Shenhav illustrates this when he proposes to Mizrahi Jews in Israel who came from Middle Eastern Islamic countries to strategically embrace *mizrahiut*, that is, an Oriental identity. For "strategic" reasons Shenhav chooses to call these Jews "Arabs" and to view this Arabness as their essence, regardless of the fact that they are from different countries and that they differ from one another in many respects (Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*, 20). There are some differences between normative essentialism and strategic essentialism. Normative essentialism is not necessarily a maneuver on the part of oppressed groups. The argument that humans are rational in essence is not adopted by an oppressed group in order to rid itself of oppression. Mainly, it serves to explain why humans are obliged to behave in certain ways (though it must be admitted that it also serves to oppress nonhuman animals). Unlike "strategic essentialism," normative essentialism does not have to be a temporary move. When we consider humans as being rational in essence, we do not do so on the basis of features we consider temporary or which we would like to be temporary, nor do we do so for temporary purposes.
92. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 12–13.
93. Gellner and Hobsbawm use identical or similar illustrations. See Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 13; Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 28.

94. For my definition of the Zionist ideology, see Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 6.
95. The first part of this sentence reflects the type of national ideologies that are called “ethnocultural” ideologies. Its last part expresses the underlying principle of the type of ideologies called “civic-territorial” ideologies. On the distinction between these two types as a normative distinction between theories of political morality (as opposed to the usual sociological-historical distinction made by Kohn, *Nationalism*, 29–30), see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 7–38.
96. For instance, Dov Ber Borochof, a Marxist Zionist and one of the founders of the Labor Zionist movement, quite obviously did not presuppose in his socialist Zionism the essentialism that Baer and Dinur presupposed. He must have recognized that altered circumstances can constitute a good reason for changing the character of the Jewish collective. He also believed it possible to interpret the reasons for the emergence of nations and national movements in “legitimate materialistic” terms. See Mintz, “Ber Borochof,” 37; Peled, “Ber Borochof”; Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 179–86.
97. Yitzhak Baer himself, Dinur’s partner in drafting the guiding principles for the Zionist historiography of Judaism, was a major scholar of Spanish medieval Jewry. Benzion Netanyahu, too, studied them. Yisrael Heilperin researched the autonomous institutions of the Jews of Eastern Europe and the results of the anti-Semitic Chmielnicki Revolt of 1648–49. Israel Bartal studied the Jews of Poland in the nineteenth century—the list goes on and on. Many of these scholars also oppose Dinur’s and mainstream Zionism’s historiographic “negation of the exile.” Bartal writes: “This historiographic tradition [regarding the ties between the Jews and the Land of Israel] which was created more in accordance with ideological patterns and changing political conditions, seems to us today, from a perspective of one hundred years and more since the first days of [early Zionism], as part of the history of a new nationalist movement rather than as a critical research of this history.” Bartal, “Land and People,” 49. Already more than twenty-five years ago Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson wrote that in his opinion Zionism’s historiographic “negation of the exile” was an ahistorical phenomenon. See Ben-Sasson, *Continuity and Variety*, 35–38, 48–49.
98. Sand’s book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, which questions the way this relationship evolved, relies on publications that have long since been accepted by the Zionist canon; this, for instance, is the case with the origins of the Khazars. See Bartal, “Invention of the Invention”; Shapira, “The Jewish-People Deniers.”
99. Ram, *Time of the “Post,”* 22–23; Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 49; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 46–47.
100. I mention several scholars belonging to this in note 97: Baer, Heilperin, Netanyahu, and Bartal.

### CHAPTER 3

1. Gavison, “Jews’ Right to Statehood,” 74–75.
2. See chap. 1, n. 7.

3. Dinur, "Book of Zionism," 14.
4. Dinur, *Israel in the Diaspora*, 11. Barnai quotes from an interview with Dinur in which the latter explicitly accuses the Arabs of plundering the Land of Israel: "The Arab tradition of plundering Jewish property was a tradition that was passed from one generation to the next until our own days, and it is important to note in this context that the 'property' plundered was not just the land itself but also its holiness. The Arabs, as much as the Christians, not only expropriated the places holy to Judaism, but also turned them, by changing their names and falsifying their traditions, into places holy to Christianity and to Islam." Barnai, *Historiography and Nationalism*, 83.
5. As for Ben-Gurion, in addition to the quotations below from the 1937 letter he wrote to his son Amos after having been one of the main advocates of the decision of the Twentieth Zionist Congress to accept the Peel Partition Plan, he hinted elsewhere at the possibility of enlarging the state once it was established on the basis of the Jewish proprietary right over the Land of Israel. See Naor, *Greater Israel*, 109n. 29, referring to pages 95–119 in the proceedings of the Zionist Congress; Teveth, *David's Passion*, 216–17; Galnoor, *Territorial Partition*, 218–19. On the other hand, Ben-Gurion said that the Jewish claim to sovereignty in the Land of Israel

stems from the unbreakable bond between the Hebrew people and its historic homeland; from the right of the Jewish nation to independence and national renewal in equal measure to that of the world's other nations; from the status of the Jews in the diaspora as a wandering minority at the mercy of strangers; from the need to find a home for millions of Jewish immigrants; from the under-populated condition of the land of Israel; from the possibilities for settlement and the opportunity to make bountiful the earth of the land of Israel and its endless natural treasures, now lying fallow; from the Jewish settlement enterprise in the land over the last several generations.

Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*, 188. Jabotinsky, who more than any other Zionist leader is generally identified with the non-religiously based assertion of the Jews' historic right to the Land of Israel, was also aware of the argument's limitations and of the need to support it with other arguments. He spoke about the universal right to self-determination. He was also sensitive to the fact that historical right alone does not suffice to justify ownership and believed it must be joined by actual need or necessity in order to serve as an appropriate basis for territorial demands. See Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 367.

6. Ben-Gurion, *Letters to Paula*, 211. Shimoni, who also quotes this passage from Ben-Gurion (Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 384), sets out the positions of many other Zionist leaders on this matter. Especially important is the opinion of Rabbi Meir Berlin, honorary president of the World Mizrahi Association. In 1937, in a speech delivered at the Twentieth Zionist Congress, which accepted the Peel Plan, he said: "The basis of Zionism is that the land is ours, and does not belong to the Arabs." Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 339.
7. Naor, *Greater Israel*, 92.

8. All this is even more forcefully so in the case of those who are currently identified as the very spearhead of hegemonic Zionism. I mean the settlers who live in what is called in official English “the unauthorized outposts,” and in colloquial Hebrew “illegal settlements,” as if there were a distinction to be made in the legality of different types of settlements, as Israeli Hebrew discourse presumes. These settlers often occupy land to which Palestinians are entitled under the positive property law existing in the territories under Israeli occupation. As a result of the settlers’ activities, Israel is in breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits population transfer into occupied territory. According to the property laws obtaining in the Occupied Territories, these settlers are plunderers. However, subject to a reservation that I shall immediately make, from the perspective of the hegemonic Zionists’ interpretation of the Zionist narrative they are definitely not plunderers. This judgment is evidently shared by the government authorities in Judea and Samaria (the biblical name, and therefore consistently with my characterization of proprietary Zionism, the official Israeli name for the Occupied Territories of the West Bank). In 2004, attorney Talya Sasson was appointed by the (then) prime minister, Ariel Sharon, to investigate the unauthorized outposts of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. In the official report that followed the investigation, Sasson stated:

Therefore it seems that law violation [pertaining to unauthorized settlements] became institutionalized. We face not a felon, or a group of felons, violating the law. What we see here is a blunt violation of the law committed by certain state authorities, public officials, regional councils in Judea and Samaria, and some settlers who all pretend to act as if they were legally authorized to carry out these violations. This sends a message to IDF, its soldiers and commanders, the Israeli police and police officers, the settler community and the public. And the message is that settling in unauthorized outpost, although illegal, is a Zionist deed. Therefore the overlook, the “wink,” the double standard becomes it.

Sasson, “Opinion Concerning Unauthorized Outpost.” See also Zertal and Eldar, *Lords of the Land*, esp. 333–99.

9. Hasfari and Yaniv, *The National Left*, 7.
10. Magal et al., “Psychological Legitimization.” According to this study, the leadership and most of the population have been ready to share the land ever since the First Intifada in the late 1980s, though they were not ready before it. This willingness stems from pragmatic considerations and from the fear of losing the Jewish and democratic character of Israel, rather than from doubts regarding Jewish proprietary rights over the Land of Israel. The belief in this right has stayed as firm among Israel’s population and its leaders as it was immediately after the Six-Day War.
11. Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 1 LSI 3 (1948).
12. *Ibid.*
13. Eliezer Schweid makes this argument explicitly (Schweid, *The Land of Israel*, 193). He refrains in this English edition of his book from characterizing non-Jewish landowners as “plunderers.” However, in the Hebrew original the argument is made along with its entire proprietary vocabulary and its implications, including the argument that non-Jewish landowners are “plunderers” (Schweid, *Homeland*

*and a Land of Promise*, 210). Later, however, he discusses the rights of the Arabs and mentions solutions proposed by Dinur and other Zionist leaders such as the socialist Yizhak Tabenkin concerning the problem of the clash between the Jewish proprietary right over the Land of Israel and the rights of Arabs (Schweid, *The Land of Israel*, 194). These authors are of the opinion that Jewish rights have priority (a) because the Jews have nowhere else to go and (b) because the Arabs did not develop national consciousness until the return of the Jews. It seems that these writers do not consider the Arabs as fully fledged plunderers. Their position, nevertheless, is inconsistent. From their proprietary claims and from their insistence that these claims have not elapsed (“a property that one has not surrendered to its plunderers continues to be one’s property,” as stated by Schweid, *Homeland and a Land of Promise*, 210), it follows that the current non-Jewish occupiers of parts of the Land of Israel, namely the Palestinian Arabs, are holding onto stolen property. It is the settlers’ and Israel’s policies following the Six-Day War that are consistent in this matter. Their deeds are in harmony with what the proprietary argument implies, which is the restitution of property that the Arabs expropriated from the Jews.

14. It should be noted that the law makes a distinction between the owner’s right to tenure of his property and his right to realize it. For reasons of public order, the owner may not always exercise his discretion unilaterally to realize his right to the tenure of his property. Still, the Declaration of Independence includes a solution even to this issue in property law: It was not only their ownership of the Land of Israel to which the Jews appealed when they returned to resume their tenure. They did so with the approval of the “police”: they returned to the Land of Israel under the protection of the Balfour Declaration and the League of Nations Mandate, as the Declaration of Independence states.
15. Berlin, “Nationalism,” 346.
16. Justice Mishael Cheshin of Israel’s Supreme Court claims that, as a matter of legal fact, “a collective right of the Arab public . . . to preserve and nurture its national and cultural identity . . . is not recognized by Israeli law.” HCJ 4112/99 *Adalah v. The Municipality of Tel Aviv-Yaffo* 56(5) PD 393, 459 [1999]. Later in the chapter I cite some of the countless examples of Jewish refusal to grant collective rights to the Arabs in Israel. One important example consists in the various interpretations of the notion of a Jewish state that were proposed at the Constitutional Committee of the Sixteenth Knesset, which was commissioned with drafting a constitution for Israel. This committee did not even address the presence of an indigenous Arab minority in Israel. See Gavison, “Proposals for a Constitution.”
17. Kahane’s Kach party, Rehavam Ze’evi’s Moledet party, and the political parties that succeeded them believed, and continue to believe, that the Arabs in Judea and Samaria are not entitled to collective rights, and moreover that they should not even have the right to reside there as individuals. They wished, and continue to wish, to remove them. Likud (and the parties from which it sprang) always believed that the Arabs who live in the Land of Israel have individual rights to reside in the territories of this land and that they must not be driven away. Likud (under the leadership of Begin and Shamir, who interpreted certain vague statements of Jabotinsky’s on this matter) was even prepared to grant

the Arabs of Judea and Samaria rights to control their own affairs in certain domains (within a personal rather than territorial framework; without having the power to make the final decisions; and conditional upon the security and national needs of the Jews). The Tehiya party believed that the Arabs are not entitled even to this. However, until recently there was absolutely no debate between the Tehiya, Moledet, and Kach parties on the one hand, and the Likud on the other, regarding the denial of territorial and political rights to the Arabs in Judea and Samaria. In 2009 Prime Minister Netanyahu announced that the Arabs in Judea and Samaria will also be granted territorial and political rights. However, it is doubtful whether in doing so Netanyahu was driven by any but tactical motives. If he was really serious, then his motivation was pragmatic only and certainly not a reflection of a principled acknowledgment of the Arabs' collective political rights. The deeply embedded denial of these rights within proprietary Zionism may also explain the consensus that exists among parties as different as the Labor Party, Kadima, Likud, Yisrael Beytenu, Habayit Hayehudi, and the Ichud Haleumi regarding the issue of collective political rights for the Arabs within the 1967 borders, in contrast to the serious disagreements among these parties regarding the individual rights of the Arabs within these borders. It is for pragmatic reasons that Labor and Kadima—in contrast to a party such as Habayit Hayehudi—wish to let go of parts of the territories that Israel has occupied since 1967.

18. Israel allows the Arabs partial management of Arab education and its use of Arabic. But this permission probably does not stem from the recognition of their right to autonomy in education. It seems to be motivated by two apparently contradictory purposes: (a) to avoid education in Hebrew so as to reduce the chances of Arab successful integration with the Jewish population, and (b) to reduce the chances of a revolt arising from the Arabs being utterly robbed of their ethno-cultural belonging. Both these objectives, contradictory though they are, reflect the Jewish desire to be segregated from the Arabs in Israel. It is obvious that the Israeli Arabs' partial autonomy in education is not based on an acknowledgment of their moral right to autonomy since their curriculum is dictated by Jews and is mainly a Zionist one. This explains why the names of Arab localities, though presented in Arabic characters, are officially spelled according to their Hebrew or Jewish pronunciation and not the Arab one: Akko, for instance, instead of Akka, also in Arabic script.

Curricula in state schools contain comprehensive requirements imposed on Arab schools in the spheres of Hebrew language, history, and Jewish culture for which there are no analogous demands in Hebrew schools. In addition, the substance of the curriculum, especially the obligatory one for matriculation, is being carefully purged in fields such as history and literature of any national Palestinian narrative. Saban, "Minority Rights," 269.

19. In a speech at an event in Israel commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of Egyptian president Sadat's historic visit to Israel on November 20, 1977, Livni added that "Israel would respect the individual civil rights of its Arab residents, but their national rights would be realized in the Palestinian state." Barak Ravid,



- Yoav Stern, and Shahar Ilan, “Livni: Palestinian State Is a National Solution also for the Arab Citizens of Israel” [in Hebrew], *Ha’aretz*, November 9, 2007.
20. According to *Ma’ariv* daily, which reported Ben Porat’s proposal during an ordination ceremony for Reform rabbis at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, “Knesset member Rehavam Ze’evi and the Fifth President Yitzhak Navon left the ceremony in protest [at her proposal].” Y. Golan and A. Bender, “Former Comptroller of State, Miriam Ben-Porat: Add a Verse to the National Anthem That Arab Citizens Could Identify With” [in Hebrew], *Ma’ariv*, September 15, 2000.
  21. During the incumbency of the Fifteenth Knesset, right-wing Member of Knesset Michael Kleiner introduced a draft bill intended “to encourage people who do not identify with the Jewish character of the state [i.e., Palestinian citizens of Israel] to leave.” Kleiner’s bill, entitled A Bill to Encourage Emigration to Arab States, 5761/2001, was not included in *The Official Gazette: Bills*, apparently because it had not reached the stage of being debated in the Knesset plenum. The Israeli government later introduced a bill—which was passed—to amend Israeli citizenship law in a manner that would deny Arabs who are Israeli citizens and who have married Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories the right to live in Israel with their spouses and children (The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law [Temporary Provision], 5763-2003, SH no. 1901, 544). A bill proposed in the Eighteenth Knesset by the Yisrael Beytenu party to make the right to participate in voting in Israeli elections conditional on an oath of allegiance to the Jewish democratic state has so far been rejected by the government ministers’ committee for legislation.
  22. According to Ottoman law, which still applies in the territories of Judea and Samaria, and also according to its interpretation by the Israeli authorities, state-owned land is land that has not been cultivated and that is at least two and a half kilometers away from any township, or beyond human earshot.
  23. The notion of *geulat adamot* (redemption of lands), like the notion of *aliyah* (which is used for designating immigration of Jews into Israel and which literally means ascending [to the Land of Israel]), is part of the Zionism-laden Hebrew language. In the same way as the notion of *aliyah* imparts positive value to a Jewish person’s immigration into the Land of Israel, so does the notion of *geula* with regard to Jewish acquisition of land in the Land of Israel, whether it involves purchasing or expropriating land from its private owners. Ben-Gurion used the term *geulat ha’aretz* in the letter to his son Amos, which was quoted in the main text; and Yehoshua Hankin, who acquired land in the Jezreel Valley from Arab effendis in the early twentieth century, was given the title *go’el admot ha’emek* [“redeemer of the lands of the Valley,” namely, Jezreel Valley, which was perhaps the most extensive Jewish land purchase in the formative years of Zionism].
  24. Naor, *Greater Israel*, 92.
  25. Haetzni, “State of Israel.”
  26. For example, in the wake of the public debate about a freeze on Israeli construction in (Arab East) Jerusalem due to pressure from President Obama, *Ha’aretz* reported the minister Silvan Shalom (a former foreign minister of Israel) stating the following in a radio interview: “How did we reach the situation in

- which construction in Jerusalem became a hindrance [to the peace process]? If we blink we will lose everything . . . The prime minister has an authorization from the Jewish people throughout its generations, and we cannot reach any other decision." Mazal Mualem, "Deputy Prime Minister: If We Blink, We Will Lose Everything" [in Hebrew], *Ha'aretz*, March 25, 2010. Also, the Internet site *Nana10* reported in 2008 Limor Livnat, then minister of culture and sport and formerly minister of education, as having said at a political conference of her party: "Whoever dares to tear apart one part of Jerusalem will bind the Jewish people throughout the generations." Ronen Leibovich, "Livnat: Whoever Dares to Rip a Part of Jerusalem, Will Bind the Jewish People Throughout the Generations" [in Hebrew], *Nana10*, November 24, 2008.
27. Democracy, at least in its major versions, also excludes certain issues from the majority's decision-making power. However, it does so for reasons flowing from its internal logic in order to protect individuals or minorities from being repressed by majorities. It never does so in order to protect the property rights of a collective against individuals who do not belong to it.
  28. The Declaration includes not only arguments of political morality, like the proprietary argument or the argument from the right to self-determination, but also legal arguments, mainly pertaining to the international recognition of Zionism: the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate granted by the League of Nations to Britain to rule over Palestine in order to establish there a homeland for the Jews, and the 1947 partition decision of the United Nations General Assembly. The legal arguments are meant to support the political morality arguments.
  29. Gavison, *Jewish and Democratic*, 26.
  30. Gavison, "Jews' Right to Statehood," 74–75. Gavison's argument thus consists of two stages. First she identifies the right to self-determination with a right to a nation-state. Then she defines the concept of the nation-state as quoted in the text to which this footnote refers. While I believe her definition of the concept of a nation-state is accurate insofar as it purports to describe the way this concept is generally understood, her identification of the right to self-determination with a right to a nation-state is groundless from the perspective of both the way self-determination is understood in international law and the way it is understood in political theory. For a fuller discussion of self-determination in this book, see chap. 3.3.2 below, which includes references to the general literature of international law and political theory on this topic.
  31. For examples, see chap. 1, n. 7.
  32. This "division of labor" between the public at large and the mainstream academic spokesmen, with the politicians wavering between these two camps, should not be surprising. The proprietary argument suits most people's basic possessive instincts. More than anything, it is a simple, uncomplicated argument. As will be further explained below, unlike the argument from the right to self-determination, it also contains internal resources that may explain the institutional nature and the territorial scope of Jewish self-determination in Palestine / the Land of Israel.
  33. Most territories of this kingdom are parts of the biblical Land of Israel. See chap. 1, n. 2.

34. For this wording of the distinction, and for an extensive clarification, see Kofman, "Territorial Claims." It might also be important to note that many proprietary rights are constrained by requirements stemming from the interests of other people. This, however, does not alter the fact that proprietary rights are perceived by people generally as rights that allow their owners almost unlimited control of the proprietary object, and especially as rights to exclude others from this object. In the event that one's property right over one's home is in question this interpretation of property rights is not very remote from the way it is actually treated in legal practice. Most members of the (Israeli) public view the Jews' right to the Land of Israel analogously to the property right of a person to his home.
35. HCJ 727/00 *Committee of Heads of Local Arab Councils in Israel v. The Ministry of Construction and Housing* 56(2) PD 79 [2001].
36. Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 116.
37. Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 118.
38. Gavison, *Jewish and Democratic*, 113–14. Gavison discusses many other instances of discrimination elsewhere in her book.
39. Gavison, *Jewish and Democratic*, 28.
40. The arguments in this section concisely summarize some of the arguments I made in chapter 3 of my book *A Just Zionism*.
41. The main advocate of this argument is Gavison. See the quotations to which notes 29 and 30 above are attached.
42. The main proponents of this argument are Jakobson and Rubinstein (*Israel and the Family of Nations*), but many others use it, too. See Gavison, *Jewish and Democratic*, 39; Michael Walzer, *New York Times Book Review*, October 6, 1974, 6; Michael Walzer, *New York Review of Books*, December 4, 2003, 57.
43. International law distinguishes between external and internal self-determination. The former pertains to the singular act of a given group constituting an independent state, or to a group's choice to belong to a certain state. The latter is associated with the right to create an ongoing condition of limited self-government within that state's territory, and participating in the government of that state. On this, see the ruling of the Canadian Supreme Court regarding Quebec's secession (re Secession of Quebec, [1998] 2 S.C.R. 217).
44. For a comprehensive philosophical discussion on the right to self-determination and the right to secession, to which the distinction discussed here is central, see Buchanan, *Self-Determination*, 331–424.
45. This was done through the Ohrid Agreement, August 13, 2001.
46. See Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 202.
47. Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*.
48. Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 129.
49. Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 127–28.
50. The ethnocultural minority groups in these countries are negligible in size. Germany has minorities of Sorbs, Danes, Frisians, and Roma, each comprising some scores of thousands. There are insignificant minorities of Muslims and Armenians in Greece, making up no more than 1 percent of the population.
51. Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 43.

52. Yakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 42. This exception to the rule against the use of historical rights arguments as justifications of territorial claims can also be found in the report that the Jewish Agency presented to the Royal Commission of Lord Peel in 1936 and to the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry in 1946. See also Gafni, *Our Historical-Legal Right*; Ben-Gurion, *We and Our Neighbors*, 188. For a general discussion of the history of the Zionist use of it, see Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 333–88.
53. Yakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 42–43.
54. Yakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 42.
55. Gavison, “The Jewish State,” 61 (emphasis mine). In the English version of this article, “Jews’ Right to Statehood,” Gavison speaks only of a legal liberty. She omits there any reference to a moral liberty.
56. Hohfeld, “Fundamental Legal Conceptions.”
57. Hart, “Legal Rights,” 171–72.
58. See Halpern, *Idea of the Jewish State*, 262–65.
59. Bartal and Ben Arieh, *Last Phase of Ottoman Rule*, 264.
60. Bartal and Ben Arieh, *Last Phase of Ottoman Rule*, 264.
61. Hart, “Legal Rights,” 169–73.
62. Some of the arguments in this section repeat arguments I made in chapters 2 and 3 of my book *A Just Zionism*.
63. These arguments for the interests people have in living within the framework of their culture are made by Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 75–106; Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*, 57–77; Miller, *On Nationality*, 81–118; Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination”; Gans *The Limits of Nationalism*, 39–66.
64. The nationalist/multiculturalist thesis regarding the interest people have in the continued existence of their culture beyond their lifetime should be distinguished from the nationalist/multiculturalist thesis according to which people have interests in living themselves within the framework of their cultures mentioned in the previous note. For arguments supporting the former thesis (“the historic thesis”) and for the need to distinguish it from the latter (“the adherence thesis”), see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 39–66; Gans, “Individual’s Interest in the Preservation of Their Culture.”
65. Miller, *On Nationality*, 88.
66. See Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 62; Walzer, “Pluralism in Political Perspective,” 6–7, 10; Glazer, *Ethnic Dilemmas*, 149; Patten, *Equal Recognition*, chap. 8. In my opinion, this reasoning applies only to the first-generation immigrants, those who migrated themselves, and not to their descendants.
67. For a detailed discussion, see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 88–89. Another reason mentioned there for preferring homeland groups to immigrant communities in the matter of the right to self-government pertains to the world scarcity of territories. Granting rights to self-rule in a particular territory to a particular ethnocultural group means imposing to some degree this group’s culture on everyone who lives in that territory. Because there is not enough space in the world to enable all groups to enjoy these rights wherever they have subgroups, homeland groups must be given priority over immigrant groups in the distribution of these rights, because immigrant groups usually can, if they wish to do so,

- live within the framework of their culture elsewhere, that is, where their original group exercises its self-determination.
68. Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 1 LSI 3 (1948).
  69. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 20.
  70. See also Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 111.
  71. In support of this view, I might mention that it is subscribed to by authors as remote from one another as Ross Poole, an Australian philosopher who has written about Australian aborigines' rights (Poole, *Nation and Identity*, 127–28); and Yehezkel Kaufmann, a Jewish historian of the Jewish people (Kaufmann, *Exile and Foreign Land*, 211–12).
  72. This is the place also to mention the British Christians who were among the harbingers of Zionism based on Christian notions. See Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 60–65. The US Evangelicals have supported views that are in tune with proprietary Zionism ever since at least the 1970s. On the Evangelicals, see Wagner, “For Zion’s Sake,” 52–57; Shragai, *Temple Mount Conflict*, 252.
  73. On arguments for territorial rights, not just determining their geographic site, which rely on the interpretation of such facts in the spirit of John Locke, see Miller, *On Nationality*, 110–24; Miller, *National Responsibility*, 201–30; Meisles, *Territorial Rights*, 63–74.
  74. Such an argument concerning the difficulties in the notion of global justice originates in Thomas Hobbes. It has since been voiced by many philosophers. See Nagel, “Problem of Global Justice,” 114.
  75. This component of the justification of Zionism’s aspiration to return the Jews to the Land of Israel is prominent in traditional Zionist arguments, from those made by Pinsker and Herzl all the way to those of Ben-Gurion, Jabotinsky, and Weizmann. Jabotinsky said: “It is quite understandable that the Arabs of Palestine would prefer Palestine to be the Arab state No. 4, No. 5, or No. 6 . . . but when the Arab claim is confronted with our Jewish demand to be saved, it is like the claims of appetite versus the claims of starvation.” Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 367.
  76. A *remedial justification* or right is a justification or right that people have by virtue of a harm caused to their fundamental interests or to interests they have that are protected by primary rights. A remedial right is conferred in order to halt or remedy such harm. A *primary right* is a right that people have by virtue of interests they have in the normal course of their lives that justify the imposition of obligations on others to protect those interests. Primary rights are granted in order to protect or promote these interests not only in cases in which they are being harmed. For example, a person’s right not to be attacked is a primary right. Remedial rights or justifications are those that we have to perform certain acts in order to defend ourselves from attack or to claim compensation for harm caused by attacks.
  77. It could of course be argued that a wounded person’s breaking into a pharmacy in order to obtain life-saving medicine is not really analogous to the Jews’ breaking into the Land of Israel, for it is clear that the irreversible evil avoided by breaking into the pharmacy (that is, the death of the wounded transgressor) is far greater than the temporary evil caused by this break-in (namely, the damage wreaked

- in the pharmacy and perhaps also the violation of public order). It was predictable, by contrast, that the Jewish “break-in” into the Land of Israel, though it would have prevented a very great evil, would result not merely in a minor and temporary evil. This is why, in the passage to which this note is attached I hesitated to argue that the Jews’ necessity to return to the Land of Israel justified this return in terms of all the relevant considerations. (On the distinction between a necessity that justifies a criminal act and a necessity that excuses an agent from responsibility without justifying his act, and for an illuminating and captivating discussion that is also likely to cast light on the morality of the Jews’ return to the Land of Israel, see Fletcher, *Rethinking Criminal Law*, 774–835.)
78. This does not refer only to the need of individual Jews who lived in Europe from the end of the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century to defend their dignity and their bodily integrity, but rather—and perhaps mainly—to the necessity that these Jews could reasonably expect their descendants would face in Europe in later times had Jewish self-determination not been established in Palestine. This necessity evolved not just because of the persecutions of the Jews between 1880 and 1945, but because these persecutions followed centuries of persecution that seemed to have come to an end with the emancipation of the Jews in the nineteenth century. For a discussion of this issue, see my response (Gans, “Is Egalitarian Zionism Possible?” 669–73) to Føllesdal and Perlmann’s critique (Føllesdal and Perlmann, “Can There Be a Just Zionism?” 629–30).
79. This is so whether the necessity under consideration justified the harm that the Jews inflicted on the Arabs or whether it merely excuses them from responsibility for it beyond paying compensation for the harm inflicted. Moreover, it is important to note that the harm under consideration from the Arab point of view consists in the very establishment of Jewish self-determination in the Land of Israel, not in the evils perpetrated in the course of its establishment or in order to consolidate it, such as, for instance, the expulsion of refugees in the course of Israel’s War of Independence, or other evils caused by this step or others taken by the Zionist movement in the course of its history.
80. For a detailed discussion, see chap. 5.3.4.
81. EA 2/88 *Ben Shalom v. The Central Election Committee* 43(4) PD 221, 272 [1998].
82. The rights of Jews in Britain or in the United States may at most be polyethnic rights, not national rights. For a typology of cultural rights and national rights, see Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 26–33. For more detailed arguments regarding the status of ethnocultural groups in states that rule those groups’ homeland territories, see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 67–96.
83. For a more detailed comparison between all these cases, see Gans, “Individuals’ Interest in the Preservation of Their Culture.”
84. This could produce some major concrete practical differences between egalitarian Zionism and hierarchical Zionism, for example in the sphere of political and not merely symbolic and cultural representation. According to egalitarian Zionism, the Arab minority in Israel could justifiably demand collective representation rights in the Knesset that fairly reflect their demographic weight in

Israel's population. I am not at all certain that the writers who are classified in this book as hierarchical Zionists would accept this. Their principled position surely doesn't require them to do so. The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel publicized in 2006 a document they called *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, in which they made several demands. Among them was a demand for collective representation of the type I've just mentioned. Amnon Rubinstein, one of the major proponents of hierarchical Zionism, comments on their demands: "The Arab minority must realize that any campaign aimed at turning Israel into a binational state—thus denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination—will only marginalize its position in the public sphere." Rubinstein, "Curious Case of Jewish Democracy," 39–40.

Apart from repeating Gavison's misleading identification of the right to self-determination with a right to a nation-state (see note 30 above) and misleadingly implying that self-determination is incompatible with bi-nationalism, Rubinstein seems not just to express an outright rejection of the Palestinian citizens' demand for collective political representation rights, but also to condescendingly admonish them for raising this demand. I am not certain that egalitarian Zionism would back all the demands set out in *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, especially a demand it makes to have a "veto right in matters concerning their living" (15). However, I am quite certain that it would back a fair version of special representation rights for the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Pursuing a detailed analysis of this and similar applicative matters is beyond the scope of this book.

85. The oppressive nature of not granting the Arabs a presence in the state's symbols, much like that of not granting them autonomy in the education of their younger generation and the oppressive unequal distribution of resources between them and the Jews, might have advanced Jewish hegemony had the Arabs become convinced that they deserved this discrimination. However, they have not become thus convinced, at least not most of them, and even if they had it is reasonable to assume that at some stage this conviction would vanish and make way for a bitterness that certainly would not serve the security of the Jews.
86. See note 21 above.
87. The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Provision), 5763-2003, SH no. 1901, 544. Though the amendment was to a temporary order, it has been renewed time and again since the law was enacted.
88. For detailed arguments that provide bases for these claims and for a wider discussion of the topic under consideration see Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 133–38.

## CHAPTER 4

1. An Israeli civic nationhood could be thought of as transcending and accommodating Jewish ethnocultural nationhood, Palestinian ethnocultural nationhood, various immigrant ethnicities, and compensatory multiculturalism with regard to groups such as Mizrahi Jews and Palestinians. Members of all

these groups could interpret their affiliation to their specific groups and to the Israeli civic nation in any way they wish. For example, individual Jews could be allowed to interpret their Jewishness as a national Jewish identity or as a national Israeli identity as well as a diasporic Jewish identity. All this can function much in the same way as British civic-cultural nationhood accommodates English, Scottish, and Welsh nationhoods and the immigrant communities that live in Britain.

2. Some of them explicitly draw this conclusion. See Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 268. For Evron, see chap. 2, n. 1. However, it is also implicit in their very comprehensive effort to cast doubt on Jewish nationhood.
3. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 23.
4. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 21.
5. See Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 46, 101–9, and esp. 105–9.
6. See, for instance: Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory*; Shafir, "Land, Labor, and Population"; Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*; Pappé, "Zionism as Colonialism."
7. See Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 34. This quotation, as well as the ones to which the next two notes refer, appear in the Hebrew translation of Shafir and Peled's English book. It does not appear in the English original.
8. Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 27.
9. Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 36. Peled and Shafir criticize Lissak and Harkabi mainly on the basis of Lissak's "Ideological Struggles or Academic Discourse?" and Harkabi, "Arab-Israeli Conflict."
10. For various versions see, for instance, Pappé, "Zionism as Colonialism"; Shamir, *The Colonies of Law*.
11. Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, 34.
12. This concerns among other things land conquest strategies ("redemption of the land") and labor market conquest strategies ("Hebrew labor") that pushed the native population off the land and out of the labor markets. See, for instance, Shafir, "Land, Labor, and Population"; Pappé, "Zionism as Colonialism"; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 37–39, 50–56; Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory*.
13. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 17. Ram implies that the gist of ethnocultural nationalism is the congruency between the ethnocultural nation and the state as an administrative-constitutional entity, and that territorial-civic nationalism is entirely divorced from cultural nationality. His arguments also imply that the cultural affiliations of the citizens of states whose nationhood is civic are the product of mere choice and that they exist only on the civic level. He further implies that these two kinds of nationhood—ethnocultural and civic—exhaust the range of options from which states or nations may choose. All these assumptions are wrong. On the relationship between culture and civic nationalism, see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 11–13.
14. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 187. This is a popular thesis, and given the prevailing interpretations of Israel's Jewishness, it is justifiably so. Others who participate in this particular post-Zionist polemic include Yiftachel, "Ethnocratic Donkey"; Yiftachel, Ghanem, and Rouhana, "Ethnic Democracy"; Kimmerling, "Religion"; Shapiro, "Secular Politicians"; Peled, "Ethnic Democracy."
15. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 191.



16. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 188; Sand, *Invention of the Jewish people,* 47–54.
17. This is especially due to Section 7A of the Basic Law: The Knesset. This section allows the disqualification of political parties that have a racist platform and of political parties that deny Israel's right to exist as the state of the Jewish people. This section of the law has been amended over the years and today requires the disqualification of parties that deny Israel's right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state.
18. Civic post-Zionists believe that only a civic nationalism of the kind practiced in France or the United States, in which the nation consists of all the state's citizens, allows for equal citizenship. See Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 188; Shlomo Sand, "On Jews and Others" [in Hebrew], *Ha'aretz,* June 2, 2004.
19. See Rawls, *The Law of Peoples,* 23–25, 63–66, and 80–81.
20. Gavison, "Jews' Right to Statehood," 74–75.
21. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 191.
22. This is the approach I supported in chapter 3. One should, however, remember that under to this approach constitutional equality is not necessarily equality of political power.
23. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 196–200. The case he discusses—HCJ 11286/03 Uzi Ornan et al. v. The Minister of Interior (Sep. 20, 2004), Nevo Legal Database (by subscription) (Isr.)—has been dismissed without prejudice. For a later Israeli Supreme Court (sitting as the Court for Civil Appeals) decision, see CA 8573/08 Uzi Ornan v. The Ministry of Interior (Oct. 6, 2013), Nevo Legal Database (by subscription) (Isr.).
24. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 196.
25. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 200.
26. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 191.
27. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 191.
28. Prominent among them is Kymlicka, "Western Political Theory." Another prominent example is Patten, *Equal Recognition,* esp. chap. 5.
29. Kymlicka, "Western Political Theory," 17.
30. Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 147–76.
31. Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 154. Yonah and Shenhav oppose the "creation of an identity of an ethnocultural character that facilitates the formation of cultural hegemony," and it is unclear whether for them the ethnic nature of a state's identity is sufficient grounds for rejecting that identity, or whether an identity's underwriting hegemony is sufficient grounds for rejecting that identity, or whether these are cumulative grounds.
32. Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 175.
33. Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 174.
34. Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 153.
35. In chapter 3 I did not discuss in detail the status of Jews and Arabs as homeland nations vis-à-vis immigrant communities. Such a discussion would distract us from the main issue here. Let me just mention that in the economic and social domains—unlike in the specific domains of representation in the public sphere, in national symbols, in collective language rights, and so forth—a nationalist position such as that supported by egalitarian Zionism will not justify

- the hegemony of a homeland nation over immigrant communities other than temporarily and only immediately after their immigration. Even then it will not justify it as a legal-political arrangement but rather as a blameless inevitability of a transitional period until the immigrant communities are fully integrated in these spheres, with recognition of their right to choose either to assimilate fully into one of the homeland communities or to remain affiliated with their original culture in the private domain while integrating only into the society and economy. It seems to me that in this matter we should accept Kymlicka's distinction between polyethnic rights and national rights, though this typology should be supported by arguments in addition to those he offers, and enlarged by the category of the right to cultural preservation as an adjunct to national rights. See Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 58–65.
36. Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*, 26–27.
  37. Shenhav, *The Arab Jews*, 140–41.
  38. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 49.
  39. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 6.
  40. Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 153.
  41. See chap. 2, n. 57.
  42. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 10–11; Smith, *National Identity*, 160–61.
  43. See Margalit and Halbertal, “Liberalism and the Right to Culture”; Raz and Margalit, “National Self-Determination.”
  44. See Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 52–55.
  45. Butler and the Boyarins speak mainly, though not always, in terms of diasporic existence rather than in terms of exilic existence. Raz-Krakotzkin mainly uses the latter term, but he does not seek to restore the Jews to a state of displacement. See Raz-Krakotzkin, “Exile within Sovereignty,” 26. As will be shown below, he wants their historical consciousness of displacement to serve as their lodestar in conducting their politics. For a discussion of Butler's and the Boyarins' use of the concepts “diaspora” and “exile,” see Cooper, “Diasporic Critique of Diasporism,” 84–87.
  46. See Raz-Krakotzkin, “Exile within Sovereignty,” 26; Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 311.
  47. Butler, the Boyarins, and Raz-Krakotzkin think of diasporism not only as an option but also as a mission, a role that the Jews ought to play in Israel and in the world. In this sense they are like many classical Zionists, who combined their aspiration for Jewish self-determination in Palestine with a social vision. Prominent examples include the labor Zionism of figures such as Ber Borochov and A. D. Gordon, and the kibbutz movement.
  48. In this paragraph I am partly following Avi Sagi's description of the historical development of what he calls the “textualization of Jewish existence” in his forthcoming book *On the Textualization of Jewish Existence*. He refers to Hegel's “The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate,” to Cohen's *Jüdische Schriften (Jewish Writings)*, and to Steiner's “The Wandering Jew” and *Errata*, in a detailed and nuanced discussion to which I cannot do justice here.
  49. Franz Rosenzweig, who wasn't a Zionist, was nevertheless an anti-anti-Zionist. See Meir, *Star from Jacob*, 118.

50. Despite Steiner's clear preference for a diasporic Jewish existence, he is not an anti-Zionist. To the contrary: like Rosenzweig he is an anti-anti-Zionist. When he speaks about the phenomenon of Jewish anti-Zionism he describes it as "an ugly and a ridiculous phenomenon." See Steiner, "The Wandering Jew," 19. Throughout his writings on the topic Steiner stresses that his diasporism is not an anti-Zionism, but rather an ethical preference that nevertheless refers to the Zionist option with great reverence. See, e.g., Steiner, *Errata*, 54.
51. Butler (as well as the Boyarins) uses the concept of Jewishness rather than that of Judaism. Julie Cooper argues that this signifies a shift from a focus on Jewish existence as giving rise to political and religious issues to a focus on issues of individual and social identity. Butler uses the term "Jewishness," following Hannah Arendt's analysis of the transformation that the emancipation and anti-Semitism brought about in the status of the Jews. Up until the emancipation, being a Jew was "a political membership and a religious obligation." After the emancipation, "Jew" was a "marker of social difference," or "ethical modality." The latter conceptualization comes from Cooper, "Diasporic Critique of Diasporism," 84–89.
52. Butler, *Parting Ways*, 2.
53. Butler, *Parting Ways*, 32.
54. Butler, *Parting Ways*, 213.
55. Butler, *Parting Ways*, 214.
56. "Departure from ourselves is the condition of a certain ethical relation, decidedly nonegological: it is a response to the claims of alterity and lays the groundwork for an ethics in dispersion." Butler, *Parting Ways*, 27.
57. Butler, *Parting Ways*, 120.
58. She supports this position by analyzing an article by Eduard Said on Freud's Moses, and by reference to the poetry of the Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. See Butler, *Parting Ways*, 28–32, 205–24.
59. See Butler, *Parting Ways*, 117. For a discussion on this issue, see also Cooper, "Diasporic Critique of Diasporism," 86. The anti-identitarian existence with which Butler assigns her binational individuals resonates with her famous antiesentialist positions regarding gender and sex.
60. See chap. 2, n. 2.
61. See Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 310–12. Most of the chapter in this book to which these pages belong was published in Hebrew under the title "The Colonial Masqued Ball." It includes the following sentence that doesn't appear in the English: "While shattered by the seemingly unavoidable evils performed by the Jewish state, my reaction to this stage of Jewish historical practice is disgust. . . . I construct a strategic assumption . . . according to which it is only the anti-Zionist who is Jewish. And this is for the purpose of reopening a space for an anti-Zionist Jewish political entity inside Palestine and outside it simultaneously." Boyarin, "The Colonial Masqued Ball," 140–41.
62. Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora," 712–13.
63. See Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, 271–312; Boyarin, "Diaspora and the Gendered Politics of Resistance."
64. Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty."

65. Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty," 25.
66. Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty," 25.
67. Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty," 27.
68. Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty," 31.
69. Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty," 43.
70. In addition to diasporic post-Zionists I address in the text, I should mention another neodiasporic post-Zionist writer, Ephraim Nimni. Nimni argues that Israeli Jews should be viewed as just one Jewish Diaspora community among others. See Nimni, "From Galut to T'fusoth." His neodiasporism differs from the others described here in that it is neither motivated by nor based on internally Jewish-related considerations. Instead, it is inspired by two sources: (a) contemporary Anglo-American radical multiculturalists Bhikhu Parekh (*Rethinking Multiculturalism*) and Iris Marion Young (*Justice and the Politics of Difference*), who oppose making a distinction between the rights of cultural groups that constitute nations, and those of cultural minorities of immigrants that do not constitute national groups; and (b) the early twentieth-century Austrian Marxist writings of Bruno Bauer and Karl Renner on multinationalism. It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the latter also inspired the Eastern European anti-Zionist Jewish nationalisms of the Bund (on the Bund, see chap 2, n. 31) and that of the liberal Jewish historian Simon Dubnow (on Dubnow, see chap. 2.2.1). Nimni's diasporic post-Zionism also does not grow out of anti-essentialism of the type discussed in chap. 2.2 and 4.4.2 in the context of civic and postcolonial post-Zionism. It reflects mainly his indifference to the distinction just mentioned between the rights of cultural groups that constitute nations, and those of cultural minorities of immigrants that do not constitute national groups.
71. Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora."
72. See Raz-Krakotzkin, "Post-Zionism and the Binational Challenge," 24.
73. In note 59 and in the text to which it is appended I observe that Butler sees the binational identity that she wants Jews everywhere to adopt, Israeli Jews in particular, as an anti-identitarian project. But she nevertheless speaks of herself, and tacitly of all the subjects to whom this anti-identitarian project is supposed to apply, as people of "Jewish formation" (see Butler, *Parting Ways*, 20, 22, and 27). In other words, Butler is aware of the fact that her "anti-identitarian" mission presupposes certain empirical facts about individuals by virtue of which they become candidates for, or even duty-bound to take part in, this particular "anti-identitarian" project. In our case, the relevant empirical fact is that (in Butler's language) they are of "Jewish formation," that is, they are people who grew up in and were shaped by Jewish experience and education.
74. The current controversy between the diasporic post-Zionists and Zionism seems to be analogous to the controversy at the time of the inception of Zionism between Dubnowism and Bundism on the one hand (see note 70 above), and Zionism on the other. The former supported the continuation of a dispersed Jewish peoplehood. The civic and postcolonial post-Zionist stances resemble those who at the time of the inception of Zionism supported the cultural assimilation or integration of the Jews with the peoples among whom they lived and their preservation at most as a separate religious group.

75. Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora," 715.
76. Boyarin and Boyarin, "Diaspora," 715.
77. Butler, *Parting Ways*, 214.
78. In this book and in *A Just Zionism* I have addressed specific issues regarding what needs to be done, in practical terms, about these major injustices. With regard to the refugees, I have argued that it would be appropriate to compensate them but not to permit their mass return (see Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 84–93). Regarding the occupation that began in 1967 and the Israeli settlements that followed it, I argue that the correct solution is the creation of a Palestinian state in those territories, based on the 1967 borders (see discussion in chap. 3; and Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 93–109). Inequality within Israel needs to be ended not only on the basis of equal individual rights for Arabs and Jews, but also by granting collective rights to the Arab minority. In this event, Israel would be, on a constitutional level, a binational state, although on a political level properly Jewish in the main. Other than the view of Israel within the 1967 borders as constitutionally binational but politically Jewish in the main, the practical contours of my proposal are accepted by that Israeli majority which supports a peace agreement between the Jews and Arabs of Israel/Palestine. What I have done in my two books regarding these solutions is to show that they not only are right intuitively and practically but also follow from the logic of the justice of the Zionist idea itself and the changes it required in light of the history it was accompanied by and created.
79. See chap. 5.3.4 below; and Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 47–51.
80. See Judt, "Israel: The Alternative"; Friedland, "The Liberal Zionists"; Ian S. Lustick, "Two-State Illusion," *New York Times Sunday Review*, September 14, 2013, New York edition, SR1; and Anthony Lerman, "The End of Liberal Zionism," *New York Times Sunday Review*, August 22, 2014, New York edition, SR4.
81. On the feasibility of a two-state solution despite the settlements and the geo-demography they have created, see Avner Inbar and Assaf Sharon, "Partition Skepticism and the Future of the Peace Process," *Daily Beast*, September 9, 2013. On the expected moral implications of a one-state solution, see the comments in chap. 5.2.1 below.
82. See Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 67–96; Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 9–24.
83. See Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 53.

## CHAPTER 5

1. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 20.
2. They are called "Green Line" because they were highlighted by the color green on the maps attached to the armistice agreement that ended Israel's War of Independence in 1949. They are also called "the 1967 borders" because they formed the boundaries of Israel's territorial control from 1949 until the outbreak of the 1967 Six-Day War.
3. Sheizaf, "Endgame," Ha'aretz.com, July 15, 2010.

4. Sheizaf, "Endgame."
5. Shenhav, *Beyond the Two-State Solution*.
6. Sheizaf, "Endgame."
7. Another pair consisting of a proprietary-Zionist proponent and a post-Zionist proponent of the inconsistency/hypocrisy accusation against liberal Zionism described above is the pair consisting of the Israeli Kahanist activist Baruch Marzel and the prominent American Jewish political scientist Ian Lustick. The latter enthusiastically quoted and endorsed the former's version of the hypocrisy accusation in a paper published at the time this book went to publication. Marzel distributed a leaflet addressed to students and faculty at Tel Aviv University in 2014, informing them that their university stands on lands that were expropriated in 1948 from the Arab inhabitants of the village of Shaykh Munis. They should therefore do away with their two faces and either call their university "Shaykh Munis University" or stop criticizing the post-1967 settlers for their expropriations of Arab land. See Lustick, "Making Sense of the Nakba," 2.
8. *Archives parlementaires*, 754. See also the discussion in chap. 2.
9. I am not convinced that the injustice of the expulsion of refugees in 1948 outdoes the injustice of the post-1967 settlement activity, for I believe that one must compare the severity of evils within the context in which they were carried out. The settlements, constructed over a period of decades under the declared policy of a powerful state at the expense of a helpless population that is subject to its rule, seem worse to me than the expulsions carried out in 1948 by a Holocaust-stricken population attempting to create a state for itself at the expense of enemy forces. Expulsions were perpetrated in many places in the wake of popular liberations and in conditions of general worldwide instability following World War II and the end of colonialism. Still, even if one does not accept this view but continues to hold that, morally speaking, the expulsion of 1948 was worse than the post-1967 settlements, this still does not affect the argument based on the distinction between the morality of Zionism as such and the morality of the steps undertaken to realize it. The expulsion disgraces Zionism in a way that should not be taken lightly, but it does not negate its overall justifiability, since the general unfolding of Zionism during the period up until 1967 can be defended on the basis of its egalitarian interpretation.
10. For instance, the evidence provided by the New Historians concerning the refugees of 1948 and the Zionist leadership's objectives when it ordered their expulsion (on this, see Morris, *Palestinian Refugee Problem*), as well as the evidence they provide on the Zionist leadership's intention to torpedo the formation of an Arab state as determined by the UN's plenary partition decision of November 1947 in collusion with King Abdullah of Jordan (on this, see Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan*). Further support for this thesis can be found in the words of Max Bodenheimer, a delegate to the First Zionist Congress in 1897, who, in the course of the debate on the 1937 partition plan, which raised the issue of the Zionists' true objectives, attributed the modesty of the Basel Program of the First Zionist Congress in 1897 to tactical considerations. Similar evidence can be found in one of the drafts that preceded the final version of the Balfour Declaration. This draft did not refer to the establishment of a national

home for the Jews in Palestine, but rather to the “reconstitution” of Palestine “as a national home for the Jewish people.” It was only the pressure exerted by one of the British Foreign Office officials that resulted in final official wording. On Bodenheimer, see Dothan, *Partition of Eretz-Israel*, 97–98. On the Balfour Declaration, see Barzilay-Yegar, *National Home*, 30. See also Ben-Gurion’s letter to his son, mentioned in chap. 3, n. 5, and many of my quotations in that same chapter from Ben Zion Dinur. All these quotations confirm the present thesis.

11. See chap. 3, n. 5.
12. Dinur, *Israel in the Diaspora*, 23–24.
13. Hendel and Levi, “History, Teaching,” 257.
14. “The year 1948 is an arbitrary date. We could have started the analysis with the Balfour Declaration, the 1929 riots, the Great Arab Rebellion, the Biltmore Plan or the Partition Plan of 1947. The Year 1948 is, to me, a balanced starting point, because it allows the inclusion of the Palestinian history of the Nakba, even if not in its entirety, and, at the same time, recognizes the existence of the Jews as a national collective, including their achievements since 1948.” Shenhav, *Beyond the Two-State Solution*, 143–44. None of the events or chains of events Shenhav lists in the above quotation refers to the situation of Europe’s Jews in the nineteenth century. The periodization I propose, in which “the time of the Green Line” constitutes a period in which Zionism changed, certainly allows us to include both the entire Palestinian history of the *Nakba* and the entire Palestinian history from the onset of Zionism. Thus, modern Jewish history in the Land of Israel—the history of Zionism—can include Palestinian history, and Palestinian history can include the history of Zionism.
15. Shenhav, *Beyond the Two-State Solution*, 22.
16. Shenhav, *Beyond the Two-State Solution*, 23.
17. For the most extensive Israeli research on this question, see Morris, *Palestinian Refugee Problem*. Debates about certain events that allegedly led to the creation of Israel are frequent. A prominent example is the massacre that occurred during the 1948 war in the village of Deir Yassin near Jerusalem. It was carried out by the Irgun and Lehi. The killing of around one hundred Arab civilians continues to arouse stormy debate. See Nir Yahav, “Sixty Years after Deir Yassin: ‘Photos of the Massacre Must Be Exposed’” [in Hebrew], *Walla*, April 9, 2008. Some years ago there was a public uproar about what was called the “Tantura affair,” an accusation made in an MA thesis submitted to Haifa University according to which the (Israeli) Alexandroni battalion committed a massacre in the (Palestinian) village of Tantura (on this, see the online documents directory relating to the event, created by Professor Dani Censor; <http://www.ee.bgu.ac.il/~censor/katz-directory/>). Another type of action marking the history of Zionism, which stirs up similar debate, is the acquisition of land in Palestine / the Land of Israel by “land redeemers,” as they are called by proprietary Zionism; it is claimed that this “land redeeming” caused the dispossession of Arab fellahin. See Shafir, “Land, Labor, and Population”; Pappé, “Zionism as Colonialism”; Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 46–48; Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory*. A third example is the Zionist leadership’s attitude to the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust, that is, the question of whether it saw the rescue of these

- Jews as secondary to Zionism's primary goal of bringing the Jews to the Land of Israel. See Michman, "'Zionism' Facing the Holocaust"; Beit-Zvi, *Post-Ugandan Zionism*; Porat, *Zionist Leadership*; Segev, *The Seventh Million*; Grodzinsky, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust*; Yakira, *Post-Zionism*.
18. Even avowedly right-wing Zionist historians have cast doubt on the Israeli version, which claims that the Palestinian leadership encouraged the flight. These historians argue that this claim has no documentary support. See Gelber, *Independence versus Nakba*, 185, and the references there.
  19. Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 1 LSI 3 (1948).
  20. Ibid.
  21. Ibid.
  22. "It is, for example, a consideration against a conception of justice that, in view of the laws of moral psychology, men would not acquire a desire to act upon it even when the institutions of their society satisfied it. For in this case there would be difficulty in securing the stability of social cooperation. An important feature of a conception of justice is that it should generate its own support. Its principles should be such that when they are embodied in the basic structure of society men tend to acquire the corresponding sense of justice and develop a desire to act in accordance with its principles." Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 119.
  23. A position of this type has recently been vociferously advocated by Moshe Arens, a former defense minister of Israel, who considers himself a nationalist liberal and a student of Jabotinsky. It seems also to be the position of Reuven Rivlin, Israel's president at the time this book is being published. Other prominent right-wingers, too, seem to subscribe to it. See Sheizaf, "Endgame."
  24. Yonah and Shenhav discuss such multicultural arrangements, but the theoretical foundations of their academic publications—as they themselves argue—imply only a pluricentered multiculturalism for oppressed groups. See Yonah, *In Virtue of Difference*, 220–28; and Yonah and Shenhav, *What Is Multiculturalism?* 147–76. Shenhav in *Beyond the Two-State Solution* expresses general opinions that lack detail and do not cohere with the positions he adopts in his more theoretical and systematic writings regarding various types of binational arrangements for Arabs and Jews. See Shenhav, *Beyond the Two-State Solution*, 154–64. Raz-Krakotzkin mentions bi-nationalism without going into its institutional details. See Raz-Krakotzkin, "Post-Zionism and the Binational Challenge."
  25. This also applies to the Palestinian and Arab conception of Zionism, which is very similar to the post-Zionist conception. "Besides the often rehearsed views [of "Arab intellectuals in general and Palestinians in particular"] on the colonial and imperialist character of Zionism and the claim that the Jews do not qualify and constitute a national group—views that have been discussed and presented for decades—there have been very few attempts to further explore and/or revisit ["the 'Jewish question' and Jewish rights"]. Bashir, "Engaging with the Injustice/Justice of Zionism," 640. Azmi Beshara, an Israeli-Palestinian intellectual and former Knesset member who led the Israeli-Palestinian Balad Party, once described Israel as the biggest armed robbery of the twentieth century. See Ronny Shaked, "Arab Mk: Israel 'Robbery of Century,'" *ynetnews*, December 18, 2005.
  26. See the quotation in note 25 above.



## CHAPTER 6

1. Dinur, "Book of Zionism," 12.
2. This interpretation could itself be open to different interpretations. Herzl, for instance, believed that the Jewish state would be an option only for those who either did not want or were unable to become assimilated into the nations within which they reside. His negation of exile, therefore, implies that all Jews should not be in exile, but not necessarily as a result of their mass migration to the Land of Israel. See, for instance, Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 95; Shapira, "Negation of the Diaspora," 10.
3. Pinsker, for instance, believed that once the pathology of the Jews—that is, the absence of a homeland—was healed, they would be able to enjoy a secure existence also outside this homeland. See Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 32–34; Avineri, *Making of Modern Zionism*, 73–82. The clearest example of the minimalist interpretation of the negation of exile is that of Ahad Ha'am, as expressed in his theory of the spiritual center. On this, see, for instance, Zipperstien, *Elusive Prophet*, 102–4; Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 108–12. Judah Leib Magnes never objected to the existence of a Jewish Diaspora, even though he himself migrated to the Land of Israel. See Shimoni, "Shlilat Hagalut Reconsidered," 52.
4. Gabi Sheffer and Hadas Roth-Toledano say that until the 1970s "The majority of Zionist and Israeli leaders, the majority of Israeli officials and the majority of the Israeli public supported the negation of exile and conceived of Israel as the sole center of the Jewish people." Sheffer and Roth-Toledano, *Who Leads*, 39. Some scholars situate the watershed in this matter at a rather early point. Anita Shapira argues that the tendency began in the 1960s and became more pronounced during the 1970s (Shapira, *Jews*, 63–64, 83). Gideon Shimoni claims that the transition started in the 1970s (Shimoni, "Shlilat Hagalut Reconsidered," 60). I assume that one factor allowing the issue to be pushed onto the margins of the Zionist agenda is the constant and urgent question concerning the status of the Jews in the Land of Israel relative to that of the Arabs—a question that ever since the Six-Day War has overshadowed all the other problems Zionism faces.
5. For some important accounts of the history of the notion of the negation of exile and its various manifestations, see Shapira, "Negation of the Diaspora"; Shimoni, "Shlilat Hagalut Reconsidered." See also the two-part article by Raz-Krakotzkin, "Exile within Sovereignty." Though Raz-Krakotzkin's central thesis is mainly normative rather than descriptive, and concerns Jewish sovereignty in Israel and not the Jewish exile, this article also includes many important distinctions regarding the phenomenology of the principle of the negation of exile, especially in the many footnotes.
6. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 48–49.
7. Yehoshua believes that exile is an expression of national neurosis. He renders this in the title of his article that negates exile: "The Neurotic Solution."
8. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 6.

9. Ergang, *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism*, 91.
10. Berlin, "Nationalism," 346.
11. Berlin, "Nationalism," 346.
12. Shamir became a member of Lehi's leadership after the death of Abraham Stern ("Yair"), who was the founder and first leader of this zealous right-wing underground movement. On the Lehi's ideology, see chap. 1, n. 11.
13. As early as 1987, Prime Minister Shamir urged the US government not to grant refugee status to Soviet Jewish refugees who migrated to the United States. In October 1989 President George H. W. Bush imposed quotas on Soviet Jewish immigration into the United States. See Lazin, "Freedom of Choice," 400–401; Pinkus, *End of an Era*, 347; Sheffer and Roth-Toledano, *Who Leads*, 218–19. The US authorities' announcement that it was to limit the number of Jewish migrants from the USSR to be allowed entry as refugees also led to a change in the attitude of US Jewish organizations to the opening of their country's gates to members of this group. On this, see Charles Hoffman, "Tripping Out for Soviet Jews," *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, October 20, 1989.
14. Shortly before the Hebrew version of this book went to press, an interview was published in the Israeli daily *Yedioth Aharonot* with Yakov (Yasha) Kedmi, a former head of Israel's secret organization "Nativ," which was responsible for the immigration of Soviet Jews into Israel in the 1990s. Kedmi admitted in this interview that he "defrauded about a million immigrants from the Soviet Union. The purpose was to make them think they would not be able to immigrate to America and that Israel is their only option." Ronen Bergman, "The Russian Scam" [in Hebrew], *Yedioth Ahronot—Seven Days Weekend Magazine*, April 14, 2011.
15. The detente policy that began in 1969 refers to the easing of the tensions induced by the Cold War, that is, the political rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union since the end of World War II.
16. See Lazin, "Freedom of Choice," 402–3.
17. For a comprehensive discussion of the Ben-Gurion-Blaustein agreement and of Blaustein himself, see Ganin, *An Uneasy Relationship*, 9–11. For a brief discussion, see Gorny, *Quest for Collective Identity*, 68; Eilam, Review of *An Uneasy Relationship*; Sheffer and Roth-Toledano, *Who Leads*, 37, 40.
18. *Aliyah* is the word used in Hebrew to denote specifically the immigration of Jews from the diaspora to the Land of Israel or to Israel. Literally it means not just immigrating but rather "ascending," climbing to a higher altitude.
19. Shiff, *Defeated Zionist*, 241–43. Shiff argues that Moshe Sharett, too, though more moderate than Ben-Gurion on the question of who is a Zionist, was not willing to accept Abba Hillel Silver's Zionist agenda on an equal basis to Israeli Zionism.
20. As for the "Wailing Wall Women" affair, in 1989 a group of women who wanted to pray at the site of the Western Wall in Jerusalem and to read aloud from the Torah while wrapped in prayer shawls appealed to the Israeli High Court of Justice. Various Orthodox authorities argued that this was forbidden by the *Halacha* (the Jewish religious laws). The conflict culminated in the violent intervention of a number of men in the women's prayer. Following a

- series of appeals to the Israeli High Court of Justice, and after unsuccessful litigation before a specially appointed government committee, the High Court of Justice ruled that, if it became accessible, Robinson's Arch (an arch that once stood at the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount, and named after Edward Robinson, who identified it in 1838), would serve as an appropriate alternative site to the Western Wall for prayer. See HCJ 257/89 *Hoffman v. Western Wall Commissioner* 48(2) PD 265 [1994] (Isr.); HCJ 3358/95 *Hoffman v. Director General* 54(2) PD 345 [2000] (Isr.); HCJ 4128/00 *Director General v. Hoffman* 54(1) PD 258 [2000] (Isr.). On conversions to Judaism, the Chief Rabbinate tends to be inflexible about recognizing even those conversions performed by Orthodox Jewish authorities outside Israel, especially when it concerns the United States. Scores of Orthodox rabbis from the United States recently sent a letter on this issue to Israel's minister of religious affairs, Eli Yishai. See Kobi Nachshoni, "Another Front: U.S Rabbis Demand Recognition of their Conversions" [in Hebrew], *Ynet*, February 22, 2011.
21. For a general survey of this affair, and for Rabbi Yoffie's own response to Katsav's conduct, see Neta Sella, "Rabbi Yoffe Affronted by Katsav," *Ynetnews*, June 23, 2006. This expression of the exclusive appropriation of Judaism by Israel's mainstream Zionism is highly reminiscent of another expression of such a type of appropriation: The town called in Hebrew "Akko," which has a long Arab history and a large proportion of Arab citizens, is so-called even in its written Arab transcription, rather than with its proper Arab name, Akka.
  22. MK Zvi Hendel of "Ha'ihud haleumi—Yisrael Beytenu," which was almost a full partner in Zeevi's politics, used the same condescending expression regarding another Jewish US ambassador in Israel, Dan Kurtzer. The earlier protest demonstrations in Israel against Kissinger during his 1975 mediation trips between Israel and Egypt in the aftermath of the 1973 Yom Kippur War must also be mentioned. The then US secretary of state was called *yehudon* by West Bank Jewish settlers.
  23. Yehoshua, "Honing the Concepts," 138.
  24. Yehoshua, "The Neurotic solution," 69.
  25. Bell and Marans, *The A. B. Yehoshua Controversy*, excerpts from pp. 64, 36, 9–11 respectively.
  26. Israel's Law of Return and the Law of Citizenship are certainly not welcoming and empowering for the Arabs who live in Israel. See below, sections 6.3.2. and 6.3.3. For a full discussion of the meaning of these laws for the Arab citizens of Israel, see Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 117–33.
  27. The only Jews that the minister of the interior can deprive of the right to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return are Jews who were involved in activity against the Jewish people; Jews who are liable to endanger public health or the security of the state; and Jews with a criminal past who are liable to endanger public order. These exceptions are determined in subparagraph 2b of the Law of Return, 5710-1950, 4 LSI 114 (1949–50).
  28. Berlin, "Nationalism," 346.

29. Their rejection of Jewish nationalism is based on their not very nuanced anti-essentialism which is shared by writers like Ram, Shenhav, Yonah, Sand, and others. See chaps. 2.2., 2.3.2 esp. n. 91, and 4.4.2.
30. This issue is disputed by historians.
31. Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*.
32. "We shall call "ethnic groups" those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent . . . it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*) differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity." Weber, *Economy and Society*, 389.
33. The Jews' partial nationhood at the end of the nineteenth century made it possible for Zionism to propose the option of turning them into a nation in the full sense of the word. On this, see chap. 2.2. As for their also not being a diaspora in the full sense of the word (because they lacked a core national group in their homeland at the end of the nineteenth century, though they had it in the past), the same question may be asked: Should they become a diaspora in the full sense of the word by some of them becoming their core national group in their native land? Ahad Ha'am's Zionism may be regarded as an affirmative answer to this question.
34. Sand, *Invention of the Jewish People*, 302–3.
35. See, for instance, Pinsker's ideas mentioned in note 3 above.
36. See Jakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 133–35.
37. This standard but significant logical fallacy afflicted his 2008 book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*. Sand further elaborates his argument in the introduction to his edited volume *On the Nation and the "Jewish People,"* which includes translations to Hebrew of Renan's "What Is a Nation?" (*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*) and "Judaism as Race and Religion" (London, Verso, 2010). As the book's cover indicates, it was edited and translated with the aim of supporting Sand's ideas in *The Invention of the Jewish People*. I have had occasions to mention Renan's article "What Is a Nation?" many times here and its implication that, at least in our day and at least partially, the Jewish Diaspora, or at least its Zionist component, is part of a national collective of world Jewry. In the essay "Judaism as Race and Religion," which, like "What Is a Nation?" was written during the last third of the nineteenth century, Renan rejected the notion that the Jews are a racial group. At the time, Renan wrote this essay in order to counter the arguments of those who refused to accept Jews as members of the European nations among whom they lived on the grounds that the Jews were a separate race and that shared nationhood depended on shared genetic origin. But neither of these articles by Renan, not even "Judaism as Race and Religion," supports Sand's thesis in *The Invention of the Jewish People* and his position to the effect that the Diaspora Jews today are not part of a national collective of world Jewry; both these essays, in fact, clash with Sand's thesis. According to Renan, nationhood does not depend on the sociogenetic fact of common ancestry but rather on the sociomental fact of attributing value to a common heritage and a wish to continue to live by it. On this view, Jews both in the nineteenth century and in the twenty-first century may consider themselves part of the French nation

- or American nation, while in the twenty-first century they can equally consider themselves part of the Jewish-Israeli nation. They can realize this choice fully and pertinently by living in Israel, and in a partial manner in other ways.
38. Ram, *Time of the "Post,"* 191. These positions are shared by civic post-Zionism and postcolonial post-Zionism, both discussed in chap 4. One should remember that postcolonial post-Zionism supports multiculturalism only in relation to oppressed groups and only in order to compensate for their past oppression. Unlike ethnocultural nationalism or liberal multiculturalism, it does not support it on the basis of people's ongoing interest in adhering to their original culture or in preserving it for generations. On how ethnocultural nationalism and liberal multiculturalism promote these interests, see Kymlicka, *Multicultural Odysseys*, 26–33; Raz, *Ethics in the Public Domain*, 125–45, 170–92; Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 58–96.
  39. As I mentioned in chap. 4, postcolonial post-Zionists support a pluricentered, affirmative, or strategic multiculturalism. They oppose liberal multiculturalism, which distinguishes between national rights and polyethnic rights. On the literature dealing with these distinctions, see note 41 below. On the debate on liberal multiculturalism and equality, see Barry, *Culture and Equality*; and for a critique, see Kelly, *Multiculturalism Reconsidered*.
  40. For a detailed and nuanced theory of minority rights based on this type of argument, see Patten, *Equal Recognition*.
  41. The more central to a given culture is the custom whose prohibition is being considered, the less able are members of that culture to adhere to their culture. If, for instance, female circumcision were a highly significant component of Islam, it would be more important, in this respect, to allow it than if it were a marginal component of that religion. On the other hand, were it not for the fact that female circumcision caused a certain, permanent, and irreversible damage to women's bodily integrity, to their ability to enjoy sex, and hence also to their dignity, it might have been easier to allow it. The fact that, religiously speaking, female circumcision is not very crucial for Islam, together with the fact that it unquestionably and irreversibly violates an important interest, is sufficient reason to prohibit it. This conclusion is reached by balancing interests, not by invoking the value of equality among the subjects of the law. For a treatment of all these issues and the basic distinctions providing the framework for this discussion, see Barry, *Culture and Equality*; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*; Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism*; Gans, "Interest in the Preservation of Culture"; Margalit and Halbertal, "Liberalism and the Right to Culture."
  42. Examples where the outcomes of the balancing are clear are the following: exemption from the law that prohibits assault in order to allow female circumcision; and exemption from the law that prohibits murder in order to allow family honor killings. By contrast, permission to wear a yarmulke (skullcap) in non-Jewish countries is not out of the question. Permission to wear a yarmulke in the military (for instance, in the United States) or permission to follow the Sikh custom of carrying a dagger in Britain seem problematic. Sometimes a balance must be struck between the majority's right to live within the framework of

- its culture and to preserve it, and the minority's right to do the same. Thus, for instance, it would seem that the proposed construction of four mosque minarets in Switzerland should be approved, while the proposed construction of a million minarets should not. Within the range of some scores and some hundreds, it is hard to decide at what point approval should be withheld.
43. Generations of scholars have erroneously, in my opinion, characterized civic-territorial nationalism as "subjective" or "voluntary," and hence "good" nationalism, while characterizing ethnic nationalism as "objective" and involuntary, and hence "bad." See Kohn, *Nationalism*; Seymour, "Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy," 1–61; Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging*. For a criticism of this distinction see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 7–38.
  44. Sand, *On the Nation and the "Jewish People"*, 15.
  45. For additional reservations concerning Renan's depiction of the nation as "a daily plebiscite" and of the fact that it "has encouraged many scholars to misread the nation as a kind of voluntary association," see Yack, *Nationalism and the Moral Psychology of Community*, 83–89.
  46. Hume, "Of the Original Contract," 475.
  47. Hume, "Of the Original Contract," 476.
  48. On their oscillating between the concepts of "exile" and "diaspora," see chap. 4, n. 45.
  49. Anderson canvasses the decline of religion as the main explanation for the rise of nationalism (Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11–12). The transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy is the crux of Gellner's sociological theory of the rise of nationalism. See Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.
  50. From this it follows not that egalitarian Zionism's interpretation of the principle of the negation of exile has no practical implications, but that these implications are limited to the preservation of existing Jewish self-determination in Israel, which certainly does not require the immigration of all Jews into it. For egalitarian Zionism the means of such preservation must be constrained by the basic interests of both the Jews and the Arabs who live in the Israel. For a discussion on the Law of Return, see the end of the second part of the present chapter and the end of the present part. Also see Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 111–44.
  51. For discussion on this issue, see chap. 2.2.
  52. According to Ahad Ha'am, the goal of Zionism was to establish a Jewish community in the Land of Israel whose culture would be a pervasive, Hebrew-speaking Jewish culture, and which would serve as a national spiritual center for Jewish Diasporas all over the world. See also Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet*, chap. 3.
  53. Here, of course, I have in mind Ahad Ha'am's famous distinction. He believed that the key issue of Zionism was "the question of Judaism" rather than "the Jewish question" to which Herzl had turned his full attention. Herzl believed that Zionism's objective was to provide a solution for the hardships undergone by individual Jews as a result of anti-Semitic persecution. Ahad Ha'am, by contrast, believed that Zionism's main goal was preserving the Jewish collective identity after it began to fade away as a result of assimilation. See Ahad Ha'am, "Jewish State." For more on this matter, see for instance; Zipperstien, *Elusive Prophet*, 102–4; Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology*, 105–6.

54. Ahad Ha'am, "Jewish State," 44.
55. Ahad Ha'am, "Negation of the Exile," 401. As I hinted in chap. 2, these two aspects of Ahad Ha'am's notions of national culture and spiritual center are among the characteristics that Raz and Margalit stress in their article on national self-determination.
56. Yehoshua, "The Meaning of Homeland," 9.
57. In the article referred to above, in which Yehoshua mentioned the totality of Jewishness in Jews' life in Israel, he seems to be aware that for Jews living in Israel this is not a matter of choice. He even boasts on account of this lack of choice: "[The Jewishness of an American Jew] is voluntary and deliberate, and he may calibrate its pitch in accordance with his needs. We in Israel live in a binding and inescapable relationship with one another." Yehoshua, "The Meaning of Homeland," 9.
58. Yehoshua is a strong opponent of the settlements. See, for example, Yehoshua, *Homeland Grasp*, 80, in which he expresses his displeasure at US Jews' nonintervention on the settlement issue. Yehoshua's well-known leftist position, in addition to (as mentioned above) his prominent status as a major spokesman of Zionism, explain why his views and statements can serve as significant evidence that essentialist Zionism is not confined to the extremist religious right-wingers; parts of the Left, too, are adherents to important components of this Zionism, and this is surely also the case with the Zionist center.
59. This argument can be used by both Left and Right. It maintains that that right-wing US Jews are more likely to migrate to Israel if it is nationalist than if it is liberal, just as liberal US Jews are more likely to migrate to Israel if it is liberal than if it is nationalist. Possibly, the very presence of Jews in Israel is important to rightist as well as to leftist Jews in America, but it is not sufficient to motivate them to migrate there. It is the substantive value of this Jewish existence—rather than the existence as such—that carries significance for each of these groups.
60. Israel's responsibility for them will then endure, too. Though they will cease forming a diaspora in Renan's sense of nationhood, they will go on being a diaspora in the sense that non-Jews will go on identifying them with Israel. Hence, diaspora members will be forced to identify with Israel, in the negative sense at least. Then, too, Israel will have a responsibility toward them because they will be associated with its conduct. This will be a responsibility not to preserve them as a national diaspora but to refrain from carrying out policies that might endanger them as human beings.
61. Freedman, "In the Diaspora," 36. For another interesting example, see the memories of the late historian Tony Judt from a summer vacation he spent on a kibbutz during the late 1960s or early 1970s (Judt, "Kibbutz," *New York Review of Books*, January 18, 2010).
62. See chap. 4, n. 80.
63. Beinart, "The Failure," 16.
64. The increased flow of immigrants into Palestine in the period of the so-called Fourth Aliyah (1924–31) was the outcome of "external" circumstances. These included the worsened economic condition of the Jews in Poland as a result of

economic restrictions imposed on them, and the simultaneous reduction in the opportunities to migrate to other countries, especially as a result of the closing of the US gates. For a survey of the repercussions of this adversity from a number of Zionist perspectives, see Giladi, *Jewish Palestine*; Halamish, "Immigration," 196–97. For a discussion regarding the waves of emigration from the Land of Israel in those years, see Margalith, "Aspiring Emigrants." On the Fifth Aliyah, see Gelber, *A New Homeland*.

65. The Holocaust "not only annihilated physically a third of the Jewish people but also the Jewish ideological diversity that previously characterized its diaspora communities. After it, and because of it, the Zionist idea became widespread among the Jews. In this way a minority movement among the Jews turned into a dominant movement that gained extensive support among all Jewish Diaspora communities." Michman, "The 'Zionist-Blasters,'" 11–12. For a discussion of the relationship between the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel, see also Michman, "The Causal Relationship"; Michman, "Research on 'Zionism' Facing the Holocaust."
66. For a detailed discussion of this interest as justification for ethnocultural nationalism, see Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 39–66.
67. For a detailed discussion of a revision in Israel's Law of Return in the spirit of the principles proposed here for reasons relevant to Jewish-Arab relations, see also Gans, *The Limits of Nationalism*, 97–123; Gans, *A Just Zionism*, 111–44.

## AFTERWORD

1. Dror Etkes, "Stop Arguing about Zionism" [in Hebrew], *Ha'aretz*, May 18, 2014.
2. See Ziegler, review of *A Just Zionism*; and Ben-Dror Yemini, "Is Zionism Justified?" [in Hebrew], *Ma'ariv*, September 28, 2012.
3. The argument that Israel's policies in the last few decades morally undermine its justified establishment must be accepted at least by those who accept the arguments of this book. The moral intuitions underlying these arguments are common among members of the Israeli Zionist Left and among most liberal publics in the West.
4. Etkes, "Stop Arguing about Zionism."
5. Israel Bartal writes: "Sand in fact does draw our attention to a most important and underresearched phenomenon: the big gap existing between the way history is described in textbooks and in the historical research literature on the one hand, and the way history is conceived of in the political discourse pertaining the memory of the past." Bartal, "Invention of the Invention." But Bartal also knows that at least part of the answer to this important question can be found in the considerable contribution made by the Zionist historiography produced before 1967 to the creation of an historical tradition that was, in his words, "created more in accordance with ideological patterns . . . as part of the history of the new nationalist movement rather than as a critical research of this history." Bartal, "Land and People," 49.



6. See, e.g., Amnon Rubinstein, “The Revolution Failed, Zionism Succeeded” [in Hebrew], *Ha’aretz*, June 10, 1997; Shlomo Avineri, “Post-Zionism Doesn’t Exist,” *Ha’aretz.com*, July 6, 2007.
7. Though not always. See, for instance, Yakobson and Rubinstein’s response (Yakobson and Rubinstein, *Israel and the Family of Nations*, 79–81) to the modernist critique of nationalism in which they invoke primordialists like Smith, and their suggestion to interpret certain paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence as a new interpretation of Jewish traditions and prayers throughout the main part of their exile, a suggestion I discussed in chap. 2.
8. See chapter 3.3.2, for instance, regarding the fact that what could be considered as the German law of return holds not for all ethnic Germans but only for East European Germans. Germany’s ethnic priorities in immigration are set by a country that has one homeland nation, unlike Israel’s Law of Return, which applies only to Jews even though Israel contains two homeland nations.
9. For the beginnings (no more) of such an elaboration, see my response (Gans, “Is Egalitarian Zionism Possible?” 669–73) to Føllesdal and Perlmann’s critique of this point (Føllesdal and Perlmann, “Can There Be a Just Zionism?” 629–30). See also chap. 3, n. 77.

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# INDEX

\*The index omits the frequently mentioned term "Israel." It also omits "Land of Israel" (and its transliterated Hebrew term "Eretz Israel"), "Palestine," "Historical Palestine," and "Israel/Palestine," which are different names for the same country (except as explained in p. 231, n. 2). The country that they refer to is also frequently mentioned; in addition, they are loaded with conflicting ideological meanings. As I wish to avoid committing myself to any one of these, I have used the terms interchangeably where possible.

\*\*The pages listed for the sub-entry "Jews as Jewish nation" include pages that refer also to: "Jewish collective as Jewish nation," "Jewry as Jewish nation," "Judaism as Jewish nation," "Jewish people as Jewish nation."

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