

# People of Ideals in a Country of Rifles : A Report on the Field Trip to Israel

河野, 徹

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## People of Ideals in a Country of Rifles

—A Report on the Field Trip to Israel—

Tetsu Kohno

Flying EL-AL is something different from flying JAL or KAL or any other international airlines. Not only for its announcements in beautiful Hebrew but for its interesting assortment of passengers. On board EL-AL planes one witnesses, besides usual passport classifications of age, sex, skin- and eye-color, race, height etc., a clear distinction between Orthodox and non-Orthodox peoples. About half of my neighbors in the foremost part of our charter Jumbo Jet were Orthodox. An oldish man and a late-thirtyish lady took the two inner seats beside my aisle-side one. I asked them if they were father and daughter. The bespectacled, swarthy, reserved but not unsociable lady shone with delight, shouting emphatic "Yes, yes, yes." "You paid her a compliment," said her husband in black, smallish, popeyed with strong glasses, somewhat repellent but not forbidding, even waggish sometimes—a rabbi supervising a New Jersey poultry farm. Just before the Nazi invasion, he had emigrated from Lithuania through Siberia, Manchuria and Japan to Shanghai. (He must have carried with him one of those innumerable yet individually so invaluable visas issued by Mr Sugihara, the then Japanese Consul at Kovno. According to what Rabbi Marvin Tokayer talked to the congregation at the Hillcrest Jewish Community Center in February 1977, the Consul and his family kept processing piles of applications day and night to save as many of the imperiled as possible. Abraham Kotsuji, famous Japanese convert to Judaism, told in his autobiography *From Tokyo to Jerusalem* that the Consul in question had been killed by the Nazi, but in fact he is still alive as a warm friend of Israel.)

After an interval of over thirty years the New Jersey rabbi was still able to mutter some broken Japanese phrases picked up during his short stay in the port town of Kobe. He even hummed a popular Japanese melody in 1930's called "China Night". A very demonstrative rabbi, he was the

type who cannot leave unsaid anything he has hit upon. All night long he kept talking loudly to his friends behind us, both in Yiddish and English, thus leaving me with very slender chance of napping. A man of impulse, he made no bones of getting out of his seat whenever he felt so inclined, though he never failed to apologize in very polite Japanese: "Sumimasen" or "Gomen-nasai". Having told me an entire story from Yiddish Writer Peretz, he suddenly looked back to give his friends one of his old chestnuts: "An Orthodox prays to God, a Conservative to the Almighty, a Reform to the Lord, but a Reconstructionist prays to whom it may concern." He was at one moment so lavishly good-humored, and at the next so morose; so firmly self-centered that he had little qualms in changing what he had decided to do a moment ago. His wife had to take out and tuck away his Bible God knows how often. Finally she gave up with a growl, "Okay, okay, Sir, My Lord, Your Majesty, Sire!"

This unflinching self-centeredness of the poultry-farm rabbi was also shared by other observant Orthodox neighbors. What should be done has to be done, however it may look obtrusive and whatever inconvenience it may cause to others. I saw a skullcapped young man a few rows behind me stand up all of a sudden for a prayer during the pre-takeoff taxying regardless of the fasten-your-seatbelt sign. A stewardess stepped up to tell him to sit down, but judging from her unexcited, perfunctory tone, she knew from the outset it was hopeless. At sight of this admirable model of faithful observance our rabbi was unable to contain himself and followed suit, in spite of another remonstrance from the stewardess, by standing up and bobbing his head in mumbled prayer. Early in the morning, already over the Mediterranean, there was a general stir among Orthodox males. Having put on their phylacteries in a blithesome manner, they disappeared somewhere to the rear, and long after all Gentiles, all female Jews and all unobservant male Jews finished their breakfast (bagels, excellent-quality lox with cream cheese etc.), came back with beaming faces after a full morning service. Giving no heed to all alien and non-Orthodox eyes fixed upon them, they took off their phylacteries, folded their prayer shawls with all due reverence, then asked the stewardess to serve their meals anew. A dignified old

man with white beard on the special single seat installed along the front wall of the foredeck cupboard, no doubt a rabbi, gave a curt order to a steward, "Shulhan katan!"—"(Bring) a small table (for dining)!" Apparently well accustomed to the inevitable nuisance of such double service, none of the EL-AL crew grimaced—something not to be expected on any other international airlines. At suppertime on the previous evening my adjacent rabbi did not fail to remind the steward of his strict observance of dietary law. "We serve only *kosher* meals. Never mind." The matter-of-fact tone in the boy's answer gave proof that each of the crew had weathered all varieties of the same demands many, many times over.

When our plane lowered its altitude with the shore of Israel in sight, we heard a spirited song through the speaker: "Sholem Aleichem." ("Peace to you") Even the perfectly no-nonsense Orthodox father with three equally pious sons, who had not cracked a single smile since the takeoff, now beamed with unutterable joy. Many people started singing "Shaw-lem, Shaw-lem, Shaw-lem, Aleichem." One of the stewardesses appeared and talked to the rabbi's wife—"Can you believe this?" Though she was really beauty-contest-worthy, I found myself in a defiant mood because last night she had toppled a tray of coke-filled cups over my trousers—and also over her apron—then angrily gone away with a blaming scowl and no apologies. Liability for the accident was clearly bilateral: arms held out too far from both sides did it. A more delicate JAL stewardess would rush back with dry cloth and many spontaneous apologies. And so I was thinking to myself that this "Can you believe this?" baloney must have been repeated to likely passengers a thousand times. But with all my antipathy to the stewardess, happiness and joy were in evidence on all the passengers' faces. While I was happy myself just because I had now relief from latent fear of hijacking, explosion or any other mishaps, the Jews around me exhibited a special joy which could not possibly be understood without knowing what "Zion" means to them. If all the Japanese had been forcibly dispersed all the world over by alien conquerors for two thousand years, had wept when they remembered the ancient glorious dynasty of Yamato, had constantly cherished their Yamato spirit and language, had maintained enough zeal to return to their historical homeland, and had finally been

allowed to do so, they could perhaps put about the same symbolic meaning on Mt. Fuji as the Jews do on the hill of Zion. The name of Fuji might have come to stand for Yamato (Nippon) as that of Zion does for Israel. The deep emotion now enrapturing people around me is something far beyond patriotism or sense of consanguinity; it has been caused by a tangible approach to the very source of their being.

As a budding scholar of Judaica I owe EL-AL many thanks for having given me an invaluable chance to see Jewish Orthodoxy in action. But suppose what would ensue if we had *not* been on board an Israeli plane, and Orthodox people had still had their own way in defiance of disapproving glances cast by others. In his *To Jerusalem and Back* Saul Bellow reports about a similar occurrence on board British Airways. Not only stewardesses were harassed by particular culinary demands, but Bellow himself was rebuked by his Hasidic neighbor for his deviation from dietary law. The young Hasid even promised Bellow a monthly remittance if the latter would vow never to eat nonkosher food again. In this case, both spoke in Yiddish, and Bellow was able to have due tolerance for one of his people. But suppose two Gentiles, say, a German engineer and a French businessman, had chanced to meet each other in a London hotel after hours of far-from-reposeful flight with Orthodox Jews. Through a classical process of anti-Semitic gripe session, both will give full play to their "dislike of the like for the unlike." An anthropological lesson of "cultural relativism" could be a temporary cure for such rash trend toward ethnocentric diatribes. Or should one take into account the prerogatives of being Jews on the Jewish airline? But it does not follow that any Japanese group, be it of militant Buddhists or of loud-mouthed Nokyo (Agricultural Cooperative) pops or of excited boy scouts, could carry on as they please on a JAL plane. Those inconveniences and dangers peculiar to air travel oblige us to keep a minimum decorum of quietness and obedience to on-board instructions, and that's that. Persistence in noisy and wilful sectarian behavior especially in such closely communal situation as inside an airplane would most certainly provoke others to enmity.

Pent-up resentment against strangers is dangerous because strangers

are never conceived as individuals, but as particular types, as any sociology textbooks say. Types are not always unfavorably biased, if one takes, for example, the amiable face of Composer Aaron Copland as a typically Jewish one, although we never lack for prejudiced stereotypes. (A Rorschach test with the contour map of Israel could typologically reveal each subject's idea of the country. Noel Calef writes in his essay in Fodor's Guide: "The country looks like a woman—that is, the way a woman looks to modern sculptors with her waist gripped in a corset, her head, feet and one arm caught in an Arab vise and the other arm dangling in the sea." On the other hand, a pro-Arab essayist might project a more bloody image of a dagger plunged into the heart of Middle East etc.) Ubiquitous sediments of rancor and rage against aliens have frequently catalyzed genocidal tragedies not only in European Jewish communities, but in almost all majority-minority situations through world history. The obvious historical lesson was for minorities to exercise more than due discretion. The pre-Emancipation ghettoized Jews were able to be as traditional as they wanted and yet to draw a discreet curtain over what was going on inside. Now the ghetto wall seldom exists as a physical partition, and if it ever does, only as an invisible yet tangibly exclusionistic atmosphere, say, of the Hasidic community in Brooklyn.

As in other social groups, those big figures worthy to assume the leadership of such communities are surrounded by less meritorious entourages, with a greater number of hotblooded novices guarding them around the periphery. More likely than not, it is these more peripheral and therefore less responsible members of the community that encounter probing approaches from the outside, thus provoking both intentional and accidental approachers to anger. If skirmishes have been perpetrated between Jews, as in the recent crash between Lubavitcher and Satmarer Hasidim regarding the interpretation of the Entebbe rescue operation (Miracle or Not), anybody except the concerned parties would take it for a storm in a teacup or a laughingstock. But if trouble arises between Jews and Gentiles, as in the also recent one about a patch of land (meant for the ritual bath site) between a Hasidic community north of New York City and the surrounding local community, some people might take it for a

storm on a pond no longer with smiles but with knitted eyebrows. Still this is only a civil law case between two groups of U.S. citizens. Nothing is more provocative than a nationalist attempt by an ascending power to materialize its own territorial imperative. Any ideology, either political or religious, is too flimsy to cover a territorial ambition. With a resurgence of such blatantly aggressive tribalism would any avowed efforts at mutual understanding in terms of cultural relativism be easily discouraged.

The purely Jewish Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful) settlements in the predominantly Arab-inhabited, dispute-ridden West Bank remind me of the prewar Japanese Young Settlers' Corps in Manchuria and Mongolia, a specially trained para-military organization of young hotbloods from farming villages, proud of being empire-builders and ready to fight and die for the country. To any eye the Corps served as the farthest outposts of expanding Japanese colonialism. Their settlements (uninvited intrusions for the native inhabitants) were justified by one of the Corps' mottos: "Co-Prosperity of the Five Races(in Manchuria)". Gush Emunim does not even assume such a hypocritical guise, but claims their own "Promised Land" outright. If the Japanese Colonizers' pretension to Co-Prosperity was a myth, even more mythological is the belief in "the Promised Land" utilized as a justification of the Israeli military occupation, because the idea that God chose a particular people and promised them a land has nothing to do with other peoples. Any Arab Christian would ask where in the Bible is a testimony that God gave Palestine to the Jews. If referred to the promise God gave to Abraham in the Book of Genesis, he would retort by quoting from Acts 10:34—"God is no respecter of persons." In this Gush Emunim case, the lack of discretion in the peripheral young hotbloods (and their ultraright bosses behind the scene) threatens us not with storms in a teacup or on a pond, but with a real one on high sea. Nothing is more dangerous at this moment than such religious and/or territorial nationalism. On our way to the Golan Heights one of my Australian-Jewish colleagues cried, "To Damascus!" presumably amazed at the diminutive size of Israel. Even uttered in jest, his mention of the Syrian capital shocked me. If an Arab student in New York,

one of the young hotbloods on the other side, urged me with a flickering grin to buy as many Israeli postal stamps as possible before Israel disappears from the map, I could not tell what percentage of his words is pure joke.

This digression aside, Orthodox behavior on board EL-AL demands our attention. When the much too faithful young Orthodox dared stand up for a prayer regardless of the fasten-your-seatbelt sign, many other equally observant Orthodox Jews were also praying for a divine favor without daring to stand up. They had enough discretion not to lose their on-board decorum. Only a few (including my adjacent rabbi who followed suit after the young man) behaved in public as if the public did not exist. It is these provocative persisters of their own difference, from the young Orthodox fanatic to Gush Emunim, that make the world persist in misunderstanding of and hatred toward Jewish people in general, whether in domestic or international scenes. I had encountered one of Israel's big problems even before landing at Ben Gurion Airport: how to live in cooperative co-existence with non-Jews (particularly Arabs) both inside and outside the Eretz.

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After all that display of religiosity while in flight, Tel Aviv looked secularized with a vengeance. When our charter bus passed Bar Ilan University, an Israeli counterpart of New York's Yeshiva University, our good-humored guide Joshua said, "This is where they teach 1 plus 1 equals 5", and the main building of the Histadrut (General Federation of Workers) was referred to as the Israeli Kremlin. Although neither of his comparisons were quite felicitous, I enjoyed his secular jocundities. Drawing near to the midtown area, he proposed a bus tour around the city as soon as the assignment of hotel rooms was over. As drowsiness had got the overwhelming better of excitement for everybody, only less than half of our study mission<sup>(1)</sup> accepted this not so tempting offer. I did very well to

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(1) From December 21, 1976 to January 3, 1977, "American Professors for Peace in the Middle East" (APPME) sent a fifteen-member study mission to Israel, and I was invited to join it. In Israel our party was combined with another of Aus-\*



join the minority whom the curiosity got the better of. During the stroll through the overcrowded Vegetable Market nothing struck me more than a cartful of pigs still alive but about to be slaughtered. If pigs are allowed to exist against one of the most salient bans in Judaic dietary law, no religious authority could be on safe ground here, and perhaps there would be nothing secular that is not available here.

On the evening of the following day I went out for a walk and on a main street asked a young lady, more Oriental than European, quietly dressed and not unattractive, how to get to Steimatsky Book Store. She seemed to know nothing of the sort, and instead of answering me, asked where I came from. When I disclosed my Japanese nationality, she suddenly grasped my hands and made a stunningly point-blank proposal: "I have a room not far from here. Let's go and make love." I had obviously talked to a wrong person. When I told her, short of any plausible excuse, that I was too old for that, she let go my hands glumly. Whatever she was, I had another feeling that Israel might not be so different from other countries.

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In pursuit of something more nobly secular, we stayed for two days at Kibbutz Gesher Haziv which commands a mild view of the Mediterranean but is disquietingly near to the Lebanese border. After a few hours' guided tour with no participation in any work, how could one tell anything really empirical? Amnon Hadary, a leading Israeli literary critics who accompanied us through our round-the-country trip, delivered an impassioned speech entitled "The Role of Kibbutz in Israeli Society" drawing on his own half-a-lifetime kibbutz experiences. His talk was one of the few to which I pricked my politico-socially untutored ear, because he kept giving proof that the universal ideals of socialism are still alive in kib-

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\*tralian academics (AAPME) to form a thirty-odd-member group. Our two-week schedule was crammed with interviews with prominent politicians, lectures by and discussions with Israeli academics, visits to kibbutzim, Lebanese and Syrian borders, the West Bank area and also to places with historical and religious associations.

butzim in a vastly experimentalized variety of humanitarian and egalitarian systems, though of course in coexistence with Zionist aspirations. This served me as a good introduction.<sup>(2)</sup>

I had suspected kibbutzniks of (1) an extraordinarily gregarious impulse which seeks any means to overcome solitude, (2) a naive mentality which makes little of the incompatibility between individuality and equality in spite of the increasing tendency of industrialization in kibbutzim themselves with a possible infiltration of meritocracy, and (3) a run-of-the-mill sort of life with no special incentives to be "different" from others, to live one better than others. (This does not necessarily mean what Veblen called "conspicuous consumption".) Now I know these suspicions do not so much reflect what kibbutzniks are like as my own petit-bourgeois way of living and, I am afraid, also of thinking.

Though easily related with blind following, gregariousness is a species-specific character which we cannot do without. Men are so programmed as to live in groups and to like the company of others for all reasons. Kibbutzniks base themselves all the more positively on this fundamental instinct not only in imminent need for self-defense against invading saboteurs (that is, Arab guerrillas), but also because of the determined will not to grossly deviate from their socialistic ideals. It entails a high degree of mutual trust and cooperation among all members, in short, group solidarity to do without exploitation of others and to let each member have an equal share of profit. To cope with the incompatibility between individualism and equality, kibbutzniks have fully displayed their indefatigable experimental spirit to satisfy as many kinds of people in as many types of work as possible. Proper-person-in-proper-place principle, yet all loathsome work, such as in the kitchen, impartially shared. They send those academically talented to universities (of course

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(2) The bulk of my instant kibbutz knowledge was adopted from a very interesting dialogue between Yosef Criden and Saadia Gelb, both kibbutzniks of thirty years' standing at Kfar Blum (*The Kibbutz Experiences*, Herzl Press, 1974), and also from the Japanese translation of Murray Weingarten's *Life in Kibbutz* (Jiji tsushin Sha Press, 1964). Though authentically Zionist and classifiable as "officially approved", both books try to honestly give full details of inside problems.

with kibbutz money)); budding artists can take off three days a week from their regular kibbutz work. Naturally there cannot be any total and absolute equality, but the comprehensive and tolerant efforts to give as ad-hoc and custom-made care and satisfaction as possible to each member could be just about the best of all the communal activities through world history. Individualism with a meritocratic tinge seems to have been replaced by humanitarianism, a more positive respect of each individual.

To give an example of such humanitarianism and egalitarianism fused into one, physically-handicapped and mentally-retarded children are never left out either in class or in playground: all the class is so educated as to encourage them to join and try until they reach high school level and can do some proper work for the kibbutz community—something quite unexpected in Japanese schools where “the survival of the fittest” is in evidence because failure in passing entrance examinations of top-ranking high schools and then universities means failure in life, thus making pupils looking upon peers, more than anything, as competitors to outlive and outpoint. The failure of the Russian kolkhoz system could be ascribed to an abuse of Stakhanovistic competitive points-scoring, which has buried in oblivion a most important Marxist principle of “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need”. In the kibbutz people are respected regardless of their ability so long as they try hard to pull their own weight, while the “shirkers” with all their cleverness are despised. This spirit of mutual help and of always trying to pull one’s own weight explains why kibbutzniks make the pillar of the Israeli Defense Force (Zahal).

Nothing is more admirable. Yet, I would rather not discard whatever is meant by “privacy”, freedom to do anything at any time undisturbed, and such delicate joies-de-vivre as a more delicious cup of coffee, a more aromatic puff of tobacco, a more sophisticated set of stereo components, as many books and records as I want, a garden, a car, or a house for that matter, all to my taste. What a courageous decision one must have made to slight and finally waive all these bourgeois-consumer delights! First and foremost kibbutzniks are voluntaristic participants

and perhaps have made up their mind, as religious initiates, to lose their respective identities in the whole and gain thereafter a more intense consciousness of being, though of course this could not be expected of many. Not satisfied with just pulling their own weight, some might occasionally get ready to vye with each other for bigger loads, knowing that their high devotion to duty would improve their communal and after all their respective standard of living.

With two other colleagues I was given a chance to visit a kibbutz family where both husband and wife were U.S.-educated intellectuals, husband doing some managerial work and wife active in some committee job. The well-known kibbutz system of rearing children separate from their parents does not weaken but actually strengthen family ties, for after work, which comes to a close about three p.m., parents can spend as much time as they want until bedtime when little ones are taken to their quarters and sent to sleep by reading or singing. The questions I asked were a few anthropological and sociological findings made into interrogative sentences: women in the kibbutz returning to the more female functions, or very few marriages between peer-group boys and girls because of a bond as comrades precluding the one as spouses etc. The husband said in retort to almost all our questions, "That's true, so what?" If each member is being taken care of on a tolerantly ad-hoc, "to-each-according-to-his-need" basis, the answer might well be "So what?" This sense of security could be *quid pro quo* they get in return for a partial abandonment of those small enjoyments I would not part with.

A remarkable thing about kibbutzim is that those prominent politicians, government officials, military officers etc. who are also kibbutzniks, send all their salaries to, and get their dues from their own kibbutzim on a strictly egalitarian principle. Former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon's dish-washing service whenever he is back at his kibbutz is so famous. Is it for mere form's sake? I might have thought so before, but now I would like to believe he really means it. Supposed to be a mirror of ethical socialism, kibbutzim should always try to synthesize democracy and prophetic justice. To maintain the strictly egalitarian principle, even leaders must practice a commonsensically incredible downward social mobility.

If any kibbutznik found himself unable to abide by this creed, the time has come for him to quit. Those dish-washing big-shot kibbutzniks of the Yigal Allon type are called "an aristocracy without wealth or material possessions". Their efforts to abolish or at least minimize earning and status differentials are really thorough-going. Professional men and ordinary people are just so situated as to respect and depend on each other so long as they belong to kibbutzim. Humorous stories told in the Criden-Gelb dialogue about all the "cranks" and "problem haverim (comrades)" in the kibbutz ("God knows we have enough of cranks, too"), and also about how to treat them so as not to hurt their pride, were the finishing stroke to crush my lingering prejudices against kibbutzniks.

Theirs is a secularist kibbutz. I felt some atmospheric difference between Gesher Haziv and Lavi, an Orthodox kibbutz where we stayed just for the night. At Gesher Haziv they just smiled us a welcome, letting us do as we please. At Lavi we were given a formal welcome address by a dignified woman in charge of the front desk. At the gift shop another eloquent lady did not let me just look around, but started explaining about those pendants and gemstones I had been looking at. Dutiful all right, but a little bit too enthusiastic. At dinner table a stern-looking, middle-aged waitress suddenly stood beside us, and rattled all the soft drink menu up to seven or eight kinds, imposing on us an immediate choice among them. After a few seconds of open-mouthed amazement, one of my colleagues asked where she came from. "Ghermahnia!" Where else, I thought to myself.

All kibbutzim, secular or religious, and regardless of bitter inside oppositions between German-speaking and Russian-speaking "haverim" or between American Jews and Sabras (native-born Israeli) etc., are Zionist in keeping their membership 100% Jewish. (Foreign visitors or Arab employees are accepted only on a temporary basis.) Kibbutzim as a beautiful antithesis of omnipresent cutthroat competitions at others' expense, is one side of the coin. To look back into the recent history of Israel, it is clear to any eye that many of these nonesuch egalitarian communes have been built on expropriated Arab land at the expense of those Palestinians evicted from their birthplace during the tumultuous 1948 war.

Since then Kibbutz socialism has been inseparably connected with Israeli national defense. Arabs are not "taken" into kibbutzim (or into the Army, for that matter) primarily for security reasons but also for the need not to dilute the quality and vigor of the Jewish State. Given the Jewish historical horror of anti-minority policy, the Zionist tradition to develop the Jewish sector at Arab expense cannot have escaped criticism, but once accepted as a *fait accompli*, the process of eviction and expropriation came to represent the consensus of government and public opinion. Moreover, since nearly 90% of the operating capital funds are provided by banks, the Jewish Agency, the government and the Histadrut, no kibbutzim can afford to be anti-Zionist. The character of kibbutzim as purely Zionist institutions will be called in question when at the advent of peace in the Middle East de-institutionalization of Zionism gets placed on the agenda and the door to full participation in Israeli life opens not only for the Jewish people but for other "citizens." At this writing, however, kibbutzim are of course in full force as units of Zionist colonial militia.

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At kibbutz-held collective ceremonies of Bar Mitzvah (in which thirteen-year-old boys reach the status, and assume the duties, of a 'man') candidate fledglings should besides skillfully reciting thirteen mitzvot (holy commandments), show their good riflanship by taking their weapons apart, clean and fire them with passable results. Israel is a country of rifles (and actually has produced the very best rifle in the world, the new Galil assault rifle which, in tests conducted by the U.S. Army, outperformed the American M-16, the Russian AK-47 and others including the Japanese Har-18). Ubiquitous not only in the front line area along the borders but also in the thronged kasbah in Old Jerusalem and at almost all bus stops are soldiers with slung rifles, either on duty or on leave, all in tattered khaki fatigue clothes. Most of them are reservists called "miluim". I saw a few genuine regulars in their black, very efficient overall combat dress (put on and off by pulling a zipper) only in the Golan Heights area. There we were brought into direct touch with frontline

soldiers stationed on a hill supposed to command a good view of Kuneitra (the day of our visit was cursed by thick fog with only a few yards' visibility). We were led into the stone-walled fortification whose top is covered with a window-paned observation box and a complexly winding trenchline piled with wooden frameworks and sandbags. I shuddered at a flash of imagination: Syrian soldiers rushing over the sandbags in berserk rage with spray bullets. "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*"? I do not know, but if I were a soldier ready to fight and die for whatever I was born into and brought up in, and some conceited pup said "Baloney" to this age-old patriotic motto, the only reason why my death should be glorified, I do not know whether I would agree with him. A sad thing, but battle lines are where idealistic pacifists had better fear to tread.

Then we went down into the soldiers' living quarters. Though provided with electric bulbs, a table, benches and double bunks, they dwell in a literal cave, decorated not by primitive paintings of bisons but by nudes torn from pornographic magazines. One of my colleagues uttered, "Wow, you've got terrific pictures!" His exclamation was answered by a nineteen-year-old regular, handsome, confident, with a little blasé smile, standing by the table in a relaxed manner with the slit of his combat dress half open—"You may take them away, and bring us real things." My thought ran to Syrian soldiers pitted against this Israeli fortress. Said to be more stiffly bound by religious (that is Islamic) laws than their Israeli counterparts, I wondered if they could also afford to indulge in such pleasantries (in front of foreign visitors, at that). Because I read in a story about Elie Cohn, Israel's master spy arrested, tortured and hanged in Damascus over a decade ago, that when Cohn visited a Syrian front-line fortification, he and accompanying officers happened to see through their binoculars Israeli kibbutz girls working in the field with their legs undraped, and then and there Cohn had to show a proper response to this quite un-Islamic, therefore quite despicable depravity with a spitting or two. It is a remarkable paradox that Zahal with such freedom of cracking off-color jokes is an army with practically no cases of random wartime rapes.

While visiting a field clinic near the Lebanese border which also

takes care of Arab patients coming from beyond, we happened to see a general, the district commander no less. I witnessed him talking with some of his men as if they were his intimate friends. When he disappeared into his car, they did not so much as salute but just waved him a goodbye. It is also paradoxical that while the Chinese People's Liberation Army, proud of its iron discipline, has had to always indoctrinate all its forces with Maoistic revolutionary ideas not only by political education but also through drastic abolishment of all nominal ranks, Zahal with an apparently loose discipline has had practically no need of hammering Zionist ideas into its rank and file. Perhaps there is no worry of hoops coming off the barrel in the army which can lose only once. West Pointers occupy only more or less ten percent of the U.S. Army officers' corps, but this ten percent characterizes the ethos of the whole corps just as a few drops of black ink in a glass of water, I hear. Hard-core Zionists from kibbutzim could be such determinant few drops of black ink in Zahal. Given the spiritual as well as pragmatic influences of kibbutzniks on Zahal, no wonder if military pomps were scarcely to be seen anywhere. I doubt if Israeli soldiers have their own full uniforms except those worn-out fatigue clothes they stand up in. Along the wooden-framed wall inside the Golan Heights stronghold mentioned above, I saw some walkie-talkies whose antennae were all broken and roughly mended with sticking plasters. Very unattractive, but always kept handy and in full use as their operators are. Instead of wearing metal badges of rank, many officers just painted two or three black stripes where badges should be pinned on. Neither did I see any soldiers standing before officers stiff as ramrods. If officer-soldier relationships in Zahal has been modelled after those between seniors and juniors in kibbutzim, officers should get used to taking advices from the rank and file, especially from those with Jewish "mouths" plus "heads." "Privates will kindly refrain from giving advices to officers"—this famous request put up for the Jewish Legion under British command must have become obsolete now.

Humane interpersonal relations and maximum battle readiness seem, quite incredibly, to be compatible in Zahal. Usually regimentation and impersonality get the better of human decency in armed forces not only in



fascistic but also democratic countries. The U.S. Marine Recruit Depot, Parris Island, might be a very special case, but just listen to what Marine drill instructors heap upon raw recruits: "Boy, I don't like you. You better move, you Communist motherfucker. I *know* the Kremlin sent you to fuck up my Marine Corps" or "If I see some of you cocksuckers fucking around, I'm going to take your weapon away, and guess what's going to happen? *You're* going to be the goddamn dummy!" (Both quoted from *WARRIORS—A Parris Island Photo Journal* by Richard Stack, Harper & Row, 1975) And actually, as widely reported, some recruits became "the goddamn dummies" themselves. A Marine drill instructor says, "I think I could get out of the Marine Corps and become an actor. We call them these names because if they should ever become prisoners of war, somebody is going to call them worse names than we call them. So if they can't take it here, they won't be able to take it overthere." Then there would be more need for Zahal D. I. s to "call these names" in view of possibly worse humiliations in store for their boys once caught, say, by the Syrians.

Human decency still left in Zahal might have something to do with those religious laws which form part of the military code. In other words, any violation of the religious laws relevant to the military is punishable by Army discipline. As there are more secularists than religionists in Zahal, one could expect a sort of bloody *Kulturkampf* between supporters of religious authority and of secular democracy. It could be let loose on the advent of peace but never before the primal question of survival crisis is settled. Besides, Zahal manages to be religious yet not authoritative, not secular yet democratic. Religion in the armed forces might be something different. For example, in the former Japanese Imperial Army under the absolute influence of State religion of Shinto, any criticism on the Emperor as living god was hazarded at the risk of one's death, but somehow hard-core Shintoists were not so many. Shintoism in the Army, or among the general public for that matter, was not so much a matter of theological belief as that of national identity and historical solidarity. Secularists in Zahal might be thinking likewise.

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We were shipped to Israel not for tourism but for study. A study of the country up to the ear in survival crisis had to be of heavily political and military orientation. Certainly historical, archaeological and religious interests were aroused by visits to the Masada, the excavation sites in Old Jerusalem, the Wailing Wall, the adjacent two mosques and the Via Dolorosa etc., but the historic Masada was where the Army recruits just through with their "basic" pledge their allegiance to the State, and more than that, a far-from-consoling reminder of Israel's besieged situation, a perpetual confirmer of the Masada complex;<sup>(3)</sup> the Old Jerusalem digs site reminds one of the absurdly political UNESCO Resolution of November 1974 which called on Israel to desist from *any* archaeological excavations in the Old City particularly in reference to Christian and Islamic sites; one cannot enter the mosques without letting the guards search for concealed weapons; and one cannot stand before the Wailing Wall without being watched from above or stroll through the Via Dolorosa without coming across patrolling squads. In this manner all interests, historical, archaeological, religious or whatever, cannot help converging into political and military ones. No wonder that our schedule should have been packed with lectures by and interviews with members of the Knesset representing all parties wall to wall, government officials and professors predominantly of political science.

I cannot pretend to have understood them all—too complexly ramified for a politically untutored tyro. Of course there were several really exciting orations, and especially a talk given by Mr Shlomo Argov, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, still haunts my memory with

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(3) To quote from *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaica*: "Masada is one of Herod's royal citadels and last outpost of Zealots during Jewish War against Rome; situated on top of isolated rock on edge of Judean desert and Dead Sea valley. After lengthy siege by Roman army, Zealot defenders under Eleazar Ben Jair committed mass suicide rather than surrender 73 C.E." Terence Smith of the New York Times says in his "Israel Journal 1972-1976" (*Saturday Review*, May 2, 1977) : "A better name (for the Masada Complex) would be the 'Holocaust Complex'.... It is the determination not to be overrun, not to give in, to choose suicide before destruction." He further alludes to "an atmosphere where a nation finds certain unthinkable options thinkable, including the use of nuclear weapons".

his grim fear of the globally prevalent anti-Zionist maneuvers which have led up to a virtual ostracism of Israel from the international society. Mr Argov repeated the word "fear" with shrugs of hopelessness as if there were no way to let us feel as he was feeling. "It is understandable," he said, "that the fear of another "pogrom" should rankle such old-timers as myself, but even my son, a pure sabra, is not exempt from fear in his deep psyche." All of us sat in shocked silence. While listening to him, I hit upon what occurred in Tokyo: the stringent police cordon around the Israeli Embassy especially since the Lod Airport massacre perpetrated by a contingent of the Japanese Red Army; the recent abortive attempt to boycott an Entebbe Rescue movie; the nervous tension on the part of JAL until Israeli passengers reach their destinations safely; and last but not least, the general image of Israel as a troublemaker especially since the onset of the Arab oil strategy. Besides, the bulk of Japanese intellectuals are leftish or at least "dovish", apt to take at face value what foreign "progressives" have written, and strongly influenced by pro-Arab pamphlets distributed through all anti-Zionist sources (I myself purchased an English version of *Caution: Zionism* by Yuri Ivanov at a Russian books dealer's in Tokyo). Naturally they would rather visit Arab countries than Israel, and should match their reports to the traditional Japanese sympathy for the oppressed weaker. Even in a country farthest in distance from Israel with practically no history of anti-Semitism where Israeli residents amount only to 232 as of February 1976, Israeli Embassy staff are surrounded by pro-Arab activists as well as the hostile diplomatic corps. All in all, therefore, it is not hard to judge the rest: how awfully Israeli diplomats fare in other more "involved" countries.

But the fear Mr. Argov so often expressed is a sad, bleak thing. I wonder if it has nothing to do with the quasi-autistic Israeli diplomacy. "We can't go to Geneva because it's a trap," he said repeatedly. Not only in interpersonal but also in international relationships would excessive fear let loose such paranoiac symptoms as often groundless suspicion toward others and compensatory megalomania in one's own psyche. (This is just a generalization. I am not saying that Mr Argov showed any sign of megalomania.) Such fear syndrome characterizes those nearest as the

farthest. The Jews and the Arabs are nearest to each other yet farthest from each other. And this makes an ideal hotbed for religious dogmatism, too. Both the Arabs and the Israelis have been bound with a theocratic spell, out of which came "Jihad" ("Holy War" against Israeli hindrance to Arab unity) and "Ein Breira" (policy of "No Alternative" except the continued occupation of the pre-1967 Arab territories: thus religious Zionists make it a point to call the West Bank Judea and Samaria.) In both cases are defense purposes merged into religious fanaticism, owing to which "we" are definitely right and "they" are definitely wrong. For outsiders, causes of Zionism (especially as the social, economic and cultural normalization of the Jewish people) and of Pan-Arabism (especially as a manifestation of solidarity with the "illegally evicted" Palestinian Arabs) equally sound like legitimate sets of aspirations, but for the parties concerned, the opponent's cause is an unconscionable demand which could never be met, and would conjure up keener apocalyptic visions.

As in various Arab nations, Israel is certainly where religion dominates the majority of people, but somehow the spirit of self-criticism has not been lost: people can oppose a certain point of view, yet not always consider its holders to be absolutely wrong. This is not the case with the Arabs. Their nationalist leaders have been steeped in a romantic doctrine of unifying all the Arab world into a single nation and deriving economic strength from its mighty oil wells. As it is, however, oil seems to be solidifying the age-old feudal establishments rather than promoting the necessary change of social structures for general people. Moreover, the concrete interests of existing states always prevail to the detriment of unifying efforts. This is why the Arab leaders have had need of an archenemy against which to mobilize the energies of all the diverse peoples. Only by using Israel as such an effective diversionary force, they could reconcile conflicting national interests and also distract people's attention from all manner of socio-economic miseries. Standing outside, we are prone to think that after the U.S.-Soviet détente the Arab-Israeli conflict should have a thaw, too. But amidst the compelling realities of Arab nationalism, advocating peace and coexistence with Israel in front of fanatical Pan-Arabists would have been like throwing oneself in front

of oncoming war elephants. The realization of Arab unity necessarily meant the destruction of Zionism, therefore to make even the slightest compromise toward peace and coexistence would be to lose the very basic use of the Unity myth which has served to prolong the respective regimes in Arab states. So the "Jihad" setup gave the impression of being there to stay, and it was assumed that even at the sign of the most cataclysmal rift inside the Arab camp or of the most urgent need for "substantial" politico-economic reconstruction, this convenient recourse to religious incitement would not be waived. The recent visit of Sadat to Israel should be considered in this context. Certainly his diplomatic initiative was remarkable, as everybody says, as a lever for quickening desire for peace, but I would like to evaluate his courage especially in view of the chronic Israeli skepticism (such as Mr Argov's) which would not allow them to take willing steps toward peace negotiations after almost thirty years of besiegement by hostile fanatics and four wars in their first quartercentury as a state as well as the Holocaust preceding them.

While the Arabs have made enough use of religion as a unifying force, the Israelis are confronting, as they have done since the dawn of the modern era, religion as a dividing force. They are divided into secularists and religionists, with both camps further subdivided into "hawks" and "doves". The matter grows all the more knotty because some people could be politically "hawkish" but religiously "dovish" and vice versa. The religionists who are "hawkish" politically as well as religiously, and therefore automatically takes a "maximalist" position (that is, in favor of the maximal preservation of all the occupied territories), make an Israeli counterpart of Arab "Jihadists". Sclerotized with the Holocaust Complex, they would take any slight compromise as a way to the national annihilation. They firmly believe that the Israeli occupation of and the Jewish settlements in the formerly Arab territories are justified because "the L-rd G-d (this avoidance of full or direct use of the word is how they express their reverence to the divine being), who created heaven and earth, so declared." They base their contention of course on Genesis 13:14-18 which includes the very words wanted: "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever. ....Arise,

walk through the land in the length of it and the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee." Any down-to-earth estate dealer would say, "Alright, at a certain spot north of Jerusalem Abraham was told to look around, and given a stretch of land as far as he was able to see, but *not* more than he was able to see from where he stood. Try and keep your divine contract."

In my boyhood my teachers at elementary and secondary schools used to tell us that the Japanese Imperial House *is* entitled to rule the Japanese Isles eternally as heaven and earth (and to spread westward and eastward, northward and southward, according to the militarist interpretation), because Goddess Amaterasu (the Sun-Goddess) "so declared" and as a token of her declaration gave to Her grandson, the very Imperial progenitor, on his descent to earth, the Three Sacred Treasures (a mirror, a sword and comma-shaped beads), which are still kept by our Emperor who is thus Living God. Reigned under this authorized sole agent for divine will, the Japanese were a chosen people no less. "So declared," so instructed, so accepted with unquestioning compliance until Japan was defeated in 1945. Now they do not teach that stuff even as a myth. If only because of such historical reasons, the Promised Land theory would be unacceptable in Japan, and I am afraid, in other countries, either. Add to this the urgent problem of Arab oil on which Japan literally lives. Naturally the tree of Zionism tends to be judged not so much by its universalistic, democratic, socialist fruits as by its particularist, nationalist, expansionist roots which actually block Japan's access to her means of living.

Personally I am in sympathy with what Amos Oz, brilliant young Israeli novelist, contended in his essay "The Meaning of Homeland":

I cannot use such words as "the promised land" or "the promised borders", because I do not believe in the one who made the promise. Happy are those who do: their Zionism is simple and self-evident. Mine is hard and complicated. I also have no use for the hypocrites who quickly resort to the promise and the promiser whenever their Zionism runs into an obstacle and into the inner contradiction. I am a Zionist in all that concerns the redemption of the Jews, but not when it comes to the redemption of the Holy Land.

And this basic standpoint is applied to the problem of "the administered

territories" to this effect:

Our justification in respect of the Arab inhabitants of the country cannot base itself on our age-old longings. We have no other objective justification than the right of one who is drowning and grasps the only plank he can. (And let me anticipate here: there is a gap as wide as the abyss between the drowning man who grasps a plank and makes room for holding on by pushing the others that are sitting on it aside, and between pushing the others who sit on the plank into the sea. This is the difference between making Jaffa and Nazareth Jewish, and making Ramallah and Nablus Jewish.)

According to Oz' classification, Moshe Dayan was clearly "pushing the others that sit on the plank into the sea" when he said to the Notables of Nablus soon after the occupation of the West Bank, "The choice you have is either orderly life or rebellion. But you should know that if you choose rebellion, we'll have no option but to break you." (cf. E.B. Glick: *Between Israel and Death*, p. 50) Nothing shows more clearly that what the Israelis are to the Arabs in the West Bank the conquerors are to the conquered. The appellation of "the Administered Territories" for the post-1967 accretion of occupied areas is just a diplomatic circumlocution tantamount to the commercial tactics of tagging a price at \$9.98 instead of \$10.00.

Certainly "it isn't every country that would permit free election in an occupied territory," as Saul Bellow writes. (*op. cit.*, p. 16) And I agree that there are quite a few equally commendable things about the occupying Israelis. A comparison with the Japanese colonial rule in Korea would highlight their benignity in bold relief. The Military Government have given the Arab inhabitants such usually banned items of freedom as of speech, writing, movement, choice of trade or profession and non-violent politics—very far-ranging only short of rebellion. According to Mayor Shakah of Nablus whom we interviewed at the City Hall there, the Israeli district commander gave the local Arab leaders a permission "to talk as much as you want, but never to bite." Dayan is said to have ordered the West Bank occupation forces to stay out of cities except on emergencies with this advice: "Don't trouble to try and make the Arabs love you." Quite an exemplary political realism; flexible yet always on the alert, full of consideration yet calculated to avoid any possible entanglements.

The Japanese colonial rulers were just high-handed. Only the most courageous fighters for Korean independence were able to jump into acts of resistance, and words of outspoken criticism meant landing in prison. The use of the Korean language itself was banned. Severe punishments were meted out to those pupils and students caught in the act of speaking Korean; all periodicals in Korean were abolished except the government-patronized one; the prestigious Korean Language Society was closed when its staff were arrested on suspicion of anti-Japanese cultural activities; Korean men of letters had to sing about the glory of being Japanese Imperial subjects etc. (Now look at how it fares with Israeli Arabs. Side by side with Hebrew, Arabic is an official language in Israel, as noticed on Israeli bank notes and postal stamps, though one may doubt whether it is in full use on a really public basis. For instance, telephone directories are available only in Hebrew and English, but not in Arabic. Though Arabic is taught at Israeli schools, proficiency in Hebrew is a prerequisite for admission to any Israeli universities, etc. Arab pupils in the "administered territories" are taught history of Israel and of Zionism, but have never been deprived of their freedom to learn Arabic language and literature. The Israeli authorities have never suppressed Arab literary activities. To take a remarkable example, Poet Toufik Zayad was able to publish a poem which extolled—quite infamously for the Israelis—the Egyptian crossing of the Suez Canal and the smashing of the Bar Lev defense line in 1973. More amazing is the fact that later Zayad was elected mayor of Nazareth.) And Korean young men were inducted into the Japanese Imperial Army, and all Koreans, organized into neighborhood units, were forced to worship at Japanese Shinto shrines at least once a month. (As mentioned before, Arabs with the exception of Druzes are never "taken" into Zahal, and the most unimaginable thing in the world is the Arabs being forced to worship at Jewish synagogues.) This is no place to pad with further examples of the Japanese exploitative policy in colonial industry and agriculture. Let it suffice to say that the Koreans got far less pay than the Japanese in the same kind of work. The Israeli authorities could never have taken, or even would never hit upon such steps, not only because of the inevitable furious indignation which could



now firmly solidify all the Arabs against their archenemy, but also because of the indelible remembrances of the Jewish tribulations in the Diaspora. Who knows better than the Jews about those miseries caused by nationalistic egoism and racial myth? Moreover, the Torah commands them with clear emphasis: "The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt..." (Leviticus 19:34) Actually I know an example of Jewish thoughtfulness to strangers in the West Bank. When the State Attorney asked if it was not going a little too far to give financial support to women whose husbands had left their families to join Al Fatah (the military wing of PLO), the response from the Military Government was remarkable: "We must deal with saboteurs separately, but a saboteur's wife, son, or father is not a saboteur." (cf. E.B. Glick: *op. cit.* p.55) Even Dayan's motto "Do not try and make the Arabs love you" does not contradict the "Love your stranger" command in the Torah, because he never said, "Do not try and love the Arabs." I give full credence to what Albert Memmi says out of his own experiences in Tunisia: "In concrete terms: the Jews, in the Arab universe, are in mortal danger, while the Arabs, in the Jewish universe, are in no danger whatsoever. The Arabs want to do away with the Israelis. The Israelis do not want to do away with the Arabs, and even if they want to, they would never be able to." (*Jews and Arabs*, p.113)

Nevertheless I cannot forget the final few words from the mouth of Mayor Shakah: "Occupation is occupation." For any sound people is no type of occupation by foreign powers bearable. After Japan's defeat, Korea was split into two regimes, equally harsh especially in thought control, and some people may be suffering even more bitterly than under the Japanese rule, yet they would never give their independence for anything. Some naive Japanese still believe that through their colonial rule they had somehow made contributions to the improvement of the Korean standard of living, shelving the important historical fact that there had been more exploitations and humiliations than contributions. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank could really be the most benign one in world military history, but it is not hard to find out parallels between

the Japanese rule and theirs. Take "contributions" for example. The Arab farmers on the West Bank should be sharing the benefit of excellent Israeli agricultural techniques and facilities especially for irrigating their arid farmlands, but they never forget at the same time that even such "contributions" as well as those purely Jewish settlements nearby could be an effective political *quid pro quo* in the future. Though there are no discriminatory educational laws, it is virtually impossible for Arabs to take any courses connected up with national security or military affairs, ranging from engineering even to geography. As a consequence, posts in key industries are closed to Arabs, whose labor thus concentrates on agriculture, construction (called "black work"), service at restaurants or stores etc. As is the case with the colored people and the poor whites in the United States, Arabs and Oriental Jews (Sephardic immigrants or exiles from the Arab and North African countries who settled down in Israel mostly in the 1950s) constitute the lower classes of the Israeli economic structure, which puts up both for competition. Besides such an economic cramp, Israeli Arabs are politically humiliated by incessant cases of detentions and deportations, though one could not contain a wry smile to be informed that the Israeli detention/deportation regulations were inherited from the so-called Emergency Regulations used by the British against rebellious Palestinian Jews. Regardless of such dubious origin, the current regulations seem to play the very role of the notorious Public Order Maintenance Act (Chian-Iji-Ho) of prewar Japan, hopefully with a more reserved use of police brutality and prisons.

A massive riot called *Yom HaAdamah* (Land Day) broke out on March 30, 1976 against the governmental plan to develop the Galilee and to bring in more Jews through expropriation of Arab land. Thousands of Israeli Arabs attacked Israeli soldiers with rocks and molotov cocktails. According to Meir Kahane's article "Emigration Is the Only Solution" (JUDAISM, Fall 1977), the casualties were 6 dead, at least 38 wounded (with hundreds arrested) on the Arab side, and more than 30 Israeli soldiers hurt. Being one of ultraright "hawks" and the very founder of the anti-pacifist Jewish Defense League in the U.S., Meir Kahane natu-

rally defends the Israeli occupation force: "...in many towns the soldiers were ordered to withdraw and let the Arabs riot, as long as they did not leave the confines. ....it was crystal clear to the Arabs that they had gained a startling victory. The barrier of fear of the Israeli army had been broken." It is hard to grasp the true story because we have two versions from Israeli and Arab sources, the latter being of course an inventory of Arab exasperations and braveries against Jewish expansionist plots and police brutalities. (cf. Ryuichi Hirokawa: *Palestine Border in Illusion* (in Japanese), 1976, Soshisha, Chapters 4 & 7) At any event the fact remains that the Israeli government is determined to persistently enforce its expropriation policy. "Poles in New Poland in which the Arabs would be the Jews" seems not so much off the point.

The sorry plight of the Israeli Arabs can be ascribed to the sorry plight of the State of Israel which has not yet been guaranteed any right to exist by the surrounding Arab states. Faced with the ever-present "Jihad" threats, and obliged to ceaselessly invent new survival devices, Israel has to concern itself far more with the national aspect than with the social one. And in the problem of the Israeli Arabs are both aspects combined. Animosity and suspicion toward the surrounding Arabs have been inevitably brought to bear upon 500,000 Arabs inside. "Their residence is here, but their sympathy is there" is the way Jewish citizens think of Israeli Arabs. Yet having conceived Zionism and established kibbutzim as a means of struggling against domination of one by another, the Israeli Jews cannot be forgetful of their basic egalitarianism above and beyond differences, in the cases not only of Ashkenazim-Sephardim rift but also of Israeli-Arab conflict. And varieties of domination within a single nation should be no less grave than supremacy of one nation over another. The Israeli Arabs are in a schizophrenic state of mind between their identity as Palestinians and their identity cards as Israelis. (The initial number for their ID cards is 2, while for Jewish citizens it is 1.)

During periods of turmoil, institutional unity (one manifestation of which is Judeo-centrism where nationality and religion coincide) is emphasized, so that mistrust and enmity are shown with regards to any heterogeneous elements. Thus Israeli Arabs are allowed to remain differ-

ent, but not to fully enjoy civic rights. In Israel there may possibly be more socialism and democracy than virtually anywhere else, yet this is the case only with Jewish citizens. Such localization of civic rights brings dishonor on Zionism which originated less as an exclusionist nationalism than as a national liberation movement against the oppression suffered by Jews all over the world. If Zionism has aimed to put an end to the oppression of the Jews, it should be on a par and sympathetic with any other national liberation movements. As it is, Israeli and Arab national movements came into collision with each other for territorial sovereignty, growing less and less congenial and more suspicious of each other, so that the essential prerequisite for the welfare of the Palestinian Arabs is, more than anything, suspension of hostilities. Not until the surrounding Arab nations guarantee Israel's right to exist at once politically and militarily, can any Israeli Jews, whether hawkish or dovish, desist from preserving the "administered territories" for fear of losing their foothold. A non-Zionist People's Republic of Palestine under which the Jews would suffer from another minority frustrations is a nightmare for any Israeli Jews, but still remains the very goal for the hard-core "rejectionist" Arabs. Golda Meir once accused the Arabs of their *quid pro nil* policy, but she is often quoted as saying that since there is no such entity as Palestine or Palestinians, PLO cannot be any entity, either. Anybody would doubt whether she is qualified to talk about the opponent's *quid pro nil* policy. If the Palestinian right of independence were denied, and the Palestinian Arabs not relieved from their frustrations, there could be no peace for the Israeli Jews, either. "Ein Breira" hawks, whose vanguard is that fanatic "Bloc of the Faithful" with their purely Jewish settlements in the West Bank, will only extend the vicious circle of hatred and suspicion, attacks and retaliations. King Hussein of Jordan complained in a recent interview with *Newsweek*: "There are now 31 Israeli settlements on the West Bank, with 49 new ones planned. They have gone ahead with six of them since Sadat's visit."

The Egyptian President's Israeli visit was epoch-making because it revealed that any ideological "myth", no matter how apparently unswerving, could be only relatively helpful, and that sooner or later "reality"

should prevail. But if this reality turned out to be a mere metamorphosis of Pan-Arab nationalism into one-state nationalism, it might before long press for the reinstatement of the good old myth, thus setting up another chain of catastrophic demands and schemes from diehard "rejectionists". Palestinian Arabs have been at the mercy of, and are now entirely tired with, international diplomatic bargaining. They cannot keep their trust in any state on either camp. If the Palestinian problem were neglected for its irrelevancies to and its conflicts with the interests of the states concerned at Cairo or wherever, we would have to reaffirm the bitter old lesson of history that no nations would inconvenience themselves for the sake of stateless persons. (I wish the older Jews would remember what befell them all over the world through the 1930s and 1940s. And on the road between Cairo and Alexandria a freshly painted sign is said to be proclaiming "EGYPT FIRST, EGYPT SECOND, AND EGYPT LAST". This also excites no little apprehensions.) The four rounds of war were waged in the cause of saving the conquered Palestinian Arabs, the alleged victims of "Zionist Imperialism." Now we only wish they would not become victims of the Israeli-Egyptian thaw. It will be unrealistic to get carried away by the current trend toward reconciliatory concessions between the two main belligerents, and disregard what a variety of currently active Palestinian liberation movements are about.

Whatever the imminent choice exercised by the Palestinian Arabs: autonomy in the West Bank and Gaza, or integration with neighboring Arab states, or federal bi-national Republic of Israel, Israeli survival will be insured not by military force or religious unity, but only by political settlement, that is, by improving its relations with Arabs inside and outside. So long as the majority of the Israelis think their State does not belong to its citizens, Arab or Jewish, but to the Jewish people, peaceful coexistence with Arabs is hopeless. Nor is it effectible unless Israel as the homeland of the Jewish People were firmly recognized by the majority of the Arabs, because then they would always remain a potential security risk for Israel, and unable as ever to fully participate in Israeli civic life, thus exacerbating their own frustrations. While Israeli economy without Arab labor power is inconceivable, Israeli Arabs

are treated as the occupied people. Under such occupied state would a second and third *Yom HaAdamah* ensue indefinitely. To maintain the "public order" the occupying authorities will bring pressures to bear upon the occupied, who will raise an even stronger rebellion and so on to form a typical vicious circle. Some extremely hawkish Jews, such as Meir Kahane, insist that emigration of non-assimilative Arabs is the only solution, while dovish Jews both in Israel and elsewhere understand that Palestinian Arabs are entitled to have their own homeland as are the Jews. Israel is hard put up for a proper balance to strike between both standpoints, though for all practical reasons the latter has an obvious edge on the former.

Given their past history as a pluralistic people, it is hardly imaginable that the Jews should ever become a yea-saying monolith like the Germans under Nazi regime, and take an anti-minority policy by washing out all hawk-dove or majority-minority divisions along lines of religious and cultural tradition. Yet, as among other peoples, Jews are not always free from mass hysteria, and this seems to be the case more with American Jewry than with the Israelis. "Breira" (a dovish group of mostly American Jewish intellectuals who keep a basic Zionist line, yet try to effect more contact with Palestinian Arabs in the belief that there is "Alternative" to the continued occupation) held a nationwide conference in Washington D. C. last winter with much success. But before the conference, many spokes had been put in Breira's wheel. The spoke-putters' names are all listed on *The Village Voice* March 7 issue. After reading the story, one cannot help thinking of the Israeli Embassy as the spoke-provider. The Israeli Consulate in Boston applied direct pressure on no other person than Professor Nathan Glazer of Harvard by asking him not to go, with an incredibly highhanded dissuasive remark: "Nobody except Israeli citizens is entitled to criticize Israel." No other organization than the prestigious Anti-Defamation League, founded as early as 1913 to protect status and rights of Jews and strengthen interreligious connections, acted harmoniously by threatening pro-Breira dissents in its staff with dismissal. Witch-hunting pamphlets circulated by para-fascist Zionist organizations attempting to connect Breira members with commu-

nists and Trotzkyites; a Jewish Defense League contingent's violence and filibuster at the Breira conference etc. This reminds me of a passage from George Orwell's *As I Please* (*Tribune*, 4 August, 1944): "It is a matter of observation that the people least infected by war hysteria are the fighting soldiers. Of all people they are the least inclined to hate the enemy, to swallow lying propaganda or to demand a vindictive peace. ....The safe and well-fed civilian has more surplus emotion, and he is apt to use it up in hating somebody or other—the enemy if he is a patriot, his own side if he is a pacifist." Paradoxically indeed, the Israelis on or near the battle line seem to have a cooler view of "the enemy" than the American Jewry in the "home front".

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My impression of Israel could be summarized in this essay's title. Out of three Jews come four opinions, it is said. What is more remarkable than a people with such plethora of ideas and ideals presenting a united front with rifles in hand? I have often heard that Israel is a cultivated society in a garrison State. Usually State emergency entails severe thought control, imposing upon the whole nation the only authorized ideal with any others strictly precluded. (As mentioned above, this is what the Israeli legation in America tried to do through a vast nationwide network of Zionist organizations, but not the case in Israel itself.) Certainly Zionism is the authorized keynote, but from this keynote God knows how many themes are devised and developed. The widest possible interpretative latitude seems to be allowed for this magic word—from universal, egalitarian, socialist idealism to ethnocentric, exclusionist, expansionist fanaticism. I just keep marveling how such mentally mercurial people could stick together in time of stress, notwithstanding a countless number of political parties continually splintering and reconstituting themselves in new and more complicated "alignments". Quite paradoxically it might be in time of crisis only that their cultural turmoil sobers down. Once the crisis is over, mercury in their cultural thermometer would rise up and up to reach a boil.

At first glance one might hold "ubiquitous rifles" for the invariable

factor, that is, a constant in the Israeli society. "Uzi" or "Galil" rifles (as well as "Kfir" jet fighters and nuclear bombs said to be in stock) are a symbol of the glorious Masada spirit, and also of the pathetic Masada Complex. Indeed Zahal soldiers displayed their Spartan quality to perfection, yet there is something out-of-place in their excellent rifleman-ship. The Israelis would come into their own in Athenian rather than Spartan aspects, as so many Diaspora Jews have proved. No matter how rhetorically connected up with urgent self-defense, rifles are still the tool for human butchery, and Jews are after all "Am HaSefer" ("People of the Book"). "What about other peoples?" is the way the Israelis prefer to say in retort, when accused of their military excesses. In saying so they temporarily insulate their national pride as "the Chosen People". They know that traditionally commanded to settle affairs "not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit" (Zechariah 4:6), they should warn themselves against the seductive danger of hatred and violence to all men. They know that the defiantly expansionist way Gush Emunim has behaved in the West Bank as if Arabs as national beings did not exist is evidently disrespectful to their Traditional teaching. Bullying minorities, mistreating displaced persons etc. may be taken for granted in other countries, but supposedly not so in Israel. James Baldwin argues that Jews are singled out in the Black ghetto not because they act differently from other whites, but because they *don't*, because they have not been "ennobled by oppression". (cf. R. Weisbord & A. Stein: *Bitter-Sweet Encounter*, Schocken, 1972, p.217) Based on the ideals of ethical socialism, of justice and peace exalted by the prophets, "Chosen" by their divine being to be the paragon of these ideals, they are not supposed to join others in aggravating an endless list of crying evils, either individually or collectively. Otherwise I would not feel so great an interest in and so deep respect for them. I still place much reliance on Israeli people whose love of peace is by Tradition a second nature, and whose pacifism, balanced against ever-present survival crisis, is something of more realistic weight than a mere constitutional shibboleth.

One of the most unforgettable persons I met in Israel was a certain Mr Stockman. A hardened ex-commando-officer who knows all the



occupied territories like the palm of his hand, he served as guide during our trip to the West Bank city of Nabulus. He attended our interview with Mayor Shakah, and was in a visible fume at the latter's reserved but unmistakable criticisms of the Israeli occupation policy. On our way back to Jerusalem he poured out his resentment: "The mayor did not tell you the truth." Before the interview, while we made a walking tour of Roman ruins in the vicinity, he said casually but in great earnest, "We are fed up with fighting. We are tired." I was far more impressed by this spontaneous expression of war-weariness. Sheer exhaustion from repeated survival crises, coupled with traditional love of universal peace and human welfare, will urge the indefatigably inquiring Jewish mind to find out some way of ending the wartime setup not only for themselves but for others. Instead of rifles, the very people of ideals in pursuit of peaceful ways of coexistence are our best hope and should be a real constant in the Israeli society.

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