

# Prospects for Zionism in the Eighties

SAUL B. COHEN:

The “Return” and “Negation of the Diaspora,” *Shelilat Hagolah*, are twin precepts of Zionist thought. Thus, political Zionist theory held that statehood would create a unique core-periphery model based on the power of ideology to characterize the relations between Israel and the Golah, rather than the more common model of international power relations produced by economic or military force. The State’s demographic, economic, and military development has assured the Return. And most of Diaspora Jewry no longer accepts the concept of Exile. Must Negation of the Diaspora therefore remain a Zionist principle?

It is argued that abandoning *Shelilat Hagolah* would undermine aliyah, the essence of Zionism. Ben-Gurion’s solution was simple: let those who cannot accept the twin precepts be “Friends of Israel,” and let Zionists be Zionists. However, Negation was a Diaspora-born Zionist concept propelled by events there. If circumstances change in the Golah, cannot Zionists there be the best judges of the principle’s validity?

Rejection of the Diaspora emerged from the general experience of Jewish history, and the specific environment of the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries. Until the 1920s, millions of oppressed Eastern and Central European Jews were given the option of freely migrating to the West. In contrast, Palestine offered limited immigration possibilities and meager economic opportunities. To compete for even a small minority of these migrants, Zionism had to develop an ideology that challenged the Diaspora in its totality. Later events, the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust, proved the essential truth of the Negation of the Golah for the broken death camp remnants. These survivors, and refugees from Asia-Africa, “voted with their feet” by opting for Zion during the period of *Haapalah*, war, independence, and early statehood.

Today, with important exceptions, circumstances of Diaspora life no longer challenge Jews there to maintain the ideology of rejection. Jews are integrated within a modern, middle and upper middle-class Western world. This world has finally confirmed its commitment to human rights, and proven its adherence to principles of socio-economic equality and religious freedom. While Zionism’s acceptance of core-periphery relations was initially based on both “push” and “pull” factors,

only the “pull” remains — the centrality of Zion for the Jewish people. “Push” however, has little meaning for Diaspora Jews, save in the USSR, Argentina, and South Africa, whose personal and group destinies are jeopardized by their Jewishness.

Most Diaspora Jewry now lives in this new Western environment, which lacks the history of massacres, inquisitions, pogroms, and the Holocaust, and the tradition of a geographical Pale. Analysis of these new circumstances led both the “Canaanites” and the American Council for Judaism, for example, to conclude that Israel would develop a separate identity and history from Jews overseas. This conclusion has proven faulty. The periphery is not prepared to abandon the core, and the core lacks the sustaining power to exist without the periphery. Instead, core and periphery have developed an interdependence, with many in the Diaspora continuing to gather sustenance from the “Law that goes forth from Zion” and many in Israel espousing “Made in the West” economic, social, and cultural values.

Adoption of certain of the periphery’s norms and standards has undermined the core’s ideological primacy. Israel’s reliance upon American Jewry to press Washington for military and economic support is not the major reason for core primacy weakening; instead, it is the adoption of Diaspora consumeristic values in housing, automobile ownership, travel abroad, dress, and entertainment. The essential challenge of aliyah has been affected by this borrowing from the periphery. It is admittedly harder to maintain Western life-styles in Zion. But with start-up capital from the Diaspora, understanding of the *protektzia* scene, and luck, an individual can “make it” in the drawing rooms of Ramat HaSharon, Zahala, Talbiya, the Western Carmel, and Omer — drawing rooms to which most Israelis aspire, even if they do not achieve it. These Western values have overridden values that were the ideological hallmark of the core — communalism, cooperation, Jewish labor, self-realization — robbing the core of much of its claim to primacy through ideological distinction.

Of course, life in Israel is different from New York and Los Angeles. Constant war threats and pervasiveness of the Hebrew language make for a unique environment within which either Westernized life-styles or traditional Judaism are pursued. But how fundamentally different are the Jewish lives of the residents of

Kiryat Yovel, B'nei Brak, and Mea Sheariin from their counterparts in Kew Gardens Hills, Borough Park, and Williamsburg? How much less Jewish in content is the life of the secular Israeli devotee of the Israel Museum and Israeli dance, who reads novels of the contemporary Israel scene, from his counterpart who frequents the Jewish Museum and the 92nd Street Y, and reads novels of American Jewish life? The periphery has rediscovered some of its Jewishness, just as the core has acquired the periphery's tastes and values.

Further eroding the former dominant/subordinate ideological relationship between core and periphery is the diminution of American Jewry's mediating role between Israel and the United States. In a seeming contradiction, the periphery accepts the core's primacy when it believes its efforts on behalf of the periphery to be crucial to core survival, and challenges this primacy when the efficacy of such efforts becomes less potent.

It is increasingly apparent that decisions by the United States on Israel's future cannot be largely determined by American Jewry's pressures. Formerly, equilibrium in the United States-Israel-American Jewish community system was maintained by two parallel and interlocking axes: 1) the United States core and the Israel periphery, and 2) the Israel core and the American Jewish periphery. American Jewry has served as the system's feedback mechanism. Pressures from the United States government on Israel are relayed by Israel to American Jewry, which directs its concerns back to Washington, forcing a readjustment of original demands. This closed system has now been broken as other domestic and foreign policy inputs make a major contribution to United States policy towards Israel.

Economics also reduce the periphery's importance. In the light of Israel's \$14 billion national debt, raging inflation, and enormously expensive military needs, aid from the Diaspora cannot play the critical role that it did in the first two decades of statehood. To place matters in perspective, one year's United Israel Appeal proceeds are equal to the cost of less than a dozen sophisticated F-15 American aircraft!

In summary, during much of Israel's early history, the periphery accepted the core's lead. This was not only out of ideological principle, but out of the recognition that its economic help was critical to the core's survival, and that its role as the appointed political instrument of the core was focal in Israel's relations with the West, especially the United States. Because these conditions no longer pertain, core and periphery are now more evenly balanced.

If Israel and the Diaspora are neither fully independent nor dependent upon one another, then a Zionism that was historically based on the core-periphery model must find a new model of structural relations. This model can be that of a vanguard movement whose function it is to unite two equal bodies — Israel and the Diaspora. Zionism has thus far scorned such an overt

role, leaving the bridge-building to organizations drawn from the more general Jewish communal world, e.g., Diaspora-Israel "friendship," economic, or political lobbying groups. But this bridge-building is too vital to be relegated to a behind-the-scenes Zionist function.

Bridge-building in Zionist terms should not be construed as a version of cultural Zionism, for that, too, is based on a core-periphery model of disseminating Jewish values from Zion abroad.

Rather, bridge-building should be conducted through exchange of values. Aliyah, the Hebrew language, Jewish education, and strengthening of Diaspora Jewish youth's identification with Israel are part of the exchange. But the *Golah*, which in the past was able to generate values that became essentials of Zionism — Socialism and Jewish labor — has new high values that are needed to enhance Israel's mission of securing Jewish survival.

Careful, non-predatory use of the environment is one such value. Jews in America who are in the forefront of the environmental movement can help build into Zionism the environmental ethic that is sorely lacking in Israel's use of its land, coastal zone, and air spaces. Another value, the inclusion within Israel's life of optional approaches to Judaism such as those expressed in Conservative and Reform Jewry, is also a value that the Zionist movement can foster directly. Recent inclusion of the Conservative and Reform organizations in the Zionist movement should be seen as part of Zionism's value transfer role, and not merely as an organizational change.

Yet another value that Zionism needs to espouse as part of the bridge-building process is healing the rift between Israel and its *yordim*. To isolate those who have left the country from involvement in Israel's future is to deny an army of potential Zionists the opportunity to retain their emotional, ideological, and economic ties with Israel. There has been recent interest in *yordim* on the part of the World Zionist Organization and the Israeli government as a pool for returning immigrants. But this is too narrow an approach. The majority will not return, and it is Zionism's task to harness their latent power and that of their children.

A new goal for Zionism should be to develop among Jews a sense of living in dual worlds — psychologically, economically, and culturally. Many Israeli leaders have acquired this sense, and so have those who lead and maintain the Zionist apparatus. Such a possibility should not be denied *yordim*, or Diaspora Jews in general. New Zionist instruments can be created to enhance the process. Mass pilgrimages during *Shalosh Regalim* for all Jews who have a feeling for religiosity is one mechanism. Another could be "citizenship of Jerusalem" for the tens of thousands of Jews who would identify themselves with Zion's capital by supporting its educational and cultural institutions in the form of a Diaspora Jerusalem *Kehilla* tax.

The mission of the Zionist movement must be redefined, in practice as well as in theory, to unite the Jewish people on the basis of equality. There is need for a new, complex network of relations reach; lg beyond aliyah and the political/economic support of Israel. These are social, cultural, and emotional. The dangers are clear. The Golah will not remain a periphery and subordinate in status to the core. Without new goals of bridge-building and value transfer between equals, Zionism's historic mission of maintaining and unifying the Jewish people through the Return to Zion cannot be realized. ■

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#### EMIL L. FACKENHEIM:

If “prospects” means “making predictions,” the prospects for Zionism in the eighties are not good. We could consider the unpromising future; in so doing we would rehash and analyze what we read in the newspaper. In a symposium devoted to taking stock, however, it is more important to recall that Zionists have almost always had to swim against the tide. (The period roughly between 1967 and 1973 may have been the only notable exception.) The same is true of the Jewish people as a whole. Had the Jews of Egypt been futurologists, they would never have left, and the prophets would have predicted, not the messianic days, but the end of the Jewish people. Futurology is a demoralizing business when it confuses the mind and saps the will. In the thirties, Anne Lindbergh predicted a totalitarian wave of the future and the demise of the democracies. Had leaders such as Churchill believed her she would have been right.

Herzl appealed to the Zionist will. As we enter the eighties this will demands clarity of the Zionist mind. The odious U.N. Zionism-is-Racism Resolution of the seventies brought many things out into the open; for Zionists the most important was that to be confused about the meaning of Zionism is already to be victimized by its enemies.

*Zionism is the proposition that Jewish homelessness must be brought to an end.*

Prior to the Holocaust, decent anti- or non-Zionism was possible. The Orthodox could believe that only the messiah had the authority to end Jewish homelessness, while the liberals (the present writer included) could believe that there was no Jewish homelessness left in the enlightened parts of the world, and that the unenlightened remnant of the world would soon become enlightened. After the Holocaust, there is no such person as a decent anti-Zionist. There is no decent non-Zionist either. Unless, of course, he is confused — and there is much confusion.

Had there been a Jewish state at the time of Nazism, it would have flung its gates open to Jews fleeing while flight was still possible, and tried to bomb the railways to

Auschwitz at the time of the apocalypse. At that time the world knew — but did not try to bomb the railways. The world knew earlier, too — but no country flung open its gates. And during the war the Mufti was in Berlin, urging that Jews be murdered more quickly.

Incredibly, there exists the obscene fact of post-Holocaust anti-Semitism. It exists in Russia and Poland. It exists in lesser forms almost everywhere even in the democracies, increasingly few in number. It exists in the Arab world, despite expensive Iraqi ads not so long ago, saying to its 125,000 brutally expelled Jews “come back, all is forgiven.”

Jewish homelessness has not come to an end. Hence, the deliverance of the captives is a principle which no longer brooks postponement or compromise, whether from a religious or a secularist point of view. Hence, even if he lives in a free country and does not consider himself personally homeless, every decent Jew must be a Zionist. So must every decent person. So must every decent Arab. Zionism says nothing that denies Arab rights, including the right of self-determination. (It denies that right only to a hostile power threatening the Jewish state's safety. And it rejects it altogether when “self-determination” is a mere code-word for someone else's destruction. This was true of the Sudeten Germans in 1938. It is true of the PLO today.)

Zionism today consists of the unequivocal support of two principles: the autonomy and safety of the State of Israel, without which Israel could not hope to end homelessness for Jews wherever it exists; and the Law of Return, without which the Jewish state would become a selfish entity, which, having ended homelessness for some, would shut the doors to others. The proposition that Jewish homelessness *as such* must be ended (instead of just for *some* Jews) would be betrayed.

*Every decent person must be a Zionist. If he is a Jewish Zionist, he chooses second best if he does not go on aliyah himself.*

There may be, and doubtless often are, excellent reasons why a Jew chooses second best. It is second best all the same. This is true even if in the Diaspora he becomes a great Jewish scholar and in Israel he becomes a kibbutznik ploughing a field.

For Israel cannot end Jewish homelessness unless there are those who dedicate to the vitality of the home itself not just their money, their political support, the brilliance of their intellect, but existence itself.

It should be obvious that, so long as Israel continues to be under attack, it would be quite indecent for any Jew in the safety of the North American Diaspora to compare his Zionism with that of Israelis who, simply by being in Israel, live under the threat of terrorism, to say nothing of war. But even if — as one must fervently hope — true peace should come to the Middle East in the eighties (who can think beyond the next decade?) Diaspora existence would continue to be second best. Coming as it did after the greatest catastrophe in all of

Jewish history (and one of the greatest in all of history), the rebirth of the Jewish state in its ancient land is an event that should, and perhaps one day will, inspire all mankind. To be a direct participant in this rebirth (and subsequent growing pains destined to last for a long time) is an opportunity for which future Jewish generations will envy the Jews of this century. Indeed, no event of such magnitude has occurred in Jewish history in 2,000 years.

Today, we admire and envy the generations of Yohanan Ben Zakkai and Akiba which, after one great destruction, were determined to hold fast to Judaism. Future Jews will admire and envy this Jewish generation — the generation that, after a quite different destruction, was determined (encouraged by its friends but undaunted by its enemies) to take its destiny into its own hands and go home. ■

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#### CHARLES S. LIEBMAN:

One cannot discuss the prospects for Zionism without some understanding of what the term “Zionism” means. To many Israelis, Zionism is virtually synonymous with aliyah. To more thoughtful Israelis, it also connotes a conception of the Jewish people as constituting one nation whose center is in Israel and whose future as a nation depends upon the survival of Israel. Realization of the Zionist vision, they would add, by providing a territorial homeland and a foundation for the development of a national culture, is a resolution of the problem of Jewish estrangement and anti-Semitic hostility on the one hand, and the problem of Jewish cultural survival on the other. Much of the definitional terminology is vague. Clearly, we are dealing with symbols and quasi-mythic conceptions whose vagueness provides the possibility of multiple interpretation.

Zionism means something quite different to most Diaspora Jews, though Russian Jewry is an important exception. To the majority of Diaspora Jews, certainly the vast majority of American Jews, Zionism means support for Israel. Hence, Zionism is measured in the importance which Israel and help for Israel plays in one’s life.

The prospects of Diaspora Zionism (in Diaspora terms) is more or less a function of Diaspora Jewry’s perception of physical threats to Israel’s survival. It is foolish to predict what the coming decade will bring. Who, in 1970, could have predicted the conditions of 1979? But if we confine our projections to the very short term, there is room for serious concern about Israel’s predicament. I suspect that most American Jews believe that the Begin government’s policies with respect to settlements on the West Bank and/or its limited autonomy proposals are an important cause for its present

predicament. But, I believe, though I hope I am wrong, that a new government in Israel with new proposals and a more flexible attitude toward its neighbors is likely to find itself confronting the same intransigence, the same hostility, and an American administration which is no less anxious to exact concessions that the government is reluctant to yield. Hence, I foresee serious difficulties for Israel in the near future. These difficulties are likely to sustain Zionist commitment and overcome whatever reservations Diaspora Jews may have over specific Israeli policies. This will be particularly true if the Begin government is replaced in the next elections with a Labor-dominated administration.

The growing assimilation of Diaspora Jewry threatens the maintenance of Zionist sympathies in the long run; but in the short run it might even bolster them. Sympathy for Israel is often the last vestige of Jewish self-consciousness, and support by some Jews for Israel may help them sublimate guilt feelings about having abandoned Jewish culture, tradition, private loyalties, etc.

It is the Israeli conception of Zionism that is threatened by developments in the next few years. One ought not underestimate the ideological and psychological implications latent in the unwillingness of Diaspora Jewry to undertake aliyah. Indeed, the notion of aliyah is so critical a component in Israeli conceptions of Zionism that many of them seek farfetched excuses to explain the stark reality. I think this helps account for the delusion that if Israel were a “better” society, large numbers of Diaspora Jews would come. But when Russian Jews, who inspired Israelis with their Zionist campaign and courage in the late 1960s, turn their backs on Israel, or South African and Rhodesian Jews (the most Zionist of all Jewries) leave their native lands and still don’t settle in Israel, it is difficult to sustain one’s belief in Zionism as a critical component in Jewish existence, or the definition of Jews as a national people with Israel as its center. On the contrary, it appears as though Israelis are the only Zionists left, but this itself is a denial of a basic Zionist tenet which, after all, makes its claim with respect to all Jews, not just one part of the Jewish people. In addition, the Zionist claim that Israel has or even can resolve the problems of Jews and Judaism appears less and less credible. Israelis, I believe, are becoming increasingly uncomfortable with Zionism as they understand the term, and this discomfort is likely to grow. I am less confident about its consequences.

I suspect the decline of Zionist faith, as that term was traditionally understood among Israelis, will have a number of consequences. First, increased numbers of Israelis will urge their government to pursue policies without regard to the interests of Diaspora Jewry. The concomitant of this attitude, of the growing sense of dissociation from Diaspora Jewry, is likely to be an effort on their part to minimize the Jewish nature of Israeli society and culture. Other Israelis, I suspect, will

find increasing attraction in non-Zionist conceptions of Judaism. A small group may find religious conceptions such as those of Agudat Israel, which deny any special sanctity to the State of Israel, increasingly attractive. Others may look toward the development of a Judaism that is meaningful to the individual in his personal struggle and confrontations, but has fewer consequences for the public aspects of his life or the nature of society.

All these developments are likely to strengthen forces which favor separation of religion and state; forces which if they emerge victorious will, in the long run, affect Diaspora Jewry's commitment to Israel. Finally, I suspect that the disenchantment with traditional conceptions of Zionism will strengthen those forces already present in the society who would redefine the Jewish religion — place Zion and the Land at its center and deny the religious credentials of Diaspora Jewry. Such a development is likely to have a no less deleterious effect on Israeli-Diaspora relations. ■

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#### HYAM MACCOBY:

The main difficulties of Zionism in the eighties, it seems to me, will arise out of the movement's loss of idealism. The younger generation in Israel, we are often told, is tired of Zionist "cliches." This means that they are tired of any attitude that suggests that Zionism is a *cause*. To be a citizen of Israel, they urge, is not a cause, any more than to be a citizen of England or Japan or the United States. The result is a complete pragmatism that is impatient of any large-sounding phrases, and particularly of any idea that Israel must regard herself as a special nation with a mission to show an example to the rest of mankind.

As a matter of fact, there is *no* other nation in the world that takes such an utterly pragmatic attitude. Every nation regards itself as standing for certain values and exemplifying them by its history. No doubt there is a good deal of hypocrisy in this; but even to show such hypocrisy is the mark of a genuine nation. It seems that here again, we Jews are attempting to ape the nations so enthusiastically that the result is a caricature and only marks us out more than ever, but in a negative way. We have arrived at the tragically ironical situation in which the Soviet Union — a pragmatic tyranny that flaunts its ideals and ideology — poses, with great success, as the champion of the oppressed throughout the world, while Israel, which really is the repository of values of the greatest possible importance, shyly disclaims any ideological aims and is intent on being accepted as having nothing of any universal significance to say to the world.

Not that the Jews really have lost their ideals; I do not

believe that for one moment. What they have lost is the ability to talk about them. But if they do not recover this ability, they will indeed lose their ideals. The great need for the eighties is to recover articulateness, to work out a philosophy of Zionism. If this is not done, I am afraid the result will be a tragic loss of morale and a deterioration in all aspects, political and cultural.

What is the relationship between such a Zionist philosophy and the Jewish religion? The relationship is a strong one, but not of the kind that some enthusiastic religious believers want to assert. Judaism has always been a nationalistic religion in the sense that it regards nationhood and attachment to a particular land as essential parts of religious affirmation. This arises from the deeper doctrine that the planet Earth is the creation of God and our true home, not an evil mirage that it is our task to escape from into some purer region. But religious chauvinism is very far from the spirit of Judaism. The idea of the Land as an end in itself, a mystical, magical entity that can override considerations of justice, mercy, and rationality, has no sanction in the Jewish tradition. The Bible does not show the Prophets fulminating about the need for Holy War, but, on the contrary, opposing the waves of "religious" war-fever that swept the country. Jeremiah was imprisoned for damping the fervor of mystical chauvinism, not for supporting it.

One of the tasks of the eighties will be to sift out the authentic Jewish religio-political doctrine from the inauthentic kind promulgated by Gush Emunim, which has been rightly described by Immanuel Jakobowitz, the Chief Rabbi of England, as "pseudo-messianism."

The Talmud (Shevuot 16a) distinguishes between the territory conquered by Joshua and the territory taken over, at the time of the Return from Babylon, by Ezra. Joshua's conquests, says the Talmud, remained holy only as long as they were occupied by the Israelites; when these territories were lost, they lost their holiness. Ezra's territories on the other hand, are holy forever. What was gained by conquest may be lost by conquest, but what was gained by the consent of the nations of the world remains eternally holy. This cool and rational appraisal contrasts strangely with the unreasoning vapors of religious chauvinists who want to be more nationalistic than the Bible and the Talmud, while professing to hold these works in the utmost reverence.

Israel is the nub of the world, ideologically speaking, because she faces all the problems that are of crucial importance in the world today: the problem of preserving individual liberty in a world of increasing authoritarianism, the problem of preserving the autonomy of small nations, the problem of finding a *modus vivendi* between the West and the Third World, and, I may add, the problem of what to do when two national groups claim the same territory (a problem that exists in many areas, including Northern Ireland and Cyprus). If Israel acts in the light of its past tradition, in the spirit

of acting as “a light unto the nations,” its example can be of incalculable influence.

Is there nothing in the riches of Jewish moral and legal thought that can be of benefit to the world in the grip of a crisis of which Israel is the picture and microcosm? Have we talked all these hundreds of years about our feeling for justice and the rational ordering of life on this earth, only to act, when our time came to exercise power, no better than anybody else — and all because we are afraid to set ourselves up as better than anybody else?

We are right, of course, to be afraid of ideology, if what is meant by that is something like Communism or Nazism. But the Jews, of all nations of the earth, have known how to have a universal ideology without allowing it to develop into a form of imperialism, swallowing up other people’s identities. To think big and act small (in the sense of implementing one’s ideas in one’s own backyard, not in one’s neighbor’s) has been the Jewish style of ideology in the past and ought to be again. A new definition of ideology, of intellectualism, of moral programmatism, is what is needed in the wake of the deadly boredom resulting from the “death of ideology.” The people best fitted to provide such an outlook is the Jews, especially in their own land, where thoughts can be translated into action.

Zionism, then, in the eighties must become an “ism” again, as vibrant with world-wide human possibility as Communism once was. It must be a non-imperialist program for the whole of humanity, exemplified and put into practice by one people in the hope that others will follow. Only in this way will Zionism show continuity with previous Jewish history and thus recover its soul. ■

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EMANUEL RACKMAN:

World tensions yield so many surprises that I do not dare to predict what will befall the State of Israel in the eighties. I believe with all my heart that it will continue to exist and even to prosper. Zionism, as an ideal, will also continue to exist — for me Zionism and Judaism are two sides of the same coin, and both are eternal. Therefore, in this symposium, I address myself only to the prospects for the World Zionist Organization, which can be regarded as the midwife that helped bring the state into being, and since then appears to have lost its *raison d’être*. Will the eighties bring a further decline in its importance, or will there be regeneration through new needs and new programs?

Unfortunately, the overwhelming majority of the members of this world organization, and the overwhelming majority of the members of the organizations affiliated with it are not contemplating aliyah within the

foreseeable future. Therefore, we cannot define a Zionist as one committed to aliyah. That suggests the question: How does one then distinguish between a Zionist, and a non-Zionist who is a friend of Israel, contributes to its many causes, and champions its right to be among the nations? The WZO suffers because of its failure to reply. It cannot impose the duty of aliyah on every member unless it wishes to alienate all but a few. It would also be dishonest to say that a Zionist hopes that one day he will make aliyah, when we know in advance that he has no such intention. I want to suggest a simple but visceral answer to the question.

For a Zionist, Israel is the one place in the world in which he feels most at home. It may never be the place where he will live — whatever the reason — but it is the place where he has the gut-feeling, “This is mine. This is ours. This is my ‘homeland’” (a cherished word in Zionist history). The non-Zionist, if he really is a non-Zionist, does not have that feeling. He cherishes Israel, which is the home of many of his co-religionists. It is also the place where his people and his faith were cradled. But London, Paris, or New York can be home for him. It may even thrill him that Israelis have succeeded so well, but no trip to Israel is for him a homecoming as it is for the Zionist. He is always a tourist in Israel and no more.

It will surprise no one that there is a definite correlation between the measure of a Jew’s acculturation and assimilation in the Diaspora and the depth of his gut-feeling that Israel is his homeland. Except for the Hassidim, the less assimilated the Jew is, the stronger is his tie to the “land of the fathers.” Therefore, Zionism, in the eighties, must concentrate on combatting excessive acculturation and assimilation. It must sponsor and support every promising program that induces a feeling of Jewish identity and a sense of alienation in lands other than Israel.

One may rightfully ask, however, whether it is proper for the Zionist movement to magnify the sense of alienation which Jews usually have in the Diaspora. If some Jews think that they have successfully lost it, is it ethical to discomfit them by reviving or quickening it? I answer affirmatively because the preponderant weight of the evidence supports the conclusion that Jews who feel altogether at home in lands other than Israel are deluding themselves, and we render their psyches a service when we expose the delusion and make the self-deluding aware of reality.

I am not referring to the possibility or probability that what happened in Germany must inevitably happen everywhere, because I do not want to rest the Zionist movement upon the basis that danger lurks for us wherever we are. We must stress the goal of self-fulfillment rather than self-protection. A Jew cannot truly feel at home even in the most sophisticated circles of the intelligentsia as long as the Jewish component in modern civilization continues to be either ignored or denigrated. At more tender ages, Jewish children or

adolescents are never comfortable in Christian society when Christian festivals are observed. Blacks learned from Jews how to accept the fact of difference, rather than sameness, converting it into an asset for their liberation. Jews must do the same, and there are programs that can help them do so. Camps and community centers can add to that which home and school can offer.

I happen to believe that a sense of alienation is a blessing, and even at home in Israel one should not forfeit it altogether. It is healthy to become detached occasionally from one's surroundings in order to view them critically. It precipitates self-evaluation and the evaluation of the value system that the individual shares with his kin and compatriots. It makes for that "aloneness" which lies at the heart of many religious and artistic experiences. Thus, to nurture a sense of alienation is sometimes as important as the promotion of a sense of nationalism or social solidarity. Certainly, a sense of alienation in Jews of the Diaspora will make Zionists of them, according to my definition of a Zionist.

It pains me to agree with many who regard the aliyah program of the WZO as an almost total waste of money and manpower. These millions would be much more wisely and effectively expended in formal and informal Zionist education — education for identification with the world-wide brotherhood of Jews and the centrality of Israel as the stage of their past, the challenge of their present, and the site of their messianic future. Budgets for this purpose must be increased five, even ten-fold. The programs must involve stays, long or short, in Israel. Most of the WZO staff may have to be retired and different talent brought in. Still, there is no other way.

True, the millions that the WZO might allocate to these programs would still be considerably less than what, let us say, the American Jewish community is spending on Jewish education. But for that very reason, the WZO can concentrate on programs that are less concerned with Jewish information than with Jewish experience, the kind that evokes a sense of belonging to the Jewish people and a readiness to keep the group alive and dynamic. The media must be exploited for the purpose, though the cost is astronomical.

The eighties will undoubtedly find Israel in need of massive political support as the free world intensifies its wooing of the Islamic world. It will also have to become more self-sufficient as Jews in the Diaspora give less and less to Israeli causes. Critical years do lie ahead. Therefore, it is all the more urgent that we generate in as many Jews as we can the feeling that Israel is their homeland, and that they must not countenance the possibility of a third loss of that which is theirs. If we do not generate that feeling now, in another 10-20 years it may be too late.

I know that it is easier for religious and/or observant Jews to achieve the desired result. Secularists find it harder. But once upon a time they, too, did it successfully — they must try again. At the same time, they

should try not to discomfit Orthodox Jews in the world organization, which is presently being done even with a sense of delight. Already, too many Orthodox Jews feel that there can be Jewish survival without Israel. Permit their number to increase, and even the little aliyah emanating from the Free World will altogether cease. Furthermore, much can be learned from the Orthodox on how to make Jews feel more Jewish and less at home in non-Jewish lands and societies.

There is nothing new in what I am suggesting. Indeed, the suggestion is contained in the Bible as a prophecy. Moses prophesied (Deuteronomy IV: 25-30) that in their exile Jews would become attached to the gods of the countries in which they settle. Yet even without persecution, somehow, there will be alienation from the dominant pagan religions and a seeking after God. It would appear that what will stimulate the return is precisely the feeling that they are not at home, because for a Jew there is only one place where he can be himself — for better or worse.

I am not so sure that the leadership of the World Zionist Organization is prepared to accept either so simple or so traditional an analysis as I have made. Yet sometimes the best answers are the obvious ones — those tried and tested in the collective experience of one's people. ■

EMANUEL RACKMAN is President of Bar-Ilan University.

MARIE SYRKIN:

How should one comment on the prospects for Zionism in the eighties? Chipperly, with false bravado?

That would be as pointless as to sketch apocalyptic scenarios of doom. Obviously the future of Zionism, which I view as identical with that of Israel, hinges on the future of the democratic West in its present global struggle. If the United States and its allies yield before the surge of "progress" now threatening to overwhelm region upon region, and the Middle East in particular, there is little hope for Israel and consequently Zionism. Such a retreat would engulf not only Israel but the Free World of which it is an integral part. However, no working hypothesis can be predicated on total moral collapse and a paralysis of the national will of the peoples affected. Were such a prognosis to be entertained, one could join Spengler in writing "finis." On the more likely assumption that Israel will continue to shape its destiny within the pressures of contending forces, some inimical to its existence, others alert to the importance of Zionism to a democratic international order, and of Israel to the strategic interests of the West, some limited observations may be ventured.

Israel's needs are plain enough: aliyah, economic stability, and security. The first two depend on the will to survive of the Jewish people. If Jews wish to remain a

people they will embrace Zionism as the guarantor of their continuing existence and as a major bulwark against assimilation in a secular age. The third imperative, security, is a factor of the ongoing geo-political conflict. If the Free World does not lose heart, if it can enlist zealots as committed as the rampaging mobs inspired by fundamentalist fervor, or as the “revolutionary” automatons whose every act violates the dogmas that animate them, then an international order of which Israel will be an organic component can emerge. To such an end the Zionist enterprise, despite the cynical opportunism of a Connally or George Ball, can contribute insofar as the West seeks to call upon the resources of Israel.

What of the problems that fall within the immediate scope of Zionism? I have already mentioned aliyah. I see no purpose in repeating the usual exhortations, since I know of no magic that will make comfortable American Jews emulate the persecuted Jews who fled to Israel. This is an old and bitter Zionist theme; the disenchantment of Israelis at the failure of mass immigration from free countries is understandable. Judging from present trends, small idealistic groups from the United States will settle in Israel, perhaps in growing numbers, but, barring a reversal in the fortunes of American Jewry that would be calamitous for all concerned, not on an appreciably larger scale.

Nevertheless, Zionism will continue to command the economic and political support of the Diaspora. Despite the high rate of intermarriage, Jews have enough inner vitality to dread a world in which there is no Jewish base. In an age in which the internationalist banner has long been furled, whose dominant emotion is racial and nationalist, Israel is insurance against an intolerable vacuum. Even Jews overtly indifferent to Zionism and critical of Israel’s supposed derelictions sense this obscurely. After the Holocaust even an embattled Jewish state exorcizes the specter of the wandering Jew, rootless and homeless.

Sophisticates will flout this notion; dwellers of the gilded ghetto will be unlikely to formulate their recoil from extinction, but this nervous awareness of an organic bond explains the paradox of Zionism without aliyah — an attachment not sentimental but instinctive.

I know that this vague unease confers no immunity from defection. The vanishing American Jew is not a journalistic Fiction, but rather a debatable sociological phenomenon — appearing, disappearing, or reappearing. Yet in this shifting scene, a profound psychic need, conscious and unconscious, inhibits complete severance; more stay than fall away. Once, the Jewish “remnant” was held by religious conviction; now, its cohesion rests on a racial memory that warns against an emptiness that often throughout history became an abyss. To step back from the void is to be a Zionist; this impulse, however dimly acknowledged, is one source of Zionist endurance!

On a less metaphysical level, an immediate task of Zionism is to re-establish its legitimacy in the public mind. While statehood finally conferred on Jewish nationalism the political legitimacy dreamed of by Herzl, a steady erosion of its moral legitimacy has taken place since the sixties. This has been achieved partially through a rewriting of history with an effrontery exceeding that of Soviet or Nazi chroniclers of the past. But while at this stage Soviet fabrications reflect rather than alter Soviet policy, falsifications of the origins and course of Zionism adversely influence the present. We live in a period when any terrorist outrage is accepted as *ipso facto* evidence that the perpetrator was outraged. The bomber is more aggrieved than his victim. I do not believe that the cabal of the Arafats and Castros, the Qaddafis and Khomeinis will be bothered by objective data. I am more concerned with the extent to which well-meaning sympathizers and Jews themselves may be shaken by the barrage of defamation directed from every quarter at Zionism. A recent incident comes to mind.

The myth of the “expulsion” of the Palestinian Arabs during the Arab invasion of 1948 is a standby of Arab propaganda and by now permeates the media. With the passage of time, historical documentation of Arab flight at the behest of their leaders is increasingly disregarded. Understandably, the press pounced upon former Prime Minister Rabin’s account of the eviction of 50,000 Arabs from the strategically situated villages of Ramleh and Lydda during the 1948 fighting as confirmation of the most lurid Arab claims. Rabin explained that the evacuation had been ordered “because we could not leave Lod’s hostile and armed population in our rear.”

Actually, Rabin’s supposedly damaging revelation affords the best internal evidence of the truth of the Israeli contention. The incident took place on June 12, at the very end of the war *after* the exodus of some 550,000 Arabs had already taken place. More important, Rabin, then commander of a brigade engaged in the action, comments on “the great suffering” of the Israeli soldiers who had to oversee the evacuation of the villagers to Arab territory 10 miles away: “There were some fellows who refused to take part in the expulsion action. Prolonged propaganda activities were required after the action to remove the bitterness of these youth movement groups.” It is obvious from Rabin’s admission that the action was *unprecedented* and *unique*, otherwise there would have been no shocked reaction among the troops. The account offers the strongest possible testimony to the moral temper of the Israeli army and of general Israeli policy. What other country, great or small, would, while fighting for its life during an invasion by six armies, have winced at evacuating an enemy group to the shelter of its compatriots? Yet when this account was published, Jews were as defensive as though they had been faced with an equivalent of My Lai or Cambodia.

I know that Zionism, in the course of its troubled realization, has had its share of error and fallibility. As a Labor Zionist, I hold no brief for the settlement policies of the present government and have argued against them. At the same time, while I can disregard the ludicrous strictures of assorted Third World and Communist tyrannies, I am offended by moralists who demand that Israel, small and beset, display a standard of perfection asked of no other people. And I am most disturbed by Jews who find in Israel's difficulties and mistakes an excuse for distancing themselves from the cause of Jewish peoplehood.

Zionism is viable because without its sustenance a Jewish people is not viable. Measured by any criterion applied to other peoples, advanced or developing, the moral record of Israel calls for pride, not apology. Zionism does not mean identification with a particular policy of a particular government. It does mean identification with a Jewish state as a natural partner in any world order that honors democracy, equality, and the productive utilization of man's labor and mind. Only such a world seems worth the struggle, for Jew and non-Jew alike. ■

#### MOSHE UNNA:

We can define "prospects" as the evaluation of the future in terms of a continuation of the past, whether this continuation is direct or altered as circumstances demand. In spite of the differences of opinion regarding the question what is Zionism, we must treat Zionism as a historical phenomenon, whose form and substance are manifested in Jewish history. Since conceptions of the nature of Zionism vary, however, it is necessary to delineate what appears to me to be its true essence.

*Zionism is the movement of renewal of the Jewish people in the Diaspora and the movement of its liberation from the Diaspora.* "Zion," that is, the Land of Israel, is the locale — the only locale — where the realization of these two goals is possible.

Zionism stems from two sources: the concept of Redemption, and the concept of national deliverance. The concept of Redemption antedates Zionism, constituting its philosophical source and providing an overall point of view — national-religious-historical and supra-historical-messianic — as well as continuity to the spiritual life of the nation. The concept of national deliverance developed in response to the needs of the moment, to ensure national survival. This concept provided the impetus that converted the immanent longing for Redemption into the demand of the "here and now," making possible the transformation of Zionism into a popular movement.

The concept of Redemption was concretized in the pre-Zionist era in activities on behalf of the existing Yishuv, the promotion of aliyah, and the renewal of ties

with Israel. The innovation in Zionism came through the incorporation of the political realm into activities on behalf of Zion necessitated by attendance to practical national needs. This, as a result, became a determining factor. Activities on behalf of the Yishuv and new settlement were thenceforth implemented out of political considerations, that is, in order to establish a real basis for political activities. (In a certain sector of Zionism, the political consideration was seized upon as the only realm of Zionism.)

It is possible, therefore, to construe the controversy over the substance of Zionism as an expression of the fundamental differences in the perception of its source, whether it lies in the concept of Redemption or national deliverance. In the former instance, opinions are divided over the correct definition of Redemption: is it a goal demanding preparation by means of proper behavior, or is it a summons to immediate action? In the latter instance, if the concept of national deliverance directs thought and deed, then one must act in the light of reality and necessity.

On the face of it, it should have been evident to all that national deliverance entails both physical and spiritual deliverance. Opinions were divided on this point. Physical deliverance was understood by all; in this realm everyone could unite and act jointly. In the realm of spiritual deliverance, however, serious differences inevitably arose between those equating deliverance/spiritual renewal/negation of the existing state, and those who saw continuity as the basic imperative for deliverance.

The objective shared by all was the Land of Israel. Perhaps the most surprising and wonderful aspect of Zionism was that everyone, religious and non-religious alike, united in determining the objective. The inclination to establish centers for the Jewish people in other places was only marginal. Even the great temptation of the offer of Uganda remained incidental.

These two concepts "lived" side by side within Zionism, their relative strength varying from era to era, at times even competing with one another. It seems to me that throughout the period since the founding of the Zionist Organization until the establishment of the State, in only one era did the importance of Redemption exceed that of deliverance — the years immediately following the Balfour Declaration.

That the influence of the concept of deliverance was strongest after World War II and the Holocaust is obvious. The concept of deliverance rightfully overcame any other thought or longing. With the establishment of the State, however, the situation altered. The very fact of the establishment of the State after the Holocaust served to sustain the concept of deliverance; nevertheless, out of the thrill of liberation and the joy of independence could be heard anew the sounds of Redemption. The text of the "Prayer for the Welfare of the State," composed by the chief rabbis of the time, Rabbi

Herzog and Rabbi Uziel, which describes the State as the “first flower of our promised Redemption,” was not factitious, but rather the expression of a genuine feeling, which grew steadily and was consolidated in the community as a factor influencing consciousness. The strong emphasis placed by Ben-Gurion on the concept of Jewish messianism and the actuality he bestowed upon it point in the same direction.

The serious schism between physical deliverance (the ingathering of the exiles) and spiritual deliverance that grew in just those years was an evil omen. The realization of the concept of deliverance was spoiled; its strength diminished of itself, though it still seemed to have the upper hand. The change, and all that was concealed therein, was revealed with the victory of the Six-Day War. The path of the concept of Redemption to assuming control was considerably widened. A turnabout occurred in the public consciousness, not only in the religious community, but in recognizable sections of the non-religious community as well.

The consolidation of the State on firm foundations seemed assured, as though threatening forces no longer existed. The concept of Redemption pushed aside the concept of deliverance, a seemingly trivial matter in the present epoch. The obligation to exploit the unique circumstances commanded, so to speak, that considerations of deliverance — even spiritual deliverance! — be tabled, since they distract the mind, will, and ability to act from the essential. Thus was revealed the great difference between the two sources of Zionism: *deliverance seeks to sustain the nation as it is; Redemption anticipates the ultimate goal* (whose realization is assured in any event, even if large sectors of the nation are doomed to destruction).

Zionism as a movement, the moving force of the Jewish people, rests on a delicate balance between its two inherent ideas, one providing the vision, the other dictating deeds. The balance was upset by the State, which, so to speak, assumed the task of deliverance. Zionism was made deficient; what remained was pushed beyond the limit of the demand for realization.

It seems to me that this aspect will be productive at the moment that we attempt to determine the direction in which the Zionist movement should proceed; we must renew our awareness of our national destiny. Zionism was the Providential instrument of national deliverance, though it fulfilled its destiny only in part. It must recognize that deliverance in which the physical and spiritual are linked will ultimately bring Redemption. The Zionist movement must either see itself in this light, or it will perish.

Let us examine the position of the Jewish people, which is most difficult in both realms: the physical and the spiritual. In the physical realm, it is shrinking steadily for demographic reasons and through intermarriage. In the spiritual realm, for most of the nation the minimum knowledge necessary to maintain ties with its spiri-

tual heritage has diminished. As a result, a foreign substance has replaced Jewish spiritual substance; opposition, even hostility, is developing against fundamental Jewish perceptions. The gap between those bound to the Jewish tradition and those removed from it grows; the common denominator narrows steadily. There must be a change. Here is the challenge to Zionism!

Zionism’s task in this realm is two-fold: Jewish education that will spontaneously evoke a sense of responsibility toward the Jewish people and serve as a guide to a Jewish way of life; and aliyah, when the desire to assume its yoke is sustained not by materialistic hopes or messianic ideas, but from a yearning for Jewish life. Its summons will be directed at those who have learned what Jewish life is and seek to actualize it. This seems, to be sure, like too long a road, yet it is a long road that is really a short-cut.

There is another realm in the present Jewish reality into which the Zionist Organization has entered, though perhaps inadvertently. Since it has entered, however, it is not free to shirk the concomitant problems. Three denominations exist in Judaism today; this is a fact, regardless of whether we are comfortable with it or regret it, viewing it as divergence from the correct path, even a threat to Judaism. The Zionist Organization has announced that it favors equality of the three denominations: Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox. If the Zionist Organization thinks it can be satisfied with this step (which, by the way, has been contested by some), it will have only created a controversy that will shake its foundations. It is incumbent upon the Zionist Organization to design a *modus vivendi* among the denominations, making possible the existence of a single framework that will at least forestall the exacerbation of the differences and unending debate.

Zionism must act, therefore, on three planes: physical deliverance, spiritual deliverance, and in the realm of internal relations. If its strength and efforts are concentrated on these tasks, it is likely that Zionism will, once again, play a vital role in the fate of the Jewish people. ■

*Translated from the Hebrew by DEBRA BERMAN*

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MELVIN I. UROFSKY:

Although historians are notoriously poor prophets, many of us succumb periodically to the urge to read the future. Given the rapid changes in today’s world, one can hardly make sense of the immediate past, much less peer into a clouded crystal ball and discern any clear lines about tomorrow. Perhaps if we had a better understanding of Zionism in the last decade we might be able to plot some course for it in the next.

There is little doubt that Zionism in the seventies was sorely besieged, a movement beset upon all sides, suffering attacks not only from its avowed enemies, but sniping from alleged friends as well. Even the meaning of Zionism could not be agreed upon, either by friend or foe. Was it “racist” or “passe” or a “national liberation movement” or something entirely different? There was an official statement, the Jerusalem Platform of 1968, which spelled out *the aims* of Zionism; the list of Zionist *duties* enunciated at the 28th Zionist Congress in 1972 was further amplified by the commentary adopted by the 29th Congress in 1978. These documents declared what Zionists wanted and what they should do, but except for part of the 1978 statement, never really tackled the problem of defining what Zionism *is*.

Zionism is, of course, many things to many people. The Labor Zionist views the movement differently from a member of Mizrachi, while Hadassah and the Revisionists have still other conceptions. The Zionist in Israel has a much different agenda from his *chaver* in America, while ARZA, the new organization of Reform Jews, and Agudat Yisrael, the bastion of the ultra-Orthodox, might as well be speaking two different languages.

The lowest common denominator for all these Zionists is love of Israel and support for her survival. All the buttons flashing “I AM A ZIONIST” and all the pop articles about “instant Zionism” mean no more than that—Jews everywhere, including most of those who do not identify as Zionists, are united in their determination to keep Israel alive and free.

Here, then, is the core of the present problem, which will determine what happens in the future. For all the claims of revived interest and new members and increased spirit, Zionism as a movement, as a set of ideas which motivates and elevates men and women, appears weak, unsteady, inarticulate, and unsure of itself. Where are the great voices such as Chaim Greenberg or Meyer Berlin or Rav Kook or Berl Katznelson or Henrietta Szold or Vladimir Jabotinsky to fire our imaginations, to kindle our souls? Where are the visions of a Theodor Herzl, which ignited the hope of the Jewish people and led within 50 years to the fruition of Herzl’s dream? Was David Ben-Gurion right, that with the establishment of the Jewish state, Zionism had lost its imperative? Now a Jew who refused to make aliyah could not call himself a Zionist, while one who did no longer had need for either the title or the movement. Did Zionism, in the very act of creating Israel, fulfill itself and now prepare to wither away?

For Zionism to survive, much less prosper in the next decade, it will above all else have to define itself in a way meaningful and important to Jews everywhere, *in Israel as well as in the Diaspora*. By Zionism I do not mean Zionist organizations. Hadassah, for example, is a vigorous and dynamic organization that supports health and welfare agencies in Israel. It also operates an exten-

sive “Zionist education” program in the United States, but it is doubtful if the rank and file of Hadassah’s 400,000 plus members think about, or even care very much, about the goals and duties of the Jerusalem Platform. They are Zionists because they belong to a Zionist organization, but it is the Hadassah and not the Jerusalem program that motivates them.

Let us start then with a few basic premises which, in my view, will be necessary in a Zionist movement capable of rallying the Jewish people. This is, of course, a highly subjective list, but one which should be understood as suggestive rather than definitive. No one is arguing that Zionism ought to be monolithic or inflexible; it must be a large house with many access doors and even separate — but connecting — rooms. But all must stand upon the same foundation and beneath a common roof. For that roof, I would propose the following;

1. Zionism is the collective, regenerative, creative spirit of the Jewish people in our time; as such, its primary goal is the survival of the Jewish people.

2. The State of Israel is the greatest accomplishment of Zionism, but it is not the goal of the movement. Zionism does not exist for Israel; rather, the opposite is true. Israel is the chief instrumentality in Zionism’s drive to preserve the Jewish people. Jews everywhere support Israel, but Israel also supports them — spiritually, psychically, emotionally — and Zionism is the conduit between Homeland and Diaspora.

3. While living in Israel is an ideal for all Zionists, the Jews of Israel are neither superior nor inferior to Jews elsewhere. Rather, we are all part of a united and eternal people, partners in the future of a Jewry with a 4,000-year past. Zionism is the means through which we can express that partnership. As such, the movement must focus itself not so much on Israel but on the Jewish people; it must recognize that at some points, the needs of Israel, no matter how urgent, must give precedence to the more pressing needs of Jewish communities in Argentina or South Africa or the United States; that while aliyah is an important goal, the freedom of Jews, individually and in groups, is more important. When Soviet Jews leave the *Mitrayim* of Russia, they should not be castigated by their brethren if they then exercise the right of free men and women to live where they please.

4. Because Judaism has survived by simultaneously adapting its outer forms while retaining its core beliefs, the complexity of modern times has given rise to different varieties of faith. Yet all are Jewish, and must be recognized as such. If Israel is to be the heart of Judaism, if the prophetic vision is ever to go forth once more from Zion, then Israel must treat all Jews with the dignity and respect they deserve. Zionism as a movement has the obligation of ensuring that the Jewish state, both within and without its borders, deals equally with all members of the Jewish family. An important step was

taken in this direction at the 29th Congress; no backsliding can be permitted.

5. A true partnership of Israel and the Jews living *b'chutz laaretz* requires an honest and continuous dialogue, one not only of support but of criticism as well. As Israel, God willing, looks forward to peace with its neighbors, various aspects of government policy will be increasingly questioned by Jews elsewhere. Zionism should not only encourage this, but be the major conduit of communication. The Diaspora should not tell Israel what to do, any more than Israel should direct Jewish affairs in the Diaspora. But since each community has such an impact upon and an interconnectedness with the other, neither should blindly accept actions or policies which could so greatly affect its future.

This list can and should be expanded; each of these items needs much more explication. But if Zionism as a movement, as a living set of ideas and ideals, is to affect individual Jews, if it is to play an important part in Jewish communal affairs, then it must speak to the hearts and minds of all Jews. It must create a new agenda for the eighties; the old list needs to be revised, the priorities reordered, the rationales rethought. A movement that fails to grow and adapt will die, even if its outer organizational forms appear to be alive. The process of change can at times be painful, but the alternative is unthinkable. Like a people, a movement without a vision shall surely perish. ■

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# The Ya'som

BLU GREENBERG

Yeshiva handsome:  
A hooked nose  
Grey, grey eyes  
Rosy cheeks  
Over good bones.  
Curly brown hair  
Under a hat  
Tilted slightly back.  
The perfect chic of a modern yeshiva bocher.

He knew how to get around  
How to "hondle"  
Sniff opportunity  
Hail fellow well met  
Considerate, funny, clever  
At times a bit moody  
At times a bit distant  
We knew he had been saved by miracles.

He loved Sarah  
The oldest of five daughters,  
Of a great, booming family.  
"No!" said her father  
A charitable man,  
"A ya'som  
Raised by his rebbes. . . ."  
"No!" said her mother  
A woman of good works,  
"Without a father  
How' will he know  
To be one?  
Without a mother  
How' will he know'  
To care for you?"  
"Better to wait," said Tante Esther  
"Find another," said the wise old bobba.

"No . . ." said my friend  
To her Beloved.  
The grey eyes darkened  
The ya'som  
Straightened his hat  
Yeshiva chic  
Suddenly vanished.  
The ya'som  
Once again  
Hitler's victim.