IMAGINING ISRAEL, BELONGING IN DIASPORA:

NORTH AMERICAN JEWS' REFLECTIONS ON ISRAEL

AS HOMELAND, NATION, AND NATION-STATE

By

JASMIN HABIB, B.A., M.A.

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AUTHOR: Jasmin Habib, B.A. (Trent University), M.A. (University of Notre Dame)

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ABSTRACT

Israel has many meanings that are crucial to the analysis and interpretation of any resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict. With the Middle East Peace process initiated in 1993, both Jews and Palestinians have begun to rethink their relationship to their homelands. But negotiations take place within an arena where two nations claim one territory, and where one nation also claims a "diasporic" relationship to homeland. Using anthropological and cultural studies' approaches to nationalism, diaspora and the politics of location, I explore how North American Jews construct and experience their relationships to Israel. Travelling on organised Jewish tours to Israel and participating in numerous Jewish community events over a 4-year period, I have examined how the "Israel" displayed and enacted as a Jewish homeland and nation-state through Israeli nationalist and Zionist narratives is "taken up" or interpreted by Jews in diaspora. An identifiable, shared, tragic past, and common ancestry helps to define all Jews as a nation, and Israel as their homeland, but, significantly, not their home. Jews in diaspora envision Israel as the Jews' homeland, and as modern nation state. It is a symbol of the Jews' accomplishments and survival as a nation. But their primary focus is on the relations of nation and feelings of responsibilities towards other Jews. These practices and ideas require a recasting of ideas of "national" identity which assume territoriality, so as to include the practices of deterritorialised identifications with the nation, or what I call "diaspora nationalism." Moreover, I suggest that the "diaspora nationalism" of North American Jews is part of a general post-Zionist phenomenon.

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DEDICATIONS

For

Amit and Na'aman Habib

In Memoriam

Zillah Iram
Cathy Miller
John Novak
Tawfiq Zayad

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Political thought is representative. I form an opinion by considering a given issue from different viewpoints, by making present to my mind the standpoints of those who are absent; that is, I represent them. This process of representation does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else, and hence look upon the world from a different perspective; this is a question neither of empathy, as though I tried to be or to feel like somebody else, nor of counting noses and joining a majority but of being and thinking in my identity where actually I am not. The more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue and the better I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking and the more valid my final conclusions, my opinion.

Culture and politics... belong together because it is not knowledge or truth which is at stake, but rather judgement and decision, the judicious exchange of opinion about the sphere of public life and common world, and the decision what manner of action is to be taken in it, as well as how it is to look henceforth, what kind of things are to appear in it.

Political philosopher Hannah Arendt in Between Past and Future [1961] 1993: 241 and 223 (see also Marchessault 1995).

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

"A Great Miracle Happened Here" (Israel)

"A Great Miracle Happened There" (Canada)

I begin with a toy that signifies the spirit of Hanukkah, called a dreidl in Yiddish, sevivon in Hebrew, to allegorise my approach in the dissertation project. During Hanukkah a popular game of chance is played with a dreidl, a derivative of an old German gambling game, played with a four-sided top containing a letter on each side. Each letter stands for one word of the phrase "A great miracle happened there". If you happen to be playing the game in Israel, the last letter stands for "here" ("a great miracle happened here"). That the words on the dreidl change from "here" to "there" depending on where Jews find themselves serves as an interesting representation of Jewish identity. Like the toy top, whose spinning mass imparts movement and stability, Jews who live in "diaspora" experience their identities resonating within contexts that destabilise traditional ideas of belonging fixed to one particular place, instead oscillating between the narratives of be-longing "here" and "there" – "diaspora"-Israel and/or Israel-"diaspora". I am seeking to understand how a people living elsewhere use the national terms of identity to place themselves in relation to "their" nation-state.

In this dissertation I examine Jews' diaspora cultural practices: their production of narratives of history, nation, identity, culture and territory. I focus first on diverse narratives that identify Israel as the Jews' "homeland," and then on the multicultural and multinational identifications of North American Jews that in their reception and interpretations, encompass and subvert these narratives.

Those writing on nationalism discuss how the concepts of place, home and nation are abstract ideas that can be concretised and materialised as they are territorialised (e.g., Anderson 1991; Giddens 1987; Hutchinson and Smith 1994; Smith 1991). How a people claim a national place that they do not live in – how a nation can be transformed from a geopolitical space into a cultural one – is the paramount question of this dissertation. I examine not diaspora existence but diaspora nationalism, and this leads to a different understanding of the multiple locations of cultures. I show how for cultures set in transnational and transborder networks, attachments are multiply recast as much as they are

space into a cultural one – is the paramount question of this dissertation. I examine not diaspora existence but diaspora nationalism, and this leads to a different understanding of the multiple locations of cultures than one that is ethnographically-focussed on one communty's everyday habits or that simply assumes that a diasporic relationship to homeland exists. I show how for communities set in transnational and transborder networks, attachments are multiply recast as much as they are simultaneously re-situated, and how they articulate other forms of multinational and not simply multicultural communities.

My subjects Jews living in Canada and the United States who are engaged in the practice of identifying Israel as homeland while living outside its territory. In part these practices are informed by Zionism, the national movement to found a state for the Jews, as well as more general theories on diasporas, nationalism, and popular culture.

In this dissertation, I explore diverse perspectives in order to provide insight into the debate about structure and cultural meanings created and produced by human subjects in community – in this case as audiences, tourists, or members of communities. With the "globalisation" of theory and the postmodern turn against essentialism, identity has become identities and pluralities, and the discussion has moved from purity to hybridity; nationalism to multiculturalism; homeland to diaspora. Or has it? The fundamental assumptions that such theoretical moves have taken for granted are part of what I examine here.

The underlying objectives of the thesis are also to consider ways of thinking outside some of the dominant paradigms of identity and nationalism. I accomplish this task by showing how Zionist and Jewish nationalist ideas about identity are re-framed in multicultural and inter-national settings, where what I call "diaspora nationalism" allows for a celebration of life and prosperity away from one's homeland while also maintaining a relationship to it.

While the primary focus is the examination of the ideas of the nation and identity, the secondary focus is on how to critically position cultural subjects within cultural contexts that are deeply enmeshed in complex national settings. That is, I seek to understand how subjects are national subjects within multi-national, inter-national and multicultural contexts; national subjects within global contexts; and lastly, diaspora subjects within multi-nationalist contexts.

Positionings

There are two "nationalities" that identify Israel/Palestine as their homeland: the Jews and the Palestinians, and by virtue of their "locations" – in the state, outside the state, in diaspora and, for most Palestinians, in exile, – imagining the nation and their place in the world in relation to their homeland is a very different practice for each group. The literature about Israel and Palestine certainly presents very polarised perspectives on identity, homeland, history and the conflict in the region (Armstrong 1996; Ben-Ze'ev and Ben-Ari 1996; Gerner 1991; Frankel 1994; Kriesberg 1992; Ruether and Ellis 1990).

In the "pro-Israel" camp the story goes something like this: The Jews were a nation that has suffered humiliation, discrimination, pogroms, expulsion and death in Christian-dominated lands. Israel is the culmination of biblically decreed prophecies and/or a modern historical solution to "the Jewish problem." Since the Jewish people are a nation and every nation deserves a state, so for the Jewish people, a Jewish state. The Holocaust proves more than any other event in history that the Jews are not safe unless they have their own state. Zionism is the name for a movement that liberated the Jews and forms the political ideology that guides the state of Israel and its development. Israel is a jewel in the rough crown, a European, Westernised state and Western ally in a region dominated by anti-Zionist, anti-Israel and pre-modern, anti-democratic (with dictators and monarchs) political sensibilities, and still caught in a form of Jew-hatred or anti-Semitism. This narrative explains the ongoing danger in the Middle East and the need for Israeli military and political defensiveness[1].

The "pro-Palestinian" or "pro-Arab" perspectives run a parallel course to the pro-Israel position. Israel is a settler state society arising out of a form of European colonial-nationalism, named Zionism. The Palestinians and other Arabs have suffered the fate of this colonising and Westernising movement. Palestinians have been and continue to be displaced from their homes and Israel's alliance with Western powers distorts the economic and political systems of the

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1. For a diverse though not comprehensive set of "pro-Israel" perspectives see Elon 191; Fackenheim 1978; Grosby 1999; Karetzky and Frankel 1989; Laqueur and Rubin 1985; Safran 1978; Sinai and Sinai 1972; Schoenbaum 1993.

region. Monarchs and dictators have been supported by the American and Western European alliances, especially during the Cold War eras and in the post-Gulf War or "New World Order" era. Israel is a "racist" or ethnocentric state whose exclusionist national politics and western military alliances undermines and endangers all of its neighbours. And finally, it is Western guilt over the Holocaust that has cost the Arabs and particularly the Palestinians their lives, their land, and their autonomy[2].

These perspectives form the core of almost any discussion about Israel, the Jews and the Palestinians. And the problem is not so much that each has a position or perspective. It is that researchers have rarely taken the time to cross over, to be sensitive to or mindful of the other's perspectives. It is as though writers and researchers choose a side and once there, stake their claims.

When it comes to a consideration of these issues, I believe I have both the privilege and the distinct advantage of having grown up in a family deeply committed to a peaceful and just reconciliation of the Israel-Palestine conflict. My family's history, and my own continued interest and activism for just such a reconciliation or transformation of the conflict have informed my interpretations of what people in each of these communities considers critical for the other to understand. I was born in Israel to a Jewish mother and a Palestinian father. My maternal grandparents escaped the horrors of the Holocaust by settling in Israel in the early 1930's. Some members of my maternal grandmother's family perished; others managed to escape to France and to Israel. My maternal grandfather's family was rescued by my grandfather and his brother and brought to Israel. My mother and her sister were born in Mandate British Palestine, prior to the declaration of the state of Israel.

My father was born in Palestine. As a result of the United Nations Partition Plan of 1947, my father and his immediate family were removed from their home in Beisan, also known

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2. For a diverse though not comprehensive list set of "pro-Palestinian" perspectives see Abu-Lughod 1971; Abu-Zubi 1987; Avinery 1971; Beinin 1994; Beit-Hallahmi 1987; Dimbelby 1980; Farsoun 1997; Graham-Brown 1980; Kanaana 1992; Khalidi 1997, 1998; Khalidi 1984; Lilienthal 1953; Muhawi and Kanaana; 1989; Palumbo 1990; Rodinson 1973; Said 1978, 1980, 1994a, 1994b, 1996; Salt 1997; Schoenman 1988; Zureik 1995).

by its Hebrew name as Beit She'an. They became "internal refugees" in the Galilee region of the new state of Israel. Their home and property in Beisan were declared off-limits for "security" reasons and, although they became Israeli citizens, they have never been allowed to reclaim it. The rest of his family members became refugees in Lebanon during the same period. Some, though not all, have since moved out of Lebanon to live in Cyprus, England, Canada and Australia. As far as I know, no family members have ever been allowed to return to claim their property or to gain citizenship since their expulsion.

Telling this personal history moves some to understand that there is some common ground for dialogue to begin: that both peoples have been wronged; that both peoples have been used as pawns in a world where international political designs are sometimes beyond the power of individuals and their communities. For others, the story suggests that the conflict is too deep, too painful, and has for too long positioned the enemies against one another. In other words, that there is no common ground.

My experiences and imaginings of Israel are primarily as my first home, and the home of my extended family members and numerous friends. I have travelled to Israel on my own on many occasions, visiting family and friends and spending one summer working in Eilat. I grew up in Canada, celebrating all aspects of the Christian, Muslim and Israeli-Jewish traditions, in a non-religious way. For example, for each holiday different groups of people would come to celebrate with us; sometimes everyone would come together such as at Christmas. This all seemed very normal to me.

Although both of my parents had been engaged in Middle East peace activism in my home city, I have generally been protected from the more political aspects of the relationship between Jews and Arabs as I was growing up. I am as attached to the Jewish presence in Israel as I am the Palestinian. While stories my maternal grandparents told me about settling and building a modern state in Palestine and later Israel were Zionist, I never interpreted them on political terms; they were simply stories of my family's past. Similarly, stories told to me by Palestinian family and friends were rarely oriented to the Israel-Palestine conflict. While there were reflections on the hardships they faced in Israel, there was little made of the fact that they

were living in Israel as second-class citizens. Even when I took a trip to Beisan with my father's eldest brother and I was told about the family's expulsion and the expropriation of their land, there was little said about the Israel-Palestine conflict during our time together.

Consciousness of the Palestinian national movement and the Palestinian struggle was raised only at the undergraduate post-secondary level when I was introduced to a professor who was actively engaged in the promotion of peace and reconciliation in the region. I only then became aware that many of my parents' and family friends – lawyers, writers and politicians – Palestinians and Israeli-Jews – who had come to visit my home from Israel were very much involved in progressive politics within Israel, most as Communists. All were involved in peace-building initiatives between Palestinians and Jews as well as towards the development of greater civil and human rights for all Israelis, including Palestinians within the state of Israel.

This then forms the background to my entrée into this field research.

Despite my many travels, the tour trips I took as part of this research project were the first trips around the state as a tourist. This made for some disjunctive experiences. For example, as we passed my home in Haifa or Nazareth on the tours, I wanted nothing more than to simply hop off the bus and go in to visit my aunts and uncles and their children now living there.

As well, on all of the tours, once tour participants found out that I could speak and understand Hebrew and that I had lived in Israel, they asked for my assistance and knowledge about the everyday aspects of life in Israel. For example, I helped people get to the bank, buy bread and snacks, explained how to use the currency when shopping, using taxis and buses, as well as telephones. I also explained what I knew about the educational system, television programming, newspapers, housing matters and political parties. These are simple matters but they are very much a part of knowing about everyday life in Israel. While most felt like strangers, or tourists, in their homeland, I never felt that same distance. When comparing my relationship to Israel to that of the tourists, I would say that my relationship is much the same as that of other immigrants' relationships to their first homes. In that sense it may be understood as less grounded in ideologically-mediated experiences and more in everyday practices and encounters.

What I sought to discover through this ethnography are the very processes by which people who have no direct family or personal experiences in Israel develop or have developed a relationship to the state, which is so very different from mine. This is not meant to suggest their relationship is somehow less real, however. Rather it provoked me to explore just how such a relationship endures and what are its fundamental tenets. Each of our relationships to Israel is different, but neither one is more legitimate than the other. While my trips home to Israel are much like many immigrants' trips to their first home; the trips the tourists take are for them a kind of homecoming too. Still, I am in no way suggesting that the relationships developed to Israel by Jews in diaspora are somehow less legitimate than those of Israeli-Jews or of Palestinians. This exploration is not meant in any way to de-legitimise any groups' continued or enduring relationship to Israel or Palestine.

It is this very process of understanding Israel as homeland that is important to this research and it is the anthropological method – ethnography – of investigating the very processes of identity-making and the very fluidity and patterning of these processes of identification that inform this research.

Since 1993 and with the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DOP) (Government of Israel 1993) between the state of Israel and the Palestine Authority, an opening for dialogue among Jews and Palestinians in diaspora was created and people crossed paths in ways that they had never done before. The DOP, better known as the Oslo Accords, recognised the right of Israelis to a secure Israel in the Middle East, and the right of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza to live free of Israeli military occupation. As a result of some of these developments, and due in part to the fact that I have been interested in promoting peace between Jews and Palestinians, I was invited to speak at many community events in Jewish community settings, including at Temples both in Canada and the United States, local community centres, and for women's groups involved in development projects in Israel.

In my own presentations at community events and in individual conversations, I choose not to focus on differences but rather to tell stories of displacement and discrimination in the hope that people will come more fully to understand the conflict in the region. I also try to

speak about the regional conflict in terms that moves the focus above and beyond the politics of leaders and their hand shaking, and beyond the mediated representations that only present enemies in military or revolutionary garb. I hope to direct listeners to the very personal costs for each "side", as individuals and as members of a collective, as well as to the actions each group has taken to resist violent conflict and gain contact between the groups involved. Telling these stories is not enough, of course.

In this dissertation, I search for the roots of individual and collective ties to a perspective. Exposure to a range of Israeli and Palestinian perspectives on the conflict made me mindful of the fact that there was a "side" to these arguments that I did not really understand at all, a perspective that I had not been exposed to in my own home, or as a result of personal experience. That "side" was the North American Jewish perspective. I therefore decided to find out just what Jews in North America were being told about Israel and how they had come to understand their relationships to Israel; how they had come to judge Israeli politics, culture and history, in general, and the Israeli-Palestine conflict, in particular. And what, if anything, defined them as "in diaspora, " that is in the most simple terms, as living in a "home away from home."

Beyond reading the literature in the area, I decided I needed to do at least two more things: participate and observe Jewish community events, particularly those where Israel was the focus; and participate and observe organised tours to Israel that were designed and oriented for Jews living in North America. In this way I would be able to see how Israel was represented to Jews in North America while in their home communities, as well as how Israel was represented to Jews from North America while in Israel.

Key to this process was to listen to the "official" narratives about Israel and Jewish identity for North American Jews and then to try to understand how and when narratives of Israel and Jewish identity might be "taken up" by their audiences. This was an examination of how and when contemporary Israeli-Zionist thought directed at Jews from North America might get "taken up" by its audiences. What I investigate is the creation of national meanings through public and popular cultural events and many of their social and political interconnections.

Thus while in the communities and on tour, I observed and participated in the communities both as "outsider" and as "insider" (Abu Lughod 1986; Azoulay 1997; Jackson 1987; Kuglemass 1988; Narayan 1997). I am a Jew and a Palestinian; a Canadian and an Israeli; a peace activist and an anthropologist. I say this not to suggest that one "side" was in or out, only to present the "positionings" I found myself shifting in and out of (Battaglia 1995; Borsa 1990; Haraway 1988; Rich 1986).

There is an enormous scope to the literature exploring Jewish identity, history, and the practice of Judaism in North America. One significant element of this research is that it presupposes "a" Jewish community. That is, despite the fact that Jews live in communities across North America (Belcove-Shalin 1995; Brym et al 1993; H. Goldberg 1987; Kugelmass 1988; Sklare 1982; Zenner 1988), they are generally defined as being part of one community. In general, the North American Jews are presented as socio-economically successful and active in local and national politics. They have built strong and effective community development organisations that fund and support institutions such as Jewish community centres, Temples and Synagogues,. geriatric residences, day schools, as well as Jewish Studies programs in universities (Brodbar-Memzer et al. 1993; Brym 1993; Brym, Shaffir and Weinfeld 1993; Cohen 1983; Davids 1983; J. Goldberg 1996; Hertzberg 1989; Liebman and Cohen 1990; Lipset 1990; Myerhoff 1978; Shaffir 1983; Sklare 1982; Taras and Weinfeld 1993; Tulchinsky 1992).

Within this wide-ranging literature, sociologists and demographers measuring Jewish identity have defined rates of travel to and support for Israel as important variables (Brodbar-Nemzer et al 1993; Cohen 1983; Cohen and Liebman 1990; Sheffer 1996). However, as anthropologist Jack Kugelmass (1988) points out, such practices of support for Israel "are some of the areas that need to be considered in an ethnography of American Jewry" (1988:13). I agree with this critical assessment and take up the challenge to explore these relationships and practices.

In many ways, this dissertation is about the politics of location: the location of Jews "in diaspora," the location of Jews in Israel, the location of the presentation of narratives, and the location of the listeners and readers of those narratives. But "location" has more than a

geographical meaning here. By "location," following feminist writer Adrienne Rich (1986), I mean the place from which we see the world and the place we are set into in the world. Subjects do not only make perspectival readings; those subjects are also socially and multiply positioned. And each positioning depends on context, history, and politics. Thus "location" is not just about perspective, it is about how perspectives are multiply cast and creatively emergent while also "locatable" in social positions and historical contexts (Borsa 1990; Clifford 1992, 1997; Gilroy 1996; Haraway 1988; Keith and Pile 1993; Lavie and Swedenburg 1986; Frankenburg and Mani 1996; Rich 1986).

I want to suggest as well, that anthropologists rethink their practices of naming peoples by where they are located geographically – that is, naming peoples as living in diaspora or as diaspora cultures because they do not live in their "original" territories. I would argue that diaspora must be understood as a "location" in Rich's terms. That is, not as a geographical location but as a practised relation to homeland. It is the practices of identification that define the Jews with whom I travelled and joined in community events celebrating Israel as living "in diaspora." Jews who do not identify, who do not feel any attachment, or who do not participate in Israel-events should not be defined as living "in diaspora" since they may not at all "locate" themselves as such. In fact, they may not primarily identify as Jews and may simply define themselves as Canadians or Americans, or by the city they lived in, e.g., Torontonians or New Yorkers, for that matter. Israel may not even matter very much. While I did not do research with the latter group, I will show how these issues are important for understanding the positioning of those who do have attachments to Israel.

I am seeking then to understand and contextualise, from North America, Jewish history, Jewish identity and Jewish popular practices and identifications of and with Israel. The public and popular narratives and practices that I examine were presented and performed by Jews for jews and about Jews.

Outline of Fieldwork in the Community

While the official period of my fieldwork began in the Spring of 1994 and extended through to the Summer of 1998, I began to attend community events and make contacts with people in the two Canadian communities where I planned to do research in the Fall of 1993. I lived in one large city with an estimated population of 175,000 Jews for a one-year period and then in a nearby smaller community with an estimated population of 5,000 Jews for the rest of the research period. While living in these cities, I observed and participated in numerous public community events in community centres, synagogues, libraries, and academic centres. When I lived in the smaller city, I frequently travelled to the major urban centre in order to continue to attend community events and meet with people. The metropolitan region in which I conducted the research has one of the largest populations of Jews in Canada and therefore has many well-established Jewish community institutions and annual events, including book, film and music festivals. As a result, I had many opportunities to develop relationships with people as well as to attend numerous public events. I attended at least one public event a week over the course of the research period, but often attended two and three events a week between the months of October and May, when there tended to be a higher number of activities.

I examined the North American Jew's interpretation of their relationship to Israel by attending those community events that were about Israel, about Israel-Palestine relations or included Israeli personalities or celebrities, for example, musicians, filmmakers, or authors. These included public lectures, conferences, and book readings sponsored by communal institutions (e.g., Jewish community centres, synagogues); fundraising and lobbying organisations (e.g., United Jewish/Israel Appeal, Jewish National Fund, New Israel Fund, Peace Now, Friends of Bar Ilan University [Israel], Friends of the Hebrew University [Israel]); and university programs (e.g., Jewish Studies, Middle East Studies). Israeli- and North American-Jewish politicians, academics, and writers as well as prominent leaders and activists were speakers at these events. Community celebrations of Jerusalem's 3000th Birthday, Zionism's 100th Anniversary, and Israel's 50th Birthday included public parades and marches, festivals, and

musical performances were often sponsored by major organisations such as the United Jewish Appeal and Jewish community centres. In addition there were annual book, film, and cultural festivals (e.g., Ashkenaz, a Yiddish Revival Festival) as well as educational events (e.g., Holocaust Education Week). When invited, I also attended Board meetings of some of the communities' Jewish organisations involved in lobbying and fundraising for Israeli projects.

I subscribed to the Canadian Jewish News as well as a number of synagogue and community newsletters, once I learned they were important sources of information for community members. The Canadian Jewish News' calendar of events as well as its many special inserts, (e.g., on celebrating 100 years of Zionism, Jerusalem's 3000 Birthday, Israel's 50th Anniversary), proved to be helpful guides. News about Israel and articles written by Canadians living in Israel were regular features in the Canadian Jewish News. Reading these periodicals helped me get a good perspective on the way news about Israel is framed for and by a Jewish North American audience. I also became a member of, or was put on the mailing lists for a number of Israel-focused groups that have fundraising organisations in Canada. I was thus able to receive their newsletters and notices of upcoming events.

I was also invited to join a "Jewish lunch" that met every Tuesday. It usually involved 5-10 participants, some academics and their former or current graduate students. I regularly attended for approximately two years starting in 1995 and then less and less frequently after the initial fieldwork period began. I did not attend religious services in the communities unless invited to do so on special occasions (e.g., weddings and engagement parties; Bar and Bat Mitzvah's). I also spent a brief but productive time in one U.S. city because the tour group was made up principally of residents of that city [see below].

I was invited into the homes and lives of many people and I formed a number of friendships in the various communities during the fieldwork period. Extended discussions with these friends have helped me form a richer sense of just what is at stake for many of those who have made Israeli politics and culture an important feature of their lives. Though there were many disagreements, it is in these discussions with this group of friends that I learned a great deal about just what it means for some Jews in North America to be tied to Israel. These friends

have also guided me to see what the possibilities and pitfalls of any promises for peace and reconciliation might mean to them as well as for all involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Outline of Fieldwork on Tours to Israel

Choices

In addition to spending time in communities and attending community events, I chose and received permission to participate on three Canadian-based organised tours to Israel. These tours gave me the opportunity to "experience" Israel with Jews living in diaspora.

I chose tours of a type popular in the communities I was engaged with. Almost everyone I met had either travelled to Israel on one of these tours in the past, especially on their first trip to Israel; or they planned to do so sometime in the future; or they had known others that had travelled on such a tour. I was able therefore to discuss experiences of such travel even with those who had not been on any of the tours I travelled on over the course of the research period.

Choosing tours organised by Israel-focused community organisations (described below) involved not taking other types of tours given the expenses involved. I chose not to participate on commercial tours available on a regular basis to any North American interested in travelling to Israel. I felt that these tours would be less oriented to the connecting/linking principles I was seeking to understand among Jews in North America. There was little to guarantee that the tourists would be Jewish and speaking to a number of tour agents made clear that these trips would be treated as leisure tours rather than study tours. Thus, my own research interests – how and what tourists get to know about Israel and how they get called on to participate in nation-building and state-building practices – would not be the focus of such leisure tours.

Also, I decided not to travel on religious tours. I wanted to go on tours that anyone in the Jewish community – Orthodox and non-Orthodox – could easily and do frequently access. During the fieldwork period, I did not meet one person who had gone on a religious tour. Going on religious tours also meant studying a very different kind of trip – one that I would argue

would be far closer to a pilgrimage – than the kinds of trips I was interested in studying (Badone 1995; Bowman 1991; Eade and Sallnow 1991). While it could be said that the tours I participated on had elements of pilgrimage (especially in Jerusalem), the tours were not defined as such and the tourists never defined themselves on those terms. I wanted to focus on the meanings created in, on, and through the tours of Israel as an extension of the meanings produced about Israel in communities outside of Israel.

Last but not least, I chose not to study the "March of the Living" tours. These are tours that take travellers to Holocaust sites in Europe and then "return" to Israel. There are several reasons for choosing not to take part on these tours. The "March of the Living" tours were among the least commonly travelled tours among the people I met, perhaps because they are such a new phenomenon in the community and because many of these tours are directed at teenagers rather than adults. Another reason: my interest is in North American Jewish identity and diaspora-Israel relations in particular. "March of the Living" tours are designed to celebrate Jewish survival after the Holocaust, as well as to commemorate and learn more about Europe's Jewish communities. As such, they are about Jewish communities outside of Israel, but they are not primarily focussed on the role that Israel plays in "diaspora" consciousness. These tours are also tours I would not want to take myself. Having been brought up with stories about the Holocaust from my own grandparents, I, like my mother, have never even been able to watch a film about the Holocaust. Travelling to concentration and death camp sites is beyond my personal emotional capabilities. But more than that, I do not feel properly trained or prepared to work in such a highly emotionally charged atmosphere, such as a tour of Auschwitz organised for a group of Jewish teenagers.

Arranging Tours

I requested and received permission from the sponsoring organisation to go on each of the tours I took. Each organisation received a letter of request, a copy of my proposal and consent forms to be signed by the tourists. In one case this process seemed like nothing more than a formality, and nothing of significance was discussed with the sponsoring agents. In

another case, members of a Board of Directors of the sponsoring organisation were involved in my tour planning. In fact, when I got to Israel and prior to the arrival of the rest of the group in Israel, I was met by an Israeli staff member wanting to interview me for the organisation's newsletter (I declined the interview but agreed to meet the staff member). In spite of the fact that I had more contact with this sponsoring group than any other, I had more trouble on site than with the others (more on this below). With the last tour I not only had permission, I was introduced in the welcoming letter to the tourists each of whom was informed about my background as well as my research interests. Those on tour were encouraged to assist me in this research. As in the other cases, not all those present on the trip agreed to participate on my project, but it was with this group that I had the greatest opportunity for conversation and the numbers of on-site interviews were greater than on the previous two tours.

Fieldwork at Home

While people's perspectives on Israel arose in the questions they raised on tour and in the lectures in community, I also set out to explore relations to Jewish identity and Israel in a series of formal interviews with those I met in the community and on tour. These interviews form the third and key part of my field research. I met with over 100 people with whom I had discussions about Israel and its place in their lives. Quite a few became close friends, others became acquaintances; some I only came to know on tour and did not have any opportunity to meet again. All of these people guided and taught me about the role that Israel plays in their personal histories, their sense of Jewish identity, and the degree to which it affected their lives in North America. What follows is a brief description of informants and subjects of the research.

All but one of the families I met were Ashkenaz Jews – meaning Jews whose families were European and whose "traditional" language is Yiddish, although this generation may not have spoken it. I met one family who were in fact Palestinian Jews – Jews who had lived in the Galilee area prior to Israel's founding in 1948. They would be defined as "Oriental" Jews because they were "from" an "Arab" land and their "traditional" language is Arabic. I did not meet any Sephardic Jews – Jews whose families were expelled in the 17th century from Spain (*Sfarad* in

Hebrew) to countries like Morocco, Algeria and whose "traditional" language is Ladino (a dialectic of Spanish written in Hebrew script). Many of my respondents but not all were affiliated Conservative' or Reform' Jews. Some were Modern Orthodox', others Reconstructionists'. The ages of those I met during this research ranged from early 20's to early 90's but those I had most contact with were middle-aged (late '30s/'40's to mid-60's) and older (mid-70's to 90's). Almost all of those I met have children and grandchildren. Among the middle-aged group, there is a good deal of active support for Jewish community organisations and their activities, particularly in Israel. Some of them sit on Boards of Directors for Jewish organisations that support Israel, others are leaders or fundraisers for similar institutions either working as employees or as volunteers. Many have contributed many years of community service in the arts or in social agencies. Most of those I interacted with have been professionals – teachers, lawyers, professors, social workers and businessmen. Many are very wealthy, and have come from upper and upper middle class backgrounds. Many are comfortably retired but still active – avid golfers, artists, travelers, political or community volunteers.

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3. Conservative Judaism is a 19th century North American movement that advocates more traditional Jewish values than Reform Judaism but is more "modernised" than the Orthodox. One of the differences between Reform and Conservative is that the traditional separation of men and women in Synagogue has been maintained. Women may be ordained as Rabbis. While there are some Conservative Synagogues in Israel, Conservative Judaism is not recognised as a legitimate representative of the Jewish religion by the Orthodox Rabbinical Authority in Israel.

4. Reform Judaism is an 18th century, "enlightenment" movement originating in Germany which rejected a number of fundamental traditional beliefs and practices. The Synagogue is called a Temple; there is mixed seating, and the services are performed in the vernacular language of the community. Beliefs rejected include dietary laws. Women may be ordained as Rabbis. While there are Reform Temples in Israel, the Rabbis and Reform practices are not recognised as legitimately Jewish by the Orthodox Rabbinical Authority in Israel. The Reform Movement is also distinguished by its debate on the role of Zionism in modern Jewish life; while anti-Zionist at the beginning of this century, this stance changed in the 1960's.

5. Orthodox groups can be subdivided to include Ultra-Orthodox and modern Orthodox. The modern Orthodox while rejecting the efforts to modernise halacha (or religious law) as the Conservative and Reform movements have done, maintain a modern lifestyle, believe in secular education and hold vernacular ceremonies. The main difference between the Modern Orthodox and the Ultra-Orthodox communities is that the Ultra-Orthodox Jews reject some of the values of modernity, often distinguished by their traditional clothing and "ghetto" lifestyles. While in the State of Israel only the Orthodox are officially recognised as authoritative on Jewish laws and practices, although there are Ultra-Orthodox that are anti-Zionist (e.g., represented by groups like Neturai Karta).

6. Founded in North America in the 20th century, as a breakaway from Conservative Judaism. It is distinguished by its focus on Judaism as a cultural tradition of literature, philosophy and folk practices. There is no belief in the Jews as the Chosen People, or in the Messiah, and strong emphasise fairness, equity.

Dissertation Outline

One of my goals in this thesis is to give readers an awareness of what is at stake in the many debates on Israel, Jewish identity and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Creating an ethnography has afforded me the means of getting at far more complicated views of national identities than those furnished by scholars on "identity" and, as problematically, by the political players – leaders and activists alike – of this troubled region. There is more at stake than recounting the history of Zionism or concentrating on the state or political ideology of Zionism. People make sense of their lives in very complicated and sometimes in unanticipated ways despite the rigid ideologies they are exposed to.

The dissertation is divided into four sections and twelve chapters. The first section of the dissertation "On the State of Ideological Affairs" comprises four chapters. In Chapter Two, "On the State of Ideological Affairs," I begin by critically examining anthropological theories on diasporas, hybridity and questioning their contribution to understanding the diasporic meanings examined here. I also examine some of the theories of nationalism, particularly Anderson's "imagined communities" (1991). These theories help to guide my examination of the narratives of nation that I was exposed to on tour and at community events. I use cultural theorist Michel de Certeau's theoretical contributions on how people can generally play an active role in making meaning because de Certeau emphasises the critical potential of everyday "readings"(1984, 1986).

In Chapter Three, "Locating Zionism and Israel" I provide a brief background on attitudes towards diasporas developed within Zionism, the Jewish national movement founded in Europe in order to establish a state for the Jews. I provide a broad-stroke survey of the dominant themes in Zionist thought, its values and mission. I pay particular attention to Zionist perspectives on life in "diaspora" and the need to have a state for the Jews. I briefly highlight some of the key ideas of Zionism as they were articulated in various ways in the narratives of nation presented in the later chapters.

While shifting political alliances and allegiances since the founding of the state have marked Israel-diaspora relations, there has been a great deal of support for Israel among North

American Jews. Disputes have occurred at the organisational level over the emphasis on making *aliyah* (to settle in Israel) or staying in North America, particularly during Jewish organisations' congresses (Levitt and Shaffir 1993; Livni 1995; Kaufman 1996; Shusterman 1993). Nevertheless, it has been generally accepted that Jews will provide political and moral support for Israel while continuing to live in North America.

Jews and Israelis are thus "located" by politics and ideologies motivated by Zionism – where the dominant themes are fear, oppression and the liberation from that oppression – as well as by post-Zionism and diaspora nationalism – where the themes of survival and choice as well as a celebration of living creative lives outside of the state but in relation to the state, foreground their practices. In this chapter, I highlight and give some context to the key ideas as they arise in later chapters, rather than attempt an overly reductive account of histories or justifications.

In Section Two of the dissertation, "Nationalist Narratives of Be-longing," I move from theoretical discussions of nationalism and popular culture to the practices I examined in my fieldwork on tours through Israel organised by well-known and active Jewish institutions, as well as at community events in North America. Here I present related narratives about Israel and Jews as presented on tour, while in the next section I present the narratives about Israel and Jews presented at community events. It is in these narrative representations of Israel that core national cultural values and traditions are encoded.

Very similar narratives of Israel and belonging occur at numerous events and arise in a field of complex inter-relationships. I suggest that the content of the narratives, the context of their presentation, as well as their inter-relationship – or intertextuality – defines them as Zionist. That is, at their core, each Zionist narrative "imagines" (Anderson 1991) all Jews as a nation and locates the Jews' homeland within Israel. They do not "imagine" diaspora, they narrativise and imagine the nation. This is what I call "diaspora nationalism."

In the third section of the dissertation "Shifting the Ground(s) of 'Identity'," I begin to unravel the nature of the reception of these narratives. Here I present profiles of some of the people I met in the community and on tour. These profiles suggest that Jews who have forged diaspora identities – Jews living in North America who have formed a relationship to and an

identification with Israel — do so in complicated and creative ways. Their longings for Israel are situated in their interpretations of themselves as members of a nation, the Jews, and within that framing, as peoples who have a duty to one another, what anthropologist Pnina Werbner in her study of diaspora describes as "co-responsibility" (1998).

In the final section and chapter, "Re-locating Jews 'Here' and 'There'," I summarise the results of the research and their implications for thinking about the emergent identities that Jews in diaspora have created in their imaginings of Israel as Jewish homeland while belonging to the nation as diaspora. As Chantal Mouffe writes,

> By resisting the ever-present temptation to construct identity in terms of exclusion, and recognising that identities comprise a multiplicity of elements, and that they are dependent and interdependent, we can "convert the antagonism of identity into the agonism of difference", as William Connolly puts it, and thus stop the potential for violence that exists in every construction of an "us" and "them". Only if people's allegiances are multiplied and their loyalties pluralised will it be possible to create truly "agonistic pluralism." Because where identities are multiplied, passions are divided (1994:111).

With these ideas in mind, I reflect on whether or not the proposition that those who find themselves in the multicultural milieu that is North America might identify as hybrids or multi-nationals in their claims to two territorial homes — Israel and the United States or Canada. How do Jews in diaspora form attachments to their homeland and nation-state?

In part as a response to the territorial disputes defining the politics of territory and identity occurring in Israel-Palestine, anthropologist Jonathan Boyarin and cultural theorist Daniel Boyarin suggest that Jews must rethink themselves as a "diaspora" nation rather than in terms of their relations defined by the territorialisation embodied in the nation-state idea that is Israel (1993). I will suggest however that rather than needing to reorient Jews to "(re)imagine" themselves as diaspora, as the Boyarins argue, my ethnographic findings show that Jews imagine and form relationships to Israel that are already interestingly deterritorialised — what I call a form of "diaspora nationalism" — that may bring us to the same utopian moment that the Boyarins, and Mouffe seek — dreaming identities that are unoppressive and non-dominating. And finally, in this chapter, I reflect on what "fielding" questions of identity has meant for me as researcher, activist and member of two communities seeking to transform the Israeli-Palestine conflict.

CHAPTER 2
ON THE STATE OF IDEOLOGICAL AFFAIRS

Imagining the Nation, (Dis)Locating Diasporas?

In this chapter I examine some of the theories of nationalism, particularly Benedict

Anderson's (1991) "imagined communities." Since representing "History" is a significant

characteristic of nationalist (Badone 1991, 1992; Eriksen 1997; Gellner 1983; Handelman 1990;

Handler 1988; Hobsbawm 1990; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984; Hutchinson and Smith 1994;

Hutchinson 1994; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Lowenthal 1985; Smith 1986, 1991; Verdery 1996) as

well as diaspora practices (Boyarin 1992, 1996; Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Chaliand and Rageau

1995; Clifford 1997; Klausner 1991), the manner in which nations officially represent their past in

public culture is important to grasp. I also draw on the work of Ana Maria Alonso (1988), Robert

Paine (1989; 1995), and Don Handelman (1990). These theories help guide my examination of the

narratives of nation that were presented on tour and at community events. I therefore consider

this literature specifically in the context of the insights I drew from it for understanding the

research findings presented in this dissertation.

Since I am not only interested in how nationalist narratives of Israel are represented to

diaspora audiences but rather in how those audiences might interpret the narratives, I also turn

to cultural theorist Michel de Certeau's (1984, 1986) theoretical contributions on how people

select, "poach" and generally play an active role in making narratives personally meaningful (see

also Allen 1992; Fiske 1992, 1993; Morris 1992; Nightingale 1996). While those writing on

nationalism and the representation of the past emphasise the political meanings of narratives and

how they cannot be isolated from the intentions of their institutional narrators, de Certeau

emphasises the critical potential of everyday "readings" and consumption. He also recognises

that while the interpretations of narratives can be ideological or institutional, they can also mark

a break with accepted practices.

An ideological perspective that assumes that each nation belongs to, or comes from, one territory that is, or was, its own, Zionism assumes that the Jews belong to, and in, Israel. Thus those who live outside it, live as a "diaspora." But rather than accept this as any more than a descriptive term about the "location" of Jews living in North America, the purpose of this thesis is to examine just what living "in diaspora" means, and particularly what it means to retain a sense of be-longing to Israel as another place.

Defining Diaspora

While anthropologist James Clifford (1997) warns against using "ideal types" or models of diaspora and suggests that we remain open to a variety of situations and practices that might define cultures in diaspora, in fact I have found a number of "definitions" of diaspora quite useful. For example, in their Penguin Atlas of Diasporas, historian and geographer Gerard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau set up a list of criteria that describe diasporas as follows:

> 1. A diaspora is defined as the collective dispersion of a religious and/or ethnic group, precipitated by a disaster, often of a political nature... (1995:xiv);
> 2. A diaspora is also defined by the role played by collective memory, which transmits both the historical facts that precipitated the dispersion and a cultural heritage (broadly understood) – the latter often being religious (1995:xv)....;
> 3. Even more important among the factors that go to make up a diaspora is the group's will to transmit its heritage in order to preserve its identity, whatever the degree of integration. What characterises a diaspora, as much as its spatial dispersion, is the will to survive as a minority by transmitting a heritage (1995:xvi)...; and
> 4. Finally, then, what in the last analysis makes it possible to assert that a given group is or is not a diaspora is the time factor. Only time decides whether a minority that meets all or some of the criteria described above, having insured its survival and adaptation, is a diaspora (1995:xvii).

"Dispersion," "history," "collective memory," "the transmission of heritage," and "survival" constitute the key terms for this definition of diaspora. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, what is useful about such a description is its emphasis on practices rather than on place or geographical location in the world. Fundamental here is the need for the collectivity to "transmit its history," "preserve its identity," and while adapting to circumstances after its dispersion, "survive" as a community.

Ironically, this emphasis is in contradistinction to the definitions that a number –

though not all – anthropologists have been working with. In the 1990's anthropologists and other

social scientists began to take interest in groups such as "exiles," "tourists," "migrants,"

"immigrants," defined by their "location" outside the bounds of what had up until that time been

referred to as "nations," "cultures," "ethnic," or "minority" communities. Underlying many of

these arguments was an unease with the "old" definitions which, it was argued, had simply

reproduced epistemological models that were used to label and define peoples (Handler 1988;

Dominguez 1989) rather than investigating just how people might be making meaning of those

terms. In addition, feminist, postcolonial, literary, and postmodern theories had deconstructed

modernism's epistemological "givens" of "female/male," "self/other," "Orient/west,"

"tribal/state," and created new epistemological terms for consideration and debate (e.g., Butler

and Scott 1992; Graham-Brown 1980; Mohanty 1984; Said 1978; Spivak 1988; Trinh 1986, 1991).

New concepts such as "travel," "ethnoscapes," "diaspora," "exile," "geography," "creolisation,"

"space and place," and "border cultures" emerged in order to describe a globalizing world and

cultures unbound by the parameters of a modernist anthropology (e.g., Appadurai 1988, 1990;

Clifford 1992, 1997; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Coombe 1991; Featherstone 1990; Foster 1991;

Hannerz 1996; Lavie and Swedenburg 1996; Malkki 1995; Knauft 1996; Massey 1994; Olwig 1997;

Olwig and Hastrup 1997; Robertson et al 1994; Rodman 1992; Said 1994a; Smith and Katz 1993;

Strathern 1991).

With these shifts has come an interest in both non-territorial "locations" and the

situated practices of place. For example, anthropologists Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg

write that:

> ... the phenomena of diasporas calls for reimagined "areas" of area studies and
> developments of analysis that enables us to understand the dynamics of transnational
> cultural and economic processes as well as to challenge the conceptual limits imposed
> by national and ethnic/racial boundaries (1996:14).

But what those "conceptual" limits are is not really made explicit. What is different, for example,

about living in a "transnational cultural and economic process" from living in a "capitalist"

world? Are diasporas the "immigrant" or "ethnic" communities of the past? It is not clear what

distinguishes a diaspora from any other community except that there is an assumed relationship to another place that its members either "came from " or "long for". But coming from another place and longing for another place are very different practices and may imply very different experiences of place.

Anthropologist James Clifford in a celebration of "travelling" cultures and the "roots and routes" that cultures and communities take, seems also to celebrate "invocations of diaspora theories,[and] diasporic discourses" (1997) without specifying why "diasporic" practices are different from other cultural practices. As geographers Neil Smith and Cindi Katz (1993) argue, Clifford's notion of "location," and I would add his ideas about "diaspora" and "travelling culture," reach for

> ... a dynamic rather than a static conception of location. He wants to convince anthropologists and others that localising cultures in the field or the village is problematic in that identities are established in the course of travel as much as spatial and cultural rootedness.... [However] Clifford's 'series of locations' and 'diverse, but limited spaces' [1992:110] suggest a *multiplication of absolute spaces* rather than a radical rethinking of spatial concepts (Smith and Katz 1993:78; my emphasis).

In the same vein, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's concerns about the previous privileging of the local and the representational in western analyses of "native" peoples (1988), have drawn him toward a celebration of deterritorialisation in his discussion of "disjuncture and difference" in the new cultural mediascapes of late capitalism (1990). In "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology," Appadurai writes:

> ... there are some brute facts about the world of the twentieth century that any ethnography must confront. Central among these facts is the changing social, territorial, and cultural reproduction of group identity. As groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic 'projects', the ethno in ethnography takes on a slippery, non-localized quality, to which the descriptive practices of anthropology will have to respond. The landscapes of group identity – the ethnoscapes – around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous (1988:191).

Although I am sympathetic to the "project" of postmodernism (Collins 1989; Hutcheon 1988, 1989; Rose 1991), the anthropological models about diasporas provided me with little direction for this research. It seems to me that anthropologists have been interested in the

epistemological potential of the term "diaspora" (see also Werbner 1998) but have been limited in

their analyses of what I call "practices in place." I use this phrase to refer to creative practices

that peoples meaningfully engage in as the way they "locate" themselves in relationship to place

– whether at home or in their envisionings of homeland.

But it is not simply that some anthropologists are using abstract definitions of diaspora.

To begin with a description of diaspora as a noun rather than as a verb, i.e., in terms of a relation,

suggests that some people are somehow "out of place." And I would argue that anthropologists,

while responding to the deconstructionism of the 1980's have again placed the paradigm before

the people. They are assuming rather than *illustrating* that exiles, immigrants, and migrants, for

example, continue to have a relationship to an/other place.[7]

Thus anthropological "diasporas" include "exiles, migrants, and refugees" (Lavie and

Swedenburg 1996; Appadurai 1991), and the only common denominator for all of these peoples is

their "status" – in a world where people's official identities (e.g., passports) can only be defined

in terms of nation-state or territorial boundaries – as "deterritorialised" subjects. In this way,

some anthropologists have moved from mapping nations onto people to defining them by their

dis/locations.

Defining a people as diasporic because they live away from a place defined as their

historical or traditional or indigenous homeland, *assumes* that that population has maintained a

relationship to "home," defines itself in relation to home, or would return "home" given the

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7. For example, the work on refugees by Lisa Malkii is very different and investigates the very meanings
people make, and their shifting identities in response to being both defined as refugees and confined to
living in refugee camps. They are nationals at one time, refugees at another, and the enemy at another. This
work not only situates people within a bounded place, it also illustrates how they make meanings of another
place as well as their "place" in response to being bounded geographically as well as by the identities they
are given by for example, humanitarian agencies, and that they "take," as "refugees" (1995; 1997). Compare
to Lavie (1996) who writes about Palestinian Arab authors' experiences in Israel as "exiles." Because many
of these authors now write in Hebrew, not their native language of Arabic, Lavie has designated them
"exiled" in the "borderzone" that is "Israel". But is this appropriate? Why "exile" them – she entitles one
subsection of the piece "History of home as Exile" – even metaphorically, when they are indeed at "home,"
as the title of her article indicates? Why not speak in the terms of their resistance to the discriminatory
practices of the Israeli state? Note that I have no argument with her thesis that Palestinian and Arab writers
are discriminated against and face enormous difficulties as writers. But, naming Palestinians who live in the
state of Israel "exiles" is doing exactly what I think as anthroplogists we must be very careful about: naming
people in place, or out of place for the sake of a new scholarly metaphor like "diaspora" or "exile". The
Palestinians in Israel are not out of place. They are not exiles. Palestinian refugees are exiled.

opportunity to do so. This perspective neglects to historicise peoples' locations and again maps a homeland onto their identities when it may or may not exist as a significant part of their self-identifications. What also is the advantage of placing peoples living away from home into one category? Furthermore, at what point can people claim to belong to diaspora, as members of a nation who identify with but do not live in their homeland? Will they forever be defined as people out of place? And so then what is "place" or "home" in fact? Do we not return to the age-old dichotomy foreigner/friend, self/other with such definitions? Is it not more dangerous to re-situate difference on the basis of one's ability to possess or maintain territorial and geographical dominance? Are we witnessing a new essentialism while searching for hybridity?

For anthropologists whose "science" is in the local, to bring together such vastly different experiences of "place" as those of "exiles, refugees, and migrants" under one category, "diaspora," is also quite troubling. All of this is to suggest that we need to be careful not only in our "definitions" and "classifications" of peoples based on their location, but also in our assumptions about the meanings of home and homeland. We need to pay particular attention to how much these categories have been informed by and reproduce dominant cultural models based on nation-state politics.

In addition, as I reflected on those postmodern understandings of diaspora which are more discriminating, that is, where the "diaspora" under investigation excludes people who are refugees or exiles, I realised that much of what was being celebrated was the survival of "tradition" and the persistence of communal and collective identities among those whose experiences were at least in part defined by a relationship to what had been historically, ritually, or administratively defined as "their" homeland (e.g., Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Brown 1998; Clifford 1997; Gilroy 1996). In an academic world that sought to rupture these very conceptualisations (Olwig 1997), these anthropologists were talking "diaspora" while still examining the "invention" of culture (Wagner 1981; see also Preston 1999) in ever-emergent communities and the relationships of people in, among and across "imagined communities" (Anderson 1991). In other words, the terms for practicing place – of memory, community, and tradition – are being examined in much the same way as they had in the past. Only the terms of

identifying "new" identities, for example as "deterritorialised" rather than as "minorities," have changed.

In fact, then, the challenge yet to be met by anthropologists is to keep up with the new terms of discourse all while engaging with and across many communities that continue to define their place in the world on the basis of "identity," "nation," and "culture". Thus, while many of these scholars are writing about lives lived in a place away from what has been defined as their "homeland," they are not writing about people's continued relationships to home and homeland, which is what interests me here. In other words, while celebrations of hybridity within "displaced" communities were the interest of scholars like Paul Gilroy (1996) and Jacqueline Nassy Brown (1998), my emphasis is on the experiences and envisioning of homeland, or the relationship developed to a homeland, in ways that I argue would define peoples as living "in diaspora".

This excursion through the literature on diaspora led me back to the literature theorising nationalism; the role of history and national identity; and the role of public culture events. Each of these literatures forms the background for the examination of nationalist narratives of belonging that follows this chapter.

Theorising Nationalism

Despite the fact that I introduced this section with an allegorical presentation of Jews' living in diaspora, I choose to frame this discussion with a brief outline of theories of the creation, presentation and performativity of the nation. I will argue that Jews living "in diaspora," that is North American Jews who identity Israel as homeland and who have formed a relationship to Israel, are responding to and subverting, to varying degrees, nationalistic narratives of the Jews' be-longing in Israel. Since in the next chapter I examine narratives of the nation and the nationalist discourse which form the context within which those living in diaspora give meanings to their experiences of Israel, I think it is important to provide the contours of the theories underlying my analysis. I begin with a brief overview of the contributions made by scholars interested in nationalism and national identity. I suggest that this literature can provide a rich

description of how the narratives and temporalisations of the past create and territorialise national "history" and create a national place.

Interestingly enough the theorists of nationalism always assume a state politics and not an out-of-state or diasporic identity. Despite the gap, and because they are dealing with "nations," I argue that much of what they have to say is relevant to the kinds of identifications that Jews living in diaspora make. Thus whether one lives in the territory of one's imaginings (Anderson 1991), or not, the narratives of the nation-state also become the narratives of the nation; those narratives are selected and claimed to be narratives belonging to a group of people belonging to that nation.

On Nationalism and National Identity

Discussions of national identity are often found in the literature on the politics of nationalism (Gellner 1983; Hutchinson and Smith 1994; Smith 1986, 1991) but little of this literature interrogates the interpretive complex experience of collective identity (Badone 1991; Boyarin 1994; Paine 1995; Verdery 1996). Most commonly the aim in these accounts of nationalism is to locate its historical origins in the nation-state and other phenomena of modernity, such as capitalism, industrialism and globalisation. In such accounts the concept of national identity is often treated as the outcome of certain developments, for instance, in Ernest Gellner's argument, of the pressure of industrial society to produce "large, centrally educated, culturally homogeneous units" (Gellner 1983: 34).

While Benedict Anderson's book, <u>Imagined Communities</u> ([1983] 1991) is an essay on the historical origins of nationalism, he makes a useful attempt at a conceptual definition of the nation. Anderson defines the nation as an "imagined political community":

> It is imagined because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion (1991:6).

This idea may seem fairly obvious, yet it is most important for it immediately locates national identity at a certain level of abstraction. Anderson is careful to distinguish that his is not an essay

on the "invention" or "fabrication" or "falsity" of national communion (as against the kind of analysis put forward by Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984, for example); it is rather an articulation of the "imaginative" and "creative" production of community. He writes that "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (1991:6). In fact, he suggests that "all communities... are imagined" (1991:6). Identity is a "communion" which can only be one of the imagination; it cannot be otherwise because all the people of a nation can have concrete relations with no more than a few of its members. Furthermore, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (1991). Anderson adds two more specifications to his definition of the nation: that it is imagined as limited – it "has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations" – and as sovereign, or autonomous from other states (1991:7). While these latter specifications refer to the territoriality and sovereignty of nation-states, I do not believe this should limit the use of Anderson's theory for understanding diasporic identities that are at once national and deterritorialised, or out of state.

The virtue of Anderson's approach is that it represents how nationhood or a sense of national identity is liable to be experienced by people. Anderson also suggests that *all* cultural identities – be they national, regional, local – are, in one way, all representations of belonging. Where people think beyond the immediate presence of others, they "imagine a community" to which they belong.

Furthermore, for Anderson "national imagining" is a phenomenon of modernity, a form of experiencing which is only possible within the context of the technological and economic changes that produced modern societies. He writes:

> ...the very possibility of imagining a nation only arose historically when, and where, three fundamental cultural conceptions, all of great antiquity, lost their axiomatic grip on men's minds. The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth, precisely because it was inseparable part of that truth. It was this idea that caled into being the great transcontinental sodalities of Christendom, the Islamic Ummah, and the rest. Second was the belief that society was naturaally organized around and under high centres – monarchs who were persons apart from other human beins and who ruled by some form of cosmological (divine) dispensation. Human loyalties were necessarily hierarchical and centripetal because the ruler, like the sacred script, was a node of access to being and inherent in it. Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and hisory were indistinguishable,

the origins of the world and of men essentially identical. Combined, these ideas rooted human lives firmly in the very nature of things, giving certain meaning to the everyday fatalities of existence (abo ve all death, loss, and servitude) and offering, in various ways, redemption from them (1991:36).

Thus, Anderson suggests that the processes of social modernity arise out of the decline (though not the disappearance) of other cultural practices emerging out of the sacred and cosmic-universal languages of Christianity or Islam, and the dynastically ruled communities (1991:9-36) which offered their own orientations of the world. The breakdown of these certainties of existence, including perceptions of the world in terms of time and space (e.g., the processes of creating universal calendrical time; making maps; and using census data), under capitalist secular rationalism, created a vacuum in cultural orientation and "the search was on, so to speak, for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together" (1991:36).

Imagining nation-ness is essentially achieved in literate societies with well-developed media structures. So for example, it is an imagination encouraged by reading the community and "national" newspapers. In this way, the effects of mass media develop the capacity to co-ordinate the imagination of social time and space, and encourage people to imagine the simultaneous occurrence of events that are spatially distant.

Anderson's approach offers an account of the processes by which identification with the rather abstract notion of a "nation" becomes possible. But he also offers an account of why the cultural imagining of nation-ness becomes a dominant form of cultural identification. Anderson writes: "In a world in which the national state is the overwhelming norm, all of this means that nations can now be imagined without linguistic communality ... out of a general awareness of what modern history has demonstrated as possible" (1991:135). In other words, the "norm" was for all communities to become identified as nations; their evolution or culmination would be in their eventual formation as nation-states.

In summary, Anderson's position is that national identity is a particular style of "imagining the community" made possible by how historical and social features combined in complex ways to promote identification with the nation as the dominant form of cultural identity.

The attraction of Anderson's account for my analysis of diaspora is not only its definitions of national identity as a highly mediated type of belonging, but as a definition which Anderson says should be "treated as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion' rather than with 'liberalism' or 'fascism'" (1991:5). That is, nationalism should be examined as a social practice rather than simply a political or ideological form.

All this points to the need to understand nationalism in interpretive rather than in spatialised and territorialised political terms, thus avoiding the logic of "this people lives on this land" and therefore this is their nation and all things within this territory are therefore of "national significance." Thinking about national identity in this way problematises the simple view that national identities are cultural belongings rooted in deep quasi-natural attachments to a homeland, on the one hand, or generationally and blood-based on the other. Rather they are conceived of as complex cultural constructions emerging out of specific historical conditions. Since national subjects are not necessarily in direct communal solidarities, the "imaginings" of national communities are lived through representations. Paradoxically, what some anthropologists and other social scientists claim to be the processes of globalizing the world, for example institutions of the mass media (e.g., Appadurai 1990, 1991; Featherstone 1990), Anderson attributes to the rise in *communal* identifications.

Anderson's discussion of nationalism suggests some useful ways of thinking about national identity and its implications for this particular discourse in the face of globalisation. He argues that identifying with the nation somehow replaces cultural identities formed around the cultural "givens" that supplied the existential certainties and "ontological security"[8] (Giddens 1987:218) in the past. He stresses the "imagined," essentially mediated nature of this belonging and the fact of its peculiarity to the broader social conditions of modernity, in particular the "convergence of social space and time" brought about by technological advances in

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8. Giddens writes:...the communality supplied by national symbols... supplies one means of support for ontological security, particularly where there is a perceived threat..."(1987:218). Both Giddens and Anderson (1991) attribute the rise of nationalism to the development of modernity and the loss of communal forms that provided "security" and "knowledge" in the past.

communications, travel, and so on.

The Nation and the Past

Although Anderson's scholarship provides a corrective to the scholarly work on nationalism prior to the mid 1980s, he does not take up the kind or qualities of nationalist representations that people may creatively engage with as they form a relationship to or identify as members of a nation.[9] As a range of scholars points out, national culture and national identity require concepts like national heritage and traditions (Cruikshank 1995; Karp and Levine 1991; Lowenthal 1985; Steiner 1995; White 1997). The main argument is that such representations of a people's "past" are set within terms that define these practices and communities as not only "authentic" but more importantly, as stable. In interesting ways, the "traditions" present an invariant history and scholars writing about these "inventions" do so with varying degrees of sensitivity to people's power to create and recreate these histories. For example, some claim "tradition" is created by and against elites (e.g., Hanson 1989; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1984; Keesing 1989, 1991); while others focus on "tradition" as a practice rather than an "ideological" construct (e.g., Badone 1991; Trask 1991; Linnekin 1991). Because the field is so wide-ranging, and I have limited goals in mind, I choose to look only at a few writers who discuss the construction of the past and, in anthropologists Ana Maria Alonso (1988), Don Handelman (1990) and Robert Paine's (1989; 1995) cases, who look at how state events can mark and imagine communities as "national."

My interest in the past, with respect to the past and its "constructedness," focuses on what cultural theorist Roland Barthes called "mythologies." In his book Mythologies ([1957] 1972), Barthes examines myths as discursive forms that naturalise rather than historicise "realities." He writes ([1957] 1972:155)

> ...[M]yth has the task of giving an historical intention a natural justification. ...What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, ... by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality.

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9. In a revised edition of Imagined Communities (1991), Anderson does explore the rise museums, maps and the census as forms of national representation. See also his Preface to this new edition.

In other words, myth is not false so much as it is a reworking of "historical reality." This

reworking is part of what Barthes wants to argue is a "dialectical relation ... between human

actions" ([1957] 1972:155). Furthermore, Barthes argues that

> Myth does not deny things, on the contrary, its function is to talk about them; simply, it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives them a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but of a statement of fact.... In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organises a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves (1972:156).

In other words, it is the iteration of history that is itself important. Not speaking about something

cannot tell you anything about it. Thus, myths are creative productions. Most interesting in

Barthes' approach is his formulation of myth as a creative and dialectical activity in which history

becomes naturalised and essentialised. He does not suggest, of course, that what is being

represented is true or false so much as he asks us to recognise that the process of myth-making is

necessary in order to "organise a world", and in order that "things appear to mean something by

themselves." The potential for history to be "organised," "naturalised," "essentialised," and

depoliticised (1972:156) is important for any understanding of the role that nationalist narratives

perform.

In her examination of the "re-presentations of the past" in Mexico, anthropologist Ana

Maria Alonso (1988) argues that while Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities (1983)

contributes to analysing identities, the "centrality of histories to national imaginings ... remains

at the edges of his argument" (1988: 40). She chooses to make it the focus of her paper. She

writes:

> Historical chronologies solder a multiplicity of personal, local and regional historicities and transform them into a unitary, national time. They link the experiences of day to day life to events which are categorised as 'national' and in so doing, they reinforce the solidarities of nationality (1988: 40-1).

Thus, history is not only "naturalised," (as in Barthes) it is also nationalised. Alonso goes further

than Barthes, articulating how it is that those empowered to make "history" or what she calls

"hegemonic ideologies" creatively "transform popular histories" into national stories by naturalising, departicularising and idealising them. Each process is described as follows:

> Naturalisation is a form of reification whereby social actors, discourses and practices are re-presented as natural essences or things.... Naturalisation disguises the transformations effected on subordinated histories by turning re-presentations into 'raw facts' which cannot be contested. Framing, voice, [and] narrative structure are all manipulated to conceal the work of reinterpretation in which power and knowledge are intimately linked. The effects of truth render invisible the effects of power (1988: 44-45).

Here Alonso echoes much of Barthes' argument in Mythologies ([1957] 1972) but she suggests two important additions to an understanding of the "representation of the past." In the first place, she understands that the processes of "framing, voice and narrative structure" add an element of "living" representations to what seems more object-oriented in Barthes' model. Secondly, she frames these representations as "effects of power" implying not only that those in power make history, but that the context within which these representations are articulated is also important.

Next, Alonso describes how historical discourses and practices are "departicularised". That is, they how "are emptied of the meanings which tie them to concrete contexts, to definite localities" thus

> ...the signs of subordinated and regional histories are appropriated and revalued, invested with new meanings which reproduce a hegemonic national ideology and the relations of domination it configures and legitimates (1988:45).

In other words, local or regional histories disappear in the face of nationalising discourses, re-creating one history where there are many histories. Again, it is power that determines whose history gets told.

And finally, Alonso describes the process of "idealisation" whereby "the past is cleaned up, rendered palatable and made the embodiment of nationalist values. ... Pasts which cannot be incorporated are excluded by national history" (1988:45). In other words, histories or stories of those who cannot be embodied within a nation's imagining of itself are made to disappear in the process of "idealisation." Alonso here suggests that national histories are stripped of the histories of "others" in the process of creating one "history" of the nation. Alonso

does not assume that only monolithic histories are created, but rather writes that "popular and official memory exist in relation to each other" and are continually negotiated as such.

Barthes' and Alonso's models both proved helpful for understanding the nationalist narratives of Israel as they are presented on the tour and in the community (see below). Since I have defined the tours to Israel as well as the community events as public culture performances, I turn next to anthropologist Don Handelman's insights on the relationship of the nation to what he describes as "public events," particularly his analysis of those events that are performances of/for the nation.

Performing the Nation

In <u>Models and Mirrors: Towards An Anthropology of Public Events</u> (1990), Don Handelman examines sites of "communications that convey participants into versions of social order". Public events "are devices of praxis that merge horizons of the ideal and the real, to bring into close conjunction ideology and practice, attitude and action" (1990:16). They are also "structures" with "relatively high degrees of replicability" (1990:12). He argues that these events present moments for an "encoding of national history" which "has important consequences for national cosmology".

Handelman is interested in the design of these performances as they position the audience in a way that sets them "into" the nation's history thus not only setting up a particular "history" through commemoration but "temporalising" experiences as well. Handelman explains the roles of the narratives this way:

> First the narratives encoded by ceremonial can telescope into and out of one another with little contradictions. .... Second, together these planes encode narrative through various modalities of time – linear, oscillating and cyclical. Together, resonance and modality enable the multidirectional cross-indexing and cross-referencing of lengthily separated period and events. The result is a complex temporal grid of the mastery of time, a blueprint that helps shape the meanings of national history and that interprets ongoing, national existence through the perception of such temporal processes (1990: 233).

For example, the state may set aside and sequence national days of memorialisation, such as Holocaust Remembrance and Independence Days in such a way that evokes and "reflects the

importance accorded to the encoding of cultural time in [the nation]...." So for example, the

themes of catastrophe and rebirth can be "played out" in the narratives and commemorative

practices of the Holocaust Remembrance and Independence Day, since one ceremonial day

follows the next in that order. Thus, Handelman writes:

> It is in part through temporal rhythms that national history is generated, and it is
> within this ethno-history that this nation-state is legitimated in large measure to itself.
> This hegemony of ethno-history constitutes a moral economy of time, one keyed to
> innumerable injunctions to remember, and so to re-member (1990:231).

Furthermore, these practices "mediate persons into collective abstractions" by designing "forms

that select out, concentrate, and interrelate themes of existence – lived and imagined – that are

more diffused, dissipated, and obscured in the everyday" (1990:15). For Handelman, the

opportunity to perform the nation is about a time-out-of-the-ordinary. Furthermore, a public

event is "primarily 'expressive' in its emphasis on the mutuality, reflectiveness, and solidarity of

togetherness" (1990:19).

Anthropologist Robert Paine (1989) considers the "ontological issues" involved in the

formation of national identifications. Seeking to understand "Jewish identity and competition

over 'tradition" in Israel, Paine addresses the interpretations of "time "and "place" as they are

differently experienced by nationalist-territorialist Jews (the settlers in the Occupied Territories).

He writes that within Israel "there are groups who enact their lives as though they are living in

different Israels from one another. Each group, each 'Israel' is an attempt to constitute Jewish

identity in Israel. In doing so, Paine is articulating the differences between Jewish identifications

with Israel but situating those differences in ideological terms that are complicated by notions of

time and place. Moreover, he suggests that we study "Zionism as a Jewish quest about meaning

and means of redemption" (1989:130) and he writes:

> ...one should *expect* dialectically arranged forces at play around Zionism and Judaism
> and "being Jewish" today, and also expect them to be embedded in historiography
> (1989:130).

I will later demonstrate that on organised tours to Israel, the presentation of numerous sites and

events is designed to evoke periodisations and temporalisations of the nation. Oftentimes the

sites are to be "experienced" and the narratives performed in such a way as to "situate" the tourists within the context of the memorialised "event" or "happenings".

As within discussions on national identity and nationalism in general, in Anderson (1991), Alonso (1988), Handelman (1990) and Paine's (1989; 1995) theories outlined above, there is a tendency to assume that individuals do not have room to "speak" back, to articulate oppositions to, or to interpret and imagine the national in ways that vary with "official" and institutionalised representations and narratives of nation. Ironically, then, while some theories of nationalism and national identity describe people's activities as creatively "imagined" there is more about how representations of the nation are imaginatively created and little about how imaginative national subjects are in interpreting such representations.

I do not argue in this dissertatation that the existence of national imaginaries are not formed within a "real" world of "ideas" and practices, or bound within a range of narratives that carry with them some determinant of the scope of what national identity and a nation is. But such imaginings must be contextualised in order to understand the constraints as well as the freedoms to imagine national identities and the national community. I do not at all deny that official narratives of the national exercise influence individual actions, but this sort of influence is not the same thing as interpreting those ideologies or official "imaginings" in a totalising manner. This influence must itself be examined and analysed in context.

With this in mind I reformulate Michel de Certeau's theories on "poaching" in order to examine the way in which people interpret and experience narratives of nation, the past, and their place in the world.

Theorising Practices

Michel de Certeau (1984, 1986) shares with other postmodernists, an emphasis on the critical potential of people's ability to wrest and co-opt narratives (Collins 1989, Fiske 1992, 1993; Hutcheon 1991; Morris 1992; Nightingale 1996). According to de Certeau, an emphasis on "consumption," or reception and interpretation in this case, need not involve rejecting either a general historical context or the character of the narrative's cultural field of production but his

focus is on the local event. In order to recognise "resistance" to narratives, there is a need to recognise the dominant or culturally-sanctioned meanings of events, narratives, and other performances. Following de Certeau, I describe central moments or standard performances of power (the narratives of nation) with the intent of showing the production, limits and specificity of commonly accepted narratives. By showing how the dominant modes of representation have been organised, I then also show how narratives might be read other/wise, although I must add, I am not seeking to read marginalised readings or resistant readings in particular. Examining "resistance" challenges assumptions about dominant and ideological forms and demands that we think differently about the consumption or interpretation of those ideological forms.

Setting itself explicitly alongside Foucault's theory of power, de Certeau's calls "tactics" (de Certeau 1984: 29-42; see also Knauft 1996:166) the powerful appropriation of discourses and narratives practiced by their interpreters. For de Certeau, Foucault emphasised dominant power structures at the expense of other multiple, disordered and peripheral forms of activity. For de Certeau, because Foucault's work was a "genealogy"[10], it always attempted to trace patterns in the present back to the past. Foucault's "genealogy of modernity," according to de Certeau, accepted the dominant structure of modern power and in so doing, ignored other powerful acts. De Certeau offers his own work in contrast to Foucault, as a theory of the tactics which can resist, subvert and make use of dominant or "foregrounded" power structures. He writes:

> A society is thus composed of certain foregrounded practices organising its normative institutions and of innumerable other practices that remain "minor", always there but not organising discourses and preserving the beginnings or remains of different (institutional, scientific) hypotheses for that society or for others. It is this multifarious and silent "reserve" of procedures that we should look for "consumer" practices having the double characteristic, pointed out by Foucault, of being able to organise both spaces and language, whether on a minute or a vast scale (de Certeau 1984:48).

Thus de Certeau's model suggests that we not only uncover and describe dominant discourses or narratives but that, in order to understand their "effects," the contexts and interpretative

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10. I cannot do justice here to Foucault's term "genealogy" except insofar as to highlight that it is an historical method which argues that scholars look at history from the perspective of the neglected, or the disordered, rather than accept the totalized, linear representation of history as presented by the dominant or those in power, in their efforts to present a 'rational' and thus ir-resist-able history (see Smart 1983).

practices engaged in by their "consumers" or audiences must be examined (see also Allen 1992;
Fiske 1992, 1993; Morris 1992).

Whereas theories of nationalism locate the effects of a narrative on a polity, I use de
Certeau's theory of tactics to shift the emphasis to the interpretations made by the national
subjects for whom these national narratives are intended. De Certeau's theory of practice (1984)
enables a focus both on the political effects of a narrative and on the position of the reader. When
theory is applied to the interpretation of narratives in this way, anything like a single totalising
ideology collapses, for not only are audience members capable of interpreting the narratives in a
number of ways, the narrative itself is reconceptualised as a site of "play" and the interpreter is
redefined as an engaged, active and creative subject . Following de Certeau then, I begin by
assuming that "consumers" of nationalism are able to contest a dominant order of representation
and that context, community and the intention of the narrative's producers cannot control the
function of those narratives.

While de Certeau argues that an audience member is capable of a kind of "poaching" or
interpretation which alters the rules of interpretation and consumption, his theory is not simply
a celebration of individual imagination. These actors are always located within a field of social
forces, but because such a field is dynamic and shifting the possibilities for consumption and
interpretation are multiple. Nevertheless, the interpreter has to rely on what is available for he or
she cannot "transcend" these social/cultural forces by any act. But while the interpreter can not
"escape" cultural or social forces, he or she can subvert or reinterpret the "conventions" of
particular interpretive practices.

Thus in this project, I use de Certeau's theories of "poaching" and consumption in order
to understand how Jews may creatively imagine their relations to Israel and how their own
interpretations of their place in the world are accomplished precisely by "poaching", consuming,
and interpreting the national narratives of Israel while on tour or at public culture and
community events. These then are what I am calling their "practices in place."

Theories of "imagined communities" and the representational practices and
performances of the nation, as well as the creative aspects of audiences making meaning, all

"structure" this ethnography. In the chapters in Section Two, I discuss how Israel was imagined, represented and performed for diaspora, while in Section Three I will discuss just how these narratives and practices were "poached" by those I met while on tour and in community settings. It is the richness of the ethnographic that tells the complicated and complex creative identifications Jews make in relation to Israel. It is to the practices in, of and out of place that I then turn.

CHAPTER 3
"LOCATING" ZIONISM AND ISRAEL

In this chapter I provide a brief outline of the orientations to life for Jews in diaspora with the rise and transformation of Zionism through the 20th century. Zionism to a large extent defined life in diaspora in terms of passivity, loss, sacrifice, punishment, pain, and suffering. The context for this was European discrimination and anti-Semitism. The expression in Zionist terms was also accompanied by a set of ideas of freedom, redemption, revolution, liberation, and normalisation. In this chapter, I pay particular attention to how diaspora has been described and defined. Zionism informed the ideology and founding documents of the state of Israel, and I outline key Zionist ideas here because they are articulated in various ways in the narratives of nation in the chapters that follow (D. Goldberg 1996; Eisen 1986; Hertzberg 1976)

More recently, post-Zionists have begun to question some of Israel's founding narratives, especially those informed by Zionist interpretations of history (for overview on these debates, see Silberstein 1999). While no post-Zionist narratives were presented on tour or in the community presentations, I will later suggest that some Jews in diaspora do relate to Israel on post-Zionist terms.

As I indicated in Chapter One, there has been a great deal of support for Israel among North American Jews (Sheffer 1986). Disputes at the organisational level over the emphasis on making *aliyah* (settling in Israel) or staying in diaspora have arisen and do arise (Kaufman 1996) but it is generally accepted that the Jews in North America will stay in North America and continue to provide support for Israel. I will argue that this assumption has also had implications for how Jewish identity has been analysed and "measured" by social scientists interested in differences and similarities among Israeli Jews and "diaspora" Jews.

Zionism and Diaspora

Zionism, a political nationalist movement that embarked upon the founding of a nation-state for the Jews in the late 1800s, developed in response both to the rise of nationalist movements throughout Europe as well as, in no small measure, in reaction to the conditions under which Jews had been forced to live in Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe but not excluding Western Europe. As such, Zionism was a national movement that was created "in diaspora" and thus all Zionists, while calling for a nation-state for the Jews, were situating their perspective within the larger one of what it meant for Jews to live in diaspora[11] (Biale 1986, 1992; D. Goldberg 1996; Evron 1995; Eisen 1986; Hertzberg 1976; Wheatcroft 1996).

Each Zionist, depending on his political orientation, decreed that the Jews were a cultural-historical entity, a religious-national entity, a "race," a "people," a nation or a combination of these categories and characteristics. While there were different emphases on how to revive or rescue the Jews and Jewish identity, all Jews were portrayed as being endowed with the same right to a "national" home. The majority of Zionist writings at the turn of the century historicised the Jews' condition within ahistorical framings, suggesting that Jews were engaged in an ever-present conflict with the "Gentiles" (or non-Jews) and that the Jews were eternally condemned to live alienated and insecure lives unless they had a land or territory of their own. These callings resonated for Jews who were living within European nations where anti-semitism was pervasive and where, in Russia for example, state policies prevented Jews' freedom of movement and conscripted male subjects into armies for longer than normal-terms. Essential to the Zionist idea was the idea that life for Jewry outside of a territory they could call their own was presumed to be difficult and insecure.

Reflected in each Zionist's program was a position on what each thought was necessary for the "liberation" of the Jews (Eisen 1986; D. Goldberg 1996; Hertzberg 1976). These programs

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11. Simon Dubnow, a Jewish historian wrote against this Zionist representation of the Jews' life in diaspora in the late 1800's and up to 1941 (1961). On the American Council for Judaism's anti-zionist position during the pre-state period, see Kolsky 1991. See also for example, Biale 1986; Boyarin and Boyarin 1993.

also presented the conditions from which the Jews needed to "escape". Among the many Zionists there were those who focused on the role of anti-semitism, in part attributing it to the Jews "abnormal" status among the nations. They called on the Jews to gain the self-determining status that the French of France and the Germans of Germany had, presenting the political ideology of Zionism (e.g., Theodor Herzl [1896] 1976;). For other Zionists, the Jews' condition was attributable to their alienated relationship to working the land. According to these writers, because Jews had not owned or worked the land, they were alienated from the labour necessary to become members of a folk. These thinkers mirrored the socialist movements around them and created a kind of socialist Zionism (e.g., A.D. Gordon [1911] 1976). Still other Zionists believed that a "return" to Israel was part of a messianic calling and formed a kind of religious Zionism (e.g., Rabbi Isaac Kook [1930] 1976). Theirs was a nationalist religious project that sought to "return" the "chosen people" to their "Holy Land." In all of these cases, the assumption was that with the founding of a nation-state for the Jews, the diaspora would disappear and with it the "abnormal" and insecure condition in which all Jews lived. This is sometimes referred to as the "negation of the diaspora" (Ahad Ha'am [1909] 1976).

There were also Zionists who sought to establish a cultural centre for Jewry in Palestine while not at the same time expecting that all Jews would "return" to the land. The most important proponent of this cultural or spiritual Zionism was Asher Zvi Ginsberg, better known as Ahad Ha'am ([1897] 1976; [1901] 1976). Born in 1856 to an aristocratic Russian Ukranian family, Ahad Ha'am became a Jewish scholar and philosopher who made *aliyah* to Palestine where he was to die in 1927, prior to the founding of the state. Ahad Ha'am's concerns for the Jews in diaspora were rooted in his fear that the Jews would assimilate and therefore lose their identification with the greater Jewish purpose. For Ahad Ha'am, with the "restoration of the Land," would emerge a kind of "Hebrew renaissance" which would strengthen the will of those Jews living in diaspora to preserve their Jewishness (Ahad Ha'am [1897] 1976). Ahad Ha'am's Zionism assumed a continued relationship between the Jewish state and its "diaspora". His conceptualisations of the history of the Jews living dispersed among other peoples and away from the "spiritual centre" – Israel – was as negative as those of his Zionist contemporaries.

Unlike them, however, he did not believe that the Jews would "return" to the Land even if it became possible for them to do so. And because he was interested in the revival and maintenance of Jewish culture beyond the spiritual centre, he assumed that this centre would become important for the survival of Jews living elsewhere.

Zionism and Israel

In its first fifty years or so, Zionism was not a mass social movement in Europe. In fact, few Jews migrated to Israel in comparison to the United States during the same period ("Aliya" Encyclopedia of Israel and Zionism 1994:53; D. Goldberg 1996). With the death, destruction and loss of European Jewish communities during the Second World War and with almost all gates to Canada and the United States closed to the Jews (Troper and Abella 1983), the need for a place for the Jews took on a new urgency.

Zionists who had moved to Palestine in the pre-World War Two years had, among other things: created political, security, and social institutions such as the Jewish Agency; used their diplomatic contacts to get permission from the Ottoman Turkish rulers (who occupied the region until 1917) to buy land in Palestine from absentee landlords; after the end of Ottoman Turkish rule, succeeded in getting the British who had a mandate over Palestine, to declare the site as a Jewish homeland in the Balfour Declaration of 1917; founded kibbutzim in the Galilee and Negev desert; founded schools and social service agencies in some of the cities; and built a number of "national" institutions such as the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1925) (Eisenstadt 1992; D. Goldberg 1996; Laqueur and Rubin 1985; Teveth 1987; Wheatcroft 1996).

There are many competing narratives[12] of what followed but I will only provide a bare bones framework here to serve as a foundation for my later chapters. After the Second World War and with the end of the British Empire, the UN declared the Partition of Palestine in 1947.

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12. In particular by Israel's new historians who have challenged the Zionist framings of the founding of Israel, including Benvenisti (1996), Evron (1995); Flapan (1987), Kimmerling and Migdal (1993); Morris (1987, 1998), Morris with Rubenstein 1995; Pappe 1992; and Sternhall (1998), Segev (1986; 1993). See also Azoulay (1994); Mahler (1997). Accounts by Palestinians that serve to counter official Zionist history of the founding of the state include Abdo-Zubi (1987), Doumani (1995), Farsoun (1997), Kanaana 1992; Khalidi (1997, 1998), Khalidi (1984), Muhawi and Kanaana (1989); Said (1978,1980, 1994), Said and Hitchens (1988).

This Partition was designed to accommodate what had been defined as the two interested parties, the Arabs of Palestine and the Jews. Throughout 1947 and 1948, Arab countries that surrounded Palestine, including Jordan, Egypt, and Syria became engaged in military battles with the Jews in Palestine. During the same period, many Palestinians became refugees and moved to surrounding states. On May 14, 1948, the Jews announced the Independent State of Israel.

With such events in the background, the founding documents of the state of Israel were bound to reflect both the negative characteristics of life for Jews outside their "own" territory as well as a triumphalism with the founding of the new state. Here is an excerpt of the Declaration of Independence from May 16, 1948:

> In the Land of Israel the Jewish people came into being. In this Land was shaped their spiritual, religious, and national character. Here they lived in sovereign independence. Here they created a culture of national and universal import, and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.

> Exiled by force, still the Jewish people kept their faith with their Land in all the countries of their dispersion, steadfast in their prayer and hope to return and here revive their political freedom.

> Fired by this attachment of history and tradition, the Jews in every generation strove to renew their roots in the ancient homeland, and in recent generations they came home in their multitudes.

> Veteran pioneers and defenders, and newcomers braving blockade, they made the wilderness bloom, revived their Hebrew tongue, and built villages and towns. They founded a thriving society of its own economy and culture, pursuing peace but able to defend itself, bringing the blessing of progress to all the inhabitants of the Land, dedicated to the attainment of sovereign independence.....

> The Holocaust that in our time destroyed millions of Jews in Europe again proved beyond doubt the compelling need to solve the problem of Jewish homelessness and dependence by the renewal of the Jewish state in the Land of Israel, which would open wide the gates of the homeland to every Jew and endow the Jewish people with the status of a nation with equality of rights within the family of nations.
> Despite every hardship, hindrance and peril, the remnant that survived the grim Nazi slaughter in Europe, together with Jews from other countries, pressed on with their exodus to the Land of Israel and continued to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom, and honest toil in the homeland of their people....

> It is the natural right of the Jewish people, like any other people to control their own destiny in their sovereign state....

> The state of Israel will be open to Jewish immigration and the ingathering of the exiles. It will devote itself to developing the Land for the good of all its inhabitants....

> Even amidst the violent attacks launched against us for months past, we call upon the sons of the Arab people dwelling in Israel to keep the peace and to play their part in

> building the state on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its institutions, provisional and permanent....
>
> We extend the hand of peace and good-neighbourliness to all the states around us and to their peoples, and we call upon them to cooperate in mutual helpfulness with the independent Jewish nation in its Land. The state of Israel is prepared to make its contributions in a concerted effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East. We call upon the Jewish people throughout the diaspora to join forces with us in immigration and construction, and to be at our right hand in the great endeavour to fulfil the age-old longing for the redemption of Israel.... ("The Declaration of Independence Pamphlet," Independence Hall, Eretz Israel Museum, n.d.).

Embedded within this document are a number of Zionist "signifiers", or "markers" as I prefer to call them. I will show how these themes recur in the narratives presented on tour and in community events in forthcoming chapters.

- The Jews while not all born in Israel can return to it because it is the site of their nation's birth. They are the chosen people and it is their chosen land.

- The Jews have yearned for return ever since their "exile".

- The land the Jews had come to was a "wilderness". The Jews had "returned" and created a "thriving society" as though none existed there before. They are dedicated to "bringing the blessing of progress" not only to the inhabitants but also to the entire region of the Middle East.

- The Jews' "return", restoration, reclamation, reconstitution, and redemption in their national home identifies them as organic to the land and non-Jews as simply its "inhabitants."

- The Holocaust proved that the Jews' "abnormal" situation of "homelessness and dependence" was a matter that could be resolved only by granting them the "status of a nation" among the "family of nations."

- The "newcomers" are "pioneers and defenders".

- The Arabs are perpetrators of "blockade" and use violence to attack the Jews forcing them to "defend" themselves.

- Arabs who "dwell" in and "inhabit" the land are granted "equal and full" status as citizens in a Jewish nation-state.

- Jews around the world are called upon to "[fulfil] ... the dream of generations" through immigration or support for Israel.

A few years after the Declaration, and in lieu of a Constitution, a number of Basic Laws were drawn up, the most significant of which was the Basic Law of Return. Formulated in 1950, this law granted "every Jew, wherever he may be, the right to come to Israel as an *oleh* (a Jew immigrating to Israel) and become an Israeli citizen" (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Basic Laws Document, n.d.; see also Laqueur and Rubin 1985:128). The Hebrew word *oleh* comes from the word *aliyah*, which means "to ascend" and in the context of Israel, to ascend to Zion. In its anglicised version "to make *aliyah*," means to settle or emigrate in Israel.

Many of the studies on Israeli Jewish identity have highlighted these and other Zionist themes. In their explorations of Israeli Jewish identity these scholars have focused on the "official" representations of history in museums and archaeological sites, as well as public and popular culture events (e.g., Abu El Haj 1998; Azoulay 1994; Bauman 1995; Ben-David 1997; Ben Ze'ev and Ben-Ari 1996; Friedlander and Seligman 1994; Golden 1996; Gurevitch and Aran 1994; Katriel 1997; Selwyn 1995, 1996; Shenhav-Keller 1993; Shohat 1989; Silberman 1990, 1995, 1997; Stein 1995; Zerubavel 1995a, 1995b). All usefully "locate" Zionism in the text and for this reason, I have found them helpful for my analysis of the narratives presented to Jews in diaspora.

But Israel's history has not only been marked by the liberationist historiography of Zionism, it has also been marked by militarism. Israel has been engaged in a war in every decade of its existence (Levy 1997; Safran 1978; Safty 1992). Among the most significant are:

- The 1948 "War of Independence": a war with Israel's neighbouring states, including Egypt, Jordan and Syria. It led to the end of British rule in the area and the expansion of Israel's borders to include some of what had been "designated" as the Arab state in the 1947 U.N. Partition Plan.

- The "1967 Six Day War": a war with Israel's neighbouring states, including Egypt, Jordan and Syria and which led to the "reunification" of Jerusalem and the occupation of the "rest of Palestine" (West Bank and Gaza Strip) and the of the Golan Heights.

- The 1982 Peace for Galilee war: a war with Lebanon aimed at destroying the "terrorist bases" of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation then located in Beirut area after having been expelled from Jordan in the early 1970's.

- The 1991 Gulf War: Israel was targetted by Iraq in order to undermine a coalition of Arab and western states allied against Iraq.

Israel's more recent history has also been marked by a series of peace agreements – the most important ones being the Camp David Accords signed with Egypt in 1982, which returned Sinai to the Egyptians; and the Declaration of Principles (D.O.P.), or the Oslo Accords, signed in Oslo, Norway, by the Israelis and the Palestinians in 1993, which led not only to the withdrawal of Israeli military troops from much of the Occupied Territories or the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it led to peace agreements with other Arab states, including Jordan (Levy 1997; Karsh 1994; Said 1996; Shlaim 1994). While the Oslo Accords have not been fully implemented, continued negotiations suggest that this agreement will be finalised. All of these actions have led to discussions and negotiations with the Syrians and Lebanese about security arrangements for returning areas occupied in 1967 and 1982. This era has marked the first time in Israel's history when an official "peace" with its neighbours seems finally on the horizon (Karsh 1994).

Israeli Zionism and North American "Pro-Israelism"

Soon after the state was established, debates about the "place" of the Jews which had begun during the formation of the Zionist movement continued particularly between North American Jews and Israelis with each side defining and redefining Zionism to suit its own political needs. Despite Israel's invitations for all Jews to return to Israel and the support for Zionism and Israel among Jews in North America, very few Jews from North America chose to relocate to Israel. Jewish institutional organisations' "mission" statements, including those of the Jewish Agency, reflected these patterns and shifts in interpretations of Zionism with calls to make *aliyah* taking on less and less significance, and the responsibility of Jews in North America to provide financial and political support for the state growing in significance (D. Goldberg 1996;

Kaufman 1996; Livni 1995). In fact, according to Israeli political scientist Gabriel Sheffer,

> It is known that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Israel's annual income from donations raised in the U.S. amounted to some $300 million, investments in Israel [from abroad] amounted to about $600 million, and the amounts transferred from all other Jewish Diaspora communities have amounted to about $200 million annually (1996:63).

In the late 1970s and 1980s when a number of social scientists began to examine the

differences between Jews living in the North America and those living in Israel, Zionist issues

remained central (Azria 1998; Brodbar-Memzer et al. 1993; Heilman 1999; Liebman 1999). Among

the most frequently cited of these studies are Steven Cohen's Modernity and Jewish Identity

(1983) and Charles Liebman and Steven Cohen's Two Worlds of Judaism (1990). Similar studies

have been conducted by Steven Cohen and other researchers for the Canadian Jewish community

(Brodbar-Memzer et al. 1993). There are two issues that arise out of these studies that are of

interest for my research. First of all, "pro-Israelism" is used to define levels of commitment to

Israel. Cohen describes why he uses the term "pro-Israelism." He contends that "pro-Israelism" is

a more accurate term to describe U.S. Jews' attachment to Israel because classical Zionist

perspectives on diaspora are not expressed by Jews living in the U.S.; and "Zionists" in the United

States "[lack] any distinctive analysis of Jewish life" in diaspora (1983:34). In other words,

Zionism's classical emphasis on "galut"[13] or exile is not part of U.S. Jewry's "Zionism".

Secondly, among the many "practices" Cohen uses in his quantitative analyses or

measurements of Jewish identity he includes the rate of "attachment" Jews have formed to

Israel[14]. He explains that his "analysis of pro-Israel activity *per se* is confined to travel to the

Jewish State" and the analysis of "attitudinal components of support for Israel" distinguished

along the lines of "orientation to the classical tenets of Zionism, concern for Israel, and support

for her government's international policies." In the Two Worlds of Judaism, some of the results of

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13. Golda Meir (1986), writes "We have always believed.... that the foundation of Zionism is more than geographical independence.... I believe that there is no Jew in the galut creating as a free man and as a free Jew. Only a Jew in Israel can do so.... Whoever talks himself into the belief that the Jewish people in the diaspora can exist as it would in Israel, and that it has a lasting chance of survival there, is deeply mistaken.... The more people taken out of any diaspora community, the richer that community becomes. This is paradoxical but true. A Jewish community from which there is no aliyah becomes spiritually impoverished.... No real bond can exist between Israel and the Jews of the free countries without a great immigration to Israel" (1986: 301-303).

Liebman and Cohen's quantitative measurements are summarised as follows:

> On the basis of several surveys, we feel comfortable dividing American Jews into three broad categories: about one-third are relatively indifferent to Israel, another third are moderately pro-Israel, and a third are passionately pro-Israel. In the first group are those who say in their responses to our questionnaires that they do not "often talk about Israel with friends and relatives," or have no intentions of ever visiting Israel, or are not interested in having their children visit Israel, or reject the view that "caring about Israel is very important part of my being a Jew," or see themselves as "not very close" to Israel, or do not agree with the statement "If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest tragedies of my life." About two-thirds of American Jews answer such questions in a way that shows support for Israel; about one-third do not.
>
> Among the two-thirds of American Jews who are pro-Israel, almost half respond affirmatively to a more stringent set of questions. They have visited Israel, they claim to have had personal contact with an Israeli during the preceding twelve months, they want their children to spend a year in Israel, they plan to visit Israel in the next three years, and they call themselves Zionists. To be sure even among this more passionately involved segment of the population only a fraction would qualify as Zionists by the typical Israeli's criterion, which emphasises commitment to *aliyah*, [meaning] resettlement. Only 15 percent of American Jews say they have given some thought to settling in Israel, and an even smaller number say they could "live a fuller Jewish life in Israel than the United States" (Liebman and Cohen 1990:84-85).

While Cohen and Liebman are constrained by the limitations of all quantitative research methods, I think it important to point out a few of the weaknesses in their approach as they relate to their "definitions". As I read these "results" I am left with many questions about just how Jews might identify with and relate to Israel. For example, using the term "pro-Israelism" to identify those who are "attached" to Israel is suggestive of a favourable attitude towards the state of Israel as a political entity. But is it true that people who are attached to Israel are also supportive of its policies? Or is there some other kind of attachment being described here? Moreover, the question: "If Israel were destroyed, I would feel as if I had suffered one of the greatest tragedies of my life," does not reveal just what meanings people might have for Israel or what is "embodied" (Boyarin 1992; see also Rodman 1992) by such a relationship that its "end" could be considered such a grave "tragedy." Finally, in this analysis, as in others, Israelis and North American Jewry are "located" by the politics of Zionism. That is, the definition of North American Jews as as living in diaspora is informed by Zionist politics. Why not describe them in

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14. Other measurements include, for example, lighting candles every Friday night to celebrate the holy day of Shabbat; fasting on the high holidays of Yom Kippur; and lighting candles for Hanuckah.

terms of third or fourth generation immigrants, for example? In the chapters that follow, I examine how Zionism continues to inform current public culture events designed by, for, and about Jews in diaspora. Later I show how such polarized identity categories fail to account for the meanings and practices of many Jews in North America and that perhaps some Jews in diaspora are experiencing a post-Zionist moment.

Post-Zionist narratives deconstruct the classical Zionist narratives and call for a rethinking and even a redrawing of the territory not only of what Israel represents but what Israel might become. These issues are most frequently associated with the "new history" in Israel (Mahler 1997), though there is scholarship from other fields, all of which questions the representations of Israeli Zionism. In particular these narratives question the representation of Israel as an embattled state in the Middle East and its treatment of the Palestinians in 1947-1949 (e.g., Flapan 1987; Morris 1987; Pappe 1992; Segev 1986); the role that Israel played during the Holocaust (Segev 1993), and the discrimination against "Oriental" and "Sephardic" Jews as well as Palestinians within an "Ashkenzic" Jewish state (Shohat 1988; 1989). The Post-Zionists, while all critical of some of what is considered to be "conventional" Zionist wisdon., range in their perspectives on the future of the state. There are those who, while deconstructing Zionist history, maintain a Zionist outlook, e.g., that Israel should remain a Jewish state, but the majority propose that Israel become a state of its citizens rather than primarily the Jew's state (for overview see Silberstein 1999; Evron 1995; Cohen 1995).

SECTION TWO
NATIONALIST NARRATIVES OF BE-LONGING

CHAPTER 4
'RETURNING' TO ISRAEL

In this Section "Nationalist Narratives of Be-Longing" I investigate narratives of Israel as nation and state. As Benedict Anderson (1991), Ana Maria Alonso (1988), Don Handelman (1990), and Robert Paine (1989; 1995) suggest, nations are imagined, represented and performed for their national audiences. Here I draw on such "imaginings" and "representations" of Israel, those presented on guided tours through Israel organised by North American Jewish community institutions. These popular cultural practices afforded me an opportunity to look at the interconnectedness of metaphor and materiality. Discursive practices – the narrativising of Israel – formed a key component in the development of material practices, the very construction of Israel as the nation and state of the Jews. I examine both what happened on tour, and what tourists were told about Israel and the Jews' identity. These tour narratives focussed on certain moments in Israeli history and presented contemporary Israeli concerns. I cannot give a complete briefing here, but I believe that by putting together the narratives as I have, any tourist I travelled with would be familiar with them. They would also recognise these narratives as nationalist narratives of belonging. I try to point out the themes that undergirded the overall perspectives being presented on these tours. While I recognise that there are counter-narratives or counter histories for every narrative presented, I do not present them here, though I have tried to signal (sometimes in the footnotes) where I know they exist. However, I have not presented an exhaustive list of counter-histories or even their counter-counter-histories.

"Returning" on Tour

The tours that I accompanied are characteristic of the kind of "study" tour organised by Jewish organisations that fund projects in Israel – projects that range from "reforestation" to "democratisation" – and are designed to forge a connection between Jews living in diaspora and Israel. Unlike Israeli tours that are organised for the Israeli-Jewish population – for example, tours like those organised by the Israel Society for the Preservation of Nature where walking the land is designed as part of a process of becoming fully Israeli (e.g., Ben-David 1997; Gurevitch and Aran 1994) – these tours are designed to bring Jews living "in diaspora" together as part of a nation and to "place" them, that is, to forge their connection with Israel, all the while recognising that they live in North America. The question here is how do the tour guides present and represent Israel to an audience of Jews from the North America?

Fundraising

Each of the tours in which I participated was organised by a group involved in some form of fundraising for projects in Israel. We were taken to sites where we were told that the contributions of Jews in diaspora (though not necessarily those of the people on tour) had made a difference in the lives of Israelis. Among the funded projects were community centres, municipal parks, water reservoir projects, tree-planting projects, social work projects supporting inner-city Ethiopian teenagers, and battered women and children's shelters for the Orthodox. These projects were not run by state agencies but by the Jewish tour-sponsoring non-governmental organisations (and other organisations), but many overlapped responsibilities of the state.

Nevertheless, tour participants seemed to take less interest in sites where there was no history told or information given about the country or its people, for example, at tree-planting sites or at lookout points where plaques of lists of donours were the centre of our attention. The tourists were also very aware that at one point or another on the tour they would be asked or encouraged to "give." On one tour, the North American representative made the mistake of speaking about the fund's many projects on the first morning's orientation session, prompting

quite a number of tourists to say that they couldn't believe the "pitch" had come so early!

The Guides[5]

The guides are central to my research because it is the narratives that they presented (Cohen 1985; Fine and Speer 1985; Katz 1985) which formed the data for my understanding of how Israel and diaspora are represented while on tour. Each of the tour organisations assigned an Israeli tour guide who was accompanied by at least one other Israeli and one North American representative from the same agency that had organised the tour.

I spoke to each of the Israeli-based tour guides and discovered that all tour guides in Israel must complete tourism courses and be licensed by the Israeli government. In addition, it was often the case that each guide received additional information from the organising institution that they needed to study prior to the tour, and in some instances, prior to our arrival, they were taken to some of the sites that we later visit on the tour.

The Israeli guides were responsible for giving us information about the Israeli landscape, people and history as well as informing us about some of the contemporary issues Israelis faced. Two of the three assigned guides were Israeli-born. Talia on the Israel Land Fund (ILF) tour was in her mid-50's while Sivan on the Israel Civil Society Fund (ICSF) tour was in her late 30's. Arnie in his 50's guided us on the Israel Development Fund (IDF) tour and was an American-born Israeli who had made *aliyah* or immigrated to Israel in the 1970's.

I noticed some differences in the way that each of these guides represented Israel. Sometimes that difference was slight, but the emphasis by those who had made *aliyah*, such as Arnie, but also other guides such as Laurie and Stephanie (see below) was on the uniqueness of Israel as a state for the Jews. Israeli-born guides, including Talia, and her assistant Avi, an Israeli-born representative of the North American Israel Land Fund, as well as Sivan, emphasised that Israel while certainly a state of and for the Jews was also a "normal" state. So, for instance, Israel's

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15. Names of the guides and of the organizations sponsoring the tours have been changed to protect the identity of the guides, the agencies and their representatives.

pollution and traffic problems were described in a way that emphasised the ordinariness that such problems pose for any state, or when touring new "settlements" they described the cost and design of the apartments and the amenities available for each "neighbourhood."

There were often site-specific guides as well. So, for example, our guide at the Neot Kedumim site, Laurie, is a staff member of the "biblical reserve." At Kibbutz Revivim, Stephanie who lived on the kibbutz and was part of its "public affairs" committee was assigned to guide us. The ISCF was a "study tour" so we sometimes had as many as six presentations a day by journalists, politicians, lawyers, activists, and staff members from the grantee agencies. I was not given permission to audiotape these proceedings and while I was allowed to take notes, I was at times asked by ISCF representatives not to include certain statements. This didn't affect the research to the degree that I thought it might since the ICSF Israeli guide, Sivan, gave me full permission to record all of her narratives on tour, whether on the bus or at the different sites. As well, on the ICSF tour we visited similar or the same sites as on the other tours and very similar narratives were presented.

On all of the tours, North American representatives of the organisations accompanied us in Israel. They were there to "make sure everybody is happy" as Jeremy, one of many North American representatives on the IDF tour put it. That is, to make sure that the tourists were satisfied with the organisation's itinerary, accommodations, and planning as well to promote, highlight, or simply provide information about the organisation's "good works." These representatives were sometimes asked to present their perspectives or knowledge about Israeli politics or culture while we were on the bus or as we were driving towards or away from a site. For example, Karla, the ICSF's North American representative and Jeremy on the IDF tour provided a good deal of information and background on the Israeli projects and the need to support their respective organisations. On the ILF tour, the organisation's Israeli-born North American representative, Avi, who had been a Brigadier General in the Israel Defence Forces until his recent retirement (at 55 years of age) was often put in the position of presenting the military narratives. All of these agency representatives participated on an intermittent basis however, and in the end, it was up to the Israeli guides to do most of the explaining and the

guiding.

All of the tour guides managed to develop a friendly and helpful relationship to most members of the tour group but each had their own problems as well. Both negative and positive comments about the tour guide's knowledge or emphasis or attitude would arise among the tourists, but always out of earshot of the guide. Many of the tourists would come to me to discuss their feelings about the tour guide, in part I think because they thought I was studying this aspect of the tours to Israel. At the same time, two of the tour guides, Talia and Sivan, developed a relationship to me as a fellow Israeli. At one point, Talia who was frustrated by some of the tourists' responses to her, spoke to me about how difficult it was to guide Jews as compared to Christians who seemed to have a greater appreciation of what they saw and were far less demanding. Talia immediately analysed the situation, stating that she believed that "diaspora" Jews have little control as a "minority" community in North America so they resort to controlling behaviours whenever they get an opportunity to do so. In another instance, Sivan was quite concerned when it was discovered that the ICSF organisers from the United States had not been informed of my research by the Canadian office and that they had shown some ambivalence about my participation. Sivan, who was well-liked by the ICSF representatives and the tourists, came to me immediately upon hearing of this situation. She spoke to me as a "fellow Israeli" saying she wondered if the U.S. ICSF response to me was due to the same "insecurity" that all "diaspora Jews" feel, but particularly those who are promoting an alternative agenda for Israel. When I asked her to explain what she meant, she said that she thought that Jews in diaspora need to believe in an idealised Israel and that they are afraid to criticise the state, whereas in Israel criticisms of the state are made from a position of power and are considered normal. What was interesting about these moments was the way that the Jews from North America were said to be expressing a "behaviour" that could be attributed to their "diaspora" status.

Arnie and I did not get a chance to speak very much on the IDF tour, though I did develop a close friendship with one of the organisation's North American representatives, Jeremy. We sat together and spoke often about the sites and our feelings about Israel (see below,

"Fielding Questions of Identity").

Arnie spoke to me directly only during the final day of the tour. All of the tourists were sitting and chatting in a room overlooking the Red Sea in Eilat. A number of the tourists had presented us with their reflections on the tour and the tour guides and organisers were presented with small gifts. When Arnie and I had a brief moment to chat, he asked me what part of Persia my parents had come from. Arnie did not know my history and had assumed because of my "physical features" (as he put it) that I was "Persian." When I told him about my history on that final day, he seemed quite taken aback and was silent for the rest of the time we sat next to one another. I didn't understand his response at the time, especially because it was on this tour that all of the participants had been sent a letter describing who I was and what I was doing on the tour. I spoke to a number of Israeli family members and they helped me come up with at least one explanation: Arnie, who would have been given "security" training for guiding tours in Israel may have been disturbed by the fact that he hadn't realised that a "Palestinian" had been on board!

Arnie, who had also guided an IDF tour in the past and was known to the agency's Israel and Canada representatives, developed an easy manner with all of the tourists, getting to know everyone's names and chatting with them whenever he could. Talia and Sivan spent far less time with the tourists than Arnie, going to their Israeli homes to be with their families when they could in the evenings, and chatting with bus drivers and other tour guides or tour organisers rather than with the tourists during many of the meal times and down times.

Themes

All of the tours in which I participated were designed and organised by professional staff of the different fund-raising organisations in North America and in Israel. The tours were generally ten days in length. The accommodations were at four- and five-star hotels. The prices ranged from C$2500 to C$4000 which included airfare, travel throughout Israel, entrance to designated sites, most meals, and accommodations. The two major organisations I travelled with had tours planned for between 700 and 1000 participants, all of whom were in Israel at the same

time. Once in Israel, these large groups were divided into smaller groups of approximately 25 to 40 people, usually divided by municipal regions so that, for example, Jews who had travelled to Israel from Toronto or Montreal were put on buses with other Torontonians or Montrealers. The smaller tour I participated on had approximately forty participants who were drawn from areas across North America.

The itineraries for the tours were sent out to each participant at least a couple of weeks prior to the departure for Israel. Although a general outline of the tour was always available, the particular, detailed itinerary was not available until closer to the departure date. On every tour I took, we visited the city of Tel Aviv; "West" Jerusalem as well as in the Old City, the Jewish, Christian and Armenian Quarters; a kibbutz; an archaeological site; the Golan Heights; the Galilee area; the Jordan Valley; and the Negev Desert region. And on every tour at least one dignitary or government official, such as a mayor, cabinet minister, and on one occasion, the Prime Minister, gave us a welcome speech prior to an event or a full speech outlining his/her position on a particular political or social issue.

The tours on which I was a participant took place in late winter, in spring and in the fall. Each tour had a theme:

- To celebrate Jerusalem's 3000 year anniversary (ILF tour);
- To celebrate the regional peace agreements and democracy (ICSF tour); and
- To celebrate Israel's 50th Anniversary (IDF tour).

I have agreed not to name the organisations that sponsored these tours and have done my best to keep their identities hidden. But I think it is important to describe briefly what each of the community organisations does, the purposes of its fundraising both throughout North America and in Israel; as well as what its roles in Jewish-community building and "diaspora" - Israel relations. These details are important as they highlight each organisation's niche both within North America and in Israel. At least two of these organisations are well known within the North American Jewish community. Each tour organisation provided the tourists with a set of readings. The opening letters of introduction and welcome by the organisation staff in each of the tours' itinerary booklets hint at the themes, concerns, and interests that are highlighted on

that organisation's tour.

I have named the first tour organisation the Israel Land Fund (ILF) for the purposes of this research. This organisation is known in the Jewish community for its fundraising efforts in Israel in the areas of resources, land, and water development projects. Excerpted from the ILF's "Participant's Guide":

> ...Among the main features of our programme is a first-hand look at some of the outstanding achievements of [ILF] in beautifying the land, protecting the environment and enhancing the quality of life for all to enjoy.
> We are very proud of the fruits of [many decades] of effort and energy which [ILF] has devoted to the state of Israel on behalf of the entire Jewish people. From our beginning..., when a group of committed, dynamic and visionary Zionist leaders created [ILF], to the present time in which [ILF] plays a pivotal role in the absorption of a massive wave of Aliyah throughout Israel, the ability to turn dreams into reality has given vital proof of the meaningful role of [ILF] for Jewish people the world over. As a participant on this tour you have an integral role in these accomplishments, and in the work of the years to come (Pp. 1-2)

The second tour was organised by an organisation that concentrates on the development of Israeli civil society. I have named it the Israel Civil Society Fund (ICSF). As the ICSF's tour "Itinerary Guide" claims:

> [ICSF] has been at the forefront of the movement to build a society dedicated to tolerance, justice and pluralism. Now, its efforts are even more imperative to create a civil society in which the rights of each and every citizen are respected.
> The Study Tour you are joining offers you the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of the issues that [ICSF] deals with on a daily basis. You will also have a chance to see the political and social contexts in which varied citizens' initiatives operate (P. 1).

I name the third organisation the "Israel Development Fund" (IDF). This organisation concentrates its fundraising efforts on the development of social services and communities in Israel and in North America. The IDF's "Resource Book" which was a part of our tour package, states:

> We have had the opportunity to visit Israel on many occasions and it was always said that we were visiting in "Historic Times". Once again we will have the opportunity as we celebrate the 50ᵗʰ Anniversary of the state of Israel.
> We all take pride in the many accomplishments and growth of the state of Israel. We, in the diaspora, play our role in the collective responsibility of Aliyah and Klitah ([meaning] immigration and absorption). Supporting [IDF] ensures Jews suffering from oppression will have an opportunity to live and express themselves freely in a democratic open society (no pagination).

Locations on Tour

The sites chosen by tour organisers as well as the narratives presented at these sites are arranged so as to "place" Jews, their histories, and the survival of their traditions into the social body politic that constitutes Israel today. These narratives seek to locate the Jews as a nation to the territory that is Israel; to show that what the Jews have brought to Israel affirms it as their own, and to show how the Jews are a threatened population within a "chaotic" and "undemocratic" Middle East. They therefore must secure their survival as a nation within the nation-state.

In what follows, I focus on narratives of Israel and Jews' identity that are presented as "narratives of be-longing." That is, the Jews not only belong in Israel, they have longed throughout history to belong in Israel. The Jews in diaspora are linked together not only as a nation – the Jews – but also with the territory – the state of Israel – as their biblical and ancestral land; the Jews' history, tradition, and the present are linked. Presentations locating the Jews' history on the land in a manner that establishes this geographic space as exclusively the Jews' rightful place were made: (1) about biblical and ancient sites; (2) about Holocaust memorialising; and (3) about and around Jerusalem. I name this section "Celebrating 'Return' to One Nation/One Land."

In the next chapter, I explore the narratives that locate the Jews' return to Israel as part of a modernising trajectory. With their return, Israel becomes a modern state (e.g., Said 1978; Shohat 1989). Tropes of return and redemption infuse narratives about development, particularly in and around the Negev Desert. And, democracy, recognised as an important progressive principal, forms the background for understanding the narratives that "recognise" that non-Jews live within the state. I name this chapter "Israel as Modern Nation-state: Celebrating Development and Democracy"

In Chapter Six, "Defending One Nation/One Land," I am concerned to outline how it is that narratives of belonging are linked to the need to defend and secure what is presented as a "tiny" nation-state, surrounded by her enemies. Examples include narratives about 1) the War of

Independence; 2) the Six Day War; and the current conflicts with 3) Lebanon and Syria.

In Chapter Seven, "Securing the Nation," I examine how the narratives present "settling" on the land as securing the nation particularly in 1) the Jordan River Valley areas and 2) the Upper Galilee Area. Included in the section "Securing Peace," I examine the representations of the Peace Agreements in the region, following the narratives that were primarily on representations of the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians, the Oslo Accords.

I have also included discussions of a number of tourist "resistances" to the narratives presented on the tours. I include these in order to indicate examples not only of the level of engagement experienced by tourists, but also to emphasise that these are meaning-making performances by both the tour guides and the tourists (e.g., Cohen 1979, 1985; Fine and Speer 1985; Frow 1991; MacCannell 1992; Selwyn 1995, 1996; Urry 1990). That is, the latter are in the process of selecting and deciding how and what is meaningful and trying to make sense both of the narratives themselves, and of their own personal "locations" within such narratives and thus also "within" the nation.

While there were many sites and topics described on all three of the tours, I cannot do them all justice here. I have chosen to focus my attention on those topics that are the markers or signposts that forge the connections between Jews in Israel and those living in diaspora. These topics formed the basis for many conversations during the course of the tours or at the tour sites and were topics of conversation with tourists after we had come back home, as well as in discussions at community events and interviews.

Written texts (tourist guidebooks and materials provided to tourists by the organising institution, often including Israeli government documents), video and audiotapes I made, as well as my fieldnotes, were all reviewed when preparing these accounts of narratives on Jewish community organisation-sponsored tours of Israel.

Celebrating 'Return' to One Nation/One Land

Biblical and Ancient Narrations

Common to all the tours were narratives that tied the Jews to a biblical Land of Israel in such a way that the landscape became exclusively associated with the Jew's struggle and mission. Jews were placed into the Land and the Land was placed into the Jew's history (Boyarin 1992, 1996; Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Gurevitch and Aran 1994;Whitelam 1996).

On the ILF tour we were taken to Neot Kedumim, an ILF-sponsored biblical garden. At the site there we were assigned to one of Neot Kedumim's guides who turned out to be an American Jew who had "made *aliyah*" years earlier. I will use the name Laurie. Neot Kedumim is the Hebrew name for the biblical gardens and Laurie later explained:

> Neot means... oasis and *kedumim* ... means ancient; but ... many Hebrew words have opposite meanings and though it means ancient it also means going forward so ... [*Neot Kedumim* means] [in order] to go forward we build on our meanings of the past...

We were brought to a sheltered area that allowed us to overlook the rest of the gardens. It was a bright, warm and sunny day and we were all enjoying the opportunity to be out of the bus and out of doors. Laurie told us that

> we are looking at a very long tradition which goes back to the very beginning of the Bible ... just like the Garden of Eden... And when we look at the setting of the Bible what we're looking at is a society where people are farmers. That's why we have traditions that are about farming. ... [But] [n]ot all of us have grown up on a farm and to try to understand why we do what we do ... [and] why we have certain traditions, we have to go back in our imagination and that's why we have this place, to help us understand... So we've created here something that is disappearing from the world. But, in some ways, we have a connection because no matter how many roads, or how many malls, or how many cities or how many buildings you build, if you plant a fig tree, if you plant an olive tree it's going to grow exactly the same way it did 2000 years ago. So some things never change. Okay. So that's why we're here.

Never deviating from the biblical sources, Laurie linked the practices of the land with the Jews' traditions.

Laurie's primary focus remained on linking the land and its plants to the people, the Jews, and their traditions. Over and over again, Laurie accomplished this process of linkage by

referring to important holidays – Passover, Lag B'Omer, Sukkot – and expressing them in terms of the work on the land. Whether she was speaking to us about wild plants, like hyssop, or the precariousness of the weather and its effects on planted wheat or olive tree blossoms, it is the Jews' traditional or ritual processes that are set in the context of this land:

> ...A lot of the plants that grow here became symbols of something in the Bible and the hyssop became a symbol of monarchy... For example, the exodus ... when the Israelites, our ancestors, left Egypt, they were told to slaughter a lamb, and take some blood and paint the door posts so that the plague would pass over us and our houses and what were they supposed to do it with was with a bunch of hyssop and one of the interpretations is that they were supposed to remain honest and humble; not too easy for the Jews maybe....

This last remark prompted both laughter and nods of agreement among the tourists.

When Laurie was asked if these were "public lands" she replied only that the land for the garden had been "alloted by the Israeli government in 1965" and that "nobody wanted it." Implied here and earlier by Laurie's comment that "there was nothing here" is that the land was empty and ready for "re-planting" by those who are now taking care of the garden. At no time did Laurie's narrative make any reference to the fact that hyssop, figs, almonds, wheat, and especially olives grew prior to this "gardener's" arrival. The irony is that this garden's "crops" were also the basis of the Palestinian peasant economy prior to the founding of the state (Abdo Zubi 1987; Doumani 1995; Kimmerling and Migdal 1993).

Near the end of our visit, Laurie commented on the "unusual qualities of the olive tree" which have symbolic meaning for the Jews. She told how in the Jewish tradition, olive oil was used to light the menorah and to anoint high priests and kings. And, she explained:

> If you're an olive farmer, and you want to plant new olive trees, you don't plant the pits because it takes too long, you take one of these little shoots that comes out of the base of the trunk and this is your next generation of olive trees. .... You cut the shoot, it will stay fresh even for a few days and you put it in the earth and it will start growing. That is the special quality of the olive tree; that it reproduces through these shoots. .... So this is the image of the shoots that are the next generation of the olive tree. There is a very nice verse in... Psalm 128 that says "Your children are like olive trees around your table". This is the next generation of the olive tree. Your next generation is sitting around your table. And the end of that Psalm says "You should see children of your children have peace on Israel." This is the wish, the hope, for everybody; the continuity of the generations, [and] peace on Israel. This is what we wish and hope for everybody and that is the wish that I would like to leave us all with, joy and family, and peace on Israel, Amen.

To this statement, many of the tourists responded with "Amen." Laurie's comments prompted a retired Reform Rabbi who was a participant on our tour and who had remained attentive though very quiet throughout Laurie's scriptural presentations, to rise from his seat at this time to say:

> There are many homilies on the olive and one interesting one: just as the olive has to be beaten before the oil rises to the top, so the Jewish people suffer persecution but ultimately, despite everything ... we rise to the top, to which I can only say, Alevi.

Laurie and many of the tourists were thrilled with this interjection. It not only reinforced much of what had been said earlier in the presentation, it brought a sense of closure to the visit. For we had begun our time in this ancient biblical gardens being told about "the beginnings" – Adam and Eve, Israelite settlement and planting practices – and we ended with a celebratory note: after much suffering, the people had returned to their Land.

The most widely recognised of the many biblical and ancient narratives that link the present nation of Israel to a past, is the story of what happened at Masada (Bruner and Gorfain 1991; Lewis 1975; Kedar 1982; Maranz 1994; Zerubavel 1995a). Situated in the Negev Desert, close to the Dead Sea, Masada was a mountain fortress and has been for years now, an archaeological site and popular tourist destination. Important as Masada is, not only in Israel's but in Jews' and non-Jews' popular imagination of Israel – partly because of its popularisation with the movie "Masada", partly because it is used in advertisements for travel to Israel – this site was only once on the itinerary of a tour I accompanied. In all other cases, however, the tour organisations had optional tours to Masada available, and all the tourists who had never been to Masada took these tours. In this way, despite the fact that Masada was not on all of the official itineraries, Masada generated many discussions among the tourists on all of the tours.

I have been on guided tours of Masada in times past and I found the IDF presentation of the Masada story was much like the others. We reached the mountain's top by riding on the newly-built funiculaire. Some tourists were quite nervous for as we climbed higher and higher, the wind and rain (yes, rain in the desert is unusual!) shook and swayed the vehicle. Still the excitement was palpable and, once at the top, everyone wanted to go off in his or her own direction and look at the excavated areas. Arnie managed to gather us under a sun shelter area –

this time sheltering us from the cool rain – and began by telling us that the name Masada "simply

means small fortress". Skipping the archaeological findings from the "Chalcolithic and

Macabbean periods", Arnie moved "straight into the Roman period." Beginning with the Roman

period of "Herod the Great", described as a "Roman puppet leader," a "king," "paranoid," a

"strange fellow," and a "great builder," Arnie told us that Herod built Masada as a possible

refuge. He continued:

> ... [I]n the year 66 C.E. ... Herod is long gone, [and] the Jews revolt against the Romans and for four years there's a Jewish revolt, [from] 66 [CE] up to 70 [CE]. ... [Then there is the] [d]estruction of the Temple in Jerusalem... In 70, the revolt theoretically is over but it's not over because here, at Masada, there was a group of zealots.... One [part of this group was] called the Sikari. They were knife-wielding assassins – [who] also kill[ed] Jews, they ... didn't [just] kill Romans. Any Jew who ... [was] opposed to [the] revolt, they'd stick him. ... And so, banded together, they were raiding Roman supply lines in the mountains. They would get water and goods at En Gedi [the oasis nearby].... [F]or three years the zealots were on top of Masada with their families, with sheep and goats and donkeys ... they lived up here. And in the final battle scene, [there was] the mass killing.

As Arnie spoke, most of the tourists listened intently, and occasionally spoke quietly among

themselves. At this point in Arnie's telling, one tourist said the word "suicide." Arnie

immediately responded to this with: "Who said suicide? [It was a] mass death and killing at

Masada." But, rather than explain this correction, Arnie told us we would have to wait to hear

the end of the story. First, he asked us to follow him for a short walk towards the "Synagogue"

site. As we stood within the reconstructed walls of the "synagogue", Arnie told us he had

something very important to share with us:

> A few years ago my son had his Bar Mitzvah... here. .... [But when] he read his Torah... he was rubbing elbows with those Jews from Masada. They were wearing Phylacteries. .... They were wearing prayer shawls 2000 years ago. And I said to him: Son, you decide what you want to do with your life; as [to] what definition [you choose] as a Jew. But today you take one commitment: that you pass on the Torah, the word, to the next generation. The minute the link is broken we're finished, just like the Edomites, the Moabites and everyone else. We'll just simply disappear [if that link is broken]. That's part of the meaning of Masada. They were people who believed in the Jewish lifestyle. They may have been extremists but they went to the end believing that there was only one way to live and that was the way of a Jew and things haven't changed all that much.

To this, tourists nodded as if in agreement. In this way, Arnie had brought the story of an

"ordinary" Jew's experiences and practices, his son's Bar Mitzvah, and linked it to the practices of

Jews in the past. He had done so within the walls of an ancient synagogue, imbuing his words

not only with its sacredness but also with the meaningfulness of Jews' practices around the

world. But as importantly, this "ordinary" practice, was now placed into the context of a site

enveloped with a kind of mystique and messianism, with every Jew being called upon to

continue these practices or "simply disappear."

After we had visited the Roman baths, storerooms and other sites on Masada, Arnie

took us to the edge of a fortress wall and told us what I think we had all been waiting to hear.

Why he had chosen to define the last days of the zealots as a murder and not a suicide. He

explained as follows:

> In the first attempt by the Romans [to break into the fortress]... the leader of the zealots,
> named Elizar Ben Yair gathers all the last soldiers and their families together.... And he
> says to them simply: It doesn't look good. The Romans are getting close. The ramp [up
> the mountain] is complete. The wall [we've built] is going to be collapsed very soon.
> They've already made a break. We blocked it up with timber and we're going to have
> to decide what our destiny will be. And he tells them: We were born free. We are free
> Jews. Slavery is not for us. The children will be abused. The women will be abused.
> The old people will have their bones broken and... be carried away. A slave is nothing.
> [It] is not the way for a free Jew.

According to Arnie, the Jews were not happy with Eliezer Ben Yair's proposal that all the zealots

would have to die in order to prevent the zealots from being taken by the Romans. But, as time

passed and the likelihood that the zealots would successfully repel the Romans diminished, the

leaders made a decision. At this point in the narrative, Arnie returned to the tourist's earlier

comment claiming that there had been a suicide atop Masada. Arnie forcefully narrated his own

version of the story:

> Here and, in their last breath, they died as free Jews. The bottom line here... [it was] not
> suicide. The bottom line here is not murder. It is the desire to resist a larger empire
> forcing their will upon you. They wanted to die as free Jews.... [Suicide?] That's not it.
> [It was] resistance: the small against the large [and] the just against the wicked. It
> happens in many places and these were the people that took their lives, based upon that
> understanding of who they were. Born as Jews, [they] died as Jews. For that reason we
> used to – not so much today – swear in our armoured division here ... tell [the soldiers]
> that they are the continuation of the last defenders of Masada. They were the end of the
> Second Commonwealth. We are the new independent state. They are defending the
> state as those zealots died here on Masada. That's the connection. We say "Masada
> shall not fall again." It's a little Jewish paranoia because things haven't changed much.
> We're still the minority in a very tough neighbourhood. We have large countries
> around us. We have Saddam Hussein who, in one day, can tip the world this way or
> the other way, just like that. One person in a tough neighbourhood can turn awful.

> Everything that's going on around us, changes all of our lives. So things have not changed all that much. As a strong small country we can exist. We must be spiritually strong, like the zealots, and also be able to defend ourselves, like the soldiers who are sworn into the army, here at Masada, and at different places in the country. Resistance, that's the word, not suicide.

Arnie had narrated and performed a narration that carried the past of the Jews' struggles into the present. From the past to the present, Jews' lives are marked by rebellion and resistance to political powers in their quest for autonomy and freedom. While he presented one of many controversial interpretations of the Masada myth, his interpretation is important for its reference to and framing of the contemporary Israeli situation. Note for instance: "We're still the minority in a very tough neighbourhood," and "things haven't changed that much" and, most importantly, "We must be spiritually strong, like the zealots, and also be able to defend ourselves."

The themes of "siege" and "defence" marked all of the interpretations of military struggles in the region, from the biblical and ancient eras to the contemporary period. On the tours, Jews were always presented as on the defensive; their enemies always on the offensive. It is their strength to resist on the basis of a vision of ultimate liberation and redemption that maintains their traditions and thus also the nation. I will examine the narratives of Israeli military struggles in more detail in the sub- section, "Securing One Nation/One Land," below.

On the Israel Land Fund (ILF) tour, Talia presented us with the biblical tale of Joshua in the Valley of Ayalon, a valley we were driving through in order to get to a tree-planting ceremony in the Negev Desert. Linking biblical and ancient stories to more contemporary examples of the Jews' struggle, Talia managed to draw our attention to this site as a site of military struggle. She said:

> ...[We are now in] the... Valley of Ayalon. [Do you] remember when Joshua was fighting the Cannibals, and he was losing time... and [he cried to God]: "Will you please help me?" and God said "Why not" and he said "Let the sun and the moon stop their course above the Valley of Ayalon." This is why Joshua ended the battle successfully and then God let them go their way...

> ... The Valley of Ayalon, as a matter of fact, is the place of lots and lots of blood poured.... We know, [in the] second century B.C.E., when Judah Macabbee was on his way to Jerusalem to fight the Assyrians, he had to fight his way through the Valley of Ayalon, because it is on the way to Jerusalem....

> In recent times, in 1917, it was General Allenby, the British General Allenby ... who had to fight the Turks here in the Battle of Ayalon ... And during the War of Independence there were four battles that took place here... They all failed and this is why the Valley of Ayalon was a package that was not part of Israel. It was part of No Man's Land, and we could not go to through the Valley of Ayalon until 1967...

Talia, naming a number of biblical, ancient and recent heroes of the Jews – Joshua, Judah

Macabee and General Allenby – and setting each into the landscape, described the Valley of

Ayalon as a place associated only with the Jew's struggle for autonomy. Important in this

rendition is its military emphasis, for each area and every heroic struggle proves to be a decisive

military struggle in the history of the Jews.

On all of the tours, after many historical references had been used to illustrate the

significance of sites we were passing through, tourists began to ask the tour guides for some

explanation. On the Israel Civil Society Fund (ICSF) tour, Sivan, the tour guide, used what she

described as a "child's understanding" of history. With her arms stretched out, Sivan explained

that her head represented the year 0; her one hand the year 2000 BCE, or the period of Abraham;

her elbow the period of the Patriarchs, David and the Temple. The shoulder of her other arm

represented the destruction of the Temple in the year 70 CE; her elbow, the "return from exile" in

1948, and her hand, the year 2000 CE.

On the Israel Development Fund (IDF) tour, there were a number of people who did

not understand the tour guide's historical referencing and after many asked me about it, I took it

upon myself to ask Arnie to explain it to everyone. He answered:

> ... I've been throwing out time periods and I'll try to do [a] simple [explanation]....
> Canaanite period. They were the original inhabitants of land. .... So, the Canaanites
> formed a broad stage people. They were inside the land from 3300 years BCE. Notice
> the dates: I'm talking now about Jewish historical sites. BCE, which is Before Common
> Era. ... [With the] conquest of the Israelites in 1250, ...the Canaanite [period ended].
> [The] Israelite period, Kings of Israel, from that time period 1000 BCE up until the
> destruction of the... first Temple, Babylonians 586. Second Temple period up until... 70
> CE... And, from then on friends, it's simple. It's Romans, it's Roman Byzantine, it's
> Muslim, Crusaders, Mamaluks, Turks, Brits, and we're on to the present.

This periodisation of Israel's early history was based primarily on biblical sources: "Canaan", "the

Israelites", "Temple period", etc. Beyond the biblical period, the focus was on those who

"invaded" or "occupied" the region, a geopolitical rather than sociological description of the

region. That is, there was no mention of the peoples who lived in the region, only narratives of the "occupation" of the land by successive invaders.

On the ICSF tour, reference was often also made to archaeological sites where findings "proved" the existence of the Hebrew or Israelite tribes in the area. While travelling in the northern part of Israel, through an area called the Galilee, Sivan the tour guide told us:

> There were several huge cities when the first tribes [the Hebrew tribes] entered that part of the land.... This is something that can be proved archaeologically... There were Canaanite kingdoms, "city kingdoms" they were called and there you can see the penetration of a different set of tools, of pottery and then of writing and then you can see how the Hebrews are penetrating the land over the layers of the Canaanite [period] ...
>
> ... [T]his is very, very obvious because they found here something that looks like a palace and a very, very big gate [built in] a very different style [from] the Canaanite [style] and this is what we call today the Solomonic Gate, [or] the Solomonic Palaces, simply because it comes together with the Hebrew period or the Israelite period of the kings in Jerusalem. This is quite an incredibly big site. It is one of the biggest city kingdoms that was ever in this area. And there is a lot of correspondence that was made between this city and the cities of the Mesopotamia area. And so documents were found in Mesopotamia, in Iraq actually, giving the name of Hazor and the kings of Hazor and all the correspondence that was going between the cities.

Here Sivan, like Arnie, periodised the region in terms of a Jewish- or Israeli-Jewish-centred or biblical historiography. History in the region begins with the Canaanite period and moves through the Israelite, Roman, Crusades, Roman Byzantine, Mamaluk, Ottoman and British periods. Note that except for the Israelite Period, these eras are represented in terms that suggest that the land has been "occupied" until the "return" of the Jews and that "Palestinians" or "Arabs" are not a part of the "history" or sociology of the region. This forms a particular referencing "system" that enables those who, by focusing on the occupiers, can then neglect to speak about those peoples or "nations" who have continuously lived in the area. Of course, it is not unusual for archaeologists too to narrate the past in an order that is identified with a particular people's history (Jones 1997; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Silberman 1990). Archaeologist Keith Whitelam (1996) argues that Israel's history is limited by the biblical archaeological discourse, while writers like Neil Asher Silberman (1990; 1992; 1995; 1997) and Amos Elon (1997) and Nadia Abu El-Haj show that nationalism sets the agenda for the archaeological preoccupations of Israelis.

These periodisation practices frame the histories of the regions' inhabitants in such a way that some histories simply disappear. These narratives "locate" the Jews and suggest that until their "return," there have been peoples "occupying" the land rather than inhabiting it. The distinction is important for it suggests the organicity, or belonging, of the Jews to the land. In this way, "other" histories are hidden by the dominant discourse that situates Jewish and biblical history in the region.

But whether or not the Jews are indigenous to the Land of Israel is another complicated matter. While some cultural theorists argue that the relationship of the Jews to Israel has been defined by a deterritorialised rather than territorial diasporicism, they still maintain that there is also an authochthonous or indigenous relationship to that same land (e.g., Boyarin and Boyarin 1993). But a close reading of the popular and public national narratives do not suggest indigenousness; rather they suggest that while the Jews may not have been there "first", the land is theirs because it was "chosen" for them and they were "chosen" to live on it. And in more secular terms, they are the Land's oldest living survivors. This suggests that if a group called the "Canaanites" had "survived", it might be their land today. Indeed this realisation may explain the disappearance of and delegitmisation of the "others" who live in Israel and why such narratives of survivalism may resonate when there is a call on all Jews to maintain certain Jewish practices of survival.

This strategy obliterates local histories and moreover, it helps to frame what people might actually "see" as they tour the country. For example, when Sivan described the archaeological finds in northern Galilee as "Solomonic Gates"she placed the finds within a Jewish historical frame of reference to Solomon, or when Arnie claimed that the "terracing" – a process of building stepped walls that prevents soil erosion on hilly slopes – we see around us "comes right out of the Bible. This [is the] Judean mountains and all of our agricultural festivals and laws come out of this land," he neglected to orient the tourists in such a way that they could "see" that the people "terracing" the lands in the area are Palestinians. It is they who have maintained this practice in this area and yet they are made to disappear. Naming the area the "Judean mountains" also returns the past name to this place in the present.

On Jerusalem's Place in Jewish history and the Jews' Identity

On all of the tours, Jerusalem was central to the narrative of the creation and importance of Israel (Armstrong 1996; Benvenisti 1996; Lustick 1985). Jerusalem's history becomes metonymic of the Jews' past and return to Israel.

Each itinerary included a tour through modern "West" Jerusalem as well as the walled Old City. West Jerusalem is the site of modern Israeli institutions such as the Supreme Court, the Knesset, the Israel Museum, the Hebrew University; modern (French Hill, Gilo, Talpiot) and gentrified communities (e.g., the communities called the Germany Colony, the Russian Compound, Beka'a, Yemin Moshe); as well as old and new markets, restaurants and cafes (Ben Yehuda Street, King David Street, and Nahalot). We were also taken to sites memorialising important military victories in the area (see below). On no tours were we taken to see the "Eastern" part of Jerusalem where Palestinians continue to live and work and where there are few Jewish or Israeli institutions.

On the IDF tour, as on the ILF and ICSF tours, the Jewish connection to Jerusalem was presented as a unique phenomenon in the world. All the guides made similar claims: other religious, cultural or social ties to the city do not have the same quality as those of the Jews. For example, as we drove into Jerusalem for the first time on the Israel Development Fund tour, Arnie explained the importance of the city for the Jews in this way:

> Now many other people hold Jerusalem sacred. For the Christians it is [about] the last week in the life of Jesus in Jerusalem. However, they have Bethlehem, Nazareth, [and] for many Catholics, Rome and other shrines all around the world. The Muslims hold Jerusalem sacred because of Mohammed's night journey... They also have Medina and Mecca in Saudi Arabia as holy cities. But when it comes to the Jews, ...there's only one holy city, and that is Jerusalem. And unlike many peoples around the world, we took Jerusalem with us. We couldn't physically visit, we couldn't get there.... So around the Passover Seder at the end of the Seder... every Jew, whether they live in Sweden, Poland, Morocco, Kurdistan, or in Yemen, they ended the Passover, the exile story, the slavery story, with freedom in Jerusalem. That was the wish of the Jewish people. There are very few cultures in the world, or people, that take cities with them.

Jerusalem is idealised, romanticised and presented as uniquely important for the Jewish faith and the Jewish people. No less important and yet completely ignored, are the non-Jewish people who continue to live and who have lived in the city over the centuries (cf. Benvenisti 1996).

Later when Arnie explained why the final prayer in the Passover Seder – "Next year in Jerusalem," – has been changed in Israel to "Next year in the rebuilt Jerusalem," he attributed the change to the fact that the Jews now find

> ...the Wall is around us, the buildings around us, the kids in the street, the schools, Ben Yehuda Street. This is Jerusalem. As the Prophet Isaiah prophesised: ...after destruction, after dispersion, will we hear the children's voices in the streets once again and that what it is all about.

Thus the city's non-Jewish inhabitants do not exist. It is as though Jerusalem was there to be taken from whomever was living there and "returned" to the Jews who solely and legitimately can belong to her. Here again the Jews are the sole ancient survivors and it is this that makes Jerusalem and Israel uniquely theirs. In this discourse people who currently live in the area are not simply made to disappear; rather they are presented as lacking the same rights to the area as the Jews. Reiterating this main point and linking Jerusalem to all Jews' identity and history, Arnie said:

> It is our national capital. It is the capital of a people that are dispersed throughout the world, only one city and that is Jerusalem. It's amazing to think that our biblical writers in the Book of Psalms foretold the future of the Jewish people and said if Jerusalem should ever be forsaken, then I should forget exactly who I am. ...These words should be embedded in your memory. Jews, unlike many other people have a communal memory... I ask you: where are the Moabites, where are the Edomites, where are the Philisitines, where are the Canaanites, where are the Romans today, where are the Babylonians, where are the Assyrians ,... and where are we? We are back in our ancestral biblical homeland. They have disappeared. Why? Number one, they never wrote down their laws and passed them on to the next generation and number two, they had no communal memory and as Jews we pass these things on. The words are short but they're very clear from Psalms 137: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy." ... So in many ways that ascent is not only physical, it is spiritual...

Arnie finished this narrative just as we reached the lookout point on one of Jerusalem's mountains, Mount Scopus. We all climbed out of the bus and as we looked over the city, Arnie led a toast. On the Israel Land Fund tour, a rabbi who was on tour with us led a similar toast. There were three interesting elements in Arnie's toast: 1) the Jews of the past were connected to those of the present; 2) all Jews are together as a 'people;' and 3) the Jews were celebrated as "fighters" and "defenders" and there was a call for the continued military defence of Israel.

> I want you to just take one moment. Think of your immediate family or possibly those who are not here with you right now – maybe your children, maybe your parents – who are not here with you right now... [They are] spiritually here with you. And remember the defenders of the Jewish people, whether they fought in the ghettos in Europe, whether they fought in the camps, whether they fought in the Israeli Army [or the] ... [Israeli Defence Force] pilots... If they'd been around fifty years ago, maybe history would have been written in a completely different way. We are one family. We are one people. This is one city. This is ours... together.

In this way, claims to Jerusalem were both sacralised and secularised.

In addition to the claims to Jerusalem as the spiritual and traditional centre for Jews, on the ILF tour, there was a special opportunity to celebrate Jerusalem's 3000-year birthday. But we did not do so on Mount Scopus, nor even at the sacred site of the Wall, or in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, or even in the Knesset. Rather, this celebration took place on Ammunition Hill, the site of the Jordanian bunkers in the Six-Day War of 1967. Hundreds of seats had been arranged in the park to form a half circle in front of a stage area, dramatically lit by torches for the evening ceremony. Songs and folk dances were performed and the speakers that night included ILF dignitaries and government officials, including the deputy mayor of Jerusalem. One of the last speakers that night was the Israel Defence Forces Chief of Staff who had this to say to us:

> We the Israelis celebrate today a holiday ... [This is] a holiday of the reunification of Jerusalem for 29 years. But what is 29 years in the history of this city? This city, a city of peace... It is a true love story with the Jewish people and Jerusalem. This is the only city that Jews never left. In the whole history of the Jewish people, Jews were living here, remembering Jerusalem, not only here, but wherever they were. And I believe that many of you are with us today only because of one reason: Because Jerusalem is the beating heart of Jewish [people]. It's a city of happiness and a city of sorrow. It's a city that witnessed, in its streets, kingdoms [rising] and falling. .... But it is the city that was always the capital of the Jewish people.... My generation was lucky to liberate Jerusalem. Twenty-nine years ago ... young people thought to liberate Jerusalem... And we all, Israelis, remember the song ["Jerusalem of Gold"] and whenever we heard it on the radio during the war I believe that all of us had tears in [our] eyes. We should remember [the soldiers] making it possible for us to be here in the united Jerusalem and remember them everyday, not only today. And we ... promise to keep Jerusalem and to keep it safe....

Thus Jerusalem was also politicised as it was sacralised; perhaps it can be described as being secularly sacralised.

On every tour, it was the Old City that the tour participants were most excited to see, particularly those who had come to Jerusalem for their first time. The Old City tours followed

the same route – from the Armenian Quarter through the Jewish Quarter, through the Christian Quarter and along the periphery of the Muslim Quarter – on all of the tours. In the Armenian Quarter, we were told about the history of the Armenian Christian institutions in the small quarter, as well as the Turkish massacre of the Armenians in the 1920's. We were taken into small gift shops on each tour and told that the Armenians in the area are famous for their distinctively painted pottery. The Christian Quarter tours included walking along part of the Via Dolorosa, the famous route of the crucifixion, as well as a brief tour through the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Significantly, we only walked through a part of the market area or along the periphery of the Muslim Quarter. We were never taken to the holiest Muslim sites in Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosques in the plaza area known as Al Haram Al Sharif (or Noble Sanctuary) and the Temple Mount .

On all of the tours, it was the Jewish Quarter that thrilled most people most of the time. Situated in the southeastern section of the Old City, most of the original buildings and shops in the area were either demolished and rebuilt or modernised in the massive reconstruction and restoration of the area that occurred after Israel's 1967 victory. The beautification of the area stands in contrast to the older, crowded and unreconstructed Muslim, Christian and Armenian quarters. The Jewish Quarter is wholly Jewish[16] and includes shops, living quarters, archaeological "ruins", yeshivot or religious seminaries, and the holiest site, the Western or Wailing Wall plaza.

On each of the tours, we walked through the living quarters of the Jewish Quarter, and stopped at several excavated sites labelled "Second Temple Period" as well as at synagogues that had been destroyed by the Jordanian Legion (according to the labels) in the 1948 war but which have since 1967 been partially rebuilt. These synagogues were set up as outdoor museums and memorials: the "before" and "after" photographs and narrations serving as reminders of the "War of Independence" and the dangers of life for the Jews under Arab rule. At these destroyed

16. A 1981 Israeli Supreme Court ruling prohibits non-Jews from buying property in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem.

synagogues, guides would take the opportunity to comment on the differences between Arabs and Jews: Arab leaders allow Jewish institutions to be destroyed while Israeli leaders protect all religious institutions – churches and mosques – within Israel.

We also walked along what is called "the Cardo," an excavated "main street" from the "Byzantine" period, which has now been transformed into a wide main thoroughfare lined with reconstructed Byzantine columns and a Judaica boutique area, and which is located storeys below the main living quarters.

On each of the tours, we were also taken to the Wailing or Western Wall. Also called the Kotel (in Hebrew) this is one of the most sacred of Jewish sites (see Storper-Perez and Goldberg 1994). In Jewish tradition it is the Wall of the Second Temple and it is the site where Jews have come to pray as well as to lament or "wail" the first and second temples' destruction. The plaza area immediately in front of the wall is divided in such a way as to separate men and boys from women and girls. The largest area is reserved for worship by males.[17] Almost all of the tour participants approached the Wall when there was an opportunity to do so. Some had written their own notes to place in the crevices of the Wall while others carried notes they had been given by friends and family.

Discussions of the spiritual importance of the plaza, however, were kept to a minimum and were not highly religious or ritualised. For example Arnie brought along some poems, not scripture to read. On the ILF tour, a long Jerusalem Day march through the modern city marking Jerusalem's 3000th Birthday culminated at the Wall. But once in the plaza, there were no discussions and most of the tour participants left prior to sundown, returning to their hotel rooms to prepare for the Sabbath dinner rather than wait to listen to Israel's Chief Rabbinate and other dignitaries who had prepared welcoming remarks.

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17. On the ICSF tour, one Knesset member with whom we met talked to us about a small women's movement that is actively engaged in seeking the right for women to worship along the entire wall. On one occasion the women attempted to enter the men's section and were dragged away and arrested for civil disobedience.

On the ICSF tour there was little time spent at the Wailing Wall. Sivan the tour guide gave a very brief history of the importance of Jerusalem for Jews' worship (as above). However, it was on this tour that we were taken to the Western Wall Tunnel. This tunnel forms a narrow corridor from the Wailing Wall's plaza along the Muslim Quarter's walls and into the Muslim Quarter. This wall "divides" the Jewish Quarter from the Muslim Quarter. Some Jews recognize it as a sacred site claiming that the wall along the tunnel is the wall of the Jews' ancient Second Temple Mount. The Western Wall tunnel is a controversial site for it is also under the Muslim Quarter, and the Muslims claim that excavating in the area structurally weakens the Muslim holy sites (Al Haram Al Sharif) "above" the tunnels (see Armstrong 1996; Benvenisti 1996; Goldberger 1995).

Even within the Western Wall tunnels secular history and archaeology marked at the site. That is, the labels were drawn not from Jewish religious writings or traditions; there are no psalms or rabbinical statements, but simple signs such as the "entrance gate to the Temple Mount" or a "medieval basement". I expect, though I can't be certain, that a religious tour would have led to different kinds of explanations by tour guides as well as perhaps scriptural readings.

The controversial status of these sites in contemporary politics was reflected in the way different tour guides addressed the tunnels' importance. On the ICSF – a fund considered by many to be in the peace camp – Sivan, the tour guide did not allow us to walk through the tunnels, leading from the Wall Plaza and into the Muslim Quarter. Rather than walk straight through the tunnels near the exit to the Muslim Quarter, we were turned around and we were asked to retrace our way back to the entrance. As part of our walk through the Muslim Quarter on the ICSF tour we had been taken to see the Western Wall Tunnel "exit" which was guarded by army and security personnel.

So while opportunities to sacralise these sites arose, they were kept to a minimum and very few details of the Jews' spiritual practices in, or the spiritual significance of, those spaces were presented. It was thus national rather than religious narrativisations that we were presented with at these sites.

Thus while Jerusalem was clearly defined as the Jews' spiritual centre, much of the discourse on the tours about Jerusalem concerned the social and political place that Jerusalem has played in Israel's and the Jews' history.

In the next subsection, I examine the memorialisation of the Holocaust on the tours. The Jews' heroism and courage are recognised and memorialised at these sites. These themes provide a continuum from the biblical and ancient narratives: they recognise the enduring quality of the Jews' hope for their return to their place on this Land (Friedlander and Seligman 1994; Handelman 1990; Handelman-Shamgar 1997; Segev 1986, 1993; Young 1993; Weitz 1997).

Memorialising the Holocaust

I include the Holocaust memorial narratives in a section of the chapter entitled "*celebrating* one nation/one land" because the tour guides emphasised the heroism of Jews during the Holocaust, and of non-Jews who assisted them, and de-emphasised the victimisation of the Jews. Yad Vashem, or the Museum of the Holocaust and Heroism was set up by a law of the Israeli Knesset in 1953. Situated on Jerusalem's Mount Herzl, the complex is part of what is called Remembrance Hill, site of not only the museum of the Holocaust and Heroism but of Israel's National Cemetery and the tomb of visionary and father of Israeli Zionism, Theodor Herzl (Young 1993). Associated with the Museum of the Holocaust and Heroism are the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles, the Warsaw Ghetto Plaza, the Valley of the Destroyed Communities and the Children's Memorial. It is for this reason that, Mount Herzl and Remembrance Hill are all "physically" and "symbolically connected," Arnie explained.

The presentations on the IDF tour and the ILF tours focussed on the heroism of the people resisting the Nazis and the heroism of those who founded the state after the devastation of so many communities in Europe. Often it was implied that this celebration of heroism could only be appreciated in Israel, where Jews are the majority. As we stood along the path leading to the Warsaw Ghetto Plaza, Arnie explained:

> Unlike many Holocaust museums that we have in Washington, Los Angeles, Miami and maybe several in Canada, it has a different outlook.... It is the only place in the world where it is the Jewish people telling the story of what happened to the Jewish

people from the Jewish standpoint. It is not a museum in a country where Jews are not the majority...

Arnie implied that the museums of the Holocaust outside the state of Israel, in Washington (Lilenthal 1997), for example, are very much about the victimisation of the Jews in Europe rather than a celebration of survival and resistance. "This is not a graveyard ... This is a memorial made to respect the victims and honour the heroes. ...Poland [and Auschwitz in particular] is a cemetery and a graveyard...." In interpreting the sites for us, Arnie emphasised not only the resistance by Jews and non-Jews during the Holocaust era, but the need for Israel, a nascent state in the 1950's, to create its own heroes (Young 1993). For example, at the Warsaw Ghetto Plaza, Arnie pointed to two frescoes set into a wall. He explained that one frescoe, which was sunk back into the wall, represented a weak period in the Jews' history.

> [There's] nothing really honourable about it. Their heads [are] down and that was [the] Israel of the 1950s. [It represents] the survivors themselves, who were still in mental shock from everything they [had undergone], [and] the younger generation who didn't know anything about their parents from that time period. [This was all] in a young country looking for new heroes.

The other frescoe in the same plaza, with its strong, rounded faces framed by long, flowing hair, represented the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Arnie reiterated that this memorial was part of the Israel that had a "Jewish army looking for new myths..." in the 1950s. And, just inside the Museum of Holocaust and Heroism there is a large four-part sculptured mural, that Arnie explained symbolises "resistance" and traces the Jews' history "from destruction to redemption"; that is from the Holocaust to the "return" to Israel. When we stood before a tall, stone column in the plaza overlooking Jerusalem, just in front of the Children's Memorial, Arnie described its significance:

> This is the pillar of heroism. I told you this is Israel. The heroes are important to a young Jewish nation. They still are important to those who escaped from the camps, those who fought in the ghettos, those who blew up crematoriums in the camps at Auschwitz-Birkenow.... One of [the crematoria] is blown up by a few women from inside the camp. .... And this pillar, straight up, represents strength.... Again [this is for] a young country. This is a memorial to our heroes from that time period.

Here, in Israel, the heroes also include non-Jews. There are over 6,000 dedication plaques and Carob trees planted, including one for the famous Oscar Schindler, along the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles. Why Carob trees? Arnie tells us: "You cut them down, take out the roots, they grow back. You can't get rid of a Carob tree. It [represents] courage. It [represents] strength."

On the IDF tour, Ozzy (see Profiles, below) one of the participants, stood before a tree dedicated to the Righteous Gentile who had secured his family's safety in Europe. He told us the story of his family's rescue, and the love that he and his other family members felt for this man. Thus the visit to the Avenue of the Righteous Gentiles was presented as another opportunity to celebrate the strength of the human spirit rather than the victimisation of the Jews.

While Jews' and non Jews' heroism was the focus of the narratives, it was also the case that the Jews were presented as a population uniquely targeted by the Nazis (Goldhagen 1996[18]). Arnie argued that the word "Holocaust" should only refer to what had happened to the Jews. He explained it this way:

> ...[The word] "Holocaust" ... is [a] word [that] is sort of thrown around. [There is a] Cambodian Holocaust, a Rwandan Holocaust, [and] ... [an] ecological Holocaust. [But] friends, "Holocaust" is a set period of time. Holocaust was only [targeted at] one people that were written down for a final death solution. [There was] only one. There were gypsies who were killed and I've had homosexuals on groups and other people... who said, "Listen these people were killed..." True, I'm not playing that down at all, but only one people [and] only one ethnic group had a stamp of death [and] of annihilation and... that was the Jews... I don't want to cry about it. People say, "Well he's crying. [What about] the gypsies? You don't hear about them..." [And, "What about the] twelve million Russians [who] died in the Second World War?" [But] that's not the point. Only the Jews were put on an industrialised death machine, from the minute that [they] were fingered or taken out as a Jew, right up to those last moments. [The] Holocaust happened to the Jews and when you mix it in with tribal warfare, [or] with ethnic cleansing – which are catastrophes and horrible – it loses [the meaning of] ... that particular time period and what happened to our people.

Again, the emphasis was not on the victimisation of the Jews *per se*, but on the uniqueness of the Jews' experience as a people. In the case of the Holocaust, they were targeted for

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18. A discussion of the centrality of the role of anti-semitism in the Holocaust arose in 1996 with the publication of Goldhagen's Hitler's Willing Executioners. For a discussion on this debate see also Goldhagen 1998; Riemer and Markovits 1998; Shatz 1997.

annihilation in a way that no other group has experienced. Arnie's claim that the Holocaust was a "time period" rather than another in a host of heinous political acts such as "ethnic cleansing" or "tribal warfare" was part of a claim that this historical moment has epochal significance for the Jews as a people. This perspective is in keeping with a long line of thinking within Jewish tradition that there is a separate teleology that is connected to the Jews' "chosenness". What happens to the Jews is not to be read in "normal" historical terms but rather within the framing of the Jews as God's chosen people (Fackenheim 1978[19]; cf. Maurus 1987).

Although none of the tour guides went into the details of the Holocaust, such as the rise of the Nazis in Germany or the hate and discrimination that led to the Jews' displacement and transfer into labour and death camps, (all part of the main Museum's exhibition), on the IDF tour Arnie stopped us just before we entered the Children's Memorial to tell us about what happened

> in [one] camp, [Treblinka]... because the children were holding up the lines into the industrialised death machine, they were taken into a Red Cross building [which] was a facade. There were nurses outside. There were flags hanging. [It] looked like a beautiful structure and they were probably taken off ... [and] they were taken behind the building. As the lines went towards the gas chambers... [the children] were immediately killed and buried in large trenches. They were just holding up the production line.

In this description, the murder of the Jews is presented as a well-planned and well-designed process that had not only targeted a population, but had targeted even its most vulnerable victims, the community's children.

The path leading to the Children's Memorial was lined with broken stone pillars which we were told had been cut so as to symbolise the fact that no child represented here ever reached adulthood. Walking through the Children's Memorial Museum for the second time on the IDF tour was as moving for me as the first time I visited the museum on the ILF tour. As we all slowly walked into the Memorial, I remember having to grasp the railing just inside the entrance. We all inched, almost shuffled, forward and we were soon enveloped in darkness. I allowed my eyes to adjust and it was then that I began to see the flickering flames of what looked like

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19. For a reflection on Fackenheim's interpretation of the place of the Holocaust and contemporary Jewish identity see also Rubinoff 1993.

hundreds of candles all around me. Though I realised that it was a simple mirroring effect that created the illusion of so many candles, it was all very strangely angelic and overwhelmingly sad. A woman's voice called out a child's name, his/her age and where s/he was from, in English, Hebrew and Yiddish. Dedicated to the estimated one and a half million children listed as victims of the Nazis, we were told that it takes this tape, running from 8 am to 5 p.m., 22 months [on another tour I was told it takes seven years] to complete its cycle of naming. While it had taken less than a minute to walk through, long after leaving the room, the images and the voice haunted me. And I was not alone. On both tours, some of the tourists were overcome at this point, and rather than enter into the Museum, chose to walk back to sit at the Warsaw Ghetto Plaza before returning to walk through the Museum.

The Holocaust Museum itself houses a permanent exhibit primarily of photographs and documents from the camps and from Germany during the 1930s and 1940s, chronicling the rise of the German Nazi regime and the resulting carnage. There are also photographs taken by a German soldier who served in the Warsaw Ghetto during the height of the German occupation of the area. The exhibit includes photos of begging, starving, dying and dead ghetto inhabitants. These are some of the most horrific photographs I have ever seen. While the sign at the entrance of the exhibit, "Warning and Witness" hinted at the ambience created, what immediately struck me was that it was so very different from what I had expected, having heard so much about heroism and resistance prior to entering the Museum itself. Once in the museum, most tourists walked around, reading the captions, and spoke to one another in whispered tones. It is a dark museum, all of the photos and labels stark and plain. After leaving the museum, a group of us on the ILF tour entered an adjoining building where we found a dark room lit only by small flames that rose from small pits in the floor. Each eternal flame was labelled with the name of a camp and commemorate d those who died. On the ILF tour, the Rabbi who was a tour participant recited the Kaddish – the Jewish prayer for the dead – as we stood by one of the flames (Handelman and Shamgar 1997).

Later we were taken to the Valley of the Destroyed Communities, where in a courtyard-like area, both the ILF and the IDF organisers held a spiritual ceremony that included the

Kaddish, in addition to other readings, prayers and music . The Valley of the Destroyed Communities is an outdoor "theatre" built with large sections of Jerusalem stone, and designed to represent "Europe." The area is designed to be traversed as though through a maze. With a map of Europe in one's mind, one could make one's way in and out of the different "chambers" engraved with the name of a region or country. Within each "chamber" the walls are engraved with the names of each of the communities destroyed through the displacement and genocide of the Jews. I got completely lost searching for my own grandmother's lost community of Oberhausen, a community that I was told by the Yad Vashem staff had had only 625 Jewish families living in it. My grandfather was from Berlin and that was easy to find. Once I found myself standing in the regional "chamber" and looking at the stone wall engraved with the names of all of the communities, I was completely overwhelmed. The list had practically covered the entire stone structure that, like the others, was more than 25 feet high. I watched and listened to other tour participants who had also been looking for their parent's or their own communities; they too were quite astonished by the number of "destroyed communities" engraved into the stones.

This site was most impressive in its ability to evoke what Handelman and Shamgar-Handelman (1997) call the "presence of absence". For here as we stood looking at these "walls" engraved with lists and lists of villages, towns, and cities, we re-membered the images of the past and experienced the absence of its representability. That is, we could only remember images of the past, of loss, of stories of loss; we could not "see" the communities, we could only remember the stories told to us about them or the images of them that we had been given in times past. This very remembering placed the Holocaust events in Israel. That is, this site put the sites of the Holocaust's disaster within the territory of the state of Israel. We were hundreds of miles away from the site memorialised, yet this was the place where loss could be remembered. In this way Europe's disappearance of the Jews could be "experienced" in Israel.

The Holocaust memorials were among the only sites where tour participants became openly emotional.

While the ICSF tour did not include a tour of Yad Vashem, we did come to a room

commemorating the Holocaust in the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv. This room had iron-made

columns hanging from the ceiling which looked very much like large smoke stacks. This display

was called a "Memorial Column." We walked under it and looked up and into the "stacks".

Though very simple in design, these large, heavy, black iron structures evoked a sense of

industrialisation and danger as they hung heavily from the ceiling. There were no photographs

or documents in this room marked simply "Remember." Sivan, the ICSF tour guide, asked a

young female tourist to read the only label on the wall.

> In the year one thousand nine hundred and thirty three of the Christian era, Adolph
> Hitler came to power in Germany. In his time the Germans and their accomplices
> murdered six million Jews, among them a million and a half Jewish children.
> Imprisoned in ghettos, the victims fight desperately for their lives while the world
> stood by in silence.

The tour participant read this inscription through her tears, and as she read some of the other

tour participants broke down and openly wept as well. I believe that while the emotional

reactions of the tourists are universal, we need to recall that the majority of tourists were

Ashkenaz Jews; Jews most affected by the tragedy in Europe. As such, these sites resonated for

these participants in a way that other sites did not (Handelman and Shamgar 1997).

The "redemption" of the Jews was continually being tied to the foundation and creation

of the state of Israel at such sites. Redemption tropes are also embedded in the celebratory

themes of modernity: Western "development," exemplified by the blooming of the Negev

Desert; and "democracy,"demonstrated by the recognition of "others" who live with the Jews in

Israel (Asad 1973; Fabian 1983; Rosaldo 1989). It is to these themes that I turn to examine in the

next chapter.

CHAPTER 5
ISRAEL AS MODERN NATION-STATE: CELEBRATING DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

In the last section I looked at how the Jews' nation is situated in a history within the land of Israel. In this chapter, I turn to the celebrations of Israel's modernity of the productive nature as well as democratic or "western" principles of the state (Asad 1983; Fabian 1983; Rosaldo 1989; Said 1978; Shohat 1988, 1989)

The Negev: A Trop(olog)ical Desert?

The infamous statement "a people without a land to a land without people" was the most clearly articulated notion in the tours around the Negev Desert. Over and again the tourists heard descriptions of the emptiness and barrenness of the land prior to the arrival and, more often, the "return" of the Jews to the Land.

The Negev Desert narratives are important to examine for two reasons. First, the implications of settling and colonising the desert are seemingly less harmful than in other parts of the country. The desert is popularly represented as only a barren land, without villages, without people. In other words, who else would want it? Second, it is through the Negev narratives and their associated practices that the Jews' relationship is "naturalised." The Negev Desert's development is cited as Israel's miracle. The Negev Desert narrative goes something like this: the land is pure but barren and has the potential for development. Ever since the Jews left the land, there was nothing. What was once a rich productive land became a wasteland; desertified. With the Jews' return, it became a nurturing site (with its communal structures like kibbutzim and moshavim), and a site of production, not only of agriculture but also of a new civilised human culture.

On the Israel Land Fund tour, we spent an intensive day in the Negev Desert. We left Jerusalem early in the morning and as we descended from the mountains into the desert area, Talia, our tour guide described what we were going to see. Tour participants were very eager to

hear all about the Negev. Talia began by telling us:

> The Negev is two-thirds of the territory of Israel. The large part of the Negev, which is like the northern part of the Negev, is no longer a desert. For many years it's no longer a desert, although it was a desert. But ... you will see, we made it into a flowering garden....

An elderly tourist who was on his first trip to Israel interrupted Talia to ask her: "Is all the territory we see here Israel?" and she replied: "Definitely, definitely, the whole Negev is Israel. Who else would want the desert?" To which the tourist responded: "Sure, they get the oil and we get the desert!" A few moments later, Talia ended this little word volley with: "You know, Moses took us to the desert for 40 years and brought us to the only place in the Middle East where there is no oil!" The tourists laughed uproariously. This fateful appreciation of the predicament of the Jews set the tone for narratives of the Negev Desert. For here was a people who had wandered and had done God's bidding and yet they had been assigned a place in the world seemingly bereft of resources and abundance and that would require endless human toil and creativity in order to survive. These themse were repeated on all the tours.

The narrative that all guides more or less adhered to, even though each gave his or her own personal inflection, was the story of the early pioneers or *halutzim* (in Hebrew) who had left their homes in eastern Europe and had come to the land of Israel, where they found redemption in their organic connection to, and work on, their nation's land. The tour guides insisted on temporalising the Negev Desert in national terms: the commonly known "B.C.E." or Before Common Era and C.E. or Common Era were re-formulated so that often times we heard narratives beginning with "Before Zionism" or "After Zionism."

According to the all of the tour guides, this redemption was the dream of Israel's first Minister David Ben Gurion (see also Goldstein 1991; Gorny 1991; Teveth 1987). With the Jewish Return, the barren Negev is improved; it becomes a nurtured and nurturing site, bearing fruit and the marks of civilised culture. By filling and redeeming the land, it is recovered and recreated into a garden again. On the Israel Development Fund tour, Arnie, the tour guide put it

this way:

> The British Mandatory Period sent a group of surveyors to the Arava Valley here in the early 1940's [told to] check out the water sources, check the soils and tell us what we can do down there and the bottom line was "uninhabitable, uninhabitable." And until David Ben Gurion and the greening of the Negev, there was no one here. That's the mid-40's and nothing [was] here on this road, nothing whatsoever, and you're going to see what's in front of you in two minutes.... THIS is what is called "uninhabitable": these are hot houses, you don't have to heat them, [you] just need the sun down here; [there are] flowers, vegetables, wall to wall agricultural production with computerised Israeli... water systems made in Tel Aviv. They're even exported all over the world. Desert. Sand. THIS is what can be done!

Later he told us:

> David Ben Gurion ... was the first one that saw the potential of the Negev[20]. He said now the true Zionism is to resettle in the Negev and he himself said I'm going to be an example and he came all the way down here, and it's really far down south in the Negev, to a really young and small kibbutz, Sde Boker, and... they accepted him and he had here a wooden shack where he lived and from here they dragged him back to government but this was his home. .... The house of Ben Gurion, it's ... just a wooden shack .... and today it's a place to visit and you can see he lived in sheer simplicity surrounded by his roots.

On the Israel Land Fund tour we were also told a more personal story. It was the story

of Talia's own coming to know the desert. She was still a teenager at the time, on her way to her

army service at Kibbutz Urim, one of the first development towns in the desert, and she said:

> We were taken by truck, singing and happy from Tel Aviv [but] little by little people stopped singing; [there were] no trees, no flowers, nothing. "Oh my god, [we thought], where are we going, where are they taking us? In[to] the middle of nowhere?" It was really depressing. But it doesn't look like that now, of course. Things have changed tremendously and when you go into one of the kibbutzim, there is no sign whatsoever that this is desert, except for the heat.

Later, as we prepared to leave our picnic in a desert park – it has been landscaped with small

trees and small man-made pools of water set like small lakes, Talia exclaimed: "Can you imagine

that this is called desert? This is called desert! Can you imagine? Look how beautiful it is!"

However, the narratives of the Negev Desert are about more than making the desert

bloom. They are also about the making and remaking of the Jew. Key to this process was one of

recognising one's organic and "chosen" relationship to the land, and responding to that

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20. On Ben-Gurion and the Negev, see for example, Teveth 1987; Tzahor 1995.

recognition. This is the way that Arnie, the IDF tour guide, an American-born Jew who had

made *aliyah*, told us of his "awakening" in the desert:

> I got off the bus in 1972, in December, right here, there was nothing around, [and] I
> didn't know where I was going. I walked with backpack down this road right here into
> a small farming community, knocked on the door of a family ... who spoke very little
> English and I had an awakening, a spiritual awakening, not necessarily in synagogue or
> in Hebrew school but here in the Arava [Valley]. I [gained] a little bit of [a] deeper
> understanding [of] what it is to be a Jew in the Land of Israel, not necessarily from a
> religious aspect but being Israeli and a Jew put together is probably the main reason
> why I'm standing here in front of you today. If the first experience is positive and
> meaningful, then it's a long-lasting effect and this is really home for me, which is all like
> desert to you. But I see... just so many fantastic people here living in the middle of
> nowhere [with that] pioneering spirit, helping one another.... It's the Israel that I first
> saw and met here that sort of gave me that little push that decided if I was already
> Jewish I may as well do it here.

Thus the processes of making the desert tropical and making the Jew are linked. The ability to

transform the land into an "inhabitable" place serves as evidence of the special link between the

Jews as a people and the land.

In addition to the troping of return and redemption, the value of economic

development and "progress" was made explicit on all of the tours. Thus both "culture" –

modern knowledge, skills, and technologies – and agri-culture were brought to the land by the

Jews and were evidence of the bountiful nature of their "return."

> The main idea is to make agriculture into an industry. It's not going to be an unskilled
> farmer that goes out to the field and plants what he wants; that it will not be seasonal,
> that it will be an industry that works all year round and creates the right environment
> so that they can hire people for permanent jobs all year round and will get results every
> month of the year. The Negev is 60% of Israel and the potential here is agriculture
> (Talia on the ILF tour).

> The whole Arava Valley is one plastic greenhouse growing hot house tomatoes, green
> peppers, cucumbers, eggplants, 90% for export, not even [just] for the local farmers;
> [and the] flowers! You've got to fly over this area to understand what's going on here;
> the latest in agricultural technology, hydraulics, the works! (Arnie on the IDF tour).

> ... here is a kibbutz which [has only been] here since the 70s and you will see the
> beautiful thing of having green fields where the [technology has been developed so that
> the] sandy and salt water is being poured with a lot of fresh sweet water that pushes the
> salt level down in the ground and then you can put in all sorts of seed and grow
> watermelons, melons and even grapes... There are vineyards here also (Sivan on the
> ICSF tour).

The most recent chapter in the recovery of the desert is the use of technology – whether biotechnology or water technology with desalination plants, irrigation techniques, specially designed green houses, fish farms and other aquacultural techniques, water reservoirs, and other innovations.

The power of science has also come to civilise the desert. On the ILF tour we were taken to an experimental greenhouse in the Negev. The projects there were partly funded through the ILF. Once in the greenhouse, we were assigned a guide, whom I call Dani, who worked on a number of research projects in the greenhouse. He gave us a presentation on the newest technology and its commercial worth not only for the local kibbutzim but for Israeli international trade as well. Highlighted in this narrative are the inventive qualities of the Israelis and their commercial success. In the presentation, Dani told us that in this greenhouse they "have the ability to produce flowers and vegetables;" and that this is a productive undertaking. He highlighted just how much of all of this production was a matter of highly sophisticated scientific development. For instance, in this greenhouse they "control night temperature" in the wintertime by "supply[ing] artificial heat" and, for the summertime, they have developed a number of cooling systems (e.g., air conditioning system; a water cooling system, and dynamic screen shades) in order to lower the temperature in the scorching heat of the desert. This "greenhouse" has "seven sections, seven rooms" and

> [we] have here all kinds of sensors, much more than we planned, and we measure all the time by computer. We measure the temperature, the humidity, the time of the oxide concentration, the radiation. And we have all the figures in the computers so we can understand what's going on, how the plants feel and how we can make the best conditions to get the best production and the best quality.

At another site on the same day, we were taken to what was called a "Reclamation" site by the ILF tour guide. In the Negev Desert, near the town of Ofakim and northeast of Beer Sheva, a forestry expert, whom I call Yossi, welcomed us and began to explain how there is very little rainfall in the area. He then described the tree-planting project at the site. I looked around and noted we were standing on a flat area, surrounded by steep sloped, gulleyed, and sandy soiled terrain. But there were no trees as far as my eyes could see into the distance. I waited for

an explanation and realised very quickly that this was an exercise of imagining a future, a future of desert-turned-to-green-space. He pointed in the direction of Tel Aviv and told us that, while in the North of Israel "flat areas" with "deep soil" could be cultivated and irrigated with treated sewage waters, in areas such as we were now located, the "steep slopes," "gulleys," and "shallow soil" made it impossible to simply plant as one might in other places. He then described how it was that "two thousand years ago there were farmers in this area [who had] used the local resources for agriculture." But, he explained:

> In the Seventh Century, when the nomads invaded into this area, they destroyed the famous old agriculture and they caused desertification to this area... They changed the natural vegetation by overgrazing.

The park that we were standing in was described as much like many "other park [lands] scattered around Beer Sheva and around other settlements in the Negev" that he and fellow scientists were "trying to improve," "trying to rehabilitate" by "improv[ing] their value for grazing, [and] for tourism." In co-operation with the Arid Lands Consortium in the United States, the United States Forest Service, along with other scientists and institutes, he and others were spreading their "know-how to other countries." In response to a question from one of the tourists, Yossi identified the vegetation we were seeing before us. He explained that part of the process of rehabilitating the land included "managed grazing" which included "bringing herds of Bedouins (sic) to this area."

This then was not a lesson in tree planting at all. Rather it was a lesson describing how peoples in the past had destroyed the land, and how the Jews had "returned" to "reclaim" it. Implied here was that the "Israelites" – who by all guides' accounts lived in the region some two thousand years ago – had farmed the land with great care; but with their expulsion from the land, the "Nomads" had come and had overgrazed and neglected the land. The Jews having "reclaimed" the land, are now using their knowledge to revive, rehabilitate and recover it. Ironically, too, the Jews are now "returning," albeit under "managed conditions," the Bedouins or "nomads" in order to "revive" the area's flora!

While the presentation of a barren dry land turned green is part of the narrative of the past and present, the extensive collection and designated uses of water also points to a future. On the ILF tour, we were taken to an area in the desert that looked very much like an oil refinery station, with huge containers, pipes and very deep natural and man made valleys that were built to carry precious rainwater from the desert mountains to the reservoir area. Here we were impressed with the grandness of the very structures before us as well as by the amounts of water the planners estimated would be collected in these stations. Talia on the ILF described the project as follows:

> Now today the water that are being used today are about 240 million cubic meters....
> Out of the 240 million cubic meters, only 44% are good water, water that is good for
> drinking.... All the good water goes for personal uses, for drinking. For agriculture
> they are going to use either water that is purified, sewage water from the central part of
> Israel or water that will be found in water wells in the Negev. The plan is that within 5
> years they will add 30 million more cubic meters and then another 50 million cubic
> meters.... By that time, we are going to have enough reservoirs that they can enlarge
> and develop the agriculture.... One goal will be to catch and collect the flood water that
> ... in a good year you can have between 100 and 200 million cubic meters a year.

These overwhelming statistics presented not only a picture of a resourceful and technologically astute people but described the process of transforming the desert into a veritable flood zone!

Lastly, and following from this point, we were told by Arnie on the IDF tour that this agricultural revolution has led to an enormous surplus. He described it as follows:

> Now Israel has plenty of products, much more than it needs, and of course we are
> exporting whatever we can. Anything from citrus, high quality olive oil, bananas,
> avocado, and more and more....

The original garden has been redesigned so that an irrigated desert blossoms not only with fruits and vegetables but now also with flowers. This point is important for it represents an Israeli society enjoying not only an abundance of produce but now also having the luxury of flowering gardens.

Although the conception of redemption by the Jews lies at the core of these narratives, and redemption is realised more through the reconstruction of the land than through the denigration of its inhabitants, bringing "culture" to the area, and civilising the people is also part of the mission. Israeli agricultural expertise, that is, the scientific knowledge of the land, is set in

contrast to the simplicity of non-Jews' "innate" rather than scientific knowledge of the land. Note

how in the following presentation by Sivan, the ICSF guide, the Palestinians of the town of

Jericho were not given any status as crop producers but were rather presented as if they were

handed the geographical luck of the oasis-draw:

> ... Now, we're going into the Jericho area. If you look to the right and forward then you
> see already the greenery of Jericho... famous throughout many periods for different
> types of crops, mainly for bananas, for oranges, for grapefruits.... But Jericho is in an
> oasis. It is not a desert. It's true its climate is very hot; it's true that there is hardly any
> rain throughout the winters but it is an oasis. The waters that come down on the
> mountains went into the ground level, trickled through the layers of limestone and then
> come out in the Jericho Valley.... [T]his was one of the oldest cities or towns in the
> world. There have been found remnants of Neolithic man there. That is way back,
> 8,000 years before the Common Era.

Note as well that the reference to past cultures was described in archaeological ("neolithic man")

not cultural terms, again enabling an elision of the histories of others who have settled in the

region.

In addition, Palestinian labourers and even the physical space of another country, Jordan,

were presented as benefiting from the Jews' "Green Revolution." Sivan explained:

> ... Palestinians would come from.... all the villages around. They depended on that
> [work] as a source of living. More and more you could see trucks coming and
> unloading. ...I've seen it even in California with the Mexicans being unloaded from
> buses and then picked by the end of the day; [and] this is how it functioned and
> everybody profited from that. In a way, even the Jordanians profited from having these
> beautiful settlements here [in the "Jordan Valley"]. Do you know why? Something in
> geography – which is called geographical diffusion. Even if we [didn't] have formal
> contacts with Jordan, the dripping system, something that was invented in Israel...
> [which] moved to the other side. ...It is very interesting to see because if you look at
> maps, aerial maps of Jordan and this part [of the Jordan Valley] before 1967 and after
> '67 you will see a great change....

The Palestinians' productive labour in Israel and beyond is diminished as a product of Israeli

initiatives.

Within these narratives there were also recurrent framings of non-European Jews, the

Sephardim and Oriental Jews – Jews who emigrated to Israel from such Arab and African

countries as Morocco, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria – as unskilled peoples who had been moved into new

settlement towns in the Negev Desert[21] in the 1950's. Talia had this to tell us on the ILF tour as

we drove by a "development town" in the Negev:

> The absorption of new immigrants was always a huge problem. You never knew if you were doing the right thing, especially in the beginning. At the beginning, people were coming from all over, the 600,000 Jews left their Arab countries, [and] they were engaged in a war of survival.... They had ... [to learn] to live.... They had no idea. And a lot of mistakes were made, a lot.... Again, there were people from, ah, Iraq, or Yemen, or North Africa that emigrated here.... In each village, they put, uh, Israeli-born youngsters who were experts in agriculture, they put them in charge, they were the uh, uh, the teacher, and the brother, and the babysitter, and the instructor, they were everything. The people were given tools, but not as a present, just as a loan. They were given a few animals, like cows, like, uh, uh, mules, and they were taught from A to Zee how to do things. That was professionally agricultural, professional... way to teach them how to do it.

On the IDF tour Arnie presented these same issues. On this tour, we had an

opportunity to visit one such development town that had become, by virtue of the development

funding provided by the IDF, a very beautiful kibbutz town. Arnie described what had

happened in the past and why the town we had visited had been so poor for so long:

> Fifty years ago with the waves of immigrants from Morocco and from Romania, Israel did not have the tools to put up the housing that they have today, to get the jobs that we have today, to have the social programming. Fifty years ago we were handing out food stamps, [though] there wasn't food. It was a new army ... so what happened to [the town we are visiting] – and ninety other neighbourhoods and cities were that way – [was that] they never pulled themselves out of that situation where they were uneducated. Many of the new immigrants emigrated from [places] where they didn't have the skills, where they came from places they did not have running water and electricity and [this kibbutz] simply turned into an eclectic backwater of a hovel.... The goal was not necessarily to turn [this place] into a nice middle class community; it happened that way. The goal was to teach the local people to run their own lives, to give them that type of training, and to help them along, to make a connection....

So although the single category "Jews" defines the national basis of the collective, in these

narratives a "cultural" distinction is made among them. Ashkenazim are Western European Jews

who come from "modern" countries in Europe. They are represented as Jews who brought a

wealth of knowledge and skills with them to Israel. The Sephardim, or non-European Jews, come

from such countries as Morocco, Yemen, and Iraq, are considered from a Western, "Orientalist"

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21. The Sephardim and Oriental Jews were also "settled" in development towns in the North. See the Kiryat Shmona narrative embedded in the story of the Lebanon conflict, below. On Sephardic Jewish experiences in Israel, see Shohat (1988).

(Said 1978) perspective to be "pre-modern" or "primitive". This latter group of Jews were moved into the communal structures in order to be "civilised" and in order that they develop the proper skills needed for modernising Israel (on Zionism and Sephardic Jewry see Shohat 1988).

Thus the tour narratives construct several tropes: most importantly that of the visionary leaders, pioneers and scientists who cultivated the desert, subsequent to centuries of neglect, and the desert cultivated new Jews, who have returned to revive their chosen land. The precise nature of the relationships between people and land, coloniser and colonised, newcomer and native was never put into question. Rather the narratives perform the task of creating a linear historical path and the Negev Desert is presented as a miracle of the Jews' return: from a neglected past to a decidedly Jewish future.

In sum, in the Negev narratives the Jews are inscribed as organically linked to the land. It is their return to the land in order to recover its potential and to revive it that is fundamental to any understanding of why the desert blooms. The organicity of the Jews' relationship sets the framing for this "reclamation." Other histories of the land and other peoples on the land are made to disappear or are ubordinated and it is assumed that prior to the Jews' return, the land was empty, sterile, barren. The naturalising of this economic, political, and cultural dominance is thus inextricably linked to the "discoveries" in and the "recovery" of the Negev Desert.

I have not discussed how it is that the Bedouin, some of who live in the Negev Desert, are represented within these Negev narratives. In this subsection I primarily wanted to describe the productive aspects of the Jews' return. This story was the primary narrative on the Negev. In the next subsection, "Recognising Arabs", I will take up the issue of just how the Bedouin, as well as the Druze and Palestinians were represented in nationalist narratives of belonging. It is here that the second trope of a modernised Israel was represented: Israel is a democratic, tolerant state that recognises its "others."

"Recognising" Arabs

I have entitled this subsection "Recognising Arabs" first of all, because these narratives set out how to distinguish among and recognise the Arabs who live alongside the Jews in Israel, (even while suggesting at times that there may be similarities). Secondly, Israeli recognition of Arabs as citizens in the state of Israel forms the horizon for narratives about the democratic and tolerant nature of Israeli society (see Peled 1995).

On each of the tours, the tour guides took pains to explain that while there are Arabs who live in Israel, a clear distinction must be made among these Arabs. According to this distinction, there are the Druze, the Bedouin and there are others, designated as the Palestinian populations. The central theme of the distinction is that the Druze and Bedouin are friends of Israel who, by virtue of their duties to the state, have rights that the Palestinians can not enjoy. The central duty these Israeli-Arabs perform is service in the Israeli army; either because they are drafted, in the case of the Druze, or as volunteers, in the case of the Bedouins. Nevertheless, tour presentations about the Bedouins and Druze revolved less around their commitments to the Israeli state than that they are still in many ways "traditional" and "primitive" peoples (Lavie 1993; Mohanty 1984; Shohat 1988, 1989). Thus, while the Bedouins and Druze are clearly presented as "on side," the narratives about them are presented with some distance.

Bedouin

For example, as we were driving through the Galilee region, in the northern part of Israel on the Israel Development Fund tour, Arnie, our tour guide explained:

> Now I want to make this clear distinction. Up here in the Galilee ... we have Arabs [who] call themselves Palestinians [or] Israeli Arab citizens [who] call themselves Palestinians, and also we have Bedouin villages up here in the North. The Bedouins of the north, some 80,000 of them, have a little different standing [from the Palestinians]. [From] some of these villages here, the Bedouins volunteer for the Israeli Defence Forces, ... the Israeli army. We just went by a village ... [where] almost all the Bedouins ... finish high school. They're no longer Bedouins. They don't roam around anymore in tents. They're living in homes. They built villages. They serve in the Israeli Defence forces. They are Muslims and they volunteer for the army ... They are part of the Galilean population of close to 500,000 Arabs, Palestinians, [and] non-Jews living in Galilee. .... A lot of people are not aware of the fact that there are large segments of the Bedouin population in the north [who] do volunteer for the Israeli army. They are not

> drafted; ... They volunteer for units depending on what religion, [and] depending on what extended family they belong to, and many of them are doing duty in service inside of Lebanon today. .... [A]nother reason why they can build these homes, [is that] after they finish the army or stay in the army ... they get special housing loans just like Jewish families or Jewish soldiers, and this is one of the reasons why they can buy these or put up these private homes. I want to again just let you know that 20 or 30 years ago, these people were living in tents and corrugated ... tin metal huts on the top of this hill... [They are one] big extended family [in this village]. ... I think if you look in the phone book in this area you may find that there are three or four thousand of them, and there are no street signs in the village... [so] you just ask. This is the part of the world where you ask "Do you know ... someone" and everyone knows who they are and they'll send you there.

The "northern" Bedouin are represented as having benefited from their relationship to Israel. They have been modernised: they are no longer nomads, the children finish high school, and they have moved from "primitive" living conditions and are now living in beautiful, modern houses. Still, the tour guides reminded us that this group of Arabs maintain some "old world" practices, living in clan-based communities where everyone knows everyone else's business. Arnie had earlier made the distinction between those Bedouin who live in the North and those who continue to live in the South. He explained:

> The word Bedouin comes from Arabic *Bedou*. Bedou is a man in the desert, a people of the desert. The Bedouins who are living ... in the Judean Desert are no longer nomadic, like the traditional Bedouins who wandered from oasis to oasis with their tents and goats and their sheep. They are here all the time. They are squatters. They do not own the land at all. They don't pay taxes. They live in their tents and huts out here and they have tractors where they have the water tankers. They go to the government wells, fill them up and having running water next to their tents. A great majority of them now have cell phones [because with cell phones] you don't have to put in telephone lines. [They have] battery-operated television sets inside the tents and mostly Subaru front wheel drive vehicles. They traded the camels for the Subaru....

Many, though not all of these southern Bedouin have made a commitment to the Israeli state. Rather than give any explanation for the conditions under which they live, Arnie simply described them as "no longer nomadic" and peoples who squat because they have no land and pay no taxes. There were no reasons given for Bedouin living conditions and it was implied that they are becoming modern because they own cell phones, TV's and motor vehicles. That their migratory routes are not open due to the secure borders that exist between the neighbouring states, and that some villages remain "unrecognised" by the Israeli government, i.e., they have no access to sewage, water, or electricity, were issues not raised in this or other presentations. On

one other occasion, Arnie commented that the Bedouin's nomadic practices came to good use in the Israeli army: some were used as "trackers" sent to find caches of arms and to "track" to see if Palestinians had crossed into any area, particularly around the Dead Sea. Thus the Israeli army use the "instincts" or "natural" talents of the Bedouins when necessary.

In fact, however, emphasis in these narratives was almost always on the need to modernise, as well as the effects of modernising the Bedouin (Shohat 1988, 1989; see also Asad 1973; Fabian 1983; Rosaldo 1989). On the Israel Civil Society Fund (ICSF) tour we were taken into a home in a Bedouin village where we met with an activist Bedouin woman, whom I call Hanan. Hanan's father had given her permission to attend a high school in Haifa, something generally reserved for the boys since, generally speaking, girls are not to live away from their communities until they marry. In her twenties, Hanan worked as a social worker in the local high school. She had been one of a group of activist village women who had formed a woman's organisation five years earlier. Hanan spoke to us about a range of difficulties faced by her community. These included arranging for Israeli government funding for such immediate needs as the village day-care and even a high school. Until recently, the government had refused to build a high school in the village because it feared that it would become "another Bir Zeit" (a Palestinian University in the West Bank that was often closed down due to activism by its faculty and students). Hanan also talked to us about the bias of some educational programmes, particularly those designed for women. For example, entry into social work programs is reserved for women 20 years of age and older. This criterion assumes, according to Hanan, that a woman has served two years in the military prior to entering university because most girls complete high school by the time they are 18 years of age. However, for Bedouin women, the rule means waiting out the two years, or more often than not, getting married instead.

With all of these issues on the table, the first few questions posed by the tour participants to Hanan were: "Why did your family support you in a way that was so unusual?" and, "Are there many differences among the tribes' treatment of women?" Hanan told us that she had been one of five children, of whom only one was a son, and that as a young girl she had noticed how he was treated as if his life was special. She remembers always wanting to gain the

respect that was usually reserved for men in her community. When she was only 14, she approached her father about going to high school outside her region and her father supported her, though he "suffered" for his decision because it was an unusual one in her community. She felt her father was different because he had worked in the "Jewish sector" and had observed Jewish fathers' treatments of their daughters, so he was more open to the possibility that his daughter might want something different.

The most insensitive questions posed by a tour participant for Hanan were about the availability of sex education, the accessibility to birth control, and openness of the community to the issues of sexuality. This question signalled to me just how indelicate this whole affair really was. I felt only compassion for Hanan and for the other Bedouin women with her, all of whom would have considered such discussions shameful in public and particularly so with any men, i.e., the tour participants, in the room. Hanan handled the question well, limiting the focus to women's health in general. When asked about the new land agreements that had "settled" the village, Hanan said that essentially the government buys up 80% of the land owned by the Bedouin and gives them back only 20% to build on. She said that many have refused to be bought out, but that the two families in her village who had agreed to the deal have become very rich. Hanan pointed out that all of the new houses we had seen in her village were no more than three years old.

Thus Hanan talked about how difficult life was for the Bedouin and how dependent they had become on government support, particularly since their resettlement. And yet she also presented the Jews as bringing with them modernising principles, such as women's rights.

A patronising attitude pervaded the narratives told by the tour guides about the Bedouin and their villages. On another occasion, we were told a little more about how the Bedouin were affected by the Israeli government's land and settlement policies, especially those policies dealing with what are officially called "unrecognised villages". These villages do not have the rights provided to "recognised" villages like the one where Hanan lived. When discussing the policy to resettle the Bedouin, an ICSF-funded non-governmental organisation's spokesperson reflected on what she called the Israeli government's "insensitivity" to the Bedouin

community. She explained that in one case Bedouin had been moved into a housing settlement where they promptly took the roofs off of their new homes, moved their cattle inside, and set their tents up outside. After the tourists stopped laughing she added that one of her organisation's objectives was to try to get people to "think differently about living away from what they were familiar with" though this is "especially difficult." Again, Bedouin practices were not explained as anything but primitive and thus largely untenable in a modern world. Thus, it was the duty of Israeli organisations to modernise them, while being aware of their "traditional" ways.

On the Israel Land Fund (ILF) tour, Talia, our tour guide set out to establish that the Bedouins were nomads, who, much as Arnie and the ICSF presenters described them, had "settled" in the desert. Talia also wanted us to understand, however, that the Bedouin continue to live "in a clan-like formation" and "as tribes" and that they still live by the "rules of the desert" which were described as including a "great sense of hospitality" as well as the "law of blood revenge." In this way the Bedouins were represented as Israel's noble savages. While they prove to be helpful to the modern Israeli state, they continue to be described as living in a most primitive, traditional manner.

Druze

The Druze were the second group of Israeli-Arabs described as having some duty to the state of Israel. Very similar presentations were made about the Druze on all of the tours, although only one of the tours included a visit to a Druze village and that consisted of a half-hour stop to shop in a Druze market bazaar.

As we drove towards a small Druze village in the northern part of Israel on the ILF tour, Talia told us about the Druze. She said that the Druze are descendants of Muslims though they are different from the Sunni and Shia "sects" (who form the majority of Muslims in the Middle East). According to Talia, they are members of a secret religion to which only a few elite scholars and religious leaders from within the community have full access. Talia told us that "they are very much like the Jews" because they are "close-knit", "they live conservative lives"

though they have "no formal observance of religion" and their "mother is just like the Jewish mother." And finally, "the Druze are always loyal to the Jews. They are brothers." In the army, they are "tough soldiers" though "never officers." Furthermore, "they know the mentality of the Palestinians [and] they are very tough so they usually get assigned to Palestinian towns and border patrols."

Arnie told us a very similar story as we were driving through the Golan Heights area on the Israel Development Fund (IDF) tour. He said:

> Druze men are drafted by law, since [in] 1948 the Druze... made a Covenant with the state of Israel. They originally... were fighting with Palestinians, [until] they went over to the Israelis side, to the Jewish side. They have a very traditional kind of society... [This is about the majority of] the Druze in Israel. .... [There are] 80,000 [Druze] inside of Israel drafted into the army and to the security forces. [They are] very important in the security forces [because] they're Arabic speakers, their Arabic mentality, culture and they were very, very important... in... [the Israeli] secret police force.... Druze are an ethnic group. They are a group of people that live in the Middle East. They live in Lebanon, Israel, Syria.... They're not Muslims, [rather] they have a secret religion. They follow the Egyptian Prophet Hakeem. In the eleventh century they're a breakaway from the Islamic religion. And Druze have something very, very special about them. They are loyal to every country that they live in. They have no national aspirations. They're sometimes more Israeli than the Israelis. They're drafted in the army. They're in the parliament. They're in all walks of life. [They are] very, very Israeli.

Thus both tour guides wanted us to know that the Druze are very much a part of Israeli society. Their Arab identities are helpful to the Israelis because the Druze can be used to infiltrate Palestinian society within Israel as well as in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza. The fact that the Druze have no "national aspirations" (i.e., desires for a state) of their own differentiated them from the Palestinians, and also made them "safe" Arabs.

However, the Druze who live in the annexed regions of the Golan Heights are not part of the 1948 Israeli-Druze pact and they needed to be explained in other terms. These Druze refuse[22] to accept Israeli citizenship and are thus, in Arnie's terms, "caught in the middle." This was part of Arnie's description of the Druze in Golan:

> Now on the Golan Heights the Druze are in a little bit of a different situation. They were in Syria until '67 [and] loyal Syrians, and now they're under Israeli administration. Israel has annexed the Golan Heights... [and] they're [under] Israeli law here. ...[They have] Israeli license plates, Israeli identification cards. The Druze were given the option

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22. See also Kennedy (1981) and Tarabieh (1995) on Druze resistance in the Golan Heights.

> to take [Israeli] I.D.'s, [and] citizenship. .... [In] four [of these villages]... the Druze are in a vacuum.... They are enjoying Israeli administration. They are prosperous. These are all new fields [of] cherry trees, apples; everything is newly planted. And you'll see that the houses [display] a lot of prosperity. However this is still the Middle East and a lot of them are still very loyal to the Syrian government and to Syria. [They have] families living right across the fence on the other side in several Druze villages... they're just caught in the middle....

The contempt for this group of Druze was made very clear in Arnie's tone. They have all the benefits of being a part of Israel and yet they refuse to fully participate (i.e., accept Israeli citizenship). That they have been part of a forced annexation by the Israelis got downplayed and the perceived "benefits of occupation" were privileged in Arnie's comments.

Palestinians

In an ironic twist, the Palestinians living in Israel were discussed on the tours almost exclusively in terms of their citizenship rights, including their rights to vote, and their access to government funding. Thus in the discourses of the tour guides, the Palestinians are transformed, by virtue of their exclusion from the other two groups who are "traditional" and "friendly," into a group of citizens. The Palestinians living within the state of Israel were hardly the topic of any discussions on the IDF or the ILF tours, except with respect to their differences from the Bedouin and the Druze. If on occasion we passed by an Arab village, this fact would be pointed out. The most important point made was that the Arabs, "including the Palestinians", have the privilege of voting in Israeli elections and even have their own political parties.

The ICSF tour took the most care to discuss not only the fact that the Palestinians have democratic rights but that there are many disadvantages that they face as citizens of an Israeli state. Still, there was little or no mention of the history of the structural inequalities that the Palestinians have endured within the state of Israel (e.g., Lavie 1986; Peled 1992, 1995; Shalev 1989, 1992). Nor were examples made of continuing Palestinian resistance to such practices as the expropriation of their land, the denial of building permits, and their inaccessibility to housing (e.g., Halper 1998; Rabinowitz 1997). Rather, the presentations were almost exclusively about the Palestinians' wish to participate more fully in an Israeli state. The Palestinians' political

participation, rather than economic and social self-determination, was the primary concern of these narratives.

Israel's structural inequality vis-a-vis the Palestinians and other Israeli-Arabs was only discussed on the ICSF tour. But these presentations were done in such a way that the Palestinians who spoke to us, each of whom was a participant in a project funded by the ICSF, rarely had the opportunity to focus on the inequalities they endure or the resistance they have been engaged in. The presenters' focus on programming and financial needs shifted the orientation of these sessions to the Palestinians' dependency on international funding agencies for their development, maintenance and continued livelihood.

In fact, when some of the inequalities between Israeli Jews and Palestinians in Israel did become part of the discussion, it made some tour participants as well as tour organizers, very uncomfortable. At one presentation in Nazareth we were presented with the appallingly low level of Israeli government funding made available to the Arab education sector. When highlighting the cultural aspects of these disadvantages, the Palestinian education expert suggested that perhaps a separate but equal educational school system would better promote cultural awareness, pride for Palestinians students and perhaps gain higher retention rates for those students. However, many ICSF tourists reflected on this proposal in terms of the segregation policies of the United States, and expressed their dissatisfaction with such a separate but equal proposal for Israeli Arabs. Rather than see this suggestion as a form of affirmative action, as in the tradition of the African American colleges in the United States, the reaction of the tour participants was that as citizens of the state of Israel, these Palestinians should learn under Israeli guidelines. When the presenter explained that the Palestinians didn't want to teach their children the history of Palestine from an Israeli perspective but rather from a Palestinian perspective, people were silenced. They shifted the topic and focussed instead on the funding differentials experienced by the Arab villages. In this way, the obvious social inequalities and the cultural differences that were not being bridged by trying to assimilate a whole cultural group as "citizens" of Israel could be ignored and attention diverted to the "safer" subject of Palestinian dependency.

After we left this session, we met with a group of Palestinian women who are part of an economic development project that is partly funded by the ICSF. Again, this session led to further questions from the tourists about the resources and services available to Arab women in Israel and ignored the cultural aspects of their status as second class citizens.

At the end of the day when we were all back on the bus and on our way from Nazareth back to Tel Aviv, Karla, the North American ICSF staff member, decided to give some context to what we had heard earlier in the day. She came to the microphone and said:

> Traditionally in Israel the Arab sector, Arab communities would get one dollar worth of resources and services for every three dollars that went into Jewish community groups. It's a long conversation about why that was the case but that was the case for many years. And even under ... the previous Likud Government everyone agreed.... that simply wasn't fair. It wasn't a question of official policy; that was the reality.... In addition... things like pre-schools that were not funded by the government were funded in the Jewish sector by the Jewish community, by money we all gave in the United States, Canada, Britain, etc. ... particularly starting from before statehood until now that went only to Jewish communities. For a variety of reasons Arab communities had no sources that they could get... comparable money from. So the economic situation in Arab communities was really very dismal. Now at least over the last 10 or 12 years... everyone agreed this was not fair and it was not healthy, [and] it was not right.... [But] nobody ever has enough resources and it wasn't a high enough priority and so they didn't do anything about it. Under the Labour Government ... they finally made a change, and they improved the situation so that for every dollar that went into the Arab communities, every dollar in resources and services, two dollars went into the Jewish.... I've got to find a way to say that it sounds weird to present it that way. The percentage changed from 1 to 3 to 1 to 2, [compared to] how much money the Jewish communities would get. No there was no justification for it. There's explanation for it but nobody could possibly justify it.

One woman who was in her 40's and who was on her first tour to Israel asked Karla just why it was that the Jews would support the Arab communities and why the Arabs weren't expected to provide support for their own communities. To this Karla responded: "First of all, lack of interest...." Then almost as if she needed to correct what she had said, began again and explained:

> To begin with, it was illegal. It's very hard to do it when it's illegal. Because the Government was concerned about subversion or whatever, ... I'm trying to be fair, so it was illegal. On top of it, the truth is there wasn't that much. You know the Jewish community is really unusual. People organise, we organise to take care of our own for reasons ... historically if we don't take care of our own who's going to take care of us? The Arab community doesn't have that same tradition to the same extent. There are lots of needs in the Arab world; the Arab world was angry at the Palestinians that stayed here and didn't leave. You know there are a whole bunch of... [reasons]

In reaction to what Karla said, one of other tour participants, an older man I call Gabriel, attempted to correct Karla's version of the story, by telling her that in fact billions of dollars had been raised by the "Palestinian diaspora". She then corrected him and said that these funds were raised for the "Territories" (the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip) but that

> we're talking about in Israel proper. People didn't ... want to strengthen the Arab sector in Israel. There was resentment, [and] there wasn't the same tradition.

The "people" Karla was referring to are Israeli-Jews, of course. Karla managed to shy away from explaining the Israeli government's policies vis-a-vis any transfer of funds between Palestinians in diaspora and those in the state of Israel and in the Occupied Territories, and instead blamed the victims. According to Karla, Palestinians have no "tradition" of giving to their own communities, and the Arab nations are so politically motivated as to deny other Arabs, in this case the Palestinians, any support. While the ICSF had opened a discussion about difference and inequality, rather than discuss the nationalism that undergirds Israeli land and social policy, for example, the presentations perpetuated racist assumptions about the victims of such policies. A patronising attitude extended to the Palestinians who were represented as incapable of fending for themselves once again.

No less problematic was the fact that on many occasions, Palestinians were represented as thieves. On the ICSF tour, this portrayal occurred twice. In one presentation of the hardships facing settlements in the Jericho region, Sivan described how the Palestinians had been stealing agricultural tools, equipment and even cars, adding to their "pioneering" Jewish neighbours' struggles in this way:

> .... as a matter of fact they have enormous problems now along the Autonomy [borders] and the other areas where the police, Palestinian Police, is in charge and that is the theft of agricultural tools because most of these villages deal with agriculture and there's a problem that was not yet solved, just like the plague of stealing cars. In the area of Jericho that is not as problematic simply because this is such a caged area, more easy to handle than other areas in Judea and Samaria.

Attention was refocused onto the petty crimes that Palestinians commit rather than the fact that they have lived under Israel occupation or that they have formed a cheap agricultural labour pool on the very same kibbutzim they are now accused of stealing from.

On another occasion, a local guide who had been assigned to drive our group to a site on the Golan Heights said that the local "Arabs" were a problem because they had stolen fresh produce to take home to their families from the fields in which they worked. As a result, local farmers had begun relying on foreign workers to work the land instead. This news shocked some tour participants who were surprised that foreign workers had been brought "this far". They had assumed that foreign workers had jobs in factories in Israeli towns and cities and not as farm labourers.

The representation of the Arabs who live in Israel was thus conflicted. As a non-Jewish population, they are a problem for those who consider Israel to be a modern, democratic and tolerant state. With this as the background, how does one account for the social and economic discrepancies between Arab and Jew? As well, the Arab presence interrogates the degree to which Jews could claim that the kibbutzim and moshavim are the Jewish collectives idealised as Jewish communal structures, since they seem to rely so heavily on the cheap labour provided by the Palestinians or more recently, "foreign" workers. While this issue is never fully articulated as such, it seems to me the other "problems" (closure of the territories, theft) that are discussed produce a disjuncture that few of the tour participants missed in their interpretations of what Israel has become.

In the next subsection, "Securing One Nation/One Land" I examine the military narratives as they were presented on tour. Most notable was the fact that when contexts shifted to discuss the security of the Israel as a nation for the Jews, the perspective of the place of the Palestinians and other Arabs changed quite dramatically.

CHAPTER 6
DEFENDING ONE NATION, ONE LAND:
MILITARY STRUGGLES AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL[23]

In this section, I examine how the tour narratives define and describe Israeli military conflicts in the region. I begin with historical struggles that shaped Israel's borders and her relationship to her neighbours. The first struggle, in 1947-48, is described as the "War of Independence." This war established the state of Israel's borders until 1967. The second significant military struggle occurred in 1967. This is most often described as the "Six Day War." This war not only expanded Israel's borders; it was hailed for "reuniting" Jerusalem. In addition, the ongoing conflicts with Lebanon and Syria were issues raised on these tours. Although I recognise that Israelis, Palestinians and other historians are debating these defence and security narratives (Levy 1997; Mahler 1997; Silberstein 1999)[24], I do not attempt to present alternative or counter-histories to the narratives here. My purpose is limited to an exploration of the narratives presented to the tour participants.

On the "War of Independence" in 1947-48

Pioneering and Defending Kibbutz Revivim

On all of the tours, reference was made to a group of eleven kibbutzim that were founded and settled "practically overnight" in the pre-state period. The pioneering effort of the founding of these kibbutzim formed a key component of the narratives about the Negev (as above). But when there was an opportunity to tour one of these sites, rather than focus on

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23. Note that a number of Israeli-Jewish historians have presented alternative histories to those presented by the tour guides below. I am interested in the way that histories of the Israel Palestine and Israel Arab conflict are represented to Jews in diaspora and as such I focus on those representations here. That is, I am not interested in debating the historical arguments per se. I am interested in them from an ethnographic perspective.

24. See especially Flapan (1987), Morris (1987, 1998), Segev (1986), Shlaim (1994), Sternhall (1998), Levy (1997).

"experimentation" in the desert, e.g., agricultural production, the narrative focus was on the role of these kibbutzim as military outposts. A prime example of this form of representation was at the site of Revivim, the very first and the most southerly-located of the eleven kibbutzim founded as experimental stations.

The tour of Revivim included a film and a walk through a small historical museum that had been designed by the kibbutzniks (kibbutz members) in the 1980's to celebrate Revivim's history. Over two hundred tourists were gathered into a large hall and shown a film on the history of Revivim. The film began with

> Back in the 1930's and 1940's you had to have a vision to believe that some day there'd be something here ... Pre-independence Jewish leaders recognised the importance of the area in terms of defence and development of the agricultural sector and research into the needs of settlements into the far reaches of the Negev.

This "in the beginning," Genesis-like introduction in the film, sustains the myth that the land was empty and that it was the Jews' vision to reclaim the land that revived the Negev Desert. But it also introduces that the sites' aims were not only "research" but also "defence." We were then told that the "Jewish Agency [the official World Zionist Organisation's institution in Palestine]... bought land for Jewish settlement" although "the British, who ruled the country at the time, issued their White Paper [prohibiting] the establishment of Jewish settlements." In the film, Jews committed to the settlement process were presented as a hearty group of "pioneers" wanting simply to settle and do research on the land. Thus, living in "a cave which had been used as a cistern in Byzantine times," "the new settlers ... studied water sources, climatic effect and potential crops" all the while experiencing "loneliness, seclusion and isolation." But what they did, as well, was "chart potential roadways with Haganah patrols". The Haganah, or "self-defence units" were the military arm of the Jewish Agency. Soon enough, "pioneers at the outpost had shown that Jewish settlement in the Negev was possible," and "new settlements were established."

Due to "Revivim's success," the film's narrator told us, the settlement of eleven new agricultural outposts followed in 1946 and "1100 additional settlers were brought to the Negev in accordance with the Master Plan for Jewish settlement and defence." Revivim was also

presented as the impetus for the U.N. committee's decision to recommend that the Negev be included in the Jewish State in 1947. According to the film's narrator: "It was the first such recommendation by an international forum."

The film's narrator, having established Revivim's importance in the "Master Plan to settle the Negev," went on to say that "[i]n December of 1947, Bedouin neighbours" and "agitators from Hebron" were part of a strategy that led to an "ambush" of one of the pioneers who was "escorting the morning transport." After some casualties, "eventually Revivim formed a single fighting unit" and with other settlements being established in the area "was sent to action"

Furthermore, soon after the British left Palestine, in May 1948, Revivim had to get ready for an attack by the "Muslim Brotherhood" and the "Egyptian invasion force" sent in to assist them. The "attack on Revivim" began in July of 1948 and ended in December when Air Force reinforcements came and the "Egyptian offensive in the area collapsed." Once again, the Arabs were presented as on the offensive, this time attacking a site that was presented as little-fortified, and agriculturally-based and the military importance of the kibbutz was downplayed. Had the narrator highlighted the importance of Revivim as a military outpost in the Negev, the same narrative would have suggested the offensive nature of such settlement practices. After all, the "heroic" component of such settlement practices was that they were developed in order to subvert and bypass the British White Paper of 1939 which had been set in place in order to prevent Jews from settling more land in Palestine until all parties – Jews and Arabs – could reach an agreement on the future of Palestine.

What was downplayed in the film was highlighted by what we later heard and saw on our walking tour through Revivim. Our kibbutz-guide, Stephanie, who had made *aliyah* from the United States fourteen years earlier, began by telling us to "remember, in 1943, there's nothing here; not even the bunkers, not even the barbed wires. All that was here is the dead grass, the weeds, one or two small, small, small trees, and nothing else, nothing..." Again we were presented with the story that nothing existed in this desert prior to the Jews' settling in the land. The land was "bought by the Jewish Agency" from a "few Bedouin" and "Arabs who didn't live in the country anymore." What was interesting about Stephanie's presentation was that she

acknowledged early on that the "main purpose" of this site in the 1940s was to be what she called a "guard post."

While this narrative focus paralleled with the narratives presented earlier in the film, we were now given the opportunity to see the Revivim historical museum. We were first taken to a large tower and told that it was a replica of water towers used to "establish a fact, a presence on the ground." Water towers were the first structures built in order to stake a claim and symbolise an "experimental station". After we walked down off the water tower, we were taken into a cave-like structure where we were told that "This first cave is not the original cave that [the pioneers] lived in but it's a bunker that they dug out for a command post for the army ... [in] 1948." Inside we saw the replica of the communications and military equipment used at that time. At one point, Talia the ILF guide who had accompanied us on the Revivim tour, was asked by one ILF tour participant to translate a label which she had described as the pledge of allegiance taken by the kibbutz fighters at the time. She translated from the Hebrew as follows:

> I swear allegiance with this gun ... as assigned to me by the Haganah organisation in Eretz Israel, I will fight ... the enemy of my people for my country with no surrender, with no fear, and ...giving myself to do anything ... necessary.

What struck me at the time of this tour was that we were never taken to any garden site, and never told of any of the agricultural or experimental successes of this particular research station. We were primarily left with a rendition of the defensive military struggle of the first Israelis (see Segev 1986).

The narratives of siege and defence were repeated throughout the tours of Israel not only at the kibbutzim but at sites primarily defined by their military history. Surprisingly enough, Jerusalem, a city I expected to be narrativised in terms of its spiritual importance was more often represented as a city continuously under siege and particulaly so between 1948 and 1967 when it was finally "liberated" and "reunited". Of some significance then was that on the IDF tour, the first and second stops during our first full day in Jerusalem were military sites, Castel and Ammunition Hill, where according to our itinerary, we would "see how Jerusalem was secured in 1948" and "see how Jerusalem was united in 1967," respectively.

The Battle at Castel

We disembarked from the bus and walked towards the first marker at Castel. The site itself was no more than a sparsely-treed hillside, with official signs mapping the 1947-48 war at different points along the path to the top. It was strangely quiet and there were few buildings in the immediate area. We did not visit this site on the other tours but similar narratives were represented on the ILF tour and ICSF tours. That is, Israel is represented as a state continuously under siege, always badly equipped and sadly outnumbered by its enemies. The Arab states' responses to the U.N.'s Partition Plan and the Israeli Declaration of State, for example, were represented as no more than extreme reactions in the form of massive military offensives taken against the Jews and their state.

At Castel, Arnie from the Israel Development Fund (IDF) took us to the first marker where there was a map of the Mandate of Palestine. At this point, Arnie told us that the story of the Battle at Castel and the War of Independence begins in April 1947 with the UN's recommendation to partition Palestine. He framed the affected communities' responses in this way: "[The] Arabs don't want it. The Jews say 'OK, we've got nothing to lose.'" Without explaining why the "Arabs" might have rejected such a plan, he jumped into the description of the battles that began very soon after the Declaration of Independence. He told us that "the battle started in the cities" and

> on the roads [with people] attacking buses... You [would] drive through an Arab village, put down the windows and wait to see what happened. [The bus] had guards over the wheels around it so it wouldn't take any bullets and it had a little scoop in front and a place to put barbed wire and nails that would take off the tires of the bus. [Taking the bus was] like driving in a fortified vehicle.

Their everyday lives as Jews, even those in civilian vehicles like buses, were presented as endangered, though they are presented as having done nothing more than quietly settling in the area and accepting an internationally-sanctioned solution. According to Arnie, after some loss of life, however, a "decision was made to take out a plan called the 'D Plan' [or in Hebrew]Tochnit Dalet'." This strategy meant "captur[ing] the high points, sending the people out... [N]ow we take the offensive, [we] don't wait to be hit." While Arnie defined this as a an "offensive"

measure, this action too was framed within the context of the need for more fully defensive measures to better protect the Jews in the region.

As we continued to walk through the bunkers and trenches at the site, Arnie stopped, gathered us together and gave us a brief description of each stage of the battle. At the midway point he continued:

> [There were] hundreds of [Arab] fighters to defend the Castel here. The battle lasted five days and the Arabs had a light artillery and sharp shooters in a very ... rainy ... weather... [T]he Jewish forces had few reinforcements and no supplies.... The Arabs have the mountaintop, the hilltop, they have the weapons, they have the advantage that held off five attacks already...

According to Arnie, the Jews were the underdogs, and they could only hope for a miracle. At a point, nearer the top of the Hill, Arnie told us how it all ended:

> [O]n the Castel, the commander of the Arab forces,... Abed Kadir El Husseini is killed, and that night the Arab defenders take his body and they abandon the site for his funeral. The next day in Jerusalem, in the morning attack, the [Jewish] fighters who couldn't take the hill ... come up. [There was] no opposition whatsoever. The Castel is in Hebrew, [or] in Jewish hands...

Had this been a lucky break or a miracle? Arnie had left us to ponder this point as we continued to walk up to the top of the hill. Once there, a number of tourists had questions about the surrounding areas but they were held off as Arnie wanted us to know about one other important battle in the Jerusalem area. Using the battlefield model at the site, Arnie told us about the Battle on the Burma Road. Again the narrative focused on the immense suffering of the Jews, particularly those held "under siege" in the city of Jerusalem in the summer of 1948. The Battle on the Burma Road was a battle for the road needed to get supplies to these Jews living in Jerusalem. More frightening still, Arnie told us, "Jerusalem was almost lost." But, he continued: "... this was a modern miracle for the Jewish people. The world had written off the modern state of Israel. In 1948, [Israel was] written off. So this is what the Castel's all about." The Jews' heroic "fighting spirit" and defence of "Jerusalem" was the key to this narrative.

While I cannot here represent the "alternative" history of the War, one very serious effect of Arnie's presentation was that his representation of "the Arab" offensive represented all the Arabs involved in the conflict in 1947 as though they were part of a homogeneous group and

this meant there was no distinction between the Palestinians and the Arabs representing other states who entered into the war. Palestinian reasons for opposing Israeli dominance in their country were thus disappeared. Suggesting that "Arabs don't want" the partition of Palestine and then simply presenting the Jews as living under a state of siege by the Arabs, suggests only that non-indigenous military forces, such as the Egyptians and the Jordanians, were involved in the battles here and ignores the Palestinian experience of this partition as well as their reasons for resisting it. Arnie's narrative highlighted the Jews' experiences of siege and focusses on their defence against *outsiders*.

Nevertheless, some tour participants posed very difficult questions for Arnie at this site arising directly from his framing of these issues. Not all of the participants would accept his interpretation of the War and some placed the Palestinians back into the narrative. [See Tourist Resistance, below.]

On the ILF tour, we were also told of the battles for Jerusalem. But rather than take us to any particular site, Talia, the tour guide, asked us all to,

> ... try to imagine, when you look all over, [all around] you, during the War of Independence, they were shelling Jerusalem from that place [just above the road we are driving along] ... Jerusalem was tiny then ... and [the Arabs] had the advantage point and they were shelling heavily Jerusalem...

Imagining this space on these terms reinforced the siege narrative. As we drove along these roads we were surrounded by hills and valleys, which were described to us at once very beautiful and dangerous , for they are also places that were used (and it is implied could again be used) to hide "attackers." Talia also told us that during the War of Independence, the Jewish community was "besieged by the Muslim community of Jerusalem," and a "Surviving Plan" had to be drawn up to rescue the Jews. As we drove along this route, Talia also pointed to a number of very old-looking trucks set along the narrow ridge of the roadway. Their significance, we were told, was this: they are models of the type of transportation used to rescue the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem. Talia asked us again to look out the windows of our bus and said:

> ... [W]hen you look at the trucks, you can see how small they were, how outdated [they were]. I mean we're talking about 1948 and still they were outdated even then. They tried to put some plates to prevent them from [the] bullets but it didn't help them very

> much. Now these trucks were very heavy because they put water tanks on them, a lot
> of supplies, a lot of medical supplies, and they had some soldiers on it and they sent
> them on convoy to Jerusalem. And along the way they had a few obstacles. One of
> them was here. Now take a look. ... [E]ven today with this modern road, it is so easy to
> ambush the road.... Then there was no way to turn. Each truck was small, heavy,
> loaded and as soon they started to throw stones from the hills – and the villagers did
> that – the convoy had to stop and they were engaged in a battle that was always
> bloody, always.

Arab villages are sites of "ambush," "shelling," and danger and, significantly, they are presented as on the offensive. At the same time, the simple means by which the Jews struggled for their survival was continually emphasised in the narrative. This was a people against whom all odds were poised. Emphasised here were the efforts of a small group of people, mostly "farmers" forced to cope with the simplest of tools – "hand tools", "outdated trucks" under dangerous circumstances. Highlighted were the Jews' ingenuity and common efforts as a minority in the face of a highly coordinated, well-armed "Muslim majority". The enemy, on the other hand, appeared to have co-ordinated their efforts to destroy this small, pioneering enterprise that is Israel. The Jews' victory was nothing less than miraculous in light of all of the difficulties they faced

These interpretations of the War emphasised the dangerous and illegitimate role of the external Arab forces as well, though there was little effort to explain or determine just how or when these forces became a factor. In the ICSF tour, the emphasis was on the siege of a kibbutz that was attacked by the Egyptians during the 1948 war. This emphasised that the "enemies" are close even when they might seem far away. In this example, the tour guide explained how the Egyptian forces crossed the "entire Negev Desert" in their efforts to reach Jerusalem. What is suggested is that no city or space in Israel could ever really be safe from any Arab state wanting to reach Israel, particularly its capital. Thus, the 1947-48 War becomes a metonym for Israel's history as a country in a constant state of siege and its victories are presented in miraculous rather than strategic military terms.

On the "Six Day War" in 1967

(Re)Uniting Jerusalem

The Six-Day War or the War in 1967 was, by all tour accounts, the turning point for Israel, both within the state and around the world. On all tours, the "return" and "reunification" of the nation's "traditional" capital, Jerusalem was highlighted in every narrative. This was presented as the war that secured Israel's presence in the region and defined her as a military force to be reckoned with.

On the ILF tour, a tour celebrating Jerusalem's 3000 years, we heard calls from the Mayor of Jerusalem as well as military and agency personnel who greeted us, to recognize a "united Jerusalem" and the "heroes" who united the city. In many ways, the 1993 tour of Jerusalem was more of a celebration of the 1967 war's accomplishments, that is the "reunification of the city," than a celebration of any particular role that Jerusalem plays in contemporary Israeli society.

On the IDF tour we were taken to the Ammunition Hill State Memorial Site and Museum, "Dedicated to the Reunification of Jerusalem During the Six Day War, 1967." From 1948 to 1967, this area served as Jordan's command post and weapons storage centre. This Memorial Site and Museum is set within the reconstructed underground bunker and trench system.

At this site, the war of 1967 was presented as a heroic war involving Israel's elite political and military leadership. After walking around the trenches, we were taken into a small auditorium and shown a film about the war. I have chosen some parts of the film's narrative in order to highlight how the war was presented as a defensive national war fought on behalf of the entire Jewish nation. In all of the narratives, the Arab forces, in particular the Egyptians and Jordanians, were presented as the aggressors, attacking or planning to attack Israel. Israel, on the other hand, was presented as simply preparing to "defend itself" and, eventually, being forced into a "counter-attack."

The film we watched presented one soldier's perspective on the 1967 war. He described

his call to duty and his fellow comrades-in-arms, two of three of whom died in the battle. At

each stage of the battle he told us what he experienced. For example,

> We're about to enter the Jewish Quarter. Before me is the Dung Gate. Breathe deep, we're about to realise a dream to return to the Old City. In those moments I felt that I could digest everything: all the sights of war, the wounded, the smoke. I had built for myself a sort of protective wall... We were moving under the walls, and for a moment my sense blurred. Sounds of shooting brought me back to reality, we continued defending ... the Old City...

And,

> Descending the steps to the Western Wall, I'm not a religious man, never have been, but I am touching the stones of the Western Wall... The battles had ended. I stood weeping. Letting out all the tension, all the fear, the worry, the pain that had accumulated the last few days.

This was a moving presentation during which artillery fire and the noise of battle filled the

auditorium as dark, hazy slide photos taken of the battle scenes filled the screen. The film's focus

on an ordinary person's responses to the chaos of war was very effective. This presentation not

only described this individual's heroic efforts in battle, but the war's resulting spiritual

meaningfulness, even for one who did not describe himself as religious. Jerusalem's reunification

was presented as the nation's victory and the battle was described in such a way that it seems it

was the Jews' national mission to take the city.

Typical of all the military narratives was the fact that there was absolutely no reference

to non-Jews who lost their lives or their land as a result of these battles. For example, we were

never given any information about the disappearance and destruction of what has been

conservatively estimated as over 300 Palestinian villages in the 1947-48 period. Nor were we

given any information about the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who fled and who were

displaced from their homes during the same period, or in the period since, including during and

since the war of 1967.

On the Syria-Israel Conflict, 1967 and 1973-4

I now turn to examine the Syria-Israeli conflict narratives as they were presented in the Golan Heights region. Syria was one of the countries involved in the 1967 war with Israel; other conflagrations occurred in 1973-74 . The Golan Heights area was occupied by Israel as a result of the war in 1967 and was officially (and illegally) annexed by Israel in December of 1981.

On the ICSF tour we spent the night in one of the original kibbutzim in the Galilee region, just south of the Golan Heights. The next day, after a morning tour of the kibbutz, we drove to an area where we were split into smaller groups and, guided by a local resident, we were taken for a jeep tour through the Golan Heights. The discussions in the jeep included descriptions of the local residents and kibbutzim in the area but when our guide was asked about the military issues in the area, he asked that we wait to meet Pinhas, another local resident, who was waiting to talk to us about these issues.

Approximately twenty minutes later, we disembarked from the jeep, and we found ourselves looking over the Hula Valley from what was once a Syrian bunker site where we were greeted by an Israeli guide, Pinhas. He was a fit man, in his 30's, dressed in civilian clothes and carrying a gun in its holster on his hip. Anticipating, I think that he had an informed audience before him, Pinhas very confidently began to tell us about the Golan, warning that he would do so "without getting inside politics." Pinhas informed us that we had come at a critical moment in part "because right now no one really knows nothing. Maybe next year we'll need passports here or maybe not!" He suggested that the Israelis – and presumably Israeli-Jews rather than Israeli Druze or Bedouin – in the region were living with the fear of the unknown.

According to Pinhas, the relationships among peoples in the Golan area were cordial until the middle of the 1950's. Until that time, "simple farmers [lived on the Western slopes and] they even used to trade with the Israelis down below, selling horses, wheat, cows, whatever they got." It was not until

> the Syrian Army started to arrive and they took most of their civilians that used to live here, pushed them deep inside Syria and to the area of Kuneitra, Damascus... and... just started to build a closed-off military area.

From that point on, accoiding to Pinhas, there was "shooting and shelling mostly with Russian artillery, Russian cannons, once a week, twice a week on different Israeli kibbutzim and moshavim." Between 1964 and 1967, Israeli families living in the region were forced to live "inside the bomb shelters." He then asked us to

> just imagine yourself [as] one of the Israeli farmers who use[d] to go out to farm his land and, of course, this was also a good target for the Syrian cannons. They see one of the Israeli tractors outside, [and] they start to shoot.

According to our guide "all those problems continued until '67." Pinhas then explained why Israel would choose to enter into a war with Syria. He told us that "at the beginning, there was no plan to climb the Golan Heights" both because it seemed an impossible task to "climb the mountain under fire and to capture the Syrian bunkers on top" and because the estimated risk to Israeli lives was too great. Still, the Israelis reluctantly agreed to take the offensive on this front. For although Syria was presented as a dangerous nuisance, it was not enough of a military threat that Israel would otherwise choose to enter into a war with it. It was only when "a small mission, a small group of people" from the northern kibbutzim met with Levi Eshkol, the Israeli Prime Minister of the time, that a discussion began and it was:

> ...because of a lot of pressure that came from those Israelis and also a lot of pressure that came from the Israeli Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan and the Israeli Chief of Staff, Yitzhak Rabin – [that] finally Eshkol decides... [and he] starts giving orders to bring up troops.

Thus, according to Pinhas, it was only as a result of a local populist movement that Israel entered into the war with Syria. While Israel was on the offensive, it was still presented as a reluctant participant. The resulting victory then, was nothing short of miraculous. On the fifth day of the Six Day War, and with few military resources on hand – "the Air Force was not so big" and was "busy down South" –

> ...[S]tep by step, ...we started very early in the morning... [using] big bulldozers [with] metal shields of course, tanks, and infantry units.... [It was] ...only in the afternoon [that] the first Israeli soldier arrived [at] the first line of Syrian bunkers, almost the same place we are standing [in] right now.

Still, according to Pinhas, it was only after the capture of the Golan Heights that one of the kibbutz fighters would recount how he had "realised what a big threat we got from the Syrian Army." In other words, it was a defensive war after all.

At this point, Pinhas shifted the discussion from the conflict of 1967 and the miraculous victory to the contemporary situation. He explained:

> ...[Y]ou must understand the big argument in Israel today is not about giving back the land. We are not talking about the land. And also it's not about bringing back those people that are living in the 32 Israeli settlements on the Golan Heights.... The only argument in Israel today is if we can trust the Syrians. This is the argument.

Thus the issue was framed in terms of security and not occupation of the land. According to Pinhas, Israel does not want or need the land and it is because Israel is not very good at media and public relations that the Syrian-Israeli conflict is generally misrepresented to the world: "They always say... the land... the Israelis 'captured' or 'took away' from Syria." But, he suggested, the real issues are "if we can trust Syrians" and "who wants to be responsible for this decision...." Still, Pinhas admitted, that Israel too was a threat for the Syrians. He asked us to: "Imagine yourself [as a Syrian], [and] the Israeli tanks are sitting two hours ride from the Syrian capital city, from Damascus and, of course, it's also a big threat to Asad." And yet, it is Israel that wants the peace, and it is Israelis who "are tired from giving three years in the army. All of us are tired from giving one month in the reserve until the age of 45 or 50. All of us wants peace." And he added another warning:

> Now another thing you must understand: Asad's youngest brother ... he's the one in charge of ... law and, by the way, also in charge of raising the drugs inside of Lebanon, in the Bakka Valley, [including] opium, hashish, marijuana, [and] all those wonderful things. ...[With] this money... they support the Syrian economy and they also support some terrorist organisations, like Hezbollah. But again, they say to those terrorists, you are not allowed to be active through... the Syrian territory. You are only allowed to be active through the Lebanese territory. Then they can say it's not Syria [that's behind these actions].

The representation of the enemy as dangerous, leading an immoral economy and even a war by other means does not end the presentation, however. Pinhas had one more "amusing" story "just for ending" to tell us. Pointing to the bunker site we were told that

There were three or four places like this all over the Golan Heights. This was like a small place for vacation to the Syrian officers. [There was] water... coming from a natural... underground spring. They built a small swimming pool... This was a small club, [with] dressing rooms... and even a small canteen..... [T]hey used to sell cold drinks and everything and [there] ... were very fancy toilets and showers.... Now there is another wonderful story that the Israelis .. [talk about] in... different kibbutzim and moshavim in this area... The people.... [said that] every week there was only one day [of every week] that was quiet. [There was] no shooting, no shelling, no nothing. Usually this was every Thursday. Now this is why. ...Every Thursday afternoon,... [a] red bus used to patrol the different Syrian bunkers. This was a big red bus loaded with women inside and, let's say in nice words, those womens (sic) were just for fun to the Syrian officers. Now the story is that every Thursday afternoon, when the Israelis [who] lived in kibbutzim and moshavim... looked in their binoculars, [and they saw... the red bus... patrol the Syrian bunkers, [t]hey start[ed] making telephones [to] each other [saying]: tonight we don't need the bomb shelters, this is going to be a quiet night....

Here we were presented with an example of immoral Arab behaviour as well as a description of their stupidity. This stupidity is contrasted with the cleverness of the kibbutzniks who easily discovered – using a simple set of binoculars pointed in the right direction – that Thursday afternoons were impromptu cease-fire periods.

It was interesting that Pinhas stayed away from discussing what many consider to be a key issue of conflict in the Golan region: water (Seliktar 1997). Very soon after we returned to our bus, however, Sivan discussed the conflict in those very terms. She explained:

...[W]hen in the early '60s, Israel as a state decided to build a national water [using the Golan Heights height and natural gravity to bring the water down through the Jordan Valley]... the Syrians objected bitterly... At first they tried [to intervene] with the United Nations and then [when it] was recognised... that Israel is entitled to use the water, so then [the Syrians] started [to shoot us] with artillery and these were heavy, heavy fights... at the place where the pumping station should have been.... [A]s a result, the pumping station could not be built and it has moved down to the Sea of Galilee... Now [the] '67 War was also called the "War Over The Water." Some of you may remember that ... [in response to the water project that the Israelis had planned but failed to build] ... the Syrians invented that idea of diverting the water in a diverting canal that will start up where the sources of the Jordan River, at Banias ... and they started the water canal with the financial aid of many Arab countries. They had all the money actually and they started [building] ... the diverting canal. [This] meant that the Jordan River water would stop coming down to the Sea of Galilee but [would] rather ... end up in Jordan and that was a very major threat to Israel. And when [the Israelis reached] ... the Golan in '67, the canal was found. It was almost completely built.

This presentation further legitimised Israel's continued fear of Syrian control of the area. Thus Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights is nothing more than a defensive posture. Even the more left-leaning ICSF described the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights as nothing more than a

benign occupation, with no population adversely affected by that occupation. In fact, what was presented was an occupation that secures Israel's northern border as well as its much needed water resources.

We were presented with military narratives about the Golan region when we stopped at a place called "Kissinger's Ramp", a place in the Golan Heights overlooking the now - abandoned Syrian village of Kuneitra. Both Avi on the ILF and Arnie on the IDF tours explained the importance of the Ramp in very similar terms. Their narratives described a surprise attack by the Syrians in 1973 on Yom Kippur, one of the Jews' holiest days, and the heroism of one particular Israeli officer. The Yom Kippur war is inscribed in Israeli's memory as a war that induced panic because it was the first time that the Israelis had been caught off-guard and ill-prepared. Arnie explained:

> In 1973, on Yom Kippur morning, ...the Syrians [and] Egyptians opened fire on the Suez Canal and the Syrians, in a joint military action, massed 1500 tanks on the front line of the Golan Heights. That is the largest concentration of armour in the history of modern warfare. There wasn't one battle in World War II, that [involved] 1500 tanks.... And the Syrians massed the tanks and came across the Golan Heights. [T]he Syrians, within a matter of hours, completely destroyed the over 130 [Israeli] tanks... on the southern flank. Not one tank was mobile after the initial attack. On the northern flank, just on the other side of this dirt road ...going up the hill there, there's a Valley called the Valley of Tears and one unit held off the northern attack and assault by the Syrians. It was led by a Yemenite Jewish officer, Victor Kahalani who is now [the] Minister of Police and Internal Security in the government. And he stood there with 13 tanks, 6 of them... immobile, 7 ...going up and down the same ramp and shooting at the Syrians, [and] they held out into... the early evenings. The Syrian paratroopers... commanders ...captured the Hermon Mountains. They took the Israeli position on top of the mountain and started their way down. They... knocked out our artillery units, [and]... the entire front line fell except for one spot at this Valley of Tears. At night, [the Israeli brigade led by] their commander, Victor Kahalani,... were shooting at tanks that they didn't see. All they saw were the shots, the flame... burst of a gun. They'd shoot for it. They didn't [even] see the tank in the dark. They held out until... midday next day 'til there was reinforcements on the northern [flank]. The Syrian generals rolled right across the Golan Heights... within a number of hours... [It] takes our reserve units 48 hours to get organised... [for the] counter attack, [and to] push back to Kuneitra.... Kissinger steps in, [with] Richard Nixon's [support], [and] they were sending in supplies. We ran out of ammunition in '73 war. A lot of people don't realise that. [Those were] hard times. [It was] bad news. ...[Then the] Americans get involved. Henry Kissinger flies in [and] says OK the Syrians; they're finished now. They're ready to come to the negotiating table. They've got nothing left... [They want the] Israelis to head back to the Volcanic Ridge and then things will start rolling in the Golan Heights for negotiations. Israelis said no way. You can't imagine what this ridge is opposite Damascus. [Kissinger] landed right here... It's a tank position. [He] took out the map and made a decision that we'd give back Kuneitra... to the Syrians and keep the Ridge. That's why we're here today in 1998. ...[That was] the situation [in the] last war [in] '73. There was a total intelligence fall out. The Syrians and Egyptians were planning to

attack.... [T]hey surprised us and that won't happen again because here in the Golan Heights it's readiness all the time. It's more tanks and it's more soldiers....

Note the representation of the massiveness of the Syrian's attack power and the diminished capacity of the Israelis to defend themselves. The Syrian's attempt to regain the Golan Heights they had lost in the 1967 war was presented as a major offensive against Israel. The Syrian fear that Israel would eventually annex the territories was proven to be a real one. Israel annexed the area, despite the Syrian Druze population's resistance, (see above "Recognising Arabs") in 1981, displacing people in the region yet again.

On "Operation Peace For Galilee" or the Lebanon-Israel Conflict, 1982 to the present

The Lebanon-Israel conflict was presented to us on the Israel Land Fund Tour at a site called "the Good Fence". On our way to the Good Fence, we passed Kiryat Shmona, a development town that has been the site of frequent shellings from Lebanon. Talia had this to tell us about the town:

> ... these are some of the bomb shelters. It looks like a very peaceful town, which it is, unless it starts getting katyusha rockets [shot from Lebanon].... Kiryat Shmona was not always like that... Kiryat Shmona, ...was so far away from central Israel... Mass immigration... of broken up people... in mind and body,... were placed... here. And it was really far away for them, [far] from anywhere, [far] from anything. They were not equipped, not emotionally and not professionally, to be here and it was very difficult for them. And then when Kiryat Shmona became a border town and it was hit constantly by terrorists from Lebanon, people here started to lose their courage. The town looked terrible. It was dirty. It was not being changed. It was neglected. It was really terrible and the people here cried out to heaven, until the summer of '82. In the summer of 1982, Israel went into Lebanon. The street that we are on right now, ...it was an unbelievable [sight] really. The women of Kiryat Shmona were standing ... along the road, with tables [with]... all kinds of soft drinks and coffee and cakes for the soldiers. And the soldiers kept on coming. Trucks... of soldiers and tanks were going into Lebanon... And the war went on and the war was over and Kiryat Shmona went through a complete change. Something happened to the people. Suddenly their backs straightened up. They became very proud of themselves and their town. They started to take care of their town and this is why Kiryat Shmona looks so pretty and so colourful...

Here the war of Lebanon was presented as a war that strengthened the people's (and, as in the Negev Narratives above, it is the non-European Jews who are re-made (Shohat 1988, 1989)) resolve; it gave them meaning and pride.

Soon after passing through Kiryat Shmona, we arrived at the "Good Fence," a park and canteen area, and the site of the international border between Israel and Lebanon. We walked along a path through a small park to the international border marked "the Good Fence." Once there, we gathered together to listen to Talia describe the ongoing conflict with Lebanon. Talia wanted us to know that though she was not a soldier in the Lebanese war, she thought we should get an Israeli citizen's perspective before getting Avi's (the retired Brigadier General who was her accompanying guide) perspective on the conflict.

> The story of this place starts quite a long time ago, about 21 years ago when a civil war ... ripped Lebanon apart. It was the South against the North. ... As a result, the people who lived between the area of Beirut and Israel [were] caught in the middle. They [were] in [a] war against the North Lebanese and, of course, they [were] sitting on the border with Israelis. Israel [was] not an active enemy but it [was] still an enemy. There [was] nothing here, absolutely nothing. No trees, no buildings, not even a border like [the one that is there now]... The people of South Lebanon, just like [the people in] all of Lebanon, ... are [from] many different religious ... [and] ethnic groups... The fence was just a simple fence... Inside South Lebanon you have military [personnel], you have villagers, you [have] Christians who are Christian Maronites, you have Sunni Muslims, you have Shi'a Muslims, [and] you have Druze. You have many different groups that are not doing very well with each other. But you see people are like people and they are cut off from the north. They don't get supplies,... they don't get their mail, they don't get medical supplies, [or] medical help. They are cut off. And then one day a patrol car goes along the fence and [the soldiers] observe that one of the girls that went along the fields stepped on a mine. She [lay] there and everyone [was] afraid to get to her to get some help [and] afraid to step on another mine. So Israeli soldiers crossed over and they helped her out and they [took] her out and [flew] her with the helicopter to the Ram Bam hospital. [There] she stayed, [and] was being treated. And just a side story, [she was] treated by a male nurse, a [Christian] Maronite male nurse, and he married her.

To this last piece of information there was tourist applause and laughter. Talia explained the "meaningfulness" of this incident in this way:

> Now this was a very meaningful incident, because this incident showed the farmers of South Lebanon that the villain is really not Israel [and that] Israelis are not really villains. And it takes a while but little by little, they [came] in for help... And they began to trade... And they start getting a day's permission to come to work for a day... You have all kinds of facilities that help out the farmers of Southern Lebanon. Now Israel realised [this was] an opportunity to start working with the South Lebanese militia. So they [train] them. They [give] them military clothing, they [give] them military vehicles, and there are a lot of connections between the two.

Israeli actions in the area were represented as essential and beneficial to a population caught in a civil war. The Lebanese militia was represented as though it was representative of the

population in the South Lebanese area and their request for military aid was thus presented as legitimate. Yet they are a militia, rather than, for example, an army command. Talia later said:

> As a result [of the continuing "chaos" within Lebanon], different terrorists start[ed] to infiltrate into the villages, and start[ed] to shoot towards the border and towards the different Israeli settlements along the border. The situation is getting worse and worse..... [and the] militia cannot prevent them from infiltrating into the villages and the situation is growing gradually worse. The South Lebanese start to rely on Israel and they pressure Israel into helping them out. In the meantime, Kiryat Shmona and all the kibbutzim along the border also pressure Israel and that results ... [in] Israel entering into Lebanon in 1982.

Thus, once more, Israel was presented as having to defend against terrorism only this time it was not only about its own borders. It was now asked to enter and assist a neighbour caught in the crossfire. Israel's military actions in Lebanon are represented as an entry motivated by Lebanese solicitation and the defensive needs of the Israeli border population. But Talia must also explain why Israel continues to occupy the area.

> The war was over and again, I'm not going to get into the political situation afterwards, but the decision was made that most of the Israeli forces will pull back behind the international line. But... a certain number of people will still be within what is known as the "security zone"...[The] idea [was that] Israel was to train with [the] South Lebanese militia so well that they could hold on and do the job by themselves. The south Lebanese did advance a lot but still they cannot do it all by themselves. So what happens today, they have posts side by side and sometimes together.

Thus, Israel's continued presence in Southern Lebanon and the collaboration between Israel and the South Lebanese were also defined in terms of Israel "security" and the defence of the nation.

After we left this site and boarded the bus again, the Brigadier General and ILF's North American community representative who had been assisting Talia on the tour, stood up at the front of the bus and began to fill in some of the gaps he felt she had left out of her narrative. Avi, a retired Brigadier General had served in Lebanon for two years and was the "last commander in the Beirut area" before Israel's "withdrawal" from Lebanon. Here was his description and explanation for the conflict:

> ...[T]he conflict with Lebanon started after the Six Day War..... [U]ntil the Six Day War it was a quiet border between Israel and Lebanon.... [A]fter the conflict with King Hussein [of Jordan] with the Palestinians most of the Palestinian organisations moved from Jordan to Lebanon and from '68 until today... [there may have been] one day [that] was quiet between Israel and Lebanon. Every day [there was] another problem with them and we tried to do anything with Lebanon. I can remind you we [were] inside

> Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. This was the Peace for [Galilee] War and we stopped...
> this war with the big idea [that] maybe we can change the government in Lebanon and
> ... create a new Lebanon with a good relationship with Israel. But in Lebanon, as you
> know, live Christian, Muslim, Shi'a, Druzim, Sunnim and all of them are Lebanon's
> citizens. And the civilian war in Lebanon started in '58.... And from this time until
> today, every other month they have another conflict between the groups, especially
> between the religious groups, [i.e.,] between the Muslim Shi'a and the Christian. [It is
> the] same [as the] situation in Yugoslavia.

In other words, Lebanon's multi-ethnic and multi-religious country was bound to cause it civil

strife and, in fact, that civil strife had been part of the country's history for some time prior to

Israel's military engagement with it. With this explanation as the background to Lebanon's

chaotic and ungovernable situation, Avi then suggested that Israel's "philosophy", meaning

strategic philosophy, was legitimate. Note as well, that Avi used the official name for the war,

called "Operation Peace for Galilee," which shifted the emphasis from the defence of Lebanon (as

Talia had described the war) to the defence of the northern parts of Israel, the Galilee area. Avi

then turned to describe what he thought was the crux of the matter. It was not just the

Palestinians who had moved their terrorist organisations to Lebanon from Jordan that were the

problem.

> The problem in Lebanon today [is this]: Lebanon [is] controlled by the Syrians and we
> think, and we hope, and many people in Israel believe, we can get a peace with
> Lebanon after the peace with Syria. ...[F]irst of all, we need [to] finish the conflict with
> Syria, and after that, maybe we can do [a] deal with Lebanon.

He later added: "...[W]e have [no] problems with the civilian people... in the south of

Lebanon...."

The only questions asked by any of the tourists after both of these presentations came

from Kevin, a middle-aged medical doctor from a city outside of Toronto. He asked "When was

this war? [and] What were you doing fighting this war?" Avi said "1982!" but his inflection said it

all. He was unmistakably taken aback with this question. Both he and Talia had methodically

chronicled the history of the war in Lebanon. They had both been careful to highlight that they

were not being "political" in their representations, though indeed they were not presenting the

alternative perspective on the war (e.g., a Peace Now perspective perhaps). I wondered at the

time if they had assumed that the tourists had come with the "peace" perspective and that it was

their role to "enlighten" those who took such a position. For, in fact, this was a war that had split

the Jewish communities both inside and outside of Israel and was the basis for the formation of

Israel's largest peace movement, the Peace Now movement. This was also the war that led to the

infamous Lebanese Maronite Christian massacre of Palestinians living in the Sabra and Shatilla

refugee camps; a massacre that led to an Israeli government inquiry which looked into Israeli

military responsibility for the massacre (Giannou 1990; Levy 1997). At the time, I thought that

Kevin might have been confused by the fact that Talia and Avi were both using the Israeli

military name for the war – the "Peace for Galilee" war – rather than simply describing it as the

Israeli-Lebanese war.

On the other hand, no one challenged Avi or Talia's interpretation of events leading to

the invasion and the continued occupation of Lebanon. Avi had argued that the reason for the

invasion of Lebanon was that Palestinian groups had set up their terrorist organisations there and

that Israel needed to secure her borders against them. Talia's slightly different version is

interesting only because she never once spoke of the Palestinians but rather highlighted the

Lebanese need for Israeli intervention. She also evoked a sense of Lebanese desire and need for

the modern amenities available to them from Israel.

Over and again, the conflict with Lebanon was linked to the conflict with Syria on all of

the tours. As Avi described above, it was a surreptitious action that Syria was undertaking rather

than a declaration of war against Israel. Israel was never once described as illegally occupying

the southern part of Lebanon on any one of the tours. Instead the focus was on the "peaceful"

relations Israel enjoys with some of the South Lebanese. The fact that Hezbollah – "terrorists" in

Avi and Talia's accounts – continue to fight in the southern Lebanese area and are responsible for

hitting some sites in the northern part of Israel was never explained in terms of their resistance to

the occupation of South Lebanon by Israel. These organisations were not described as

indigenous to the territory nor even as resisters to Israeli occupation. Rather the focus was on

their Iranian and Syrian support, suggesting they are engaged by externally rather than internally

designed priorities. The need for an Israeli-controlled militarised zone follows this logic. And, in

this way the Lebanon-Israel conflict was linked directly to the Israel-Syria conflict as was the

need for the continuation of Israeli "defensive" institutions in the area.

For the military narratives to be understood from an Israeli perspective, it is the Jews who are rightfully in their place and under siege, surrounded by multi-ethnic, multi-religious, pre-modern, chaotic, dangerous, and ungovernable others. It is Israel that belongs and its place must be secured militarily or all that is associated with it, democracy and moderity, will be lost.

CHAPTER 7
SECURING THE LAND TO SECURE THE NATION

In this chapter I explore the "security" narratives that underlie the representations of settlement policy in regions in and around Israel. I also examine the way that the new peace accords, particularly the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the Palestinians, more popularly known as the Oslo Accords, are represented to the tour participants. And finally, I look at how tourists engaged with as they questioned the logic of the security narratives presented by their tour guides and hosts.

Settling the Land to Secure the Nation

Settling in the Jordan Valley

On all of the tours, the arguments for settling certain areas of land were connected to the urgency to "secure" the land. In this section, I present those issues raised in relation to the need to create and maintain security corridors. While at times these issues were framed within militaristic-security terms, the main thrust of the arguments was that settling the land would secure it as the Jews' land, against any threat of future displacement or negotiations with the Arabs, primarily the Palestinians. As a result, although these security narratives were at times about military or defence needs, that was not their primary focus. Instead we were presented with the demographic politics of a Jews' state in an Arab Middle East. This was the case when we travelled to the settlements in the Jordan Valley, and as we toured the Galilee region.

Although there had been an unofficial peace between Jordan and Israel for some time prior to the signing of the Peace Agreement in the 1990's, Israeli-Jewish settlement patterns around the Jordan Valley were explained as necessary for Israeli security. Sivan, on the ICSF tour explained the need for settlements in the Jordan Valley despite the fact that a Peace Agreement had been signed between Jordan and Israel. She warned: "Behind Jordan there is Iraq. ...We ... calculate[d] that it takes 30 hours for the Iraqi army from its farthest place to get to Jerusalem, or

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to the mountains up here. Thirty hours is [nothing]." The implication was that there is a need to create settlements in this mountainous region – to control the high ground – to enable the surveillance of the Jordanian side of the Jordan Valley area. But Sivan also claimed that "conquering the land" – that is, settling the land – was necessary not only because it could prevent the use of scuds or other kinds of missiles from reaching these sites, but because a "country or state is not conquered... unless [and until] you have the troops going on the ground, bringing [in a] supply of food, bringing people in, [and] inhabiting the conquered land." In other words, the land was only secure if Israel could move ground troops along it quickly and, in order to be able to do that, Israeli settlers would have to live on the land. It was only secure if inhabited by Jews, a process that followed the troop's conquest. In addition, Sivan explained, the Israelis could ensure that even if there was a land settlement with the Palestinians in the future, the Israelis would "not let these mountains be owned by Palestinians". In this way the distinction between the military and the civilian dimensions of security collapses.

This presentation was very similar to one presented on the Israel Development Fund by our guide Arnie who explained that "the word 'settlement' today basically means any Jewish town or city over the 1967 border" or that is part of the Occupied Territories. However, he said, "there are different types of settlements." He explained:

> From Jerusalem to Jericho, [there are settlements]... in the middle of the desert. No one was living there [before]. The land was government land and there are no Arab cities or towns around them and for that reason, after the Six Day War, the Labour Government... felt that Israel had to have two security corridors in the Jordan River Valley. [This would mean that] in any final agreement with the Arabs, [the security corridor] would allow us to get to the front line Jordan River Valley settlements. Everything in between these two corridors would be negotiable in a peace deal, except Jerusalem. [So they] set up a plan called the Allon Plan [named after the Cabinet Minister, who invented the Plan].

These narratives dealt primarily with Israel's need for the continued surveillance of Jordanian and Palestinian territories and assumed that land not presently settled by the Palestinians could be used by the Israelis for security purposes. Lands captured during the Six Day War were being transformed from "occupied territories" to "corridors" necessary for Israel's security. Fear of the Arabs was to be taken as a given, even from Arabs with whom Israel had

signed peace agreements and settling the land in order to secure against threats from states that are not even on the border, such as Iraq, was also legitimised. The primary concern for Israel's security in the region meant that the effects on others, particularly non-Jews, were completely ignored.

Security was also presented as the reason for "settling" the land around Jerusalem.

Settling Greater Jerusalem

In a tour around Jerusalem on the ICSF tour, Sivan explained that with the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967

> a very quick decision was taken by the municipality leaders of the City of Jerusalem, of course together with the policy-[makers] of the state, and that is that once Jerusalem is reunified the boundaries are not going [to stay as they were within those boundaries] ... [Rather the boundaries would be drawn]... according to a future Jerusalem, a bigger Jerusalem, a greater Jerusalem.

We were all sitting on the bus at this point overlooking a small Palestinian village that had been designated part of Greater Jerusalem. Sivan explained what this "concept" of Greater Jerusalem was based on:

> The concept is that, o-kay, we had Israel and [West] Jerusalem ...[and there was always] a possibility to expand to the west. So we're not concerned with this. We are concerned with the future war or future situation of dividing... or giving back parts of Jerusalem. And so we have to secure Jerusalem by building new neighbourhoods to the south, to the east, to the north [and] to the Northwest. ...[W]e are entitled [to an area assigned to Israel in 1948] but... we're not... [entitled to these areas in the Occupied Territories]. It's not a matter of we've been here or not before. We're just going to secure a big [area] leading to the north. ...[P]olitically the understanding is that we should not create a Palestinian succession of the urban centres. We must stop that. [For example], ... there's [the Palestinian city of] Bethlehem. ...[I]f we don't have [the Jewish settlements of] Gilo and Talpiot [blocking the space between Bethlehem and Jerusalem] one day, [the Palestinian centres will] grow out and meet with that part of Jerusalem. ...So by doing that you actually secure the separation of Muslim areas or Palestinian areas from this side [Israel].

If it were not for new Israeli settlements, Palestinians would one day, by virtue of the natural population growth, surround the city of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the Jews must settle the areas in order to prevent the Palestinians from forming a contiguous territory and claiming a majority in this area. This demographic contest was discussed in plain policy terms.

But, even areas that are not immediately within the Greater Jerusalem hub were claimed for Israel. For example, Ma'ale Adumim, where we were told between 30,000 and 45,000 Jews currently reside, had been declared "by consensus" and "by the Labour Government" to be a part of Greater Jerusalem

> because Jerusalem is one, ... it is not to be divided and it's character should be Jewish. There may be Palestinian residents in it, but we must ensure the fact that it's going to be very, very Israeli and not any other type [of settlement].

By claiming that Ma'ale Adumim is part of Greater Jerusalem, the settlement becomes a site that is "non-negotiable" in any "land for peace" deal because Israeli policy states that "Jerusalem" shall always remain the "undivided" capital of Israel and the Jews. Furthermore, according to both Sivan and Arnie on the IDF tour, Ma'ale Adumim provides a route in and out of an area that the Israelis envisage will one day be within the Palestinian Autonomy zones. As such, Ma'ale Adumim becomes a settlement within the Autonomous zones which legitimates Israel's construction of what are called "by-pass" roads; roads which literally bypass the Palestinian urban centres, and provide routes to and from Jews' settlements both within the Occupied Territories as well as in and out of Israel. Note then that the contiguity of Jerusalem with areas settled by Jews were of primary concern to the Israelis and to the tour guides presenting these settlement options and policies. Thus, as Sivan said, Jerusalem must remain "fortified" by "Jewish settlers or Jewish inhabitants" (for more on this issue, see Champion 1997;Efrat, 1994; Lustick 1996, 1988)

Settling the Galilee

But the external "other" is not the only threat to the Jewish state that can only be "secured" by settling the land. On all of the tours we were told of an internal danger that was also dealt with by establishing settlements. That internal "threat" was also one based on population demographics. In the northern part of Israel called the Galilee, a policy of "Judaising" or "Hebrewising" the Galilee was fully implemented in the 1970's (see Rabinowitz 1997; Yiftachel 1991). While all of the tour guides gave a description of this policy when we toured in the region,

each emphasised a different part of the practice. Nevertheless, all acknowledged that this was a

pattern of settlement meant to create a Jewish majority in an area that had previously had an

Arab majority. Sivan on the ICSF tour explained it this way:

> [There was] a process of bringing as many Jewish people to the Galilee, a process that
> started in the 70's mainly. Ben Gurion [Israel's first Prime Minister] had this idea first.
> [The process was a matter of] dispersing the Jewish population in the Negev. But then
> at some point the Galilee seemed to be too scary, because the Arab population was the
> vast majority, and since we are dealing sometimes with the question of where you have
> an Arab majority... that is land that may be negotiated in the future.... To take out that
> opportunity the Israelis started in the '60's, and then mainly in the 70's, a program to
> bring those settlements up to the top of the mountains. They don't occupy valleys
> down below where there are terraces and fields but rather sit up above. ...And so there
> are many, many settlements like this further around the Galilee. Some call it the
> Judaisation, Hebrewisation, [or] Israelisation of the Galilee.... This is really the term
> that was used [to mean] ...just to disperse Jewish population [in the areas] so that at no
> point [in the future]... [would these areas] be negotiable, either. It's not the territories
> [of the West Bank]. It is not a contested area.... The majority of Israeli Arabs live in the
> Galilee and not elsewhere.

Arnie described the practice in similar terms, adding, "it was very successful. There's now a

Jewish majority in the Galilee...." The need to create and then maintain the Jews' majority in areas

around Israel is presented as a simple given. How land might have come to be "owned" by the

Israeli-Jews or what prevents the Palestinian population from expanding its land base was never

explicated. Implied instead was that these new settlements were established in uninhabited

rather than "terraced" terrain, as though land not "terraced" might not also be owned or

inhabited by local Palestinians. The continued resistance to these policies by Palestinians in the

area, including the annual Day of the Land demonstration in the Galilee, were also not presented.

Suggesting that these lands were not "contested" was therefore misleading in all cases.

Securing "Peace": The Oslo Accords

In this section on security narratives, I discuss representations of assassinated Israeli

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as a peacemaker, as well as the representation of the peace

agreement called the Declaration of Principles, more popularly known as the Oslo Accords, that

he signed. On all of the tours, we were taken to the site of Rabin's assassination in Tel Aviv as

well as Rabin's Tomb on Jerusalem's Mount Herzl and each time we were presented with

narratives of his place in Israeli society.

The first of the Oslo Accords was signed in 1993 between the state of Israel, under the leadership of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Yassir Arafat. The basic contours of the agreement were: the phased withdrawal of the Israeli military from the Territories occupied by Israel in the war of 1967; the creation of a new entity superceding the Palestine Liberation Organisation and named the Palestine National Authority to administer those areas; and the agreement to continue negotiating for a final agreement which was supposed to have been implemented by 1998 that dealt with such "outstanding" issues as the fate of the Palestinian refugees living outside of the state of Israel as well as the Occupied Territories, and the rights to and boundaries of "Jerusalem" (Foreign Ministry of Israel 1993; Karsh 1994; Said 1994b; 1996)

The Oslo Accords, which had in many arenas – media, politics, publications – been declared as paving a new road to peace for Israel and her neighbours were rarely the focus of any on-the-ground attention on the ILF or IDF tours. In fact the Accords and disagreements over Palestinian territories in the West Bank in particular received far less attention than any of the other conflicts in the region, and certainly far less on-the-ground attention than that given to the current conflict with Lebanon and Syria. On the ILF tour the Peace Agreements were represented as having created more insecurity for Israelis rather than any greater hope for peace between the peoples of the region. On the IDF tour, the then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu presented us with his misgivings about any attempt by a democratic Israel to make peace in a dictator-ridden region. Prior to Rabin's assassination, Netanyahu had campaigned against both the Oslo One and Oslo Two Accords. Only the ICSF took us into the newly declared "Autonomy Area of Jericho" where we had the opportunity to listen to a Palestinian representative of the new Palestine National Authority.

The Assassination of Prime Minister Rabin

Yitzhak Rabin's assassination in November of 1995 came as a shock to many in Israel as well as around the world. While the site of his assassination has now become a formal memorial

in Tel Avi, graffiti still covers the walls in the area in much the same way as it did right after the

assassination. At each visit to the site, the tour guides told tour participants what he or she had

been doing at the time of the assassination and how he or she had heard about it. All described

how the country had suddenly stopped, and emphasised that people all over Israel and the world

were shocked by the event and completely overcome with grief. Each guide also noted that

Israel's youth had responded in ways that surprised their elders. No one had expected this

"apolitical" and "Americanised" sector of Israeli society to have paid so much attention to such

an event.

On each of the tours we were also taken to Rabin's tomb where a short wreath-laying

ceremony (ILF & IDF tours) took place, and/or a short description of the site was given by the

tour guides. The tomb itself stands out from others in the cemetery. Rising from the ground, two

marble tombstones, half-white, half-black split in the middle are strikingly different from the flat

black slabs of marble that mark other state leaders' tombs.

But whether we stood at the site of Rabin's assassination in Tel Aviv or by his tomb site

in Jerusalem's Mount Herzl, his assassin's motives – ending the implementation of the Oslo

Accords and any other peace agreements with Arabs in the region – were not discussed. So, for

example, while standing in front of Rabin's tomb in Mount Herzl's military cemetery and before

laying a wreath at the site, Arnie from the IDF tour, had this to say:

> ...[T]his country has still not come out of the shock of the fact that our Prime Minister
> was assassinated... by a Jew and the fact that our Prime Minister was assassinated by a
> Jew who was wearing a yarmulka on his head. It's going to take a long, long time. This
> man envisioned the past, present and the future of the state of Israel. [He was] our first
> Sabra [Israeli-born] Prime Minister. [He was a] war hero [who had] proved himself on
> the battleground. [He was a] tough, iron-fisted politician. And then, at a certain
> moment, [he] came to the realisation that we had won the war but we'd lost the peace.
> And [with] that understanding [he] took that incredible step [of signing the Peace
> Accords with the Palestinians]. If you... look at the film of Arafat and Prime Minister
> Rabin [and look at the "body language" of] that handshake on the lawn at the White
> House [you will notice that while] it only took a few seconds [to shake hands]... I think
> Yitzhak Rabin [had gone] through hours and hours thinking of how it was going to
> happen [and] what he was going to do. Arafat went towards him and, in his own way,
> as the old soldier [Rabin] slowly put out his hand. It was a very, very difficult moment
> [for him] but maybe that was his greatness.... He knew how to overcome those types of
> hesitations. That was his greatness...

What was shocking to Arnie about Rabin's assassination was that another Jew, particularly an Ultra-Orthodox Jew, had killed the Prime Minister. There was no mention of the assassin's motives or of his association with other anti-peace, ultra-nationalist extremists who had, in their national campaigns, called Rabin a "traitor" for having signed the Peace Agreement with the "enemies of the Jews". Not one tour guide pointed in this direction. In fact, many described Rabin much as Arnie had. He was an exemplary Israeli-born politician and military leader. With his "iron-fisted" character and the gloriousness of his military victories it was even suggested that only Rabin could have taken Israelis to this point. Even so the "old soldier" could only reluctantly bring himself to treat Arafat as a statesman, by his hesitation to shake Arafat, his enemy's, hands. Thus Rabin was a hero for overcoming his own "hesitations" of making peace with his long-time enemies, Arafat and the Palestinians.

Living In/Security

On the ILF tour, discussion of the Oslo Accords turned to the suicide bombings in the Dizengoff Shopping Centre in mid-town Tel Aviv. Descriptions of suicide bombers were the only point of entry into any discussion of the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians on the ILF tour. As we drove past the busy downtown shopping district in Tel Aviv and past the Dizengoff Shopping Centre, Talia said:

> Unfortunately, many of these places may ring a bell for people not because it is a large shopping centre but during the Peace Negotiations with the Palestinians beginning in Oslo, this is where we had our first walkable suicide bombers in Tel Aviv. Crossing the street with, just on a regular day in Tel Aviv; there was a rash of bombings at that time and one of them was here at the Dizengoff Centre. I only say that to just remind you that we carry on our lives on a day to day. You're in downtown Tel Aviv now, people are at work right now, people are out at the cafes.... If we were to stop, or not carry on our normal life here after these incidents, the country would eventually empty out. You have to continue on, things get cleaned up, we remember those who were killed, injured, maimed but the quickest answers to those acts of terrorism is get back to business, try to deal with it, keep on going.

Other suicide-bomb sites were also pointed out to us whenever we passed them. These were the only moments when Talia spent any time discussing the Oslo Accords with us. Avi, the accompanying Brigadier General never talked about the Accords at all. What is most interesting

about this narrative, is not just the fact that Oslo seemed to provoke more insecurity than the promise of security, but that the narrative presents Israelis as taking all of this insecurity in stride. Israeli life is "normal" even under the most insecure of circumstances. Israeli security is paramount and the Israelis are stoically continuing to lead "normal" lives, and are also "heroic" in doing so. What is "normal" for them is not the daily routine of the tourists living in North America, of course.

Interestingly as well, little or no mention was made of the Palestinian resistance in the Occupied Territories, known also as the *intifada* or uprising in discussions about the Occupied Territories or the Oslo Accords. In fact, what was ironic about Arnie's presentation in particular was that it was precisely this Palestinian resistance in the Occupied Territories that led to Rabin's "iron-fisted" policies. He called on soldiers patrolling in the Occupied Territories during the *intifada* to "break bones" rather than kill teenaged Palestinians involved in the resistance, because Israel was gaining a bad reputation for the high number of deaths due to the occupation (Farsoun 1997:233; McDowall 1989).

Palestinian Perspectives on Peace

On the ICSF tour we were taken to Jericho, one of two of the first Autonomy Areas declared in the Oslo Accords. Sivan, the tour guide, told us that she had spent a part of her military service there and she was quite excited to see the changes to the barracks that she had lived in, now that they were in Palestinian hands. Once we arrived at the site there was little to see except what looked like a place that had once been an army barracks! Palestinians dressed in green uniforms and berets were standing and talking. There were no civilians there, nor were we taken into "town."

We were escorted into a very small, plain portable building where we were seated. There an ICSF staff member introduced us to a public affairs official from the Palestine Authority. I call him Issam. Issam welcomed us all and in the first few moments of his talk said: "I don't want to go back in history because history is history and we would emphasise and talk about the time being and the places in which we are living now." This statement immediately signalled to

those in the audience who were at all knowledgeable about this conflict, that he was not going to

go into the details of what had happened to the Palestinians in 1947 and 1967 or since. With this

comment he made it clear that rather than start with a recounting and an accounting of "history"

or "the past", he wanted to start with the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords which he described as having

provided a new beginning for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Issam went on to say that there is a "new mentality and thinking [on] both sides, Jew

and Palestinian" each having been engaged in "tragic struggles" since the "World War". He

conceded that working with the "new government... of Mr. Netanyahu" was "very difficult," and

that Netanyahu has problems of his own dealing with what Issam called "extremist religious

rulers." According to Issam, the "the peace process ... [was aimed] basically to arrange for the

coexistence [and] the co-relations between both people." He warned that "if we are not able to

change the mentality of all our people during this time ... it will be difficult [for the] coming

generations" to do so. He added:

> We are aiming now, from the Palestinian side, to change the mentality of the new
> generation in the Palestinian camp. Our kids, [the] new generation, should change the
> mentality and should accept the idea of coexistence because both Palestinians and Jews
> are living on this land and [they have] no other place to go... Neither the Palestinians
> nor the Israelis [have] any other place to go.

And, in reference to the infamous threat that all Jews have heard, he said:

> We are not going to throw Jews into the sea and the Jews can't throw the Palestinians
> either into the sea. Both people have to live side by side with new ideas and new basic
> things on the ground. I have seven children... and I used to tell them we used to fight
> the Israelis and we used to fight the Jews because of one, two and three and four... But
> it is immoral in the new thinking [to continue to do this]. In the New World, [there is a]
> new way of living. [We can't be] speaking about the battles of 50 or 40 or 60 years ago.
> ... We are looking into a new future, a new century, to establish a new relation between
> us and our neighbours because it is the age of peace....

In this way, Issam seemed to be reassuring his Jewish audience: the Palestinians will no longer

resist or teach their children to resist Israel or the Jews; and coexistence is the way of the future

and is in the interest of all of the peoples of the region.

Issam went on to tell us that in order "to achieve [peace] we started a democratic

process. We had our election ... [something you wouldn't] witness in any other Arab country."

Regardless of the progress the Palestinians were making, Issam said they continued to "[face]

some difficulties with the ... new government" particularly because there were "no negotiations"

currently in progress. He then made it clear that he felt that no matter what Netanyahu did to

block the peace, he would eventually have "no choice. He is going to be the Gorbachev of Israel

who's going to put this right." In other words, Issam believed that Netanyahu like the former

Soviet President Gorbachev, would resist his own Ultra-conservative dissenters, and move the

peace process along because it was good for the Israelis as well as for the Palestinians.

> But finally all of us knows, [there will be a] Palestinian and [an] Israeli [state]. Two
> states would be in this area. One ... a Palestinian, the other an Israeli state. The final
> shape will be decided by [the] people of the area... .... If after 10 years, the people
> decided [on] one state, [that is that] we unite or we build a society and we have a
> common political [entity] ... God knows what's going to happen in this area. Maybe
> [one day] we'll have a joint ... Israeli Palestinian [and] Jewish Palestinian parties, and
> God knows what's going to happen after 10 [or] 15 years. But for the time being, our
> relations and negotiations with our friends, the Israelis and us, [will be] based in [the
> recognition for] coexistence, [and]full respect for both sides ...

What Issam saw as a hopeful future – the probability of a two-state solution and the possibility

for bi-nationalism – caused great consternation for some, though not all of the tour participants,

evidenced by the very heated exchanges that occurred later in the day. At issue was that Issam

had suggested that Israel might in some distant future become a state shared by Palestinians and

Jews, and not an exclusively Jewish state.

Issam delved into only two issues that deeply affected the everyday lives of Palestinians

who lived in the Occupied Territories. First of all, the Netanyahu government's security-based

closures of the Occupied Territories kept Palestinians who work in Israel from their jobs, and

therefore their pay. And, secondly, the government had greatly reduced the number of Israeli

work permits for these Palestinians. Such policies were leading to great financial hardships for

the families of those workers. But rather than give us a detailed account of this or related

problems, he again seemed to anticipate his audience's concerns and, in order to reassure them,

Issam said:

> We want an easier life for our people, [and] easier relations [among us]. Of course
> [there are] extremists from both sides... [and] it's very, very difficult to prevent that....
> The mentality of terrorists nowadays is terminated... I mean, actions in Palestine and...
> I am speaking on behalf of my leadership, we are sure that situation is under control

and the terrorist acts will be minimised...

All the issues Issam raised were clearly directed to an audience of Jews. He tended to assure his audience that what the Palestinians wanted was simply coexistence, peace and good relations with Israel. There was little in his speech about the transfer of land or the rights of Palestinians. I thought throughout this event that a Palestinian audience would have wanted to know about a range of other issues.[25]

The tour participants asked Issam questions concerned primarily with the issues of financial aid, accountability, and the development needs of the Palestinians living in autonomous territories. He noted that while international financial aid was appreciated it often came in the form of tied-aid, meaning that the monies were tied to the countries that financed the aid. Issam felt that those donating monies should be reminded that there is plenty of professional expertise, including lots of engineers in Palestine, and that what they needed were fewer consultants and more direct financial resources in order to build their own infrastructure, such as roads, sewage and water systems.

Officially Representing Peace

On the Israel Development Fund tour we had the opportunity, and some considered it a privilege, to have the-then Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu give us a lecture on peace in the region. We had been warned a day earlier that we would have to endure a security check (I was picked out of the crowd, had my purse and camera checked, answered a few questions and then released) prior to entering a large lecture hall in one of Jerusalem's luxury hotels. One by one, approximately 200 IDF tour participants, all of whom had travelled from

25. For example, such an audience would have expected to hear more about what the Palestinians had gained in the peace agreement with Israel. When would the rest of the territories be free of military occupation? When would Arafat declare a state? What would be its boundaries? What rights would the Palestinians gain in such a state? What about the continued expropriation of land used to build the bypass roads and the Greater Jerusalem "neighbourhoods"? What will happen to the refugees still in camps? What will happen to the settlements? And what about the status of the Palestinians living in "East" Jerusalem? These would be more Palestinian-centred questions than those posed by the Jewish audience on the tours. For Palestinian criticism of the Oslo Accords, see Said 1996.

Canada, were directed into a room and seated in rows. Security guards as well as national and international television crews stood around. The tourists were audibly excited. Friends and acquaintances chatted with one another, many recounting their experiences in Israel.

After a brief introduction, Prime Minister Netanyahu came out from behind a curtain and stepped up to the microphone. He set the tenor of his presentation by referring to the recent Iraqi, United Nations and United States threats and counterthreats over chemical and nuclear weapons policies. He said: "We've had a recent reminder of the quality of the neighbourhood in which we live in this recent crisis." This "neighbourhood" is one that has "radical regimes that foster terrorists or indeed are committed to espousing the great terror of the ballistic missiles and nuclear war" and is "replete with dictatorships, replete with radicals, replete with ideological and religious zealotry that is aimed at removing us." He argued that while in "the first 19 years of the state, it seemed very likely and very possible" for these Arab neighbours "to remove us" because "we were [on] a narrow strip on the Mediterranean coast," the Six-Day War "had made the physical conquest of Israel impossible" and Israel had enlarged its territory from "roughly 10 miles, or 10 km wide in some places, [to] all of a sudden an enormous country. [It was now] 70 km wide, Greater Israel, more!" Facetious comments notwithstanding, Netanyahu emphasised that the Six Day War victory had been important not simply because Israel had gained what he called "strategic depth" but because it had gained "the addition of strategic height." He explained that:

> Between 70% to 80% of Israel's population ...lives on that crowded coastline along the Mediterranean [Sea] and any potential of raid of Arab armies ...now [must face] a very large or rather a very high, very tall stone wall that is over a kilometre high, which is the mountains of Samaria and the Mountains of Judea. .... That is the fundamental change in Israel's position that makes peace possible. The Arabs could attack us, which they did subsequently, but they couldn't conquer us. And the minute physical conquest was removed as an option, the peace option came to light.

Due only to such a victory, Netanyahu argued, could peace agreements be signed with Egypt and more recently with the Palestinians although, he added, that latter process "still has to be completed." But he said while Israel wished to "complete the circle of peace... [we] cannot sacrifice the bulwarks of our security in the process." He insisted that any agreement that

proposed that Israel return to her "pre-67 boundaries" would

> unravel all the progress that we have made.... because if Israel again becomes an indefensible and vulnerable country the peace [agreement] may be put on a piece of paper but it won't hold in the real world.

Netanyahu then warned that "peace agreements, treaties, international contracts in this part of the world hold only as long as you have the power to enforce them" because "what distinguishes this part of the world... [are] dictatorships and undemocratic regimes that are not accountable to their people." Netanyahu offered what he called "the central lesson of the 20th century":

> There are two kinds of peace. [There is] peace between democracies, which is self-enforcing and requires no deterrence, no security.... And [there is] peace opposite dictatorships which requires security and deterrence to be maintained.

Speaking of the Nazi era, he said it had "produced the greatest calamity in the history of nations and the greatest calamity in the history of our nation, the Jewish nation," he characterised that era also as an example of the failure of those who had "confused the two kinds of peace.... They [had] practised the peace of democracy, the peace of concession, the peace of appeasement" with a dictator, and much like any agreement with Iraq's Saddam Hussein, "you cannot enforce or defend [these agreements and] they will not last." In this way all Arab countries, which were defined earlier as undemocratic, were associated with the Nazis and Netanyahu could imply that Israeli-Jews now find themselves facing similar circumstances to those faced by European Jews during the Holocaust.

After arguing that the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan are secure because they are strategically defensible, Netanyahu turned to discuss the basis for any peace with the Palestinians. He told us that:

> ...the Palestinians happen to live on the protective wall of the mountains of Judea and Samaria. They want to be able to run their lives without us, which we accept. We want to be able to run our lives without being threatened by them. How do you resolve these two issues? Well it's important to understand that one way to resolve them is not to get off that wall, for the reasons I've said before.

The position of the Israeli Prime Minister was becoming clearer. The Palestinians, as Arabs,

cannot be trusted to sign a "democratic" peace, therefore the only peace possible with them is one

based on security. The lands that Palestinians "happen to live on" are also lands that are

necessary for security purposes; the population itself is of no strategic import and would no

longer need to be militarily controlled or "occupied". In fact he argued:

> I don't know if you're aware of it but, there is no more Israeli occupation, it's finished!
> The Palestinians now control 98% of the Palestinian population. 2% of the Palestinians
> live under Israeli jurisdiction. 98% of the Palestinians now live under a Palestinian
> authority. 100% in the Gaza district, 98% in Judea [and] Samaria on the West Bank.
> They are no more governed by us. How did you not know that? 98% of you don't know
> that 98% of the Palestinians are living now under Palestinian rule!!

While it may have been true that the majority of the Palestinian population living within what he

called "the West Bank, or Judea and Samaria" were living under Palestinian administration,

Netanyahu had redirected everyone's attention from the withdrawal of the Israelis from

Palestinian land to a withdrawal of Israeli military authority over the population, the

Palestinians. Netanyahu knew, of course, that it was precisely the withdrawal of Israel from

Palestinian lands that was the condition of the Oslo Accords that his government was not willing

to meet.

Of the land itself, Netanyahu would describe it as "empty land, empty of Palestinians

but essential for Israel's security." And,

> It is also land that we have a very deep attachment to because it is our ancestral
> homeland. It is Judea, where the word Jew comes from. It is the mountains
> surrounding Jerusalem, which we have some attachment to, and so on. But even if we
> didn't have that attachment we have a clear security interest in maintaining those
> areas...

Netanyahu made it clear that in order "never [to] sacrifice Israel's security" he had determined

that the Palestinians could "fully determine their own fate, run their own affairs..." while still

providing Israel's security only if "certain powers" are "curtailed or kept in Israel's hands." He

ended his speech by saying that

> ...We want to wish [for] the best but we cannot base the future of Israel just on wishful
> thinking... As you and I and all the friends of Israel and certainly the great Jewish
> people around the world, even those who live in this diminutive and small, constrained
> Canada(!) you surely will understand, I'm sure, that insistence on our part.

Netanyahu repeated the essential points of his platform throughout his presentation. It was clear that "land for peace," which had been the peace-camp and the Labour Party's slogan, had been transformed under his leadership to "land as security for peace." Invoking dictatorships and the pre-modern status of Israel's "neighbours," Netanyahu could hope that support for his position would be won on the basis that his priority was securing the land for the Israelis. The land was of importance to the nation of Jews (e.g., it was their ancestral land) as well as militarily and strategically important for their nation-state (see Levy 1997).

The fact that tour participants did not get an opportunity to experience the on-the-ground implications of these peace agreements was significant. For example, tours in and around the Palestinian Autonomous areas with presentations about where the Jews would continue to live, where the Palestinians would be allowed to live, where the bypass roads would be built, and even the experience of going in and out through the check-points, would have given tour participants a better sense of how the Oslo Accords might be experienced by the people living in the affected areas.

Despite the fact that little time was devoted to the Oslo Accords on the tours, it was clear that some tour participants had come with previous conceptions of Israel and, in particular, the peace and security issues facing the state. I turn next to explore some of the challenges and objections these participants made to tour guide's interpretations, particularly on security, settlements, and refugee issues.

Tourist Resistance

On all of the trips there were a number of tourists who challenged the tour guides' and lecturers' interpretations and narratives at some of the sites. These challenges were often expressed as more than merely a difference of opinion. The challenges as well as the context for them suggested that the tourists were not as willing to "take up" the ideological positionings that were presented to them and, in their own way, they forced alternative narrative presentations at many of the sites.

In this section, I examine tourist "resistance" to the tour guides. While there were many instances when individual tourists challenged the guide or the lecturer, I discuss two occasions to show the inaccuracy of most tourist literature imply or do not even bother to investigage accounts that tourists are simply passive. These two examples also give a broad indication of the kinds of issues that engaged the tourists who were willing to debate these issues in such a "public" way. On each of the tours, these discussions or "debates" helped people define their positions on issues as well as helping them to recognise other tour participants with whom they might later feel "safe" discussing these controversial issues.

Tourist Challenges

While on the Israel Development Land Fund (IDF) tour at the Castel, the site marking the 1947-48 victory of the Jews against the Arab Legion in the Jerusalem area, at least two tourists challenged Arnie our tour guide. Although Arnie had not presented the history of the war in 1948 from the Palestinian perspective, some tourists were aware of this gap. At the very first marker at Castel, Faye, a strong-willed woman in her forties, asked Arnie about the "blue dots" which represented Arab towns, cities and villages and the "yellow dots" which represented Jewish settlements[26] on a map of Palestine at the time of the 1948 Declaration of State. Faye then said she was surprised by the number of "blue dots" and wondered what had happened to the people living there. Arnie responded by asking that we reserve all of our questions until he had finished telling us the whole history of the Battle at Castel. When we reached the top of the hill, Arnie turned to answer Faye's question:

> ...and before we leave here cause I think it's a legitimate question, I think Faye asked about the people .... in the Arab villages [and where those people are today]. We have to keep in mind that the 1948 war was a war of survival. If we didn't win there was not going to be any continuation [of the state of Israel]. The Mufti of Jerusalem was very, very clear in all of his declarations. This will be a jihad [holy war]. This will be a cleansing of the land. This will be ethnic cleansing. There will not be one Jew left in this part of the world. They will be pushed into the ocean. Which means the ones that didn't die here would eventually leave. That's the type of war it was in 1948. With all the pain and understanding of refugee situation and these people['s] situation, I only

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26. This colour scheme is interesting in and of itself. License plates in the West Bank and Gaza are blue; while Israeli citizen's license plates are yellow!

say to them today [to] look in one direction and that is their national leadership who believed and tried to convince them that it was going to take a few weeks, bing bang boom, we're finished, hunky dory, you can go back to [your village], [and] you can go back to [your town]..., and you can go back to... a little village on the entrance to Jerusalem, and everything would be hunky dory. It's been 50 years now that they've lived in the situation that they live. No one has forgotten about them. They are still a part of the negotiations, eventual negotiations, that may take place some day but they will not be allowed to go back to villages where they lived because they made a big, big mistake. That's how I would look at their situation.

Faye then responded: "OK they made a big, big mistake, they are no longer that generation....

You know it's..." But Arnie interrupted her with:

Oh they still are. The Arabs and Palestinians have maintained a refugee mentality in the next generations. Jordan did not allow Palestinian refugees to leave the camps. They would lose their UN education, health and welfare benefits. The minute you left your camp, [you] didn't get it anymore. So they built a system maintaining refugees, and inside Palestinian communities some will proudly tell you that they are refugees even though they've never ever seen this village. They don't know where it is, well they know where it is. [But] [t]hey have maintained that for 50 years without any problem. [They think] [t]hey are still refugees.

Still, Faye continued to press Arnie to answer the question more directly or at least deal with the

dilemma she had put before him. She said:

What if there were, I mean hypothetically, what if there are those [Palestinians], the kids, [or] the grandchildren who say we'd like to go back. We have no ill feeling but we'd like to come back because this is where my grandparents and my great grandparents [lived] and we want to resettle in peace?

A flash of anger seemed to cross Arnie's face and with a wave of his hands, he vehemently stated:

Finished! I'll tell you why it's finished. Today in Israel I believe that the Arabs who stayed, and there were Arabs who couldn't get out, I don't want to make it all, you know, o-kay... we want to live in peace [with them]. .... These are Arabs who've lived in the Jewish state already for 50 years. No one is asking them to go any place. They are part of the population here. We believe that they're part of the democracy here. And anyone who came from any place else and said they want to come back, as far as our policy is concerned, this is a Jewish state. The Right of Return is for Jews and not for someone whose parents or grandparents left, for whatever reason they wanted to. We do not have open immigration policies. As discriminatory as that sounds the preference is for Jews in a Jewish country even for the second or third generation of people who left... these other villages.

He ended with a quick reference to the fact that Canada is now a member of the committee

looking into the "refugee problem" and that "it's an issue" that will not have "an overnight

solution."

Thus, Arnie had declared that there was no possibility for the return of the Palestinians, that the descendants of those who had been displaced had illegitimately continued to claim land they had never "seen" and that, in the end, it was their fault anyway since they lost a war that their leaders wrongfully led them to fight. Most ironic, of course, was Arnie's use of the Law of Return as a legitimation for the denial of the Palestinians' own return. Yet the very foundation for such a law was that it was established to "return" the Jews to the land they had "longed for" but hadn't "seen" for 2000 years!![27]

Arnie was immediately asked another question after he responded to Faye. The next question came from Aaron, a fit-looking 70-year old who had travelled to Israel forty-one years prior. As he looked out from the hilly vantage of Castel, he asked Arnie where the controversial Jewish settlements were. Arnie pointed to and named some of the settlements, each built over the Green Line, that is, built in the area occupied by Israel in the Six Day War in 1967. Aaron then immediately questioned the matter-of-fact manner in which Arnie had been presenting the "facts" of the settlements. He asked Arnie:

> So why wouldn't [you build] the Jewish settlements, instead of being beyond those trees, be down here in front of the trees where it's just got terraces?

In effect, what Aaron was asking was why don't the Israelis build new settlements within the Green Line; that is, within the pre Six Day War boundary of Israel? Arnie seemed disquieted with the question and seemed again to have been thrown into a defensive position. Up until this point, he had answered the tourists' questions with a certain quiet guidance. He had shown a commitment to quietly discuss and debate different perspectives with the tourists. But Aaron's question seemed to shift Arnie's disposition and he began passionately to lecture us. He said:

> Why? Because the 1967 border is gone, finished! As far as Israel is concerned, it's finished. Even moderates and left-wingers in Israel will agree with that. It was unliveable, unliveable. And around Jerusalem there's areas now called Greater Jerusalem. It's Greater Jerusalem. Why? I'm not talking about the religious or historical standpoints now. I'm talking about the realistic standpoint 'cause I could give you all sorts of reasons why we could or why we should. The people who would like to go to the '67 Border, let's just finish it, that's Palestine, this is Israel and finish it off.

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27. Faye later said as much to me as we later walked down the hill towards our waiting bus. At one point on our way down she said, "I imagine they would remember after 50 years what we remembered for 2000."

> But that's not enough [for the Palestinians] and then they can ask well why can't the people go back to [this village], why can't they go back to [that village]? Well it's obvious. If they went back, there'd be no Jewish country!

With this Arnie seemed poised to convince Aaron that there was a more "realistic standpoint" from the one he had taken. Arnie had not only revealed that with "Greater Jerusalem," Israel had in effect annexed the East, (and therefore, according to Arnie, there was nothing left to negotiate), he had also presented Aaron with a number of classic slippery slope Israel-centred arguments against returning to the 1967 borders. Namely, if Israeli-Jews conceded to any Palestinian demands, they would have to give the Palestinians all that they might demand. Furthermore, Arnie threatened, if Palestinians were allowed to return to their villages, Israel would no longer be "Jewish." This statement fit the logic of all of the arguments Arnie had used throughout the tour: the Jews must stand strong on principles that protect them first. If they venture away from the national goal of a sovereign and powerful Jewish state, they will lose their place in history, both literally and figuratively. The Jews are endangered and might disappear as a people.

But Aaron was not one to be easily convinced. He then asked Arnie to show us where the controversial Jewish settlement of Har Homa is.

In 1997 the proposed Jewish settlement of Har Homa (also known as the Palestinian village of Abu Ghoneim) became the site of some considerable debate and protest by Palestinians and members of the Israeli peace camp. The Israeli government under Prime Minister Netanyahu claimed that the settlements were perfectly within the spirit of the Oslo Accords and part of the Greater Jerusalem policy. They denied accusations that Netanyahu was trying to scuttle the peace negotiations by allowing the settlement to be built.

There were two fundamental objections to the settlement from the Palestinian and peace camp side. First, while Palestinians were refused housing permits and faced demolitions when building without permits, new homes for Jews were being given the go-ahead. Second, this geographical area was considered to be part of the final status arrangements for Jerusalem. Abu Ghoneim or Har Homa is the last in a ring of villages "encircling" Jerusalem. In other words, allowing Har Homa to be built would create new "facts" on the ground prior to any final

status arrangements over Jerusalem and would give the Israelis the advantage in any claim over the area.

Arnie, in his response to Aaron, said that we would drive by Har Homa later in the day and then added that this "neighbourhood... would block off any territorial continuity to east Jerusalem for the East Palestinians," implying that this settlement was necessary for Jerusalem's security. His position reflected Netanyahu's politics on the situation. We never did get to Har Homa on this or any other tour but it was clear that Aaron had asked Arnie about Har Homa in such a way that helped to position "settlements" beyond the 1967 Green Line as a problem; a position Arnie was very uncomfortable with.

Challenging Authority

One of the many examples of tour participants "resisting" interpretations presented to them occurred early on the Israel Civil Society Fund tour when we met with the Netanyahu government's Minister of Security, Victor Kahalani. He was introduced to us as a military hero who had been the military commander of the Golani Brigade that had "recaptured" the Golan Heights from the Syrians in what was presented as a bloody "David and Goliath"-type battle in 1974 (see above). He was also a member of the Third Way party, a coalition partner in Netanyahu's Likud government. His party was described to us as one that promoted peace with the Palestinians (i.e., the return of West Bank and Gaza Strip territories) but whose central platform was its strong opposition to the return of any Golani territory to Syria and any Jordan Valley settlement areas to the Palestinians.

The most interesting aspect about these interactions was that a Minister of the Israeli government and a decorated military hero of the Israeli Defence Forces was challenged about the pragmatism of his military assessments. I do not present the Minister's lecture but rather the first three questions posed to him and the answer to the third primarily because I am interested in the challenges, but also because in each of his answers, he repeated the themes of his opening lecture. So for example, Wolfe, a man in his 60's who is very active in Peace Now, an Israeli-based peace movement that was formed in the 1980's, and who had travelled on alternative tours through

Israel and the Occupied Territories asked:

> A number of Generals and others say that given the electronic surveillance equipment
> available to the Israelis, "it is impossible for any military build-up by the Palestinians.
> Seventy-five percent of Generals say that settlements are not the way to go." And,
> secondly "what do you think of the checkpoints" that the Palestinians must pass in
> order to get to Israel to work.

Another tourist, Gabriel, a soft-spoken businessman in his early 50's, who seemed to have had

some long-term engagement with Palestinian affairs asked:

> You made a statement that Israel should move out of Lebanon. Why don't you feel that
> the Jordan Valley could become another Lebanon?

Expressing some frustration that the Minister was not at all interested in developing trusting

relationships with his Arab neighbours, one tour participant asked Kahalani to discuss the

possibilities for developing trusting relationships that could be based on "protection" and

"defence" for both peoples and with a "balance between these things." To this the Minister

responded with a story:

> There was once a cartoon that he had seen as a child. An Arab had drawn a map of the
> area with the Jew in the sea and the Arab said, 'This is your end.' [This little boy] saw
> this and asked his father what this is all about. And from that day, [this boy] had
> decided "to quit learning how to swim" adding that 'none of my kids will [learn how to]
> swim.'

The Minister believed that some "Arabs" would

> dream to push us [Jews] out to sea. I don't trust them, any of them. Look what
> happened when we opened [the Western Wall] Tunnels [in Jerusalem]. ...We have to be
> strong. I am not naive. I don't trust anyone in the world, just those who live here that
> must protect themselves.

The questions from the tourists to Kahalani revealed that some of the tourists had been

reading about and engaged in linking security and human rights issues in Israel and the

Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well as the Golan Heights. As well,

these tourists did not defer to a man who had been introduced to us as an Israeli military hero

and Minister in the Knesset. He was, in fact, the highest-level government official we were to

meet on that tour. While he may have found the questions posed to him provocative, he showed

no discomfort with them and never raised his voice at all. However, his responses to the tourists

were condescending in tone and implied that the only Jews to be trusted were those with whom one had to live and with whom one had to struggle to live in Israel.

These examples show that some of the tourists were troubled by at least some of the militaristic nationalist narratives presented to them. To have North American Jewish tourists suggest that there might be alternative implications arising from the War of Independence, alternatives to the policy of "Green Line" settlements, or alternatives to militaristic security policies were all fairly dramatic moments for me to witness. Of course , it would be inaccurate to assume that one challenger represented all participants on the tour, although I never witnessed any tourist object to any one of the challengers either. Challenges were neither rare, particularly over the issues of war and peace, nor were they unacceptable to the other tourists. Each participant seemed to take the moment as another part of what one tourist called a "steep learning curve." This attitude suggested openness among some tour participants and a willingness to learn about more than "one side" of any issue presented to them. It also signalled that many tourists were quite aware that there were possibilities of re-interpreting and reading the past in multiple ways. Moreover, each challenger exuded a boldness and security as he or she posed these challenges to our Israeli guides or hosts. So, for example, to challenge an Israeli Minister of Security and a military hero as if he held no more than another perspective was evidence of certain invulnerability. I think the fact that these tourists are privileged (i.e., upper middle class professionals) must surely account for some of their security, but as I was to find out over the course of the research period, there is a sense of this invulnerability among many Jews living in North America. This characteristic is something that I think those studying "Zionism" whether in Israel or in North America have not yet become fully aware of. The Profiles will highlight some of these very tendencies (below).

In the next chapter, I shift the "location" of narrative representations of nation from Israel to the North American setting as well as some of the audiences' responses to those representations.

CHAPTER 8
"ISRAEL" IN DIASPORA: IDENTIFYING (WITH) THE NATION (STATE) IN AN/OTHER PLACE

Fieldwork in Community

In this chapter I examine the narratives about Israel and Jewish identity presented at community events in a metropolitan area of Canada. It is in these narratives of Israel that core Jewish national cultural values and traditions are encoded. Very similar narratives of Israel and Jewish belonging occur at numerous events and arise in a field of complex inter-relationship. I suggest that the content of the narratives and the context of their presentation as well as their inter-relationship – or intertextuality – defines some of them as Zionist and others as post-Zionist. That is at their core, each narrative "imagines" (Anderson 1991) all Jews as a nation and locates Israel as the Jews' homeland. Still, these narratives do not "imagine" the Jews' diaspora, they narrativise the nation. Some narratives imagine Israel as the Jews' nation (of and for all Jews) and others as a state of its Jewish citizens.

Over the course of approximately four years, I attended community events including lectures, book-readings, films, and community festivals. I was interested in the context within which these narratives were presented as well as the practices associated with "being there." In my examination of the narratives of Israel as presented to Jews in North America, I have limited myself to narratives presented at public culture events thus excluding other kinds of representations, such as those on television and in newspaper and magazine articles. Watching television, reading magazines, and other such activities are private activities and though I had many discussions with people about the articles they read, or the programs they watched or listened to, I have chosen to examine the narratives presented at public events and/or in collective settings. The "private" and "personal" views of Jewish identity in the interviews are reported in the next section of the thesis.

I also examine the range of publicly "aired" discussions, as well as the interactions that occurred between speakers and audience members in the question and answer sessions that followed many of these talks in order to explore just how some representations were "taken up" by Jews living "in diaspora." I attended many of these events on my own, although when I was invited to join with community members, I did so. I felt it was important to get as broad a sense as possible of what goes on in and across the community; attending with people from the community gave me the opportunity to learn more about them.

While I attended many community events, the sheer number of them precluded me from attending them all. In the greater metropolitan area in which I conducted my research, except for the high-holiday periods, there was at least one Israel-focused event to attend per week, and at times there were up to three events in one night. In the smaller city, there were fewer events. After some time I noticed that the most well attended events were those in which Israelis were the lecturers, particularly Israeli politicians, authors, and academics.

Generally speaking, many community members could be counted on to attend these events. If attendance was free of charge, the lecture rooms were often quickly filled to and beyond capacity. If there was a charge, tickets would often sell out well in advance of the event. I could not attend many of the fundraising events held in the community because too often a very high price was charged for the tickets for such events (they often raised millions of dollars annually). Ticket prices for these events were well beyond my financial reach and, as a result, it was only as the guest of one of the families in the communities that I was occasionally given the opportunity to attend such affairs.

I was also given some opportunities to attend board meetings for organisations supporting peace and reconciliation among Jews and Palestinians. I attended these meetings at the invitation of at least one Board member. I do not discuss those meetings here, however, as they were not public events.

I soon learned that community attendance was highest at Temples, Synagogues, Jewish Community Centres, and some public parks. High attendance may have simply reflected the community's affiliations and common meeting practices and not their level of interest in the topic

being presented; but the passion and level of engagement I witnessed suggests that many audience members were there because they were very interested in the discussion. I would often meet people at community events whom I had previously met at other events or in other contexts. These meetings often led to other invitations to attend upcoming events.

What became obvious very soon after I began this research was that the Jews in these North American metropolitan centres were concerned with many issues that had little or nothing to do with Israel. In fact, despite the turnout at Israel-centred events, Israel did not at all dominate the topics for public debate or lectures. For example, there were recurrent lectures on topics such as the high rates of "intermarriage" among Jews in North America, sometimes called "assimilation"; or the right of Holocaust victims and/or Jewish organisations to claim compensation for money moved to Swiss banks during the war years. North American Jews were also engaged in celebrating their own achievements and culture at Yiddish as well as Jewish film and book festivals. And during the annual Holocaust Education Week, films, lectures, and workshops were used to educate the wider community about the Holocaust. I attended many of the events as well, in the hope that I would see what was of broad interest to those living in these communities.

The density of and high attendance at community events that had little to do with Israel supports others' claims that Jews in North America are interested and active community members in a range of issues (Brym, Shaffir and Weinfeld 1993; Lipset 1990; Shaffir 1983) not necessarily or primarily tied to Israel as their cultural, spiritual or historical centre (e.g., Heilman 1999; Liebman 1999). However, because I am most concerned in this thesis with the relationship of North American Jews to Israel, I will examine only those events where Israel and Israel-diaspora relations were the dominant themes.

After close to four years in the field, I can say with some confidence that the narratives of events I have chosen to examine are representative of and may even be typical of the range of mainstream perspectives that many Jews living in a large community in North America have

been exposed to[28]. As importantly, taken as a whole, these narratives are also representative of the range of articles in periodicals and newspapers written for and by Jews, especially in such Jewish-oriented publications as the Canadian Jewish News, Tikkun, Commentary, Jerusalem Report, and The Jewish Forward. Again, I must reiterate that I did not attend religious services or events sponsored by Ultra-Orthodox nationalist extremists.

As far as I could discern, and from what I learned from others around me, the events in which I participated were all events attended by "mainstream" Jews in the community. The people in attendance were, generally speaking, neither ultra-nationalist nor Ultra-Orthodox, nor particularly activist in their orientations to Israel. These were public culture sessions for people who were interested in and, judging from their responses to the speakers, who thought they were familiar with current issues facing the Israeli society.

In addition, these events were community- and not necessarily Israeli state-sponsored events. So for example, synagogue and community centre talks were funded by internal budgets allotted for public speakers and, in some cases, endowed lectureships. University programs, for example, Jewish Studies programs, typically sponsored university-based lectures. Other community events were sponsored by organisations that support projects and universities in Israel. So for example, Israeli peace organisations like Peace Now, and universities such as the Hebrew University of Jerusalem have fundraising arms in North America called "Friends of Peace Now" or "Friends of the Hebrew University". Each of these organisations seeks "friends" or memberships that support their work in Israel. By becoming a student member of some of these organisations during the fieldwork period, I was sent notices of upcoming events as well as letters appealing for continued financial support. These events were also advertised in the Canadian Jewish News or local newspapers and synagogue newsletters and appealed both to "friends" and the wider public to attend. Each of these organisations used the opportunity to raise awareness about Israel, their organisation's good works, as well as to appeal for new

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28. I maintained contact with people who lived outside my research area (most often, people I met on one of the tours), and those who lived in a larger urban center would often tell me that they had the same speaker travel through their city or metropolitan area.

members.

In North American community settings, Israel is presented in ways that are semi-official and, on occasion, I found myself "on tour" in a North American urban setting such as at what I call the Expo. More commonly, however, I found myself at diverse presentations, offering a range of views, often in conflict with one another. These events sometimes involved emotionally explosive debates between lecturers and audiences. There were also many evenings of presentations on the almost arcane philosophies of Jewish-state relations. But even these issues were ones with which audience members showed familiarity and an unexpected engagement.

These events in North American settings also provide a public view of the responses of Jews in diaspora to representations of Israel and its relations to Jews. As I showed earlier, when we were in Israel, there were moments when some tourists challenged the tour guide or the lecturer. On the one hand, the events in North America show which issues and debates engaged their audiences, who actively followed the minutiae of interpretive strategies addressed to Jewish history, philosophy, religion and law. The audiences and questioners in North America had not necessarily made the kind of financial commitment that those on tour had made, but their interest is beyond doubt. Here Jewish identity is not only of active concern; it has obviously involved considerable intellectual and educational investment. Yet the public meeting discussions also showed that many in the audience were also out of touch with daily life and politics within Israel itself, a point emphasised by some Israeli speakers. In some ways these audience members seemed to be on more familiar ground when discussing "official" representations of the past, than events and ideas about contemporary political strategies and dilemmas facing Israel. When confronted with more diverse views and critiques of Israeli state politics as well as contemporary conflicts, some audience members adopted very conservative, yet authoritative, positions as I will show below. These positions often drew on images, ideas and "lessons of the past," (some as "official" guides presented them on the tours), to the frustration of some of the Israeli speakers at events. As I will show in the Profiles in Section Three of the thesis (below), these positions are not the whole story. Nevertheless, Jews in diaspora can be seen taking up as their own views the very representations and assumptions

that are presented by tourist guides and the more "official" lecturers in North America and using these views to think, talk and argue about Israel and the Jews.

The events set out in the following two chapters give the reader a sense of this range of familiarity and also the increasing diversity of views and passions among community members. The first section sets out events that present predominantly classical representations of Israel within Zionist terms: Israel is homeland of and for the Jews, its land is Jewish and its polity is Jewish and democratic. The latter focuses on critical representations of Israel set within what I will call a Post-Zionist framework (see Silberstein 1999). Israel is a democratic state which normalised the Jewish nation thought not within a particularly Jewish teleology (Evron 1995). While not denying that Israel is the Jews' state, post-Zionists emphasis the normalisation of the Jews and thus of Israel's need to normalise its politics. Their emphasis shifts from fulfilling diaspora political needs to tending to regional or Israeli political needs. Thus Israelis who visit, while asserting that North American Jews owe them respect for having to live with all the discomforts of Israeli life, also asserted that they need not represent diaspora-Jews' perspectives or desires unless they are also in their interest as Israelis. In addition, these speakers emphasised that the era of "existential" crisis over where the Jews belong in history is over; the Jews of modern times have a place to call their own. Taking up the issues raised by Rabin's assassination and the peace process with the Palestinians, Israeli-Jews insisted that they live in a strong, secure, democratic and modern state; and with their strategic and moral strength, Israelis are in the process of normalising their relationships to other states in the region. These are not narratives of an Israel under siege or in fear of her "neighbours."

At all of the events I attended in which Israel was celebrated or discussed, there was never any question that Israel was the Jews' nation-state. An interesting aspect of these events was that they raised questions about just which "Israel" Jews in North America would want toor could identify with (Troper 1996). I have tried to highlight not only the taken-for-granted aspects of these presentations but also how they provide a much more complex representation of Israel and Israelis than the narratives presented on the organised tours through Israel. And, although some complex issues were raised during the tours, they were never fully realised and the overall

tone of even the ICSF tour, which dealt with some issues with some degree of depth, was not of an alreadysecure and "normal". Moreover, there seemed an internal logic to the tours that forced a "balance" of the perspectives: for every "progressive" position there was a more "conservative" one as well.

Identifying (With) One Nation - One Land

Imagineering[29] Israel

In 1998, the focus of a good number of community events was the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the State of Israel. Although I attended many Israel-centred "moments in history" (e.g., Jerusalem at 3000 [in 1996], and 100 years since the development of Zionism [1997]) celebrations – lectures, festivals, marches, exhibits – planned by community organizations, the "Israel at 50" events were among the most elaborate and celebratory events I observed and participated in over the course of the fieldwork period.

For example, the Israel at Fifty pavilion at the Expo grounds in the metropolitan area where I conducted my research was, at 107,000 square feet, one of the largest and most expensive country pavilions ever exhibited. Sponsored by the Israeli Consulate and 175 Jewish community organisations, over 1000 volunteers worked in the pavilion for the ten-day duration of the Expo. It was also a display of Israel that very closely corresponded with the markers or signposts illustrated on the organised tours through Israel that I had travelled on. The Chair of the consortium that planned and designed the pavilion reportedly said: "portraying the diversity of Israel was a challenge, 'so we took the easy way out and decided to show you a little bit of everything'" (Canadian Jewish News, August 27, 1998:3).

This pavilion celebrated an Israel that has a modern economy and, in particular, a country that is becoming a worldwide commercial success in computer and engineering based technologies. There were also over fifty vendor's booths selling anything from summer sandals to non-alcoholic beer; and information promoting all manner of things, from opportunities for

financial investment in Israel to vacationing in Israel, to the need to fundraise for peace education in Israel. An art exhibit entitled "Echoes of the Past – Visions of the Future" featured paintings, sculptures and photographs, some depicting everday life and scenes from present-day Israel, others evoking the struggles and pains of the past. In another area in the Pavilion, a large colourful mural that took an Israeli artist 20 years to paint was described as abstractly depicting "4000 years of Jewish history." The exhibit's centre stage, its backdrop designed as a reproduction of the Jerusalem city-scape, featured fashion shows, musical performances, cooking demonstrations, lectures, and entertainment programming.

Most impressive at this exhibit was the 12,000 square-foot "Negev Desert" display which featured a small cabin labelled "a kibbutz"; "greenhouses"; two- and three-foot "Roman" columns surrounded by sand labelled "Masada"; live camel rides for the children around the "desert"; and a mosaic floor labelled an "ancient synagogue floor".

Represented in the Negev Desert display was the Jewish people's ancient past, Israel's pioneering spirit, and contemporary development practices. For example, a simple wood-panelled cabin-like life-size room, representing the "kibbutz" was described as

> ... a self-contained social and economic unit in which decisions are taken by the general assembly of its members and property and means of production are communally owned... Traditionally the backbone of Israel's agriculture, kibbutzim are now also engaged in industry, tourism and services.

Nearby a four foot square wooden structure, with plastic covering and filled with plants was labelled "Greenhouse" and its growing method described:

> Protected agriculture ... another technique that conserves water because it reduces evaporation. In addition to providing over 90% of Israel's food, greenhouses throughout Israel grow many crops of high-quality fruits and vegetables which are exported to European and North American markets. As well, there is an enormous export market of flowers and ornamental plants.

And very near the "Greenhouses" in the "Desert" there was a small bed of plants, with pipes

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29. This is the name given to Disney's designers.

leading in and around the plants. This was marked "Irrigation system" and labels explained how:

> The search for water saving techniques has spurred the development of computer-controlled irrigation systems, including the drip method.... The drip method not only dramatically reduces the amount of water needed for irrigation, it also allows farmers to use poor quality water; the salts in brackish water do not damage the leaf canopy in the way that regular sprinkler irrigation would.
> Oranges, grapefruits, melons, avocados, wine from Israeli grown grapes and fresh flowers are among the products that have responded well to drip irrigation and now represent a significant export market.

This narrative was very similar to those I'd heard on the organised tour I'd taken more than three years before. In fact, the Expo narrative was very close to my transcription of the narrative provided on the ILF tour.

In another area of the Negev Desert display, two pillars meant to look like "Roman" columns, one broken at the top and the other slightly tilted to one side, stood on a platform of sand, were marked "Masada". The label explained:

> ...Masada is one of the most intriguing and popular sites in all of Israel. In 70 AD, after Jerusalem was destroyed, the Jewish Zealots fled to Masada, the best-fortified palace built by King Herod. They held out on top of Masada for three years battling the Romans, even though they were no more than 1,000 strong and surrounded by 15,000 Roman warriors. Through intricate water cistern and industrious farming methods, the Zealots sustained themselves for the three-year battle. In the year 73, anticipating imminent defeat, the entire group rather than surrender, committed suicide.

While this was a different version of the Masada story than the one presented by Arnie on the Israel Development Fund tour, it is the most common version of the story. In fact, Arnie challenged a tourist whose interpretation was that "the end" at Masada was characterised by mass suicide rather than murder.

In the centre of the Negev Desert area of the pavilion, young men dressed in "Arab" garb representing the "Bedouins" of the Negev Desert were taking children around on live camels that had been brought in for the exhibit. These "rides" followed a circular path near the other "desert" features described above. While a troubling representation to be sure, this was one of the only exhibits or popular entertainment events in which any segment of the Arab population of Israel was represented. In addition to this representation, among the many vending booths in the "shopping district" of the pavilion, one displayed "a bazaar" of "oriental"

arts and crafts: colourful embroidered scarves, dresses, and other knick-knacks.

At the main entrance to the "Synagogue Mosaic Floor" was a large plaque entitled "Revealing an Ancient Message" that described how and when the mosaic had been unearthed and stated that the site where it was found, Sepphoris, was "part of the Galilee not far from the city of Nazareth." One could read that "the town was built in Roman times, about 2000 years ago, and prospered as a centre of Jewish life through the later Roman and Byzantine periods (3rd to 7th centuries CE). What the mosaic "revealed" was:

> ...a story of promise and redemption that was central to Jewish belief. The first images that someone entering the synagogue would have seen depict the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac in which God promises to protect the descendants of Abraham and to make them into a great nation. Other scenes present images of the Temple of Jerusalem, which, though destroyed, still survived as a symbol of continuity which inspired hope for its restoration. A grand circle of the zodiac shows the organisation of the universe with the sun chariot at the centre symbolising the centrality and power of God. While this synagogue mosaic focuses on Jewish themes, some elements are common to the Christian art of the period. The Sacrifice of Isaac, the Angel's Visit to Abraham and Sarah, and the circle of the Zodiac can all be found in the art of Byzantine Churches.

All of the "synagogue" labels had been carefully written to depict the Jews' chosenness and framed history within the Jews' frame of reference. For example, the description of the synagogue floor is more about "the story of promise and redemption" than an opportunity to discuss how it is that "some elements are common to the Christian art of the period...." This commonality is simply a temporal matter – the Jews' time in the Galilee having been dated within this period of the Byzantine era. Rather than conjecturing that the floor depicted the hybridity or intermixing of systems of belief at the time (see Alcalay 1993), the theory was that it was about the "story of promise and redemption ...central to Jewish belief," a belief that "promises" to "protect" and "make them into a great nation" (see also Elon 1997; Silberman 1995; 1997; Whitelam 1996).

The exhibit at the Expo had as its inspiration classical Zionist interpretations and idealisations of Israeli society; there was very little of the current culture, politics or everyday life of Israelis. While one could pick up "information" about diverse topics, these were not part of the "representation" of the nation-state. So, for example, the Negev "Bedouins" represented were de-

politicised and exoticised as camel herders, while the Palestinians and the Druze, were simply displayed on a platform at the entrance to the main stage area in an exhibit of life-sized figurines celebrating the "cultural mosaic" of Israeli culture (Shohat 1989). Each figurine's identity was marked by a stereotypical representation. For example, a *kafieh* covered the head of an "Arab man"; a woman dressed in a black embroidered dress carrying a basket on her head was a "Palestinian woman"; and "Orthodox" Jewish men had long white beards, and were dressed in black suits and hats. All were equally stereotyped in this display.

While most "popular entertainment" events celebrating Israel in North America often presented a simplified, Disney-like version of Israel, there were other more learned representations of Israel and it is to those that I want to turn my attention now. While these occasions were not "family-entertainment" events, they were clearly designed for the Jewish general public rather than for an academic or specialised audience.

Imagining the Jews' Past

Imagining Israel's past as the Jews' past was very common at many of the community events. I did not audio-tape these events but I did make extensive field-notes and the presentations below are based on my notes, with any direct quotes cited as such.

On the tours, Israel was presented as the cradle of the Jews' biblical and ancient history and it was interesting, though not surprising, to see how the same efforts to construct the space of Israel as the Jews' land and rightful "place" occurred in North American settings. At one such event, a Dead Sea Scrolls' scholar from a U.S. university professor was greeted by a roomful of interested community people. The lecture was the second of two and although it was held in a university lecture hall, it was open to the public and therefore broad in scope and content. According to the community member with whom I attended the event, the scholar had described the sites and history of the Scrolls' discovery in the first lecture.

The purpose of the second lecture, which I attended, was to debunk the myth that the Dead Sea Scrolls were only of importance to Christianity and to show that the Scrolls held clues to understanding a very important historical period in Judaism. In particular, the professor

argued that the Dead Sea Scrolls were written in a period when major shifts were occurring in Judaism; shifts that established some Jews present-day practices. He believed it was unfortunate that the Scrolls' research agenda had been set by New Testament and Christian studies. As he put it, "a person who steals the Dead Sea Scrolls from the Jews effectively steals a part of Jewish heritage, especially if they are taken to be only a matter of Christian history."

Although the professor acknowledged that the Scrolls could also hold the key to understanding the rise of Christianity, from his perspective, the Dead Sea Scrolls are very much about grievances between Jews, and are tied to a common tradition that later became the basis for contemporary Judaism. He explained that there were three sects of practising Jews during this period and that the Scrolls reflected the *halachic* basis for one of these sects, the Saducees. The lecturer pointed out that although there had never been a time in Judaism when there was only one sect, this breakaway group's theological perspectives were to have a lasting effect on the Jews' religious history. He argued that all three of these groups were engaged in political disagreements over topics ranging from Jewish law to political action to theology, all evidence of a rich culture which was to set the terms and scope of debates within Jewish history. Furthermore, while there had been peaceful debates among the Jews, the rise of Roman rule, the reign of Herod, the rise of Christianity and the destruction of the Temple influenced the growth of a new Jewish messianism and soon one group was taking to revolution, inter-Jewish political violence including assassinations. The professor ended with the suggestion that such an understanding of the Scrolls' history should lead us to consider lessons for contemporary Jews' religious debates. He suggested that inter-group discussions need to be protected lest they lead to radicalisation as they had in the past: the lesson of the Scrolls is that debates among Jews could and should be peaceful ones but that they could also lead to violence.

The interesting point of this professor's narratives, for my purposes here, is that he represented a narrowly defined history of the time and space within which these Scrolls were significant. The periodisation he used was based on Israelite and Biblical archaeological references; it was about the history of the Jews and of no real import to other peoples. The period he spoke of was not dated in the period of an "Ancient Israel" either and yet he managed to cast

the name "Israel" onto that past (Silberman 1992). In fact, it is ironic that a professor who could see that the Scrolls' research had been dominated by New Testament interests, could not also see the hegemony of biblical and Israel-centred archaeology for the "history" of the Middle East in general (for an extended discussion, see Whitelam 1996). Following the standard practices of those doing biblical archaeological research in the Middle East, this scholar noted that the "Qumran sect" was a "group of people who separated off sometime after the Maccabean Revolt." The Maccabees were a "Hebrew tribe" who revolted against the Romans and are often cited as important actors in the story of the Jews in the region. Here he used the contemporary name of the site where the Scrolls were found, "Qumran," to name the "sect," and then associated the Scrolls with the period of the "Macabbean Revolt." In this way the scholar situated the Jews' past and the Scroll community in a present place, contemporary Israel. I am not suggesting that this professor was involved in an idiosyncratic practice. Rather, this is the dominant historicising discourse in the region and, for Jewish audiences, it may only reinforce the claim that the land of Israel is exclusively, or most significantly, about the Jews' history (Elon 1997; Silberman and Small 1997; Silberman 1997; Whitelam 1996).

The question and answer session was most interesting because it too was as much about the present as about the past. With North American Jewish community leaders and members engaged and enraged by the "who is a Jew" debate, primarily a debate about who has the authority to define "who is a Jew" in Israel, the questions were as much about present divisions as past "sectarianism." Indeed the first question from the audience was: "How do you compare the sects of the past to those of the present?" And the answer was that the "movements of the past" were "not about religious practices" *per se*, because "everyone practised Judaism" and "strictly adhered" to its religious laws. On the other hand, "modern disagreements" and "religious movements" are defined by religious and "not political practices." Still, the professor managed to avoid discussing the legitimacy of any one side's claims for the religious authority to perform conversions and define who is a Jew.

Next, the speaker was asked if the "Zealots of Masada" were "members of the Essenes." I had assumed that Masada would be invoked in this setting and I was not disappointed. After

all, the story of a sect living in isolation and rebelling against a dominant political authority would sound very familiar to anyone who had read or heard about the Masada myth (Zerubavel 1995a). The speaker quickly reiterated, as he had earlier in the talk, that the "scrolls were found in a place very different" from Masada and that they had been "written sometime before Roman rule" in the region. Explaining that the "Zealots were rebels against Roman rule," he distinguished them from the "Qumran sect" who were a "more peaceful" people. However, he added that "just about everyone rebelled against the Romans" except a very "few aristocratic Jews" living in "the Galilee" at the time.

Another audience member then asked if the "differences among the groups in the past" could be compared to the differences between Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and secular Israelis? The professor explained that although there were "some similarities" in the past it was the case that "90% of the population" lived a kind of "common Judaism" and "only 10% of the population" practised in a "learned" and "ritual manner." He added that: "the average Jew is Jesus... he came from a small town, he read Torah, he knew Hebrew, he was an average guy in the Land of Israel." And he repeated that the differences among Jews today are based on interpretations of religion, while in the past the disagreements were "political".

Later, a particularly interested and well-read audience member asked how it was that the professor knew that the "documents dated prior to Roman" arrival in the area if it was clear that the Scrolls also included information about the Romans. The professor's response: everyone in the region knew that the Romans were coming and the "War Scroll" that the audience member had referred to, could be read as a warning to all of the expectation of war. The professor felt that this position was consistent with his argument that the Qumran sect believed they were living the "end of days," so they were spreading such news constantly. While acknowledging that many scholars would disagree with him on this point, particularly his dating of the Scrolls to a point prior to the Roman's arrival, he said that he believed this interpretation was mistaken and a misreading of the Scrolls.

My purpose for analysing this event is to demonstrate that the audience members were clearly linking Israel and the Jews' present history with that of a perceived common and ancient

past. This professor, like the guides on tour and the many other representations available of Israel, had also limited the scope of the attention of his listeners to locating the Jews in this place – Israel – and the biblical importance of these sites to them alone. I would go so far as to argue that while this event and others like it were open to non-Jewish audiences, I am not sure that non-Jews could make sense of the lecture unless they were interested in either Biblical archaeology or the history of Israel from Jewish- or Israeli-centred perspectives because of the professor's emphasis on Jewish historical periodisation, e.g., the Macabbean Period, the Herodian Period, and the Temple Period; his citation of certain ancient texts, such as <u>The Jewish Wars</u> written by Josephus; and his reference to prominent Israelis, such as Yigal Yadin, Israel's most prominent nationalist archaeologist (Silberman and Small 1997; Silberman 1990). There was no description of non-Jewish communities of the time and, as with the tours, the archaeological significance was defined within biblical and historiographically Jewish-centred terms, and as a backdrop to the history of the Jews in Israel (Abu El-Haj 1998; Silberman 1997; Whitelam 1996).

Digging for the Nation's Past

At another event, organised by Canadian fundraisers and supporters of one of Israel's universities, a group of close to 100 people gathered in a Conservative Synagogue's auditorium. One of the Synagogue's board members opened the evening by telling us that "it is the remembrance of the past that makes this country [Israel] what it is." We were told that the university had for which they were fundraising that evening, had "bridged Israel's past with its future." As an example, he told us that its researchers had managed to bring "ancient prayers" to the present in the form of a computer disk that holds "3000 years of knowledge." Invited as the guest of honour by the university's fundraising organisation, (called the "Friends of" this university), the guest of honour was introduced to us as a man who had "contributed to the biblical and spiritual knowledge of our beloved Land of Israel," as one of the university's lecturers in archaeology, and as one of Jerusalem's Western Wall Tunnel tour guides. He had been invited to speak to us about the university's recently sponsored excavations and interest in the sites around Jerusalem.

The archaeologist, an Israeli-Jew in his mid-50's, introduced himself as someone who would be presenting us with a scientific and archaeological perspective on Jerusalem. He told us that "Jerusalem has a variety of stories." But, he said, in order to understand the significance of one's findings, one needed to know the historical dimensions as well as the geographical and topographical nature of excavated sites. When researching Jerusalem, one should turn to what he called

> the historians: [In order] to understand [the] First Temple [one turned to] the Bible; [in order to understand the] Second Temple, [one turned to] the New Testament, and Josephus, etc.

Our speaker, who had earlier been concerned to tell us that he had always assessed findings on the basis of good scientific research (e.g., using topographical maps), now cited biblical and classical ancient Jewish texts as important "historical" texts and the means by which he periodised his findings.

Admitting that his interpretation of the findings were contrary to those of other archaeologists working in the area, he nevertheless argued that what had been excavated in and around Jerusalem was evidence that the Temple Mount site is in fact "Davidic"; that is Jerusalem was indeed the "City of David." Having established the importance of this site for the Jews, the archaeologist went on to say that such findings legitimate the call for continuing to excavate in and around the Western Wall tunnels.

He then reflected on what he called the "euphoric swift victory" of Israel in 1967 and explained that for years since there have "been excavations of a tunnel along the Western Wall" because neither "Rabbis nor Muslim Sheikhs would allow the digging [of the] Temple Mount. The Temple Mount is traditionally known as the place where the First Temple was built but it is also the site of Al Haram Al Sharif or the Muslim's Noble Sanctuary. For these reasons, the lecturer explained, archaeologists had been left to dig along the Wall, learning "from the outside what was inside [the Temple Mount]." He explained that "three stone tiers [or layers] in Jerusalem" represent periods in Jerusalem's history as follows: (1) "David's time or the First Temple Period"; (2) the "time of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre" and the "Second Temple

Period"; and (3) the "Tunnel period and the period of The Wall.[30]"

The archaeologist went on to describe how "walking through the tunnel is one of the most exciting" experiences for it not only represents the interval from "the Second Temple Period to modern times" it also highlights "the centrality of the Temple Mount in the history of Jerusalem." Here again, history was limited to a framing from the perspective of the Jews. This process was achieved in a manner even more radical than on any of the organised or private tours of Jerusalem on which I had participated. For here, even the "occupiers" since the Second Temple period – including the Mamaluks, the Ottomans, and the British – have disappeared into "the tunnel period and the period of the Wall."

Very excitedly the speaker then declared that a group of archaeologists had recently decided to explore why it was that the "present Temple Mount is small compared" to the one "in the Mishnah[31], [where] the Temple Mount is [described as being] 500 by 500 cubic feet or 230 by 230 cubic meters." To this speaker,

> the Mishnah [refers not to] the present Temple Mount, [but to the] one previous to the one [we call the Temple Mount] today... It is exciting to believe that Herod went to build the Temple Mount based on the architecture of the Macabbean Temple Mount.

And just in case those in the audience did not understand the significance of what he had just said, he explained that all of this meant that "Herod did not invent the site. He knew what was there before." In other words, the Macabees, a Hebrew tribe, and not the Roman's King Herod, were responsible for the Temple Mount structure. According to this lecturer, this research established that such grand scale architectural design which had for many years been attributed to the Romans (and King Herod in particular), could now be claimed as the invention of the Jews' kin, the Macabees. Furthermore, the purpose for future excavations in the area would legitimately be "...to find ...[this] expanded vision of the Temple Mount."

Such statements have important political implications for Israeli and Palestinian politics. To have an Israeli archaeologist declare that the Temple Mount area is much larger than

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30. He earlier named the three periods: 1) the "Medieval Jewish" period; 2) the "Christian Period;" and 3) the "time of the Jews."

first imagined gives credence to extremist ultra-nationalist Jews who not only claim the entire Al Haram Al Sharif area as the site where they would like to "rebuild" their Temple, it also legitimates their controversial and illegal squatting and purchase of lands in the rest of Muslim East Jerusalem (Armstrong 1996; Boyarin 1996; Abu El-Haj 1998; Elon 1997; Goldberger 1995; Lustick 1996).

Finally, the speaker also spoke to us about how every tourist who visits Jerusalem can now walk through the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem and appreciate the role that archaeology has played in the reconstruction of the area. He explained that "because Second Century Jerusalem was a Roman city, ...we need to remove the Roman period [layer] in order to reveal the Jewish structures, Jewish layers." Thus it is appropriate to excavate Jerusalem in order to get to the buried history of the Jews. Layers can be dug up in order to reveal only their history, and tradition; the past is their country, not foreign at all (cf. Lowenthal, 1985). No other peoples' histories need to be preserved since they are just overlays, covering essential Jewish structures (Abu El-Haj 1998; Elon 1997; Silberman and Small 1997).

There was never any discussion of the non-Jewish faith-communities' relationships to the city of Jerusalem (Ben Ze'ev and Ben-Ari 1996; Benvenisti 1996). In fact, the only references made to other religious leaders or religious sites were to the "sheikhs" who do not allow excavations on "the Temple Mount," and the Christian's Church of the Holy Sepulchre as a site essential for studying the Second Temple "tier." Other "national" communities and their historical and/or indigenous ties to Jerusalem vanished. What was presented was a "City of David" lived in, planned for and designed by the Jews in the past and now that it has been recaptured as "Jerusalem," it can be newly-excavated, and reconstructed for the Jews. Any excavation is important only for the Jews' history and the Jews' traditional link to the City (Abu El Haj 1998).

In the narratives above, much like on the tours, the "ancient" land called Israel is conceptualised only within the terms of the Jews' existence in the past and their continued

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31. Part of the Talmud that codified Jewish laws.

survival and therefore legitimate contemporary "return" to it. Only the Jews among all the "ancients" could claim an ongoing tie to the region. They have this tie and their "chosenness" to return them to the land (Silberman and Small 1997; Whitelam 1996).

Israel as the Jews' State and the Jewish State

While it was taken-for-granted by all the lecturers that Israel is the Jews' nation-state, the question of how a state can be both Jewish and democratic was taken up on many occasions. One well-attended and most interesting discussion took place in 1996 in a university lecture hall. The speaker for this event was an elderly professor of law from one of Israel's most prestigious universities. In his presentation the professor set out to discuss the evolution of philosophical understandings of and possibilities for a Democratic Jewish state. He began by outlining the philosophical beliefs held by three important Jewish philosophers, Maimonades, Spinoza, and Mendelsohn. The professor commented that the debates currently raging within Israel and among Jewish scholars (and sometimes exclusively among the Orthodox) reflect these earlier philosophical debates. The question was: will Israel become a Jewish democratic state that emphasises its democratic nature, an Israel for Israel's citizens; or will Israel become a democratic Jewish state emphasising the Jewishness of the state of the Jews?

The professor began by arguing that Orthodox Jews who live in Israel today face an "acute dilemma." He explained that although many of them have "accepted democracy," evidenced in large part by the fact that they have institutional political representation (e.g. the Status Quo Agreement of 1951 gave the Chief Rabbinate of Israel jurisdiction over such matters as marriage, divorce, dietary laws, for the Jewish inhabitants of Israel) and that they participate in state elections (e.g., the National Religious Party is but one example of a party that has wielded some influence), they still find it difficult to reconcile Judaism and the reality of a modern Jewish state. According to the lecturer, the reaction of the Orthodox has been to take one of two positions: on the one hand, there are those who deny that Israel is an authentic Jewish state; some have gone so far as to claim that Israel is "the deed of Satan" and "a hindrance to redemption." These members of the Orthodox community have excluded themselves from the everyday

politics of the state and, in some cases, have even worked with "enemies" against the state (e.g.,
the Palestinians). On the other hand, there are those who have a messianic understanding of the
state: Israel was the authentically Jewish state and though it may not have reached its "ideal" it is
part of the longed-for "return." According to this professor, the majority of Israel's Orthodox
Jews are affiliated with this latter way of thinking. They therefore participate in what to them is a
permanent messianic struggle for the ideal Jewish state.

The professor explained that in order to understand these debates, one needed to return
to the foundation of modern Jewish thought itself and, in particular, to three thinkers who
attempted to bring ideas of religion, nation and state in line with the religious and political
assumptions of the modern world. These are Moses Mamonides who lived in the 12th Century
(1135-1204) and who wrote The Commandments (Sefer Ha-Mitzvot, Heb.) among other great
works; Benedictus de Spinoza who lived in the 17th Century (1632-1677) and who wrote A
Theologico-political treatise and a political treatise (sometimes referred to as "The Treatise" or
"Tractate"); and Moses Mendelsohn who lived in the 18th Century (1729-1786) and is known for
his work Jerusalem or, On Religion, Power and Judaism, among others. According to this
professor, these philosophers transformed the conception of the nation and God, and in their
discussions of the transcendent and the corporeal, politicised religious thought.

Briefly the ideas of significance according to this professor were as follows:

- Maimonides condemned those who believed in the "corporeality of God." Thus
  God is spirit not body and there should be no worship of a human "messiah." One
  should rather follow their spiritual calling.

- Spinoza offered a secular understanding of Judaism and was the "first secular Jew."
  In his Treatise Spinoza had called on the Jews to "overcome the Jewish tradition" of
  "awaiting the messiah" because it "hindered their progress;" Spinoza called on the
  Jews to engage in the world and to participate in human "History." Spinoza had
  also radically transformed the conception of the relationship of the Jews to God:
  from a Spinozian perspective, all peoples have been elected by divinity. In this
  way, Spinoza undermined the Jews' claim to chosen-ness. Furthermore, Spinoza

argued that the Jews could achieve redemption through reason, rather than through prayer. And finally, Spinoza would have felt comfortable with mainstream Zionism for it was an ideology guided by the yearning for a national and therefore secular rather than transcendent state ideal.

- Mendelsohn had written the "antithesis to Spinoza's claims" and in the process had also "transformed Maimonides' claims." Mendelsohn promoted the Spinozian perspective of "entering the Jews into history but against Spinoza," he felt there was "religious and national significance of Torah" for Jews.

Returning to the contemporary situation facing Israel, our speaker said that "Israel is a Jewish state" with a Jewish "religion" and that any move "to separate state and religion was wrong" for "neither was true to or in man's best interest." He argued that every person and every collective has spiritual as well as temporal concerns and they are matters of justice and duty, and there was a role for both religion and state in these matters. Thus he said, "religion and state are not different in their purposes; they are different in their means." The "state may be coercive" whereas coercion is the "antithesis of faith."

Furthermore, the speaker explained, returning to Mendelsohn's thesis, there was "only one time" when there was "no tension between state and religion." This was the period of the "Mosaic Constitution" when "God was King" and the administration of the "civil arena was sacred"; any "offence against religious law" was an offence against civil law and the "enforcement of religious law" was the "same as the enforcement of civil law." Since that time, and up until the creation of Israel, the speaker argued, the Jews had to practice under "another's sovereignty" and had thus to "perform their duties to their own God" while living under other's administration. This Mendelsohnian theology was eventually to form the basis for Reform Judaism.

Having outlined the main points of the debate among these three important philosophers, the lecturer stated the main question for the evening: "Can a Jewish state be a democratic state?" He dismissed Jewish religious leaders who believed that there could not be a Jewish democratic state, because any Jewish state is an impossibility. He felt it was wrong to

assume that Rabbinic Judaism's concepts of power fundamentally clash with democracy. He emphasised that the rule of law (e.g., Supreme Court judgements) in Israel is not the result of the role of *halachic* Judaism but rather of a "cultural Jewishness": a Jewishness based in language and tradition. Thus for this speaker, Judaism and Jewish national identity are linked to the way that followed Spinoza whohad defined secular Jewishness. Where others emphasise a democracy with Jewishness "added on," (i.e., you build a democratic state and you make it Jewish if there is something in Judaism that improves the democratic model), our speaker rather recommended that we think what about the ability to create "a balance of both Judaism and democracy." He suggested as well that this approach had guided the drafting of Israel's most recent Basic Laws that embody "the abstract dimensions of both Judaism and democracy."

In addition, he explained that it was important to understand that for Orthodox Jews it remains "difficult to separate duty and divinity" because to them duty and the divine are mutual considerations. The Orthodox cannot accept this separation for "there is no single individual sphere"; to the Orthodox "every action is for and about the collectivity." Thus, for example, the premise for "human rights" is defined as inherent in their beliefs about the "metaphysical notion of mutual responsibility" and "not individual desires." For this reason, within Orthodox communities, "any individual sin" is thought to create the possibilities for "collective damage."

Thus this speaker described an Israel confronting its *halachic* tradition. It is a secular, liberal state, aware of these contradictions and striving to "balance" the distinction between the private and the public, according to our speaker. The symbolic means of identifying coexistence among religious and secular Jews are important and remain part of the pragmatic or "complementary approach" taken by Israel's legislators and lawmakers who have also recognised
· that these contradictions can never be resolved by denying one or the other's practices or sensibilities.

Still the professor acknowledged that while the population is largely non-observant, all have to cope with the Orthodox. Referring to the "who is a Jew" debate as an example, the speaker argued that the clash of civilisations is not just internal to Israel but has effects on Jews living outside the state as well. In this way, Israeli statehood poses a challenge to Jews both in

Israel and those living outside the state.

The speaker thus rationalised the current debates occurring between the secular and religious sectors of Israeli society as age-old disagreements that were rooted in Jewish philosophy rather than as a function of the peculiar circumstances facing a state claiming to be both Jewish and democratic. Although he had omitted from his main discussion the fact that the Israeli state governed non-Jews and that the "balance" he spoke of was of no relevance to those who have no duty to Rabbinic authorities or their faith communitie. This latter point became an issue raised in the question and answer session.

One of the most interesting comments from the professor came after an audience member, an elderly man, asked: "How do we respond to a Jewish generation that doesn't seem to know its own history, tradition, or identity?" The professor answered:

> We cannot leave this room assuming that this is simply a post-Zionist or post-modern moment. ... The Arab population has its own problems of identity with the state. ... For who is an Arab in a Jewish state?

He went on to say that the "post-Zionist concept of Israel" is one that states that Israel "shouldn't be Jewish at all," but that it should be "a state of its citizens" (for overview see Silberstein 1999). Obviously not in favour of such a solution, the professor offered that the problem this Jewish generation faced could be solved through education, and he added: "[we] can only be hopeful that the experiment of Zionism will succeed." He went on to say that:

> There are external and internal enemies to the concept of the Jewish state. The conflict is not just about whether or not the state should be Jewish, Zionist, and democratic. The problem in a Jewish state is 'How can a non-Jew identify in an ethnically Jewish state?' and 'What happens to a Jewish Zionist state with non- Zionists in it'?

The professor ended this discussion by stating that notwithstanding the contemporary understandings of human rights and democracy "the Law of Return should be accepted because it is [Israel] the only Jewish state... even though it discriminates against non-Jews."

This presentation illustrates the complicated relationship of modern forms of Judaism, the state and ideas of democracy. The professor's thesis was that to some degree, Israel had reconciled Orthodox and secular positions and had become a democratic Jewish state. Israel and

the relationship of Jews to the state, to democracy and to Judaism, are presented in much more complex terms than those generally presented on the tours. Within such narratives, Jews do not have a simple relationship to the Jewish state. Their differences are philosophical and political and their individual or collective orientation to the state is informed by various historical trends in religious, philosophical and political thought. In addition, there was at least some acknowledgement that within the state's border, there are non-Jews who may not "identify" with a state defined as Jewish and/or Zionist. However, the speaker did not argue that this recognition should fundamentally shift the definition of democracy for, in the last instance, he defined Israel as the Jews' state. Therefore the state is legitimately struggling with the philosophical and theological constitution of Jewish lives and traditions.

In these presentations Israel is described along a more or less classical Zionist trajectory, as a state tied to the Jews' past traditions as well as conforming to and developing into a model of a Jewish state. Israel is a state confronting its ancient and traditional past – a state facing such existential dilemmas as how to reformulate Jewish traditions into the state structure – while in the process of re-creating the Jews' presence and "present" in the land.

In the next chapter, I look at how Israel is represented in community narratives as not only a state tied to the Jews' past traditions, but as a modern and post-Zionist state. It is a state that has transcended its existential crises and resolved most matters of Jewish survival. It is now dealing with the more "normal" dilemmas faced by contemporary states and a politics defined by democracy and peace.

CHAPTER 9
IDENTIFYING (WITH) ISRAEL AS NATION-STATE: TOWARDS A POST-ZIONIST ISRAEL

Israel as Nation and State

Among Zionism's loftiest "goals" was the goal to "normalise" the Jews. This meant bringing the Jews into the course of History defined by statehood (D. Goldberg 1996; Hertzberg 1976;Wheatcroft 1996). I argue here that a number of presentations in the community assumed that Israel had entered a post-Zionist era, an era when the Jews had become "normalised" (Cohen 1995; Silberstein 1999) and the Jews were dealing with issues faced by other states. The focus of these presentations was on the maturing quality of the new relationships that Jews have to one another (within Israel) as well as to the world (i.e., with its neighbouring states). No longer living in as a nation without a state, Jews now celebrate the full dimension of living in and in t time of the Jews' state. But these celebrations also mean that Jews in diaspora should take on a new role vis-a-vis the state. It is no longer necessarily a state that defined their interests; it is a state that primarily defined the interests of its inhabitants, particularly its Jewish citizens (Silberstein 1999). It is to these representations that I now turn.

The Modern Jews' State

At one community event, sponsored by the local fundraising arm of Israel's most prestigious university, an Israeli was invited to speak about the relations between secular and religious Jewry in Israel. The event was very well attended with about 200 guests congregating in a public area of a museum hall, chatting over wine, cheese, desert, and coffee. About an hour after the reception had begun, we were moved into a lecture area. Soon after the welcoming remarks by the presidents of the local and national "Friends" chapters of the Israeli university, and the Chair of a Jewish Studies program in the city, the Israeli philosophy professor who had been invited to speak was introduced to us. He was described as "a voice of moderation among the modern Orthodox in Israel." He had been asked to speak to us about the relationship between Orthodox and secular Jews in Israel, a relationship that had been represented as

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fractious and irreconcilable in the local Jewish as well as in the international media that year [1997].

The speaker began by reminding us that he was bringing "an Israeli perspective to the problem" and asked us to recall that:

> Forty-nine years ago, [author Arthur] Koestler came to visit the new-born state... He wrote a book with some analysis of the future and had predicted that in over two generations Israeli society will become non-Jewish... Veblen said if Zionism succeeds to bring the Jews to Palestine, they will isolate themselves and the world would lose the Jews..

He argued that in order to understand "who was right" and "who was wrong" we

> need to examine the different sections of Israeli society.... Some are totally alienated from Jewishness. On the other pole, there are those who are running to separate Zionism and Jewishness and who isolate Judaism from anything modern....

According to our guest speaker, "there is a tremendous gap between Sabras[32] and this gap will become deeper. And it will also become deeper between the diaspora and Sabras and the next generations." But, he warned, "there is a danger" when we represent such a relationship in terms of "polarisation."

The professor suggested that "when analysed conceptually" all the tensions occurring in Israel "shouldn't be a surprise to us [because] ...there is a tension within Zionism itself." He explained that on the one hand

> Zionism was a radical revolution, perhaps the most radical revolution ever... [it was] much more radical than any other. [In order for this revolution] to succeed [we needed] to revive the nation [that was] without territory; [to ask people to] leave a territory to settle in a new one; [and to] revive a mother tongue. Mothers had to learn the language from their children. [We needed to] create from nothing a revolution. Where do other revolutions get their myths? The future. [But] Zionism takes the past, the renaissance, the ancient homeland, and turns back and looks towards the past.

For all of these reasons, the speaker argued, Israel would need to deal with the tension between the past and the future. It is inherent in Zionism's ideology. Further, he explained

> there is no historical analogy of the revival of a spoken language; no precedent of return of people to an ancient land.... I mention this not for the sake of Zionist propaganda, but because [o]n the one hand, we want to normalise and we have to go through an

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32. This term describes Jews born in Israel (see also Doleve-Gandelman 1987).

> abnormal process to get there, both in terms of using Hebrew as our language and then [settling] in the land. There is no historical analogy to this. But this tension [is] not [one] between Judaism and Israeli Zionism. It is a tension between past and present.

But he believed "the numbers" are evidence that the tension is not between Judaism and Israeli culture and cited these statistics to prove his point:

> 23% of Israelis say they do not turn on their radios on Shabbat. 75-79% fast on Yom Kippur ... and say yes, when asked if they perceive themselves to be good Jews. 20% say no. 57% believe God gave the Bible to the Jews in Samaria. [With respect to] religious Orthodoxy and secular Orthodoxy [they are represented at] 20% each. Everyone else is in between [the two extremes]...

Still, the lecturer explained, Israelis "are always confronting both sides because 'the boxes' have been written by these two groups.... There is in Israel a cultural and political clash and not necessarily a social clash.... " Contradictions which had been "managed" for more than thirty years by the "[1951] Status Quo Agreement" (an agreement that set the terms of Rabbinic powers vis-a-vis the state) were "no longer fruitful" for either "side".

First of all, he suggested, this Agreement which had set the terms of the relationship between religious authority and the secular state authority had been based on "one false common denominator." He explained that:

> Each side [had] believed [that] the other would disappear. Ben Gurion, [always the political] pragmatist, [had believed] entering into the Agreement wouldn't pose any future harm to the state. [He assumed that the] Jews' Orthodox religious practices were 'a phenomenon of exile' [and once] in Israel, the Jews [would become] normalised [and the] Orthodoxy would disappear [or, at the very least, become ever more] marginalised.... [It was also] perhaps for nostalgic reasons [that] he agreed to release the Orthodox [from any] military service [to the state].

On the other hand, for the other signatories, the Orthodox Jews, "a secular Jew is an oxymoron." In fact, as our speaker explained, Rav Kook, Israel's first Chief Rabbi, was "one of the most tolerant of Orthodox Jews" for he, unlike most Orthodox Jews, had believed the return to be one "from foreign lands to the Holy Land," and had celebrated the substitution of "the foreign tongue for the Holy tongue." But Kook had also believed that the Jews had escaped "from assimilation to Jewishness" and that eventually secular Jews would disappear. To Kook and his followers, the secularism of the Jews was simply a "symptom of life in diaspora."

According to the speaker, up until very recently, each "side" had tolerated the other and "the hegemony of mutual recognition" prevailed. He explained however, that the situation in Israel had changed to such a degree that the Status Quo Agreement no longer embodied the expectations of either group, citing the following examples. First, when the military exemption was granted to Orthodox Jews, there were "very, very few of them." No one expected that, in the future, there would be a large and politically important Jewish Orthodox sector. The "religious Zionists," on the other hand, had "allowed for taxi-cabs" to be driven "on Shabbat," believing that because there weren't many people who owned cars at the time of the Agreement, the streets would "always remain practically empty"! For these and a series of other similar kinds of unpredictable historical changes, each "side" now sees "what they have lost" rather than what "they gained" as a result of the Agreement. According to this philosophy professor, this forms the background for understanding contemporary tensions between the communities.

And finally, the professor said that he felt that the Status Quo Agreement was "no longer efficient" because "Israelis feel more confident." They no longer believe they need to "rally together for fear" of their own disappearance. "Parodoxically," they no longer feel they "need to fight" in order to accomplish "the simple things;" they now want their own "ideological needs" to be "fulfilled." In other words, Israelis can now afford to ask for more because they have greater security.

Saying he did not want to leave us feeling as though Israel was in a terrible state, he argued that he saw all of these developments as evidence of "the accomplishments of Israel" and that more recently they had resulted in a number of "important cultural developments." For one thing, he argued, there has been a "tremendous revival" in the study of classical Jewish texts among "elite secular Israelis" who, though not interested in religion *per se*, believe that these texts embody "our cultural memory, and our history" and that the Ultra-Orthodox are "not capable of preserving these" cultural memories for secular Jews.

Secondly, he surmised that the "conflicts over the Law of Return" and "who is a Jew" could be understood in terms not of "who is a Jew" but rather "who is a rabbi". It was, according to this speaker, a conflict over Rabbinical authority. It was the Rabbis who were arguing over

who had the authority to declare who may or may not be accepted as a Jew. If the Orthodox maintain their monopoly over the conversion of Jews and thus the confirmation of "who is" Jewish, then the majority of Jews who convert in North America, where Reform and Conservative Rabbis form the majority, will be denied legitimacy. Thus it is not a matter of "who is Jew" but which Rabbi has the authority to define someone as a Jew. The professor then gleefully pointed out that the very opponents of this battle for authority are the very people who "once opposed" the "Zionist" state: Lubavitcher Rabbis and Reform Rabbis! In the past, neither group had conferred any legitimacy to the state of Israel and yet now "both care very much about Israel."

The professor ended his lecture on what he thought was an "optimistic note". He proudly noted that

> the most crucial elements of Jewish identity will be [worked out] there in Israel and as a Zionist I am very happy about that... for Zionism was not just about the revival of Israelis but also about the revival of the Jewish people. So I am very happy the tensions are being played out in Israel... This is a question of cultural national interests in Jewish history.... This is not a religious versus secular question. It is a cultural one.

Thus, the speaker had set the debate between Israelis and Orthodox Jews within Israel's contemporary history and pointed to Zionism's founding philosophy as well as the political and the pragmatic acts necessary to create the state. The professor had presented Israel as a country working through the always unpredictable processes of state-building, and undergoing very "normal" processes of maturation and development.

This was one of the community's presentations in which Zionism's founding principles were explicitly problematised as well as celebrated. It was also clear that for this professor, the Jew's cultural centre is in Israel, and that the problems that Israelis were engaged in resolving are crucial to the Jews' cultural, and not simply national or spiritual, development. This presentation diminished any sense of the havoc that the Orthodox-Secular battles have wreaked in Israeli society, citing instead more positive developments, such as the continued traditional practices of Jews in Israel. And, as importantly, the speaker didn't highlight the recent Israel-diaspora dilemma: the "who is a Jew" monopoly that the Orthodox rabbinate continue to hold is

distressing for Jews in diaspora who are more likely to be affiliated with Conservative and Reform authorities. Most interesting then is that the speaker presented no role for Jews in diaspora and took no time to represent their interests. While he was celebrating Zionism's model of Israel (i.e., to be fully engaged in Jewish culture and politics, you should live in Israel), he presented his audience with a post-Zionist vision of Israel. The existential crises associated with the Jews' survival have disappeared to be replaced with the luxury of choosing how to live as Jews in a Jewish state.

Problematising Rabbinic Authority

At a conference on the relationship between Israel and Canadian Jewry hosted in a Reform Temple, a much more ominous tone was set with respect to the continued conflicts between Ultra-Orthodox and secular Israelis. On this occasion, an Israeli professor of sociology raised the alarm over the issues faced by an Israel trying to cope with rabbinical power that challenged state legislators. Religious authority was represented as a threat to the democratic development of Israel.

Seeking to examine what he called the "conflict between the rule of law, democracy and Rabbinic rulings" and the related issues of "illegalism and disobedience," the sociologist asked us to think about "what happens when *halacha* becomes politicised?" He argued that when "a group of Zionist rabbis" announce that "no Jew" should encourage or help "remove Jewish settlers" currently living in the Occupied Territories, they were asking their followers to "collectively disregard" what could soon "become law." He cited Rabin's assassination as an example of an "illegal act" that had been "incited" and supported by "religious nationalists" and "religious authorities." He recalled that when he had warned a Canadian audience that "the cynical exploitation of religion" was very dangerous, he had nearly been attacked by some of his audience members. This had occurred only two weeks prior to Rabin's assassination. With this comment, the sociologist had implied that North American Jews had been naive about the relationships of the religious leaders to Israeli politics. In addition, he said that many "Israelis were dismayed" that many "in the diaspora" had supported the "politicisation of the *halacha*."

While the sociology professor acknowledged that many of current halachic debates pre-date the foundation of Israel, he added that some of the issues are new. In particular he said that "the role of Gentiles on the Land of Israel" had only become an issue "after the 1967 War." He blamed the current situation in Israel, or what he called "a gap between the rabbinical rulings and the political parties," on the 1951 Status Quo Agreement signed by Israel's first Prime Minister, Ben Gurion and the "Ultra-Orthodox religious leaders" of the time. He argued that the religious parties had "demanded" a "heavy price" and that they have since that time, not only managed to consolidate their power but have also in effect held the "balance of power" even while constituting no more than 15% of the population. He said that in a "properly functioning democracy" it would be "inconceivable" that any "collective" representing such a "minority" should be allowed to "disrupt the lives" of the general "public."

On this occasion, Israel was presented as a state in which legislators and the majority of its population have to struggle with and sometimes against its rabbinical leaders. In fact, for this young professor, the Israeli political system has what he called a "lack of separation" between state and religion and that this situation "distorted" Israel's political structure. "Rabin's assassination" was only one "symptom" of a much deeper problem in Israel and this problem was a "very dangerous" one. For this sociologist, democracy and the power held by religious authorities cannot be reconciled.

The role of religious leaders and their relationship to the Israeli state was problematised here, a position not put forward by the other speakers referred to above. While the Jewishness of the state was not the issue, the speaker's objection to rabbinical representation in such a state was. While other presenters claimed that Israel was a state moving to become more representative of its Jewish citizens and that Zionism had managed to re-define the relationship of Judaism and Jewishness to state politics, this presenter claimed that Israel was undemocratic by virtue of the very relationships that had developed between Israeli legislators and Judaism's representatives. In fact, Israel was presented as undemocratic by virtue of the fact that its religious minority has managed to maintain a good deal of political power. And without some

solution to this power imbalance, the sociologist predicted even more violence was on the horizon (see also Champion 1997; Lustick 1988).

The questions community members asked this speaker focussed on the ability of any rule of law to prevent such heinous acts as the assassination of a Prime Minister. For example, he was asked: "How can any court prevent a person from committing these acts individually or from acting on matters of conscience?" and "If violent acts had been predicted, why were they not prevented?" In his response to these questions, the speaker conceded that no court could be expected to prevent people from acting individually but, he said, the problem in Israel is that individuals who committed these acts were doing so as "members of a collective," and in "response" to its "leaders." He explained that from a "strictly legal perspective," these leaders could have been "charged for breaking the law", i.e., for "incitement" to cause violence, but Israeli political leaders had "remained inactive" in order to avoid "further polarisation" between the secular and religious groups in "Israeli society." He felt that "prior to Rabin's assassination", Israelis had been mollified by the "myth that no Jew would kill another Jew." But he warned, there could be "more bloodshed between Jews" if future agreements "order settlers removed" from the Occupied Territories. He said that he remained "sceptical" that any "lessons had been learned" from the recent past or that any actions would be taken to "prevent violence in the future." In his tone, the speaker seemed to suggest that the questions posed by the audience were quite naive about the constraints under which Israeli political alliances had been constructed and continue to be maintained.

While the role of religion and democracy in Israel was to command the attention of many audiences in the community, there were also many lectures and discussions about the future of Israel. Many of the lectures and presentations dealt with the prospect for peace in the region subsequent to the 1993 Declaration of Principles that were signed by Israel and the Palestinians. And another aspect of Israeli life and the Israeli state was represented.

Re-Mapping Israel

In 1996, an Israeli geography professor from one of Israel's desert universities came to the larger metropolitan area where I worked to speak on "Israel After Rabin". He had presented lectures to two other synagogues: one Conservative, one Orthodox. On the night I attended, he spoke at a Reform Temple. The room was filled with many people who had attended the previous lectures. I spoke to two elderly men who said they had been impressed by the earlier lectures but that they still had a few more questions to put to the speaker. Approximately 50 of were seated in a small lecture hall in the basement of the large Temple.

The geographer, who had made *aliyah* from England, began his lecture by telling us that he was not seeking to

> make a sell for or against the Peace Process. I leave that to the politicians. [Still] I will be mixing my personal thoughts with my professional analysis on where the peace process is, where it is going, and where the elections [of 1996] may take it... Some believe the only way forward is the peace process while others believe it is the worst thing possible... But I do want to point out that there is less dialogue within the diaspora than even in Israel itself.

I thought at the time that this was a very defensive statement to begin the night, but it was not until the question and answer session at the end of his lecture that I realised the reason he felt he needed to open the evening in this way.

The geographer explained that while Prime Minister Rabin had been assassinated by Yigal Amir, for "ideological reasons" in order to "prevent the continuation" of the peace process, the assassination had, in fact, "prompted the opposite reaction" to occur. The most recently signed agreements, the Oslo II Accords, had in fact been implemented virtually according to the deadline as set out by its signatories. And he remarked that it was "strange" that Oslo I which was "less far reaching" had not been implemented in time "while Oslo II" with "more at stake" and "more land to return, was implemented" on time. Moving next to explain what "implementation means" he explained that it was "the transfer of power to the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank" and the holding of Palestinian elections. He said "the transition of power [had] taken place remarkably smoothly... considering we are working with two million

people [the Palestinians] who don't particularly like us."

In addition, the geographer commented that while "many are eager to look at the negative side of the peace process, everyone needs to look at what has been achieved... and to recognise that each party weighs the cost-benefits differently, depending on their political leanings." As an example, he said that despite their histories of conflict, Jordan's King Hussein and Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak had attended the funeral of Rabin and had even offered condolences. "Who would have believed that these people would arrive to say eulogies, even in a 'cold' peace? ... Still it is also ironic that it took the assassination of an Israeli Prime Minister by a Jew to prompt this."

Next, the speaker placed an Oslo II Agreement map on an overhead projector and commented that while "there is no logic to the map at first glance... It looks like splatters of green, yellow, and rusty brown" there was a rational design to it. He explained that Oslo II had established that the Occupied Territories would be divided into "three zones of redeployment." The Agreement had named these zones "Area A, Area B, and Area C."

- Area A are areas where the "majority of Palestinians live." These include "all the Palestinian towns except Hebron". Towns in Area A have been "transferred to the Palestinian Authority."

- "90% of Palestinian residents who do not live in Area A, live in Area B." This area covers the "rural regions." On the whole, Israel has withdrawn from these areas but still has "some administrative control in some parts of the land."

- Area C remains "under Israeli control." It is "completely controlled by the Israelis" and includes "all Israeli settlements" and areas where "bypass roads are being constructed" or where they will eventually be "built to cross" through Areas A and B. The roads that have been built are "some of the best roads ever constructed in last 30 years," for example, the "Jericho bypass roads."

With the map before us, the professor commented that "the map itself is post-modern; it is about exclaves and enclaves [and] disconnected territories" rather than about setting out territorial boundaries between states. "It bears little relation to most maps where the boundaries

are set to exclude some and include others." Clearly too it "is not the final map...."

The geographer predicted that the final negotiations would concern the fixing of the boundaries of a "Palestinian state" that would mean that there "will likely be two peoples living within those boundaries." Noting as well that the Oslo II Agreement had come about because "Israelis did not want to deal with the [Jewish] settlements in the West Bank right away," the geographer said that he expected that "in any case" the day would come when these settlers would "have to be moved" and that it would be a "traumatic event." In other words, the Israelis had postponed the inevitable and difficult problem of moving its own citizens out of the occupied territories it had provided incentives for them to move into. He said: "It is an Israeli problem ... and it will come."

He went on to explain that under Oslo II, Israel had insisted that "no territory" in Areas B or C would be "handed over" to the Palestinian authority and that the map had been designed in this way in order to "protect" areas where the "settlers lived." And, although the "new boundary will be redrawn to include 60% or 70% of the settlements," the Israeli government will find it hard to ignore their situation even though the settlers only represent "only 10% or 20%" of the total population of Israel. He also argued that one of "Rabin's mistakes" was that he had "delegitimised the settlers' concerns." In addition, he argued that the question of the settlements has been mistakenly formulated as a "religious argument," when in fact many Jewish-Israelis see that aspect of the disagreement as irrelevant and cite strategic as well as humane reasons for protecting the settlers. It is for this reason, the speaker concluded, that most Israelis are concerned that their government continue to maintain its responsibility for those citizens.

And lastly, the geographer declared that the then upcoming Israeli elections between the "anti-Oslo forces of Benjamin Netanyahu" and the "Oslo supporters" behind Shimon Peres, would be "a referendum on the peace agreements" and might be the "most important [elections] - in Israel's history." He ended his lecture with this anecdote:

> A year ago, I was in [this city] dealing with some difficult questions posed to me by some community members. [One of the questions came from] an individual who said he was not in support of the peace agreement. He said 'Everyone wants peace but we are a democracy, while they on the other side are dictatorships! What will happen if we make an agreement with one of them and someone assassinates THEIR leader'!

Thus the geographer ended with an ironic reflection on the challenge of presenting Israel to a community still caught in a pre-Oslo vision of Israel. Despite the fact that the geographer sent up this signal, as he had at the beginning of his lecture, he was challenged on nearly all of the points he had made. Note that this occurred despite the fact that the geographer had spoken of the basis for and the problems of the peace agreement from an Israeli perspective, highlighting strategic and political problems that might arise for Israel. He had said nothing about the Palestinians who continued to live under occupation in order that the "10 or 20%" of Israel's population could continue to live in the settlements protected by an army; nor did he talk about the hardships that a redesigned "map" of the area had created for Palestinian who are now forced to find alternative routes in and out of what used to be contiguous work and living spaces.

Still, as I thought later about the passionate responses to the geographer's presentation, I realised that he had done one very radical thing that night: he had used a map very unlike the ones made available to us on the organised tours, or in any promotional literature about Israel, or those used at any of the other presentations I had attended in the communities. Nearly all of the official maps of Israel used on the organised tours through Israel and in much of the promotional literature at such events as the "Israel at Fifty" pavilion had represented an Israel that included an "annexed" Occupied Territories or West Bank and Gaza Strip. That is, there were no clear boundaries designating these areas as "occupied territories." (In fact, on the Israel Development Fund tour, the tour guide had used a black marker to draw in some of these "boundaries" on the map that he hung at the front of the bus.)

I realised later that the geographer may have provided his audience with one of their first opportunities to see the politicised boundaries of Israel; to see a map in which areas were being designated as out of bounds to one group or another (Black 1997). Most importantly to this audience, the geographer had presented a map of "Israel" that excluded Jews from parts of "its" territories. For many this simple map may have highlighted the very fragmentary nature of a land that they had up until that moment perhaps considered, and perhaps would forever consider, "whole". And this realisation may have also forced audience members to consider the probabilities that the agreement would allow two peoples to share the land to some extent. I

wonder, then, if the passionate reactions to the geographer were prompted by the unusual "visual cue" and graphic representation utilised, more than by his narratives of fragmentation and postmodern territoriality.

Whatever their interpretations, a number of the audience members were clearly not pleased with the prospect the geographer had presented and reacted immediately after he completed his talk with questions in a session that grew heated very quickly. Every question the geographer answered seemed to cause some other audience member more distress. Below I present some of these exchanges. I have edited these portions, keeping only what I felt were the most important questions and statements; almost all of them are presented in the order they were made.

> Question: Arafat speaks a different language [depending on his audience, and the] Palestinians take what they want. Why don't we now say 'No more!' [And] what about the Covenant[33]?
>
> Answer: In practical terms, I agree with Arafat that the Covenant is irrelevant since Palestinians are as unable to push Israelis into the sea today as they were 10, 20 years ago.
>
> Question: [Do you really think the] Arabs will be satisfied with a Green Line retreat [or will the] situation deteriorate, ruin the Israeli economy and then create insecurity for all [Israelis]? [Will this present] an opportunity for the Arabs [especially] if Israel is only 9 miles wide?
>
> Answer: I do not share your pessimism [and] I do not try to be an expert on the Arabs since I have a difficult enough time trying to figure out what Israelis and Jews want. [Just to] reiterate: Israel is not prepared to discuss the Green Line as the boundary [if only] because of the settlements. [And it is] important to note [as well that] the few extra miles [that would be] annexed are miles of elevated areas. [Note too that this] annexation of part of the West Bank is based on pragmatic NOT ideological terms. ... [And lastly, if] each side said what it wanted, each would say it wanted the whole without the other! [I believe that] a strong nation makes peace. [The] Palestinians are no threat and they won't be, even as a state.

In both of these questions, Jews in diaspora expressed fear that a "smaller" Israel would be an insecure Israel and that the Palestinians would continue to be untrustworthy and threatening to Israel. Citing the pragmatism of Israel's position, the geographer attempted to allay these fears.

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33. Refers to the founding charter of the Palestine Liberation Organisation that, in essence, denied the legitimacy of Israel. The charter outlined the character of the struggle against Israel as anti-colonial and revolutionary.

But he was generally unsuccessful and the next few questions repeated the theme of Israel's insecurity.

> Question: In Oslo I [the statement] regarding the Palestinians [was that they would gain] autonomy [and not] statehood. [Therefore] there is the basis for the nullification of all agreements because now the discussion has turned to Palestinian statehood.... [Many military] Generals are opposed to this agreement [saying that the] strategic answer IS the only answer.

> Answer: One can get carried away with the terminology. Remember Israel negotiated its own solutions. [To come to] people like Rabin who have created the state [and who have] made good on all of their agreements for security [and then] to refer to Oslo as though it were another Munich agreement is blasphemous. Among all Generals [there will be some] disagreements [but the] Generals you refer to are American Generals [and those] I refer to [are the] four out of five Israeli Chiefs of Staff, [all of whom] support this agreement. Nothing is ever clear-cut [but] to assume you know more than these Israeli Generals regarding Israeli security is foolish. Besides, on some days you say that all Americans are out to destroy Israel and on other days you quote them as our friends. Why?

> Question: American security experts [say that Israel should] hold on to the territories. [Explain why we shouldn't.]

> Answer: [There is] real ambivalence [about what] Americans have to say. [Some of] what they have to say is anti-Semitic. Don't you think Israelis know best?

> Question:[34] If Arabs have written a red line in the sand, why doesn't Israel just say "no"? [They're] getting everything they want.

> Answer: There are different negotiations being described here than the ones I know and have been privy to. Israel has said 'No' many, many times. You just don't have a realistic perspective on these issues.

Some audience members, not convinced by the geographer's earlier answers, continued to insist that the Oslo Accords would make Israel insecure, and now cited U.S. Generals as sources who were similarly concerned. The lecturer seemed at this point to get frustrated with his audience members' references to authorities in a way that dismissed the Israeli position and integrity on these matters. Note his rhetorical questions in particular.

> Question: [Do the] Israelis take into account [the fact that the] Palestinians of Jordan may topple King Hussein [and] take over the military? [The] Palestinians [do] form [a] majority there.

> Answer: There is more likelihood of that happening after a Final Agreement, and not before. [You're right] Jordan is demographically a Palestinian state [but the]

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34. This question was asked only one question later but it is in keeping with the theme I deal with in this part.

international community keeps an eye on the Palestinians [and] Hussein clamps down hard on the Palestinians, [so there is] little room for them to manoeuvre. [They] suffer in Jordan as they suffered in the West Bank. [The] military implications of any move to topple Hussein would be great. And generally speaking, Jordan is more favourable to Israel than to any Palestinians.

Question[35]: Israel seeks peace and security, while the Palestinians want land and a state. What are THEY giving up?

Answer: Each side feels extraordinarily threatened by the other and yet each side continues to be surprised by the other. [The] Palestinians [are often] surprised [to hear that they are a] threat to Israel [and] they say things like we haven't got the capability to drive you out or even to get rid of you from the West Bank. .... Remember, the Palestinians under Oslo get 23% of what they would have had in 1948. [To them it is] a lot to give up. [This is] something we might find hard to understand.

Here the geographer presented the Palestinian's "suffering" not only under Arab rule but also when living in the Israeli Occupied West Bank, suggesting that Palestinians do not identify with the Jordanian state and debunking the myth that they have another Arab place to go to. He also presented an alternative interpretation of what the Palestinians would "gain" as a result of the Oslo Accords, and in the process made what I think was a radical reframing of the terms within which to understand the Palestinian sense of loss. The geographer referred in this instance not to Israel and the 1967 borders but rather to the terms set in 1948, when Palestine was partitioned into an Arab and Jewish state. While not suggesting that the terms of the Partition Plan were now legitimate, he was considering the Palestinian losses in those terms. This is more radical than any terms suggested by the Oslo Accords.

Question: If there had been two million Jews in the territories, would things be different?

Answer: Yes, the government would have to be responsible for whoever is there [because it] provided all the incentives [to have them move there.] With all due respect, however, the two million are in the diaspora and NOT in Israel and if you think it is THAT important then it seems your answer lies in that very fact.

This last question seemed to have agitated the lecturer more than any other. His answer was in many ways illustrative of the frustration he seemed to feel. Here he was, a man who had made *aliyah*, having to point out to Jews in diaspora who were not comfortable with Israeli withdrawal

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35. This question followed the next statement but it is in keeping with the theme I deal with here.

from the Occupied Territories that they could get what they wanted if they would make their own commitments to live in Israel. The geographer had not only had to defend a peace agreement and peace process that he obviously felt strongly in favour of, he had also been forced to do so for people who seemed to suggest that the Israelis did not know anything about security matters and would put their own futures at risk. The geographer ended the question period with this very emotional plea: [precis]

> I want to end [by saying that] it frustrates me to find that in the diaspora there are more people against the peace agreement than even among the Israeli right wing. We may be partners but we are asymmetrical partners. It is legitimate to oppose the peace agreement but it is illegitimate to just slag the Israelis and their government. I do not mean to say that only Israelis should speak out but there IS a difference. [Much of the] discourse in [this city] has gone way beyond [the bounds of reason and many] Israelis are embarrassed by the rhetoric in the diaspora. Israel is the place where over 50% of the Jewish population [will eventually live] and we have to build the future around a society that has moral and ethical values. We have faced the existential crises. [But] think about what is most important for us to invest in now? ... Education, not land. [Less territory to control] may mean we have more time to devote to the Jewish people and their development, [which is] more important.

This presentation and the question and answer session that followed it, presented Israel as a state ready to move beyond its "existential crises" and to the pragmatic concerns of everyday life for Israelis. It is an Israel that is secure, democratic (the elections would decide if the Peace Agreements would continue) and ready to confront a new peaceful future for its population; a people ready "to develop" in the ways of culture (Cohen 1995; Silberstein 1999). And, it is an Israel that is independent and strong, not solely relying on its allies but deciding its own fate.

The evening ended with many of the challengers approaching the geographer for further debate. Soon after, he was whisked away by his sponsors. A number of audience members had clearly been upset by what the speaker had to say and continued to debate the issues among themselves as they walked out of the lecture hall and into the Temple's parking lot.

The condescension and disdain of Jews in diaspora toward Israelis and vice versa came as a surprise when I first observed it. But this reaction and counter-reaction turned out not to be unique.

Israel after Zionism

On another occasion in 1997 a member of Knesset and the daughter of one of Israel's

military heroes was invited to speak as part of a year-long celebration marking 100 years of

Zionism. The talk took place in the large lecture theatre of a Reform Temple. After her talk she

was confronted with a small but vocal group of people who opposed her position on the Peace

talks and she was forced to vigorously defend her position. What she had to say in her

presentation was as radical as what she said to her challengers in the question and answer

session. I will briefly outline the lecture portion of her talk and then examine the more

interesting but linked question and answer session, which became quite loud and boisterous.

The speaker began by acknowledging the role of the evening's sponsors as well as that

of the Temple and said,

> We Jews are all together. We do share a commitment and there is an ongoing
> connection among us, and although the topics of discussion change, we survive.... The
> question is no longer will there be an Israel but rather what kind of Israel will there be
> and what kind of dialogue can there be with the Jewish diaspora. I would like to bring
> us up to date.... First I will begin with dates. Even though they are artificial, at the end
> of the millennium we have had 100 years of Zionism, 50 years since Israel [was created],
> four years since Oslo [was signed]... [and] two years since the assassination of Rabin.
> What we are about today is about the assassination of a Prime Minister who tried to
> bring peace. But this assassin did not just assassinate the peace process, he also killed
> Israeli democracy.... This assassin had nothing to do with being Jewish or with being
> democratic but let's not say he was so marginal. We need to guard against him and
> people like him. Did you know that our Supreme Court judges need to be protected by
> bodyguards because of threats from the Orthodox? There are still lots of people who do
> not want the peace we are talking about. There are others like Yigal Amir... Yigal Amir
> supporters. But without peace and without democracy [in Israel], there is nothing to
> support or be proud of. And what kind of peace [do we want]? [Prime Minister] Bibi
> [Netanyahu] won the election... But he stopped the peace, and the terror is renewed.
> The end of terror is never to be a precondition to peace but will be the result of peace.
> Arafat can only be strong with the support of the U.S. and us. He can do more the
> stronger he is. ...I hope my government is not stupid enough to put the end of terror as
> a precondition. It's not a zero sum game. Bibi thinks when Arafat loses, Israel is
> winning. But when we win, they win. If both sides are winning there is a motivation to
> continue the dialogue. Otherwise, what motivation is there for the Palestinians? What
> kind of peace is there for the Palestinians? It is still an occupation. ...75% of Israelis
> support a Palestinian state next to the state of Israel. How can we think of depriving
> them of this? Are we different? Are we superior? They have to buy it from us? They
> have a natural right like all peoples; they have a right to a land. The one good thing
> that's happened to Bibi? He's finally dealing with the end of a fantasy! There will not
> be a Greater Israel. There is no Likud ideology anymore. Most of the settlements are
> going to be left behind. We'll keep some of the settlements, and we will give the
> Palestinians a viable piece of land which will remove any motivation for conflict. There

is nothing but despair and desperate feelings whenever another settlement and another Har Choma is built, in addition to the hunger and the closures [they suffer].... Is that motivation...? We don't want to live in someone else's home ... The Bible is our literature, our history, our geography but it is not a political science diktat!... Their ancestors are there too. ...You don't go to the UN to present biblical reasons. Israel is strong not only in terms of war [and the military] but in terms of compromise. This is for us. We can't stand the immorality of the occupation. It doesn't adhere to any Jewish morality. This is the denial [to] other humans [of] their rights.... Instead of talking about the next war whether in Lebanon or Syria or against the Palestinians, Iraqis, whoever; we need to talk about the next peace. This should be presented as something of value to the world because we know what it is to be oppressed and we certainly do not want to inflict pain on others. ... This strength is given to us in order to make peace not to make a place of conflict and sadness. It is in our own hands [and] we must do what is right, what is of value, of strength. We have to give up territory to get the coveted peace. When this is done with a full heart, we will do it with strength.

In this presentation the speaker, a politician, had managed to mark almost every Zionist sign-post with a big "X". She presented an Israeli democracy that was being threatened by an internal Jewish foe. She claimed that it was the strength of peace and not military strength that should hold the pride of place (see Levy 1997). She insisted that the Palestinians were human and deserved to be treated ethically; that when they were desperate or hungry, they were more likely to commit crimes and that they therefore required Israeli-Jewish support. Giving the Palestinians a state would not threaten Israel but would "remove the motivation" for further conflict. Stating that Israelis don't want to live in "someone else's home" or that "their [Palestinian's] ancestors are there too" were some of the most radical public statements I made by anyone during the fieldwork. Note too that although the speaker is known for her peace and activism, she is not a member of any radical party in Israel. In fact, she is a member of the establishment Labour Party.

At the end of her lecture, audience members lined up behind microphones in order to ask their questions. The room held approximately 300 people and at first there were about 20 people who were lined up for questions. The first question set the tone for the questions that followed and every answer prompted more people to line up in order to ask the speaker another question. I have skipped the usual preambles and present only the question asked; again this is not based on a verbatim transcript but on notes taken at the event.

Question: Why do you call this an 'occupation'? It is our land.

Answer: What would be your proposal? What would you do with Hebron or Gaza? Are you for annexation? Thank God even the right wing Prime Minister has given up

on this idea. It is not ours! How many times can it be said: it is not an empty land. There are people there. They are a different people. They have a different culture, a different language. In 1948, a lot of people questioned the right of people to self-determination. Jewishness is not only about a religion but also a nationality and Zionism was to give us a homeland. ... How can we now question another people's right to a home? I don't see such a long line of people from [this city] to come. And why should you leave? I'm not saying that you should leave... You are all big heroes [but] we just want to live! ... About the Palestinian covenant: There is a headache about it but even Bibi has given up on it. I care what WE do, not what Arafat does. Everyone is an expert these days... But we also say terrible things including "slaughter the Arabs." This peace is what we want for ourselves, not for others!

Question: You are a voice of sanity and it is my pleasure to hear you speak today and I agree with you that peace is more important than real estate. But the issue is not peace or land. The Arabs have lots of land but they don't want to solve the problem. They just don't want us there. They've been waiting there in the West Bank and have had it good there for 30 years.
Answer: The Palestinians are not Iraqis or Saudis. They are a nation. They do not have other land. Have they ever been integrated to Jordan [or] Lebanon? It's not in our hands to give them land here or there. We have to take care of them because the situation as it is, is bad for Israel. The second part of your statement is patronising. This racism has no place in the Jewish world. This [is an] attitude that many Israelis and Jews have that we are dealing with a primitive, uneducated people, and that they are benefiting from the occupation. There are more university graduates in the West Bank than per capita in Israel. I feel bad that I even have to say this... My response is that they are an advanced society, an educated society, etc. I will be proud to be their neighbour and share a society with them in peace.

Question: I hope you are right about the Palestinians. Remember the four girls that were killed by Palestinians because the American negotiators were on their way? And what about Hamas? They have the support of the vast majority of Palestinian Arabs and if the Palestinians get a state, and everything else, how do we protect ourselves from those who are extremists?

Answer: What is your answer to this? How are we going to protect ourselves? Let's say you're right. Are we going to shoot them all? Let THEM prove to us that they can provide security. .... It is not true there is support for Hamas; it is a minority [that supports them]. And remember there is a limit to power. Not France not even America can control fanatic religious motivations. There is no such thing as 100% prevention. We were everywhere before, for 30 years, [we were there] in order to control. We produced an *intifada*. There is a limit to this way. This limit is where the rights of the other begins. No one can fight a guerrilla or a freedom fighter. The Palestinian cause can either motivate for peace or it can motivate others to violence. We must have a dialogue, and confidence-building. ... If we weaken Arafat, how can we motivate them to fight for peace against Hamas when we have bulldozers? ....

Question: The amount of peace is related to the degree of our security but if Arafat can't give us peace, why should we give him land?

Answer: Rabin didn't take any risks on security when it came to the Palestinians. They don't have land, nor is there any symmetry at all. This symmetry idea is ridiculous. They are all under our control in refugee camps...

At this point some crowd members started to shout out at her. One person yelled out: "Who put them there?" She ignored them and continued by saying:

> You cannot refer to Palestinians in the same terms as you refer to the Israelis. There is a degree of exaggeration among us ... our tendency is to perpetuate ... to see ourselves as victims. [Former Prime Minister Menachem] Begin did this a lot. He was part of a group that felt that there is a need for Israel because of the cohesiveness of the hatred of others. There is more to us ... than anti-Semitism. We are 5.5 million people in Israel. 2.5 million children walk in Israel. We go to school. This paranoiac way of thinking that a Jew cannot walk in the streets [this] is not Israel. .... The only solution is if we get out of this situation of occupation. No one threatens the existence of Israel.

The final four questions were all taken together and received a joint response. The speaker was asked: 1) what will happen with Jerusalem? 2) why don't we hear more from enlightened Palestinians like spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi? 3) why are the Palestinians "demanding land and peace" from us... "They want to kick us to the sea." Why didn't they ask "Jordanians, or Egyptians for a state?" They just don't want us there, period. 4) Netanyahu has taken the position that he wants Arafat to fight terror. This seems reasonable and it is part of Oslo. If you don't accept at least that, then what is peace? Of what value are those Palestinian commitments to Oslo?

> And, the evening speaker's answer was:

> About Jerusalem. There is a consensus among all the Israeli and Zionist parties that the annexation of East Jerusalem will continue although there are differences as to the status of the people there. They are a total of 200,000 people who live there. We can annex their land but not the people. There is a difference between annexation and confiscation and giving them their citizen's rights. We made them Israelis but we did not let them have building permits, no schools, and in a populated space, this is a temptation to evil. The negotiations will continue. No country in the world accepts this annexation of proper East Jerusalem and the 200,000 who live there.... The Palestinian capital is all part of the final agreement and it is negotiable. I hope we will be creative enough to find the solution to this.

> About other Palestinians speakers, I don't know who you get to meet. There is Nabil Sha'ath. I've appeared with Hanan and there is no question that we speak with the same passion. Faisel Husseini too or Abu Mazan and any of these leaders would be good. We come together but there are some technical differences, but the passion with which we talk about the prospect of a two-state solution, and attitudes to Hamas, and attitudes to terror are all the same. I would be delighted to bring the other side with me. I find I have to speak on their behalf but they can speak for themselves. It is not necessary that I do so.

> For those people who have the feeling that all they want is to get rid of us. There are some who want to get rid of us, but we don't need the Palestinians for it. There is the entire Arab world against us. You think the Egyptians love us? ... There was never a

war with the Palestinians.

A person yelled out: "So what?" and she answered:

> So what? So we can go back in time or we can go forward. They know that by war you will not get rid of the Jews. They tried and they failed. You think Sadat fell in love with us? They couldn't beat us, that's all.

There was loud applause in response to this comment.

> It is the same case with Asad, and the same with Arafat. The worst off of all the Arabs were the Palestinians and they had to count on other Arab countries that kept saying "just wait." Egyptians, Hussein, Saudis, Iraqis, etc. all said this and the Palestinians waited and they finally came to terms with the reality that no one but Israel could give peace to them, and only by negotiating with Israel could there be peace. .... Remember, there are also Jews who advocate transfer of a whole people from where they are across to Jordan.

> About Oslo. We are not keeping Oslo as well as they are not. If I thought that Arafat really controlled terror, I wouldn't say this. We have weakened him and we have to understand his power is limited. If we punish him it lowers his ability to control anything at all and renews [support] for Hamas. The Palestinians do not support Hamas but if we say in advance that they're not getting peace or land, then they have nothing to lose; too many people have nothing to lose.... Even the doves are not stupid people. It's our children. It's not only the right wing's children. If I thought for one minute that stronger demands from Arafat would save children's lives ... but the distortion of it is the problem and it is the opposite of what you say. When the Zionist Organisation of America prints pictures of children injured by terrorist bombs, it is just pornographic and it is a means to incitement especially when they write: "Arafat supports terrorists" above the pictures. That's just what I need! Believe me, Arafat is under pressure. And this kind of support we get from US Jewry! You know all the questions that were asked here tonight were in the New York Times today. All of them asked today were about the covenant. Those who are for the peace, let your voice be heard

By the end of the tense night, she received good applause but it was obvious that she had upset quite a few in the filled-to-capacity hall After the presentation, I met a number of people that I had come to know in the community and each seemed both excited and somewhat shocked by what he or she had heard. Unfortunately, the evening had been a long one and we had only a little time to chat afterwards.

These two examples of presentations about Oslo were representative of the tenor and tone of many of the presentations about the Peace Agreements made by Israelis to diaspora audiences that I attended during the course of the fieldwork. It should be noted however, that these speakers are not at all representative of all of the positions that Israelis take on the

Agreements. There are Israelis who would agree with and argue from the same positions which many of the speakers' diaspora challengers took at these events. However, most of the people I had come to know in the communities as well as on tour seemed interested in events very much like these ones.

It is also important to note that the same questions arose over and over again at each and every peace process discussion I attended. Even Peace Now meetings held in the community included these kinds of questions and often prompted similar kinds of responses. The issues of security, trust and the future of Israel were of major concerns to those who attended. And in each session, the passion and vehemence with which the Israelis were challenged and confronted surprised me. Based in part on the way that people had spoken of Israelis on the tours as well as how they had described them in the interviews, I had expected to see greater deference and respect for Israelis. I was also most interested to see that it was only at the Peace Agreement discussions that the Israelis challenged their diaspora audience members, not only with respect to their views on the peace process, but also with respect to their "location" in the diaspora, e.g., challenging them to make aliyah. I would add that the presentations about Oslo were very different from any other presentations about Israel because they humanised the Palestinians, explained and named their positions most fairly and with some degree of empathy. These were the only presentations in which Arabs appeared as people with histories, communities, and identities, and as people who had political rather than primordial motivations. The Peace Accords clearly raised some of the most contentious issues for public discussion among mainstream Jews in the communities.

In sum, the events in the community oriented Jews in diaspora to Israel in a number of ways. The historical narratives placed the Jews' history and the significance of that history as a nation in the land of Israel. Many of the themes that oriented the tours in Israel were repeated in the community, including the modernisation and development and democratisation of the state of Israel.

Judaism's role in contemporary Israeli society was cited by some as having an important role in the normalisation of the Jewish state, while for others the relationship to the

state was a troubling one.

And finally, Israeli speakers presented the recent political agreements signed by Israel and the Palestinians as hopeful signs for a future of peace in the Middle East. Interestingly enough, some audience members expressed a deep sense of mistrust of the Palestinians and Arabs as well as fear that the Israelis had put themselves in a dangerous situation. Their concern was for the security of the Jews and not the land except insofar as it might provide that security.

One Israeli artist that I met in 1999 made it clear that her preference was to call diaspora Jews simply "Jews" while those in Israel, simply "Israelis." She said: "We are different. We live our lives very differently. We always have and we always will. Why would you call us Jews? We are Israelis. They are Jews." In the next section I examine the extent to which such a comment is representative of the perspectives of Jews in diaspora on their relationships to Israel – in their own words.

SECTION THREE: SHIFTING THE GROUND(S) OF IDENTITIES

CHAPTER 10
NARRATING RELATIONS IN DIASPORA

In this section, I begin to unravel the nature of the reception of nationalist narratives of Israel and belonging, narratives presented on tour and in community. I start with a reflection of the success of Zionism presented by a prominent Rabbi in 1997 at a community event celebrating 100 years of Zionism. The reflexive nature of this and other similar discussions is significant for it points to what I call the "negation of the negation of diaspora." That is, Zionism assumed the establishment of a state for the Jews would "negate the diaspora". Jews would no longer have to live "in diaspora" because they would have their own nation-state, and their lives would become normalised when they became nationals within such a state. As such, Zionists assumed that such a process of normalisation would occur within the state of Israel. What happened instead, however, was that not only have Israeli-Jews become "normalised" in the Zionist sense, but those in diaspora have also become "normalised" by virtue of the fact that they too have a state to call their own, as well as citizenship and rights in other states. What was once a Longing for normalcy and Israel has now become a Be-longing for Jews "in diaspora". There was a sense that they felt they belonged both in Israel and in a North American setting. Homeland is not home. This shift is not one that the classical political Zionists, and those who founded and developed Israel such as David Ben-Gurion, could have predicted. Only Ahad Ha'am, the spiritual Zionist who died prior to the founding of the state, comes close to recognising that such a relationship between Jews and Israel might exist after the founding of the state (Ahad Ha'am [1897] 1976; D. Goldberg 1996; Wheatcroft 1996).

Because history looms large in discussions by Jews in diaspora, I've organised the next three chapters of this section to give voice to history; to reflect, however briefly, the role that history has played in their "envisionings", "imaginations" and "experiences" of Israel. What these

people had to say about Israel reflected what they felt about their relationship to Israel and their place "in diaspora," as Jews who have chosen to maintain a relationship to Israel while living in North America. How they imagined Israel was due, in part, to their own understandings of Israel's own historical narratives

In the next three chapters, I present profiles of some of the people I met in the community and on tour. Identifications with and longings for Israel are situated in each Jew's interpretations of themselves as members of a nation, the Jews, and within that framing, as peoples who have a duty to one another, what Pnina Werbner in her description of diaspora calls "co-responsibility" (1998).

These profiles suggest that Jews who have forged diaspora identities – Jews living in North America who have formed a relationship to and identification with Israel – do so in complicated and creative ways. I have organised these profiles in three chapters describing Jews' experiences during what Jewish historian Harold Troper calls (1) "the classical Zionist era, 1948 to 1967;" (2) "the era of new Zionism, 1967 to 1982;" and (3) "the era of fragmentation, since 1982" (Troper 1996).

Post-Zionist Belongings

By way of introduction to these chapters, I begin with the comments made at a Reform Temple meeting by a prominent conservative Rabbi, Jewish historian and Zionist scholar who had been invited to reflect on the meaning of Zionism after 100 years. After declaring that "there is a vast difference between those who study the text one hundred times and those who study it one hundred and one times," this Rabbi said that though he had studied Zionism for a very long time, he had been under the "delusion" that he had actually known what it meant. Only a couple of years earlier, he had come to the realisation that he had had to rethink his former assessments of the movement. He claimed in fact that he had not understood what Zionism meant in the past and that he was "on a journey" to gain a better understanding of what he now considered to be "the greatest of revolutions."

The Rabbi asked audience members to re-assess Zionism from the perspective of someone who would have lived in the 1890's. He claimed that in that era the Jews had believed that "anti-Semites were the hooligans" and that with modernity would come the end of anti-Semitism. But, as this Rabbi explained, it was in fact "the intelligentsia" who did not "speak up against anti-Semitism"... "There was no word from Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky" because all they really wanted was to simply get rid of the Tsar of Russia at the time. He then cited political philosopher Hannah Arendt's contention that the rise of totalitarianism, and Nazism in particular, was due to the intelligentsia's growing anti-Semitism,

> because suddenly Jews were bidding for roles in Gentile society.... Nineteenth Century anti-Semitism was not directed at the Jews who were peasants but rather at the intelligentsia among the Jews.

Thus, according to our speaker, "Zionism arrives out of a situation in which the Jewish intelligentsia loses hope" leaving the Jews with only two "solutions": one is the Bundist party, an anti-Zionist party that argued that in order "for Jews to get out" of the situation they were in they had to "radically change the system." The other was the political Zionism articulated by Theodore Herzl who said "where we are everywhere powerless, we must evacuate the Western world; we must cease being a powerless people." Exclaiming that the most profound success of the Zionist revolution was that the holiest place in the world was not the kotel, he explained:

> Yes, I go there [the kotel] but I get tearful every time I walk from Ben Gurion airport to the desk where I have to present my passport. It is the one place in the world where someone can't say 'We don't need anymore Jews.' ...Herzl knew that we could not leave the lives of other Jews in others' hands. So the customs shed in Tel Aviv is the place I cry for all those who did not have the fate to get there. That is the towering achievement in Herzlian terms.... The second achievement of Zionism is that it changed the way we stand; we no longer stand as the poor man at the door asking for favours.... The contemporary Jewish community thinks and acts not as victims but as victors, and not only in relationship to Israel.... One of the two things that modern Zionism did was to end the otherness of the Jews....

Thus the Rabbi suggested there were two monumental achievements that Herzl, Zionism's political founder, would himself be proud of: there is now a safe haven for all Jews; and as a result, all Jews now have a sense of power and pride of place. Moreover, the Rabbi suggested due to Zionism, there is now a role for those Jews living outside of Israel: they are the Jews who

are the holders of "tradition". In fact, the speaker argued it was the Jews of the diaspora who

have returned Jewish tradition to a secularised Israeli state. He explained:

> Zionism was created by those who revolted against the Jewish past and Judaism. There
> were no kosher hotels in the 1950's [in Israel]. Now the hotels in Israel have become
> kosher because WE come there... The Israelis created a different culture.... The
> counterattack [to Israeli secularism] began in the 1960's as some claimed that this
> secularism had gone overboard. They decided they needed more Jewish culture and
> tradition... Remember [Prime Minister] Rabin's funeral? How his son was breaking his
> teeth on Kaddish when he had to read the Aramaic.... He had clearly never been to
> Synagogue. The embarrassment was too great. There is a sense that in Israel the Jewish
> people have been secularised; they are 'goyim who speak Hebrew.' ...There is a
> profound sense now that we cannot continue by breaking with the past but by
> reshaping and linking ourselves again to it.

In this way the Rabbi inverted one of the very basic tenets of Zionism (a rejection of life in

diaspora) and suggested that life outside of the state of Israel for the Jews was more Jewish, more

traditional, more religious, and had more meaning in part because Israel's founders had insisted

upon a break with the Jewish past that had gone "too far" having rejected Judaism's roots and

traditions.

I place the Rabbi's reflections here as an example of a fundamental shift in perspectives,

from Zionist to what I would consider post-Zionist (a Zionism after the founding and securing of

the state of Israel) (see Cohen 1995; Silberstein 1999). I do not want to suggest that all of those I

met are necessarily conscious of these shifts, but I do think that the profiles must be read with

this kind of shift in mind.

Pnina Werbner's definition of diaspora as a matter of "co-responsibility" proves useful

for reading these profiles as well. Studying Pakistani and Muslim migrant workers, her

> ...argument begins from a definition that seeks to retain a prior emphasis on the
> compelling nature of the obligations 'diasporans' feel across space and national
> boundary (1998:12).

As a result, her description of diaspora communities is based on an interpretation of them as

> communities of co-responsibility, recognising not simply their loyalty but their
> existential connection to co-diasporans elsewhere, or in a home country. ... This sense
> of co-responsibility is expressed in tangible material gestures of charitable giving and
> complex forms of political mobilisation (1998:12).

She suggests as well that within public arenas, moral and political subjectivities are formed such that "ethnicity and nationalism emerge dialectically from a reworking and transcendence of local disputes ... and in the local negotiation of shared symbols..." (1998:14).

In order to organise these profiles, I have used the periodisation Jewish historian Harold Troper outlined at a conference on Israel-Diaspora relations. He framed the changing relationships as corresponding to three periods reflecting: 1) the classical Zionist era, 1948 to 1967; 2) the era of new Zionism, 1967 to 1982; 3) an era of fragmentation since 1982 (1996).

According to Troper, during "the classical Zionist era," there was a great deal of support and pride in Israel's achievements. The second period, 1967 to 1982, was distinguished by the Jewish community's response to the 1967 War or the Six-Day War. Canadian Jews celebrated Israel's victory and Jewish community organisations began major fundraising campaigns for projects throughout Israel. Any criticism of Israel by non-Jews was called anti-Semitism and if expressed by Jews, was branded as self-hatred.

The 1982 Israeli war with Lebanon, the continuing conflict with the Palestinians, the beginnings of the "who is a Jew" debate, all form part of the background that shifted the perspectives of Jews outside of Israel towards the state. A new era of what Troper called "fragmentation" was "ushered in." So, for example, with Israeli peace groups like Peace Now and Yesh Gvul (There is a Limit) publicly and massively demonstrating Israeli-Jewish dissent, Canadian Jews were forced to take notice and many subsequently shifted their own perspectives in response. Troper suggested that we have entered into a time when a new generation of Jews (i.e., youth) may not be ready to support Israel. He explained that this group is temporally removed from the crises of World War Two and the formative years of Israel as a state struggling to survive. Moreover, they have not at all endured the anti-Semitism that their parents or grandparents experienced (see Bourne 1987; Falbel 1990; Lerner 1994; Plaskow 1991 as representative of these shifts in U.S.; see also Heilman 1999; Liebman 1999 on U.S. Jewry's changing perspectives on Israel).

Following Troper's periodisation, I have organised the profiles in a way that reflects the experiences that he had outlined. The first three profiles of Jews in diaspora, "Myrna," "Warren

and Sarah," and "Aaron" are of Jews who have had some identification with Israel since the founding of the state and who have travelled to the state more than once. They are compiled in the chapter "Longings in Diaspora."

The second group of Jews in diaspora, comprised of "Marlene," "Lynn," "Karen and Paul," are profiled in "Be-Longings in Diaspora". They are Jews who celebrated and identified with Israel's post-1967 idealism; and, as a result of their parent's or their community's activism, had developed a relationship by travelling to Israel for the first time after 1967 and since.

In the last chapter of this section, "Belonging in Diaspora," I profile Jews who made their first trips to Israel after 1982. Three of those profiled were on their first tour to Israel when I met them. They are Jews in diaspora who have only recently (i.e., in the last decade or so) come to "know" Israel. My interest in the people profiled here is their reflections on and identifications with a recently discovered "Israel."

I believe that, read together, the kaleidoscope of positions, reflections and experiences reflected in these profiles are representative of the diversity of perspectives I met and conferred with over the course of the research period. These profiles do not present the stories of all of the people I met during the course of the research period, of course, however if read as a whole, each person I did meet would find aspects of their own "truths" and identifications with Israel as homeland, nation and nation-state.

Thus these profiles, provide more than merely a "glimpse" into the relationship of Jews in diaspora to Israel, they offer a rich collage of the diversity of views, "poached" narratives and complex creations and identifications with the nation and the state.

The Interviews

These interviews were conducted in people's homes, workplaces, at meetings we had arranged at public restaurants and, while on tour, in hotel rooms, cafes, and at outdoor sites. Only two interviews were conducted over the telephone and both were with tour planners/fund organisers with whom I had had at least one personal visit after the tour they helped to organise. Some family interviews were conducted with both spouses at the same time – which was their

preference. Other couples agreed to be interviewed separately (although those interviews are not included here).

A list of the guiding questions used for the interviews can be found in the Appendix (Appendix A). Some of the questions are similar to those Cohen used in his study of "pro-Israelism" in Jewish Identity and Modernity (1981). The questions were designed to elicit the meaningfulness of Israel in peoples' lives. The emphasis was not only on Israel, but on the Jewish community and Jewish identity and how Israel might play a role in their lives in North America. I did not use the term "diaspora" in the questions, nor did I ever ask any questions about "Zionism" directly. I wanted each interviewee to raise these terms if and when he or she thought it appropriate, so I could explore the context and saliency. In this way, I avoided defining in advance the people I met as living "in diaspora" and/or defining myself in relation to Zionism within the interview context.

Constraints

One of the constraints involved in arranging interviews involved the "geographical" make up of the tour bus groups. All of the tours I travelled with in Israel included people from across North America. For the two Canadian-based tours, I was put on the "Rest of [the Province]" and the "Rest of Canada" buses, respectively. Tourists from Montreal and Toronto made up the core of the tours, but because my permanent home was not in either community, I was put on the "other" buses. The "Rest of Canada" bus included people from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. The ICSF tour was much smaller than either the ILF and the IDF tours and while the majority of the travellers were from one major urban centre in the U.S., some had travelled from the states of California, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Washington, and Washington, D.C., as well as from Ontario, Canada. This diversity meant, of course, that the likelihood of chance meetings with people I had travelled with on this tour while attending community events in Canada was very limited. However, I did travel to the US centre to conduct interviews (see below).

I arranged to see many of those that I travelled with from the communities I worked in.

When we met, we spoke about our tour together and Israeli politics as well as Jewish community or current events. Often I was invited to spend more time with people in their homes or to join them at other events. In some cases, we maintained contact by telephone, the Internet, and letter-writing. In all cases, upon my return from a tour, I wrote letters to contact those who had agreed to an interview while on tour but whose schedule in Israel prevented us from carrying it out.

On the first tour, the Israel Land Fund (ILF) tour planners did not give me any opportunity to present a description of my research project. The local organiser felt that many people had planned their trip as a vacation and the ILF did not want them to feel that the travel had other purposes besides leisure. She also felt that the ILF needed to keep its distance, and should not in any way be associated with the research. Providing me with a letter of support or with the names of the tourists prior to our trip was out of the question for this organiser. She expected that people would eventually find out about the research and they would approach me on their own if they were interested.

Of course, the ILF planner was correct. It took a few days, but eventually people approached me, and on a one to one basis, I explained what I was seeking to do on the tour and invited them, when appropriate, to participate. Almost everyone I spoke to showed some interest in and support for the research (and many were interested in getting a copy of the "results"), but very few approached me for an interview and I did feel constrained, in part because of the ILF position, about approaching anyone on my own while on tour. As well, due to shifting of tourists from bus to bus there was a shrinking of the tour group as a whole. Some tourists were so unhappy with our tour guide that they left for other buses and joined their friends from Toronto and Montreal, while on other days travellers from other buses joined ours. These shifts meant that I sometimes had only one opportunity to speak to people about the research. When they approached me, for example at meal times, they asked for information or gave me their support and encouragement. But I didn't feel that in all cases the relationships had developed enough that I could approach people for a formal interview.

I did manage, however, to speak to many people who were not part of our core "bus group." The variability in the make up of the "group" under investigation and the fact that there were quite a number of non-Jews (some quite prominent) on the bus, meant that the "data base" was much smaller than I had anticipated it would be when I first looked at the list of participants. From this group I conducted four formal interviews and held two informal meetings to discuss the tour with those who did not want to be interviewed but who were happy to meet with me. All of those I interviewed and met with lived in the area where I conducted my research. This gave me the opportunity to see them after the tour on more than one occasion at other community events. Another six people gave me their addresses at the end of the IIF tour, but when I sent them a note after the tour, I received no replies.

The Israel Civil Society Fund (ICSF) proved to be a surprisingly difficult tour. Although this tour had been recommended to me by Canadian members of the Board of Directors, and while I had extensive contact with people who supported this Fund, the U.S. organisers balked when I approached them on the first night of the tour to ask if I could give the group an orientation session on my research. Karla, who had been the North American ICSF co-ordinator on the tour didn't understand what I was asking for at first, and when I tried to explain she dismissed me and said she didn't think it important that I present at that time.

The next day Karla and another ICSF supporter approached me at breakfast to ask me who had given me permission to accompany the tour and to outline my research agenda in specific terms. I explained what I was doing and that I had been invited to go on tour by Canadian ICSF Board Members. When Karla insisted that the U.S. office had not been notified, I replied that I had been in regular contact with the Canadian staff director as well as the Israeli staff director and that the Canadian office had not only received my research proposal and consent forms but had arranged for me to be in contact with the ICSF staff members in Israel. Furthermore, I described how I had been contacted by the Israeli office and been invited for an interview for the ICSF newsletter. Although I had turned the interview down, feeling that it could affect the research project, I did meet with the fund's Israeli media representative in Israel prior to the arrival of the rest of the tour. I had no reason to believe that members of the ICSF

organization were somehow uninformed. I also pointed out that the Canadian staff member had been in touch with the U.S. office in order to arrange for an American hotel room-mate.

After some unease on my part and without a real sense of just what I was to do next, I left the matter in the hands of the tour organisers. Sivan, the tour guide, as well as Elaine, one of the Canadian ICSF Board Members who had invited me to go on the tour, and who was in Israel at the time, suggested I take a "wait and see" attitude before leaving the tour altogether. Sivan came to me upon hearing about the issue and was very supportive, and as I indicated above, she said that she found it "curious" that the U.S. representatives would feel "so suspicious" and "so insecure" about my research and wondered aloud if they were "afraid" that their project's funding priorities might somehow misrepresent the ICSF. I reminded her that I had promised not to name the organisation and she became even more puzzled by the attitude of the tour organisers. She speculated that perhaps their "liberalism" was not as "open" for non-Jews; in other words, they had identified me as a Palestinian and that perhaps they were suspicious of my motives. A community friend and Canadian ICSF Board Member suggested that the U.S. tour participants who were lawyers, lobbyists, and businessmen simply aren't used to being the "subjects" of a research project. She thought that the fact that they were U.S. citizens of whom many were lawyers might also have affected their approach to the research project in another way: they might consider it an encroachment on their civil rights because they had not agreed to participate prior to their arrival on tour.

Later that day, Karla approached me for a second time. I was told that I would have some time to present my research project to the group at some point that day. Finally, while we were between site-visits, I was given time to present the research project to the tourists. As a result, almost every tourist approached me with encouragement, support and/or an offer to be interviewed. Sivan came to me and said that she sensed that the majority of the tourists were not only interested in the research, they were happy to have me on the tour. She added that Karla and at least one other ICSF representative seemed to have been calmed somewhat by the tourists' reception to my presentation.

On this trip, I conducted five of the interviews on our last day in Israel. Three other tour participants agreed to be interviewed on site but we did not have enough time and they lived far enough away (California, Massachusetts and New York), that I was unable to visit them or conduct prohibitively expensive long-distance telephone interviews. Approximately six months after the tour, I travelled to meet with a number of the tour participants in the city where they lived, where I conducted the rest of the interviews. Unfortunately, Karla with whom I met at the time and who had previously agreed to an interview, did not find the time to be interviewed, nor did the ICSF supporter who had confronted me with her. Nonetheless, of the nine ICSF tour participants I went to interview, six found the time to do so (one by telephone). In addition, while in the city, an ICSF tour participant introduced me to other community members who were interested and "attached" to Israel. I conducted four more interviews with them.

Israel Development Fund (IDF) tour organisers took more interest in my research from the very moment I approached them. They read the proposal and introduced me to the participants, having included my consent forms in the IDF tour package sent in advance to all tour participants. One of the first items on the agenda as we sat together on the bus for the first time at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, was to get the consent forms handed in to me. Many tourists did so, while others asked if they could speak to me before agreeing to be interviewed. Most of the IDF interviews were conducted on site. After this tour I did not send letters asking to interview people who had not signed the consent forms to participate. I felt that they had had an opportunity and, in one case in particular, had come to know me quite well, and I felt that approaching them would be unfair. I wrote to others who had signed the consent forms but with whom I was unable to schedule an interview on-site. Not all the people who were approached a second time granted my request for an interview. All of those who were not interviewed lived some distance away from my home community. One of the travellers with whom I was unable to co-ordinate an interview did send me his reflections on the tour that he had published in his local community newsletter. Of the total ten tourists who agreed to be interviewed, six interviews were conducted on site; and one was conducted by telephone after we returned home. I also met with three other tour participants in the community sometime after the tour. In all cases, we had

an opportunity to discuss the tours (and other matters) but on an informal basis.

Interactions with those tourists who did not give explicit permission to be part of the project (i.e., grant me an interview), or who showed no interest or were obviously uncomfortable about the project have not been incorporated in this research. In cases where tourists approached me to discuss my research, I have included their questions to me but nothing more of our discussions. Their interactions with tour guides and other tourists, even those who agreed to participate in the research, and their responses or questions on site have also been omitted from any analysis here.

I met with over 100 people including those on tour over the course of the research period and developed close friendships with many of them. Within the community, three people approached me for interviews but most were not formally interviewed preferring instead to have on-going conversations with me. I was invited for meals, family gatherings, parties, political and community meetings and events, and Temple services on special occasions. I was often invited to join groups such as Peace Now or Givat Haviva, and on a number of occasions, I was invited to present my perspectives on the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians at breakfast clubs, seniors' day events, midrasha (an evening Jewish "night school" for teens), and media events (see below "'Fielding' Questions of Identity"). While the voices of those I did not formally interview are not heard here, nonetheless, I think their positions and reflections are present in my account.

CHAPTER 11
LONGINGS IN DIASPORA

Myrna, Warren and Sarah, and Aaron all experienced Israel in the early years of the state. They had each formed an identification with Israel (in Warren's case, one that was at first negative), and have continued to support and identify with Israel. Their own experiences of anti-Semitism and the Second World War define the background for their identifications with Israel. All of the people profiled had travelled to Israel on at least one trip prior to the time we met.

Myrna

Among those who had had a long-term relationship to Israel and Israel-related issues was Myrna. In her late 80's, Myrna wanted very much to participate in the research project. She invited me to her hotel room where she was taking time to recover from a long and uncomfortable flight to Israel. Myrna propped herself against some pillows and streteched out comfortably on her hotel bed, and asking me to sit beside her in the easy chair, she proceeded to command my attention for close to three hours that day.

Myrna was born in the Lower East Side of New York to Russian immigrants at the beginning of this century. She described it as follows:

> We were really very poor, we never had a telephone, ... nothing except a newspaper to tell you what was going on in the world... and we never went anyplace or did anything or never even left the neighbourhood for many, many years. I felt protected. It was 60% of it Italian and 40% Jewish...

Her parents were practising Orthodox Jews but she had rebelled against them. She "didn't believe in God" and when she had her own family she "kind of dropped the ritual altogether although [she] kept the holidays and knew what it was all about. Secular is the word."

After winning a state scholarship, Myrna graduated from university in January of 1931, and became a social worker. Her siblings had also completed post-secondary education. All of them stayed in the "neighbourhood" until they got jobs and were married. Myrna has since lived

in a number of U.S. states, including California and Michigan.

Myrna recalled how Israel had not at all been part of her Orthodox Jewish upbringing.
She said: "... all I knew about Israel in the '20s and '30s was that we had ... a couple of Pushkas
[boxes to collect money for Israel] in the house, ...and my mother would occasionally put pennies
in it. They didn't get very much from us but that's what Israel was: It was a place where the
Pushka money went to. We didn't have much interest in it at all." She explained how Israel had
become part of her consciousness:

> I began to have an interest after the Second World War [when] the Jews from Germany,
> [and] Europe began to go [there]. Then I realised that was the solution and if Israel had
> existed beforehand, this never would have happened. .... I understand at some point
> Hitler offered to let the Jews out for money, [but] there was no place for them to go. So
> the importance of Israel became very real at that time and subsequently when the Jews
> ...started going [Israel] became the most important thing in my life.

I met Myrna on her fifth trip to Israel. Her first had been in the fall of 1959, when she
had been recruited by a group interested in developing Israel's social welfare. She recalled:

> I had come with a great interest in Israel and ...left with the most extravagant
> admiration for the society and tremendous emotional commitment. Great, great love,
> great enthusiasm and such pride, such pride. I was so glad to be a Jew. .... Their
> perceptions, their honesty, their decency, the struggle that they showed... It was, to me,
> an experience I've never gotten over, never forgotten and never will. I've been
> dedicated to Israel ever since.... The guide was ...a young Sabra, a man, a little bit crude
> and coarse in his appearance but so strong in his understanding, so strong in the way
> he presented himself and so firm about his knowledge and convictions that I just
> couldn't believe it. I was so proud of him. He knew everything and he had been in the
> army and here he was talking about the history that comes from the Bible. In other
> words he was the best-informed person I have ever in my life met.

After 1959, she returned to Israel with her spouse for a few professional meetings and
to see old friends but "largely they had travelled as tourists." Prior to the organised tour we were
on together in 1996, her last trip to Israel had been in the early 1980's.

Yet Myrna's commitments to Israel encompassed the unconventional as she playfully
described a moment on her trip to Israel in the early 1970's. In this story she was clearly playing
with the most significant Zionist marker:

> ...We came to Tel Aviv and stayed there... and we stayed on the beach in a very shabby
> hotel; it was shabby and inexpensive ... but that was fun because it was so casual... It
> was interesting. We met a darling, darling young man... [H]e took our bags in ...and he
> and I exchanged glances and immediately I liked him and he smiled to me; he must

> have been about 20 [or] something like that. [He was] quite dark, [and] Semitic-looking. And then, we asked for water and he brought up the water and then... the toilet was broken, so he came up and fixed the toilet and by this time we were [all] laughing.... And I was so [happy, thinking], 'Gee, it's so nice to have a Jewish boy like this' and so on. I said what is your name? He said 'Mohammed'!! But we stayed good friends and when we left, he kissed me. It was a charming thing.

And later, she told me:

> I think I told you this, [I was so proud because] everybody here was Jewish that's why when the little boy said 'Mohammed' it was so funny. I laughed. But the first time [when] I saw people cleaning the streets, they were Jews; the policemen were Jews. .... Everything, it's the only place, [and it was] the first time in my life that I felt anybody who disliked me it won't be because I'm Jewish. ...[B]ecause ...I've lived under a cloud of anti-Semitism all my life.

Myrna, while playing with the "everybody is Jewish" line, expressed her deep-seated feelings of security and happiness at being in the only state she believed could be truly free of anti-Semitism. She had also signalled very early in the interview that she knew there were also non-Jews living and working there.

Myrna had considered living in Israel "many times" but especially after her first visit when she realised that "nobody can be anti-Semitic to me anymore. ...[E]verybody's Jewish. ...[I]t's so wonderful to be free of anti-Semitism." For family and other pragmatic reasons, however, she never left the U.S. to live in Israel.

Myrna had been a supporter, and board member, of such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union in the past, but she said she didn't "like [supporting] Jewish organisations" because she would rather support organisations that were "more needy." Although Myrna had supported Israel all her life, she had not identified with or supported U.S.-Israel organisations until she discovered the Israel Civil Society Fund (ICSF). She told me that she had been attracted to the organisation – the first Jewish organisation she had felt any commitment to – after she met one of their speakers at a meeting in her community. She had been most impressed by the speaker because:

> He told me ... that being a Jew or being anybody, but especially a Jew, social justice is the most important thing in the world. I think that society is a conspiracy against the poor. And nobody cares about the poor.... You don't have to have been poor like I was in order to know what poverty does to people but it helps.... I knew what it was like to be poor just as I knew what it was like to be Jewish.... That's why I was always in

> favour of ...equality and social justice. .... [And the ICSF] just fit into my life. It's just what I've been looking for. [This was] a way of helping Israel... I love Israel, I would die for Israel, but I want Israel to be good, to be a wonderful country and this is my way of chipping in.

In our conversations about the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords, Myrna's first reflections were on the role that the Netanyahu government then in power had played in stalling the process and the role of the Israeli "extremists" who she felt were preventing the implementation of the Accords. She had been frustrated by the entire situation saying at one point: "... I hate the people that are destroying the character that I think Jews should display."

Throughout the interview, Myrna would shift her descriptions of Israel from ones that set it within a uniquely Jewish teleology to one that compared it to other "normal" states. At one point she said: "I think that we're going to have to take our place with every other country and just be a country and try to be the best country we can, but it will never be without troubles." Soon after she told me that Zionist meant "... a country that tries to make equality where people got enough to live on." Saying that "people kill one another for no cause" because this is the "nature of man" she reflected on what was presently occurring in Israel, and then said: "I don't see us being wiped out [because we're Jews]. I think we'll kill ourselves before Israel's wiped out." But when I asked her if Israel was just like any other state, she reacted quite strongly to my statement and said: "No.... Israel, to me, it's special; not like anything else. I don't like any other state like I love Israel." And when I asked if that was because she was Jewish, she answered an unqualified "Yes."

In almost every way, Myrna was very supportive of Israel. She represented it as a state that had saved all of the world's Jews. This is how she described it:

> I'd like to see anything that strengthens Israel's existence and I certainly think Jews owe it to Israel. Jews all over the world owe it to Israel. They saved us. They saved us and I don't want the Jewish presence in the world to be diminished in any way.

When I asked Myrna what she meant by her statement that Israel had "saved" the Jews, she quickly answered: "Well what would have happened to the Jews if there was no Israel?"

She continued:

> That's changed the whole world. ... [I]t gave Jews all over the world a prominence and a presence and an identity which made them more viable. I think that Jews without a country were at a great disadvantage.... I think that we were people in the air, "Luftmenschen" and now ...there's a place where we can be proud and happy and good and comfortable and decent and successful. [It] is a great boon to all the Jews in the world and I like to see anything that would make it better and stronger.

When I asked Myrna if travelling to Israel gave North American Jews "a better sense of

themselves as Jews," she replied:

> Absolutely. Absolutely... that's why I'd like to see the country perfect... You know Jews have always been at a disadvantage. They do good and there are suspicions about them: they're wicked, they hurt people, they take money away from blacks and so on and so forth. I'd like to see a proud, functioning, successful country that, not that it won't have problems but that it will deal with the problems in... an intelligent and righteous way, make a great contribution to the world which is certainly likely and everybody will be proud. I feel a different person now that there's an Israel. Not only that I could come here but that it's here and I'm proud to be a Jew. I always was but now ... I have a real concrete commitment to my Jewishness.

Clearly anti-Semitism had affected Myrna's life and the founding of Israel had had life-changing

consequences. She spoke about the founding of the state of Israel at every turn and in many

different contexts. She had placed Israel at the centre of the changing perspectives on Jews not

only by Jews as well as by non-Jews.

For Myrna, Israel is also the place to be recognised for all of its accomplishments. Here

is what she had to say about one of Israel's most recognisable institutions, the Israel-Defense

Forces:

> I always hated armies but [when I met with a General in 1959, I thought] the Israeli army was so wonderful, so democratic and... my impression was that it was the most constructive organisation in the country. To think that ...no army could do what this army did. It ties people together. It made the nation. It educated. It took everybody who came in, including the African Jews [Oriental or Mizrahi and Sephardic Jews] at that time and the story is ...they didn't know how to use a toilet or anything and sent them out polished, educated, sophisticated in some way of making a living and healthy and Israeli. They came here stumbling and bumbling and having lived in a primitive life and suddenly they became Israeli citizens. It was the only educational opportunity these people ever had and they got a wonderful education. So I found myself cheering for this wonderful army. It was so different from what an army meant to me in the United States. In the United States [the army] was the dregs and they never did anything like educate them for good and ...so [the IDF] was the civilising experience for these young people. So when I talked about the [Israeli] army, when I talked about Israel, I talked about everything they were doing right. You think the Jews are smart? Yes they are. And you know what, they're doing with these unbelievable problems

they have? Wonderful things. They think just the right way and they're doing the right thing. So... with their intelligence and with their suffering, with their energy and their willingness to work like dogs, [and] to do their own thing, it was just what I thought the world ought to be. You know, you had an ideal new world. Turned out they're just like everybody else but better, on a higher level. And ... adversity does that. It was being at the bottom of the well that made them strong and determined and brought out the best of them. They were not as exploitative as they could be later. I think part of that is that they were a more socialist society.

Here Myrna, following her own definition of Zionism (above), had envisioned Israel as a socialist state, with its own people's army. It was an Israel that had enlightened "African Jews". It was an Israel that had accomplished great things in the face of great hardships. Myrna believed that Israel had once been a socialist state and had therefore been a fairer and less exploitative country. This image is all part of the attraction that Israel holds for Myrna, a highly motivated woman whose self-identity is linked to the belief that all Jews are committed to seeking social justice. Israel is a model of what Jews are capable of doing within their own state. Israeli-Jews are not only safe from anti-Semitism, they can realise all of their own ideals: they are smart, powerful and independent. But this was also an Israel that had changed.

When near the end of one statement Myrna spoke about "exploitation," she was referring to the use of Palestinian and foreign labourers on farms and in factories in Israel. Her early idealism about Israel was clearly complicated by this knowledge.

When I asked Myrna if her perspectives on the Arabs have changed over time, she said she didn't know much about "the Arabs" except as a threat to Israel, saying:

I didn't know how many there were ,or I knew that the Grand Mufti was a friend of Hitler's. You know, he was in favour of Hitler and so on, and I knew there was great danger but I didn't know anything about their state. ...It didn't have cogency... for me.

Later when reflecting on the Oslo Peace Accords, she said:

I think it's probably the success of Israel [that led to the Accords]... [I]t made the Arabs feel also that there was something there for them. If they could come to terms with Israel, their lives would be better. Of course in the meantime I think the Jews exploited them, used them as slave labour and controlled their lives for the benefit of private enterprises in this country and that troubles me very much.

Again, Myrna's identification with Israel's success was key, shaping her assumption that the Arabs would want something from, or a relationship to, Israel. Her assumptions were based on an assumption that Israel was a modern state that the Arabs would want "a part of". And yet, she recognised that the exploitative relationship of the Jews to the Arabs contradicts the very modes of redistribution and sharing of wealth implicit in the socialist envisionings she initially spoke of when she described the state. It is interesting that despite the fact that she expressed some conflict over the exploitation of Israeli Arabs, Myrna never made any reference to the militarism of Israeli society, or to the problems faced by Palestinians.

Near the end of the interview, Myrna expressed what had been obvious from the very beginning of our conversation and what she would repeat throughout the tour: "I love talking about being Jewish, and I love Israel."

Warren and Sarah

I met Warren and Sarah on the ILF tour. It was their second trip to Israel. Their first trip had been in the mid-1970's. After our tour together, I met them in the community and was invited on numerous occasions to come for lunch. On one such occasion I conducted an interview with both of them.

Warren and Sarah are retired but both continue to be active. For example, Warren writes letters to the editor of local and national newspapers as well as articles concerning social matters. He also maintains an active Internet list-serve. Sarah golfs and paints beautiful water-colour paintings. The couple spends every winter in Florida. They have both been professionals; he in trade union politics, she in education. Warren, raised in an Orthodox family, was rebellious in his youth and as part of this rebellion, became an anti-Zionist. Sarah, raised by communist and atheist parents who had not belonged to any synagogue, felt she "grew up like topsy." They had two daughters and two sons, all successful adults living in cities away from their parent's community.

When reflecting on their relationship to Judaism and their own family's Jewish education, Warren and Sarah talked about the time they founded a Reform Temple in the city

they used to live in because they did not want to attend Orthodox or Conservative services in that community. Though Sarah became quite involved in Jewish education at the Temple, she said that "Israel didn't play a big role for us. I didn't know anything about Israel and I don't think there was anything on the curriculum for those early years." In those years Reform Judaism "wasn't acceptable" to the Jewish religious authorities in the community and the congregation had to meet in church basements. As Warren recalled,

> ...so a lot of my feelings about Jews... and Jewish community life [are negative] because of the way they treated a lot of Reform people, and I have some negative feelings also about Israel now because of that. It goes back a long time....

But despite their attempts to educate their children within the Reform Movement, they said "none of them feel [Jewish]" although they do maintain and "assert that identity" by having their "boys circumcised" and "celebrating the Passover Seder."

When I asked how their perspectives on Israel had evolved, each had a very different history. Warren told me he had been

> anti-Zionist at one time... when I was very, very young ... when I could think about what Nazism, [and] Fascism meant to me I equated it with that. Nationalism and socialism to me was a very ugly thing, and I guess I had some of the ideals [about] ... world government, the world unity and ... I saw ... Zionism as the antithesis to that at one time. I don't have that same feeling now except I do feel that the [Orthodox and nationalist] extremists [now in Israel] represent that to me. They're Nazis.

When I asked him what had changed his mind about "Zionism," he said he had been a "one-world idealist" who had only begun to see Israel as a pragmatic answer to the Jews' situation much later. He said:

> [We needed] to have a homeland for the Jews after what they'd gone through... [W]e lost a lot of my family, mainly from my father's side, in the Holocaust and... [from], my own personal experiences with anti-Semitism in this country, [which had been] very strong....

Sarah had become a "Zionist" only after a "dear friend" of hers had "made *aliyah.*" For many years, Sarah had "avoided" her friend's promptings to join "groups like Pioneer Women." Early on in her life, Sarah had become a member of the B'nai B'rith but she had avoided other Jewish organisations,

...because I just didn't have a feeling for Israel until war broke out and what we knew of what was going in Nazi Germany and Austria and them killing Jews right and left.... And then I read Exodus, Leon Uris' book, and then I realised it: I'm a Jew and my family's Jewish and I have some kinship with all these Jews that were killed and tried to flee, [who tried to] save themselves. We really need a homeland, we really need some place of refuge, [and] a place to go to, to call our own and so that was when I... started to give to the Hadassah and other [Jewish] organisations.... So that became important to me. I realised that we needed homeland, we needed somewhere where our people could go to when they weren't welcome anywhere else. Not only were they not welcome anywhere else at the time, they were being killed just because they were born Jewish. So that's when I became interested in Israel. I still believe that we need an Israel, we need that country badly and we need to support it.

Sarah had an interesting way of shifting her descriptions from "they" to "them" to "we" when describing Israelis and Jews. At each moment, however, the need for a home and a homeland is described on the basis of Jewish "kinship" and collective responsibility.

A significant element of Warren and Sarah's identification with Israel is the association of the state's significance to the Jews after the Second World War: it was the Jews' safe haven.

Warren and Sarah had been attracted to the ILF tour in part because of the celebration of Jerusalem's "3000 year anniversary." While this tour "brought back many memories" from their first trip, they were "astounded" with "the changes in Israel and it was like a wonderland to us. Some wonderful things that the country has done and... we were just thrilled to be there and... we felt... like we were part of it." They both felt that the first tour had given them "a real feeling about what Israel was all about... Like the history and the sites we visited which we didn't want to let go... [of], like Masada... And [it all] told us a lot about Israel."

One of the most memorable visits had been their tour of the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv in 1975. It had prompted some to get "in touch with my roots... I found I was reading the Bible after that and reading books on Jewish history. It created a strong interest. If I hadn't gone to Israel I don't think I would have felt that interest."

When I asked Warren and Sarah to describe Israel for me they replied:

Warren: It's multifaceted.

Sarah: It's a bustling, energetic country full of people who are...

Warren: Creative energy is words that come to my mind. There's a lot of that creativity.

Sarah: A lot of high energy activity, a lot of innovation.

Warren: A lot of creativity.

Sarah: We went to the farms and saw [the] experimental work that they are doing. It was astounding. There is so much high energy, brainy people there. That's why it's for young people. It's a country for young people...

Warren: Something that's very unique about Israel is the people who are making Israel what it is.

Warren and Sarah's most memorable moments were tied to two sites they had visited: one on their previous tour and one on the ILF tour. On the first tour Warren said that both he and Sarah had been

> moved ...most [by] the Masada experience... It's not just the physical thing about the Masada but the story about... how people... tried to save themselves and defend themselves. But that scene, what they had done to preserve their lives and their faith and their freedom, that is enormously impressive.... That they fought so hard to create this... gives the lie to the idea that they killed themselves. ... I can't believe they committed suicide. That I don't believe.

Sarah explained that perhaps "... they didn't want to give their enemy [the] satisfaction of killing them or making them into slaves." But Warren said no matter what "they would have fought to their death."

> Sarah said the other memorable site had been Megiddo, "the site where Armageddon, ...was going to be." Sarah described what she had been impressed with as follows:

> We saw the cotton fields planted there and so on and that [is] where they believe... there will be a great conflict or a war, that will be where [Armageddon] will be, and that will be the time in which we will have the Messiah come. Now I don't know that... [but] I couldn't believe that cotton was growing [there]. I mean we always think of cotton growing in the deep South of the United States, right? And you expect to see black women and children picking the cotton. We saw machines harvesting the cotton and then we found out afterwards ...on our second trip that they are irrigating, oh you heard him, the guide telling us how they irrigate the cotton fields and other fields with purified sewage water, remember?

Here Sarah had "named" the site in terms of its biblical significance and presumably following the tour guides presentation, described it within the terms of Zionist development narratives. The area she was speaking about is called the Hula Valley and it was described on all the tours I

travelled on as an area that, prior to the Jews' arrival, had been an unproductive "swamp" or marshland. It was interesting to me that Sarah had "forgotten" that the tour guide on the IIF tour had also described the environmental and ecological problems these same cotton fields had created in the area.

Warren then added that he had been "greatly impressed" by

the building, [and] reconstructing the face of the earth.... [For example,] what the Israelis are doing there in [the Negev Desert]. [It] is the basis of a new technological revolution... [And]... if you can do what they're doing there and transfer that technology to other countries in the world, it means that more people can survive and not die of starvation. ...[T]here are possibilities of feeding more people [that impresses me]. Just because of what they're doing ... transforming Israel, it's a transformation of a whole world and [by doing that] they're dealing with the [world's] problem of starvation and poverty. So it's not just there for the Israelis; the Arabs and other countries maybe can benefit from this....

Warren and Sarah revelled in Israel's development, especially in the Negev Desert. But Warren did not simply celebrate the Jews' accomplishments. He also stressed the potential that such development might have for negotiating peaceful relationships with non-Jews. Sarah was somewhat less optimistic than Warren, feeling that these technologies could also be the root of the Arabs' resentment towards Israel. She said:

... I can just picture them, the people looking down on Israel from the Golan Heights, and looking at all these rich fields and wonderful pasture land, and then they look at their own land and say 'Well, why not us? Why can't it be for us?'

Sarah could not have known from the tour narratives (or from popular or community narratives for that matter) that the West Bank provides a good deal of the agricultural produce sold in Israel and that the Syrians are known for their significant agricultural production. After all, the area is known by another name: the Fertile Crescent.

Another thing that had "left ... a big impression" on Warren was "that city with nobody living there.... It was in between Israel and Tel Aviv... How they put that all together... Fantastic." I explained that the place he was speaking about was called Modi'in and that it was one of the controversial Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories. They were quite taken aback with the news and as if they had disbelieved what I had said, exclaimed: "There's a whole city [there]" and "Wow." Sarah then asked me: "Didn't they know that when they were building

it?" And Warren questioned: "A whole lot of work ... and money gone into it." They were surprised to hear that the area had even been settledunder the Labour government.

I later checked my field-notes and transcripts to see what in fact they had been told about Modi'in and found that Avi, the Brigadier General who had assisted the Israel Land Fund tour guide, had described the area as follows:

> Look how a new city is being built... One year ago this was nothing. If you come back five years from now, it will be a beautiful city.... The Green Line was one kilometre from here. This mountain was Jordanian between 1948 and 1967. It is very, very expensive land here.

With such a description, unless one was listening very carefully and knew that what had been "Jordanian" was since 1967 part of the Occupied Territories, it would be possible to think one was simply looking at a new suburb within Israel's borders.

Both Sarah and Warren said that they had appreciated Avi's military knowledge, Warren said that Avi had given him "useful," "valuable" information as well as

> some insights... when we went to look at the Golan Heights ... You know when I saw that, that gave me a pessimistic view about the possibilities of peace in Israel. How the hell can that Golan Heights problem really be solved... [F]rom the defence stand point, I don't see how the Israelis can give it up. ... [When] we were standing up looking down onto the Syrian encampments... in the distance, [Avi] said, ...it was a very short distance from there [Kissinger's Ramp] to Syrian bases.

Sarah added "It almost looked like a stone's throw." In order to get Warren to explain just why he felt so "pessimistic," I asked if it was due to the explanations that Avi had given us or if it was his own sense of the place. Warren explained that it was Avi's explanation

> ...but also the space, the geography... I had a view of it on the ground.... I couldn't see how that issue could be resolved. In fact my view of it now ... is that it couldn't be resolved without having ... the United Nations or somebody occupy that ground and to make it like international ground so it doesn't belong to either Syria or Israel... maybe to neutralise it in some way. Because to have it occupied by the Syrians would be a threat to Israel [and] having it occupied by Israel I think the Syrians will see it legitimately as a threat to them... So it gives you a somewhat pessimistic view together with the other things about the whole politics of the region...

In a move that seemed to counteract Warren's "pessimism" Sarah interjected with a heroic description of Israel, and said:

> Except that they've done... such miracles with that land up until now. The Israelis, I

> think, can accomplish anything they want to. Yes, I think [peace and peace in that area]... can be accomplished. I'm not a strategist and I don't even know how they accomplish what they've already done.... I think what they've done is a miracle so they can create another miracle.

To which Warren pessimistically answered added:

> ...[but] they can't even get themselves out of Lebanon. Even if they wanted to, they can't. And Lebanon and Hezbollah is tied in with Syria... The Lebanese have a real problem. How can [they] escape Syrian domination? It isn't just Jews against Arabs. It's a complicated situation.

Warren had thus "taken up" the militaristic narratives tying the Lebanese conflict to Syria, much as it had been presented on the Israel Land Fund tour. Despite Sarah's sense that Israel would continue to overcome its obstacles in the most miraculous of ways, the core of Warren's "pessimism" lay in his assumption that Israel's security is at stake in the Golan region. This perspective blended the militarism as well as the heroism of the narratives as they were presented in the Syria and Golan Heights narratives.

Warren persisted with his argument that Israeli accomplishments in Israel be considered for use on a global basis. He argued that

> ...the Jews have a lot to offer the world and the world can benefit enormously. ...I think it's a pity in a way [that] what the Jews have to offer the world should be limited in the way it is right now.... Bounded by the borders, whatever they will be, of what we're going to call Israel, bounded by the chains of history, the passions of racial and religious animosities. There's so much more to be gained by co-operation and by communications if we only find a way of overcoming a lot of it... because we have a lot to offer the world and the world still has a lot to offer to Israel in all these exchanges. When we talk about trade I don't think about it... just in terms of a commercial basis but [with] the Arabs themselves ...[T]hey're our brothers, we have the same ancestors and I wonder how is it that a lot that we have can't be shared with our brothers and cousins; not just Arabs, but the whole world but particularly with Arabs who see themselves as our enemies and I think that there's the challenge.

This complex statement reflected Warren's layered understandings of Jews' identities and Israel's place in the world. It is as though Israel's borders, both literally and figuratively, and the population in the region, both internally (Israel's Orthodox authorities), and externally, (the Arabs), restrain the Jews' and Israel's potential contributions to the world. For Warren, Israel is tied to the Jews' potential contributions to world history. Furthermore, Israel is a place in which the "chains of history" can be broken by a universal sharing of technological knowledge. Warren

went so far as to call the Arabs "our brothers and cousins."

But for Sarah not all Arabs should be trusted or traded with. She was far more dubious of the potential success of Warren's plan for peace, and said:

> When I was there or when we were there I remember thinking when I was coming back to the hotel, Israel how small we are on that map. It's such a small little country, a jewel; a jewel in rough terrain and surrounded by a lot of hostility, hostile people and how do they manage to survive? You can't help it. This whole thing is a miracle, how it manages to survive. Not only for itself, but as a haven for other peoples, you know, other Jews around the world and if more Jews go there, where are they going to go? They're going to explode this little tiny spot on the map.

Israel is both threatened from the outside, as well as justifiably expansive from within. After making this statement, Sarah suddenly shifted the conversation and said:

> Do we send our children there to go and get killed in their army... It makes me feel a little uncomfortable... cause here I am rooting for this little country to survive but what do I do other than give them money? I don't send my children there; they wouldn't go anyway and I don't go myself except, you know, I support them with whatever money we can... I don't do anything else... Well sometimes I feel guilty. Like when I was there, I felt guilty about it. I did.

Sarah felt guilt over the need for "this little country" to continually perform heroic actions in order to survive. Warren's immediate reaction to Sarah's point was to turn to me and say he "didn't have those same feelings." Rather, he explained, in a somewhat agitated state:

> I can see the necessity of a Jewish homeland, I can see the legitimacy of my support in that but I find no legitimacy being restricted to it. Like my identity as a Jew ... doesn't begin or end with Israel nor do I feel it would be good for Jews in the world or Jews in Israel or anywhere else to have our Jewish idea ...and the Jewish identity restricted by that. I see the need for Israel to exist and I see the need for working out... [what] people call ... peace... a way of living and working together between Arabs and the Palestinians so that we can both go on and fulfil our mission to the world. .... It is something that is a problem now that's restricting us from realising our potential worth as Jews and as Palestinians.

The tension in the discussions between Warren and Sarah grew as the discussion continued. This tension was based on a fundamental disagreement about the role that North American Jews should play and the strengths of their commitments to Israel. While Sarah felt she had not contributed enough to Israel, Warren felt Israel was only part of the Jews' collective mission; the Jews' accomplishments are unrelated to living in the state. Warren thought that those who believe that Jews could only live fully Jewish lives in Israel, restricted Jews to one geographical

place. In fact, any sense that all Jews and Jewish identity are tied to Israel limits the potential not only of what Jews but what Israelis, Palestinians and Arabs can contribute to the world. The tension created by Sarah's comments continued to build on this issue. While both had expressed their sense that Israel had to exist for those "who need it" Warren added:

> ... I feel I'm making my own... [and we] are making our own contributions [to the world] by this. Like what our son is doing. He's a Jew, ...even if he doesn't feel like he's an Israeli or doesn't have any identification [with Israel or Judaism]....

But for Sarah, North American Jews need to make a greater commitment to Israel. She argued:

> You know, what if there wasn't an Israel... and another Hitler rears its ugly head... Where would we all run to? And ... it's very easy for another Hitler to come to be. The German Jews didn't think that there'd ever be a person, a dictator who would wipe them out, who would want to wipe them out and they stayed on. Many of them stayed on to get killed. ...I'm surprised [you feel the way you do] because I'm still, I'm still young enough to remember what happened.

To which Warren angrily retorted:

> But I'm also old enough or young [enough] to remember. I remember what happened to my parents for instance. I'm a little kid who was on the ... streetcar and we were immigrants. I was just a little kid, [the] oldest of three, and we're going downtown to visit our relatives way out in the east end of [the city]. My parents were jabbering at each other in Yiddish and some old drunk says: "Hey speak English; you're in an English-speaking country or go back where you came from" or something like that. That is important to me right, because when I say we don't belong just in Israel, where do we Jews belong? Because we got a homeland and we belong in it? I think we belong to the world... and I want Israel, but I think we must all fight for the sense of saying we belong in Canada too. We can belong wherever we want. A lot of these barriers are being broken down... I like the idea of globalisation (I just don't like to see a few corporations dominating that globe...). The idea that we belong, the world is our oyster, it's ours, it's for everybody. Not just for Jews. The Palestinians unfortunately, you know, I think they should have their homeland. We need our homeland but that doesn't mean that the Palestinians don't belong in Canada as much as Jews do, or anywhere else they choose to go. That is the thing that I think is worth fighting [for]. But we are... being distracted by it and I think this is why I said I started out with being anti-Zionist. I like the Zionist mission but not if it's going to be in terms of the idea of having a homeland. Everybody has to have a place where they can call home right, but I'd like to be able to move where I'm not confined to our homes like they're jails. Israel is...

Sarah interjected, "You can choose to be a Jew but ...you're still vulnerable to anti-Semitism [and] ... You can still be subjected to, you can still be a slave by a Nazi...."

Warren replied, "And that will be whether there is or [there] isn't an Israel..."

Their discussion continued:

> Sarah: "By a dictator. You can still be wiped out. You and your people can still be
>
> wiped out."
>
> Warren: "You know what, that's true but at the..."
>
> Sarah: "At the whim of some crackpot..."

Still, Warren insisted:

> Anti-Semitism is just one form of racism. What I'm saying is that racism will always be
> here, ... to some degree whether there is an Israel or not. My concern is that there
> should be less of it and my concern is that for certain people Israel means something
> that is more restrictive than I would like it to be.... The racism will ... always be there
> but it shouldn't be the force that it is and to many people, even Jews, the idea of a
> Palestinian state they say 'Alright, that's a place for the Arabs, get them out of Israel,
> put them into Palestine' [and there] that goes again. The whole... whether you're Jewish
> or Palestinians,... Irish, Scottish or whatever. Yes, you got your homeland – you got
> Scotland, you got Ireland and we can all live in peace together in Ireland or wherever –
> but you still can go anywhere. The Irish and Scots came to Canada and prospered here
> and they belong here even though they can still feel that Scotland is their homeland.

> Sarah: "That's why I think Israel has to exist."
>
> Warren: "Well I'm not denying that, I said yes, but not to say that its got to be a jail for
>
> us."

Through their discussions, Sarah and Warren disagreed over fundamental issues that I heard

regularly debated among Jews in diaspora: to what degree must the Jews' place be defined by, or

confined to, the territory of Israel. Sarah's fear was palpable. She had not been raised in a Zionist

household, she had not been particularly active in any Zionist organisations and had been an

educator within Reform settings. In other words, hers was not an extremist's position by any

stretch of the imagination. Yet, for Sarah, history teaches that the Jews are endangered, and any

trusting relationships with non-Jews are difficult for her to imagine. Warren, on the other hand,

had gone so far as to "normalise" anti-Semitism by placing it within the spectrum of racism rather

than imbuing it with some unique significance for the Jews' experience of the world. While each

desired an Israel for the Jews, for Sarah such a state is fundamental to Jews' survival while for

Warren it is one of a number of geographic places the Jews can claim a right to live in. In fact,

Warren warned against assigning any peoples to any one place, going so far as to suggest that if

there is only one "place" for the Jews, this could be as dangerous as having no place for them. He also recognised the danger such assumptions pose for the Palestinians, worrying that if the logic of assigning people to a place is played out, then the Palestinians could be moved to a future "Palestinian state." Warren felt the Palestinians have as much right to continue to live in Israel as he has the right to choose not to live in Israel. Of course, the fact that Palestinians cannot choose where they might like to live was not at issue here.

Asked if tours to Israel were a means of maintaining North American Jews' identity Warren and Sarah both expressed some fears that current extremist positions within Israel, as represented by the Ultra-Orthodox and Ultra-nationalists, threaten that role. Nonetheless, Sarah thought it was good to

> send young people to Israel... They used to work on a kibbutz but now they just go over there and maybe help out in the fields but they get to know other Israeli kids and I think it's a good experience. It's always good to learn how other people ... in other parts of the world live.

The fact that Sarah did not describe Israel as a particularly special place for Jewish youths to travel to caught me by surprise particularly because her earlier statements were about the uniqueness of Israel and the need for Jews to provide special support to the state.

The role of the Orthodox rabbinate authorities and in particular their power to decide "who is a Jew" dominated the rest of our discussion that day. Warren and Sarah both expressed a great deal of anger on this issue. It was also fairly apparent that they had each thought about how this issue affected them personally. At one point Warren argued that:

> there's a lot of inconsistencies and problems within the *halachic* view of what is a Jew. And it [doesn't] fit in the modern world, [or]... the... political realities in Israel right now. For instance, one of my sons married a Japanese girl, [and] they've got two children... Supposing they regarded themselves as Jews... and ...they followed Jewish practices... The boy had... the circumcision... and supposing even that they were brought up as Jewish... Because the mother had not converted according to *halacha*... they would not be accepted as Jews. But if it was one of my daughters who married a Gentile ... and they had children and the children denied they were Jewish, they would still be Jews... Right now... the Orthodox refuse to examine it. ...Even amongst the Rabbis there couldn't be a unanimous agreement of what *halacha* means and how it's to be applied and yet they don't want to apply it in a way... which... unites the Jewish people... So I think what they need now is to have somebody write a new *halacha*.

Warren wanted me to understand the irrationality of the current Orthodox position, from his point of view. In the process he touched on the nature of the dilemmas – on what basis is a Jew to be defined: nation, culture, religion? As much as Sarah and Warren recognised that these religious laws affect them as Jews living outside of Israel, neither felt that they had any business interfering in Israel's governance because they did not pay taxes and did not have a right to vote there. Though powerless to do anything about it, they both worried that Israel's policies would continue to have an effect on their own lives and the lives of their loved ones.

To Warren and Sarah, the Orthodox are simply fanatics who express religious passions that have led to unfair policies and, in the extreme, the murder of one of Israel's Prime Ministers. There was no recognition of the Orthodox' religious attachment to the land or their idealisation of Israel as a sacred space. For Warren and Sarah, Israel is a democratic and secular state threatened by this extremist minority.

With respect to the Oslo Peace Accords, Warren said he felt that both sides have to

deal with extremists and the terrorists.... That to me is the key. I think the land issues
are subordinate. I think the land issues and money issues can be resolved but the
problems like from my experience in labour relations the ideologies are the problems.
... The security problem is how to deal with the crazies, that's what it is.

Ever the labour negotiator, Warren suggested that the issue is simply one of reconciliation. While Warren seemed to be suggesting that all the issues could be resolved through negotiations, he did not seem to recognize that taking the land issue off the table shifts the balance of the negotiations to one strictly framed by Israeli interests, for the Palestinian conflict is precisely about their right to land. Warren seemed to suggest ideological differences are at the root of the conflict, but it was not clear what ideological problems could be resolved without also dealing with the land issue, especially land that Israel claims as uniquely its own.

Warren and Sarah were both committed to the existence and strength of Israel and have interpreted its place in the world through their own experiences of anti-Semitism and memories of the Holocaust. For Sarah, Israel is a place of refuge, a place of history, and a place that every Jew should both safeguard and feel proud of. In her own way, Sarah suggested that Israel is not "normal", it is a place for the Jews, and necessarily so because of the continuous history of

discrimination and hatred towards the Jews.

Warren normalised the Jews' experience of anti-Semitism, comparing it at one point to another form of racism, on the one hand, while on the other hand, he placed Israel at the centre as a unique model of the Jews' contributions to the world. For Warren, Israel could become a "light unto all nations" and though he did recognise other lights, they were somehow less bright. For both Warren and Sarah, Israel is a nationally secular rather than a particularly religious or sacred space.

Aaron

The interview with Aaron was conducted on a bright warm day while sitting on a dock on the Red Sea in front of our hotel. It was our last day on the tour together and I was particularly excited when Aaron granted me an interview. He seemed very engaged by the tour presentations and events and quite thrilled to be in Israel. He was also willing to challenge Arnie the tour guide on the Israel Development Fund tour on a couple of occasions (see Tourist Resistance above). And he rivalled me in documenting the tour by taking hundreds of photographs.

Aaron had emigrated from London, England to Canada "after having survived the blitz and the bombing of London in the War." Aaron's first trip to Israel was in 1957 when he had represented Canada in the Fifth Maccabbea – a form of "Jewish Olympics" held annually in Israel. He said of his 1998 trip: "It's been amazing. It's hard to recollect what type of deserted place Israel was 41 years ago, in my eyes."

After I asked Aaron what had tied him to Israel, at first he said: "You're asking very emotional questions."[36] When I advised Aaron that he was under no pressure to answer anything he was uncomfortable with, he said:

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36. Aaron's comment was not at all unusual, though each time it came up, I wondered why a question that I thought was political would be interpreted as emotional. Upon reflection, and with each answer and encounter, I realised that I was asking some people to "locate" themselves within their personal life histories. These histories were often marked by experiences of anti-Semitism or the Holocaust or even memories of such experiences told by family or friends, all of which made what I thought a simple question take on a very personal or "emotional" one to answer.

No. I would say it stems from really the Holocaust. I was 12 at the start of the War and I have vivid, vivid memories of pictures of the camps printed in the English newspaper. That was just heart-rending; they are printed on my mind, [and] never go away. I think really that's what led me to ...really lean towards Israel. I would say that I'm not a religious Jew, I'm Jewish and I'll defend my Jewish rights. I don't go to Synagogue every Saturday ... I'm not that religious, although I come really from a very religious family back in England where we used to walk on Saturdays and I couldn't use the scissors Friday night. I would always end up playing chess with my father Friday night. But now, of course, it's a little bit different. There are all sorts of fads, everything. But I'm not, well we're not really that religious but, you know, we do believe in the state of Israel. There's no question about it. ....[I]t's just a beautiful state. To see what they've done is unbelievable.... I think a lot more people should come and see what Israel has done to itself: the way it has made oh, beautiful groves out of desert.... One angle you look at just plain dirty old desert and you turn around the other way and you've got beautiful buildings, [well maybe] not beautiful but at least a liveable situation.

Aaron's secular tie to Israel is rooted within his own experiences of anti-Semitism and his own memories of the images of the Holocaust. He had witnessed the changes in the state of Israel and considered the transformation, particularly in the desert, to have been an impressive achievement.

I expected Aaron would repeat the narrative of the Negev's development when I asked him to reflect on the tour and what he had learned, but Aaron surprised me and said:

... I only had one generalisation of ... the whole world [and that] is man's inhumanity to man. This is really what the whole story's about. It's trying to live in peace and let people do their own thing.

Aaron's statement "man's inhumanity to man" to describe what he learned on tour, suggested to me that he did not see the world in Zionist terms which particularises the Jews' condition and presents their history as a condition of "man's" (sic) inhumanity towards all Jews. Nevertheless, when asked how important Israel is to North American Jews, Aaron said:

Well [it's] very important.... ...[I]t's basically our land... [O]ne of the things that I found very interesting 41 years ago... what I couldn't believe and what made me ... feel at home was the fact that everywhere I turned – like the maid in the hotel was Jewish, the taxi driver was Jewish, the waitress was Jewish, even the lady of the night standing on the street in Dizengoff in Tel Aviv was Jewish – ... I couldn't get used to it. It is a very satisfying feeling because I grew up in England and... there was a lot of anti-Semitism there. I felt it in school. I came across it first-hand and just realised that 'Hey, it's us alone, almost, unfortunately,' and that's what I feel.

For Aaron as for others, Israel was to be celebrated as the Jews' homeland. But Aaron's final comment struck me as interesting. When he said "almost" and "unfortunately" he seemed to be reluctantly accepting or conceding that the Jews had not arrived to an empty land and they were not alone in Israel; there had been other people there as well. This was an "unfortunate" circumstance, however, because it had troubled the relationships between the Jews and the others. What had begun as the Zionist narrative of a uniquely Jewish homeland turned into a description that included the fact that the Jews were not in fact "alone" after all.

Another reading would have it that he was reflecting on how it was that the Jews, once they established their presence in Israel, found themselves alone and having to defend themselves once more.

When Aaron reflected on his decision to disregard Canadian government warnings about the dangers of coming on the tour at the height of the latest U.S.-Iraq showdown, he compared Saddam Hussein to Hitler, as Netanyahu had in his lecture, and as many in the media have done since 1991. Here was what Aaron had to say on the Iraqi situation:

> I don't trust Saddam. I think he's just another Hitler and ... when I was 12 years old, I'll never forget Neville Chamberlain coming home, getting off the plane from Munich, in his hand, waving a piece of paper "Peace in our Time" and I think the very next day Hitler walked into Czechoslovakia. And you can't let a madman have biological warfare type of chemicals, etc. and anthrax. I mean if a man kills his own Kurds in his own country ... what can you think? It's like Chretien, the Canadian Prime Minister ordering all Indians to be killed in Canada. Same thing basically. I don't know what you think but ... we have our own problems with the Indians in Canada. It's a difficult problem.

Aaron's memories of Chamberlain's moves had formed the background against which he interpreted the unstable "peace" and "ceasefire" agreements that the UN had signed with Iraq. Netanyahu's position that Iraq's leader was an untrustworthy "peace partner" because he was a dictator had obviously resonated for Aaron. But in an interesting way, Aaron had also shifted from the hard-line position with respect to Hussein when Aaron acknowledged that the separatist and nationalist problem the Kurds presented to the Iraqis was indeed a "difficult problem." By switching to a universalistic rather than a particularistic model of conflict in the region, Aaron thus only "poached" a part of the narratives representing the Arabs of the region as

premodern and untrustworthy.

Aaron felt that the tours were a "great way" to learn about Israel because they tell of "the mysticism of the country [which] is fascinating 'cause it is a mystic place." When I asked Aaron what he meant by "mystic," he said:

> Well because of the background. From day one, you're in a country where it all started at, the old Bible, the New Testament and I remember the first time I came here, we visited Nazareth and that was unbelievable.

When I asked Aaron what had been so "unbelievable" about Nazareth he said "the caves." The "caves" are a series of Christian sites, including the Grotto of the Annunciation where it is claimed that the Archangel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to the "son of God;" and a crypt at St. Joseph's Church said to be Joseph's shop. Aaron was clearly captivated by biblical history – both Jewish and Christian. It was as though the narratives and the land had somehow captured another time for Aaron – a time that was spiritually and historically important. This is what made Israel "mystical."

Aaron, while seemingly engaged by the political issues on the tour – he had after all asked questions about Israeli settlement policies at Castel (see above) – was surprisingly uninformed when I asked him about the signing of the Oslo Accords. At first he asked when they were signed and only after I had prompted him with "Remember the famous handshake" did he ask: "What with Arafat?" to which I responded, "Yes." At that point, he proceeded to describe what he had felt at the time:

> I think sceptical ... [and], respect[ful].... [I]t's a problem. You know the mandate of the PLO at that time was to drive Israel into the sea. I don't think that mandate's been changed if I recollect, has it?

Aaron was sceptical because he did not trust the Palestinians who had not yet dealt with what he called their "mandate," meaning their revolutionary charter, also known as the Covenant. Still his respect extended to the Israelis for attempting a solution, for when I asked him if he was "hopeful at all?" Aaron shifted his position. He said:

> Oh I'm hopeful, yes and internally optimistic. And it seems a shame that the two can't live in peace together. I mean ... you see Arabs working in Jewish places, Jewish hotels and [they] seem to be living peacefully with each [other]. ...[T]here was an old saying

> from the First World War, where I lost two uncles: ... they said they should put all the politicians in a field together and let them fight it out themselves, and that's about the size of it. [People] in [t]he general public ... [I] don't think have any animosity towards the other. I mean ... you're Palestinian, – half – I don't feel any animosity towards you. ...You're a sweetheart of a girl. ...No really, I think it's ridiculous. As ... I've always said and I repeat it, man's inhumanity to man is just one of the tragedies of the whole world. When you see what's going on everywhere, other countries, this is just ridiculous... They get all worked up.

Aaron's universalistic, humanistic and generally apolitical sensibilities informed his position on the Peace process. While searching for ways in which "the people" generally get along together, he did not see the exploitation of some (e.g., the Palestinians) but he did see the humanity of all. For Aaron, it was the politicians who are the main obstacles to peace; they interfere in the lives of people who would otherwise work well together. And again it was significant that Aaron cited the Palestinian's controversial charter and yet he did not describe the conflict in terms of an eternal animosity among the peoples in the region. He did not choose to speak in realpolitick or security terms. While his was perhaps a naive perspective on the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis, since he did not raise the issue of the power imbalance between the two groups, or the issues of land and refugees, his humanism led him to some fairly radical positions.

When near the end of the interview, I asked Aaron if he had ever considered living in Israel, he said only that 41 years earlier he had been tempted to come and live in Israel by "a gorgeous Israeli girl" but that since then:

> I've enjoyed the material things I've had in Canada. My late uncle said come over [to Canada] when I was living in England.... [He was] thinking the streets are paved with gold and I've been looking for that gold ever since!

Aaron did not seem at all conflicted about his choice to remain and make a life for himself in Canada. Aaron's attitude toward Israel is to be proud of its achievements but not particularly worried about its future. And though he envisions Israel as the Jews' ancestral land, and attributes its achievements to the Jews' development of the land, it seems that Aaron recognises that others have histories and lives within that same land and that he might consider the possibilities for sharing it. He did not discuss the issues in political terms; he simply wanted peace and he was not interested in what seemed to him to be more politically-driven and

parochial issues rather than general humanitarian principles guiding the politicians on both sides.

Myrna, Warren and Sarah, and Aaron had each selected and resisted Zionist narratives of Israel. Each of them was proud of Israel's accomplishment though they differed in their emphases. Only Sarah expressed any guilt that in order that she may have a safe haven should she need one in the future, Israelis must make the sacrifice on her behalf. All had great concern for Israeli democracy and security, but none of them resorted to militaristic or territorialist arguments for security or against other "undemocratic" neighbours. They imagined Israel as their ancestral homeland and a place of pride for what Israeli-Jews, their national kin, had accomplished there.

CHAPTER 12
BELONGINGS IN DIASPORA

In this chapter, I explore the meanings of Israel with those who initially travelled there during Israel's euphoric years after its victory in the Six Day War.

Marlene

Marlene's grandfathers came to America from the Ukraine and settled in a mid-Atlantic city on the U.S. East Coast in the early 1900's. Each of her parents was born shortly before each of their respective fathers left for America and the family reunion for both had been delayed by the Russian Revolution and the First World War. Both families were "anti-religious," one for radical political reasons, the other for reasons unrelated to politics. Marlene grew up in what she called a "radical household," explaining that her grandfathers and her parents had once been Communists. They had shifted their positions somewhat during the 1950's due in part to "seeing through the lies" of Communism and to witnessing the rise of the McCarthy era in the United States. Marlene recounted how a much-beloved friend and physician who had been a member of the Communist Party had died a broken and destroyed man soon after McCarthyism had begun. Marlene's parents became "very involved" in Israel-related activities in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Her father became a leader of one of North American Jewry's most prominent community organisations. She described herself as a "non-observant Jew" whose "sense of Jewish identity ... has almost nothing if not nothing to do with religion" adding that her "identity as a secular Jew [and]... Jewish identity" are "very important" to her.

While on tour, Marlene and I would often chat and eat our meals together. I conducted a formal interview with her on our last day in Israel, though we had an opprotunity to meet again later at her home. Though she had described herself as a clinical social worker when we first met, while at her home I found that she was also very involved with developing public and community mental health programmes and assessment techniques for underprivileged children

in the inner city schools in her area. She was also very committed to Jewish community
organisations; for example, she was a key participant in a $13 million fundraising campaign to
refurbish the local Jewish Community Centre. She was so proud of this accomplishment that she
took me for a tour of the grand building and I later returned to attend a lecture on Jerusalem's
future in the Centre's new library-lecture hall. Marlene also sent me a newsletter from a Jewish
Feminist organisation in the Ukraine. Clearly a woman committed to social justice, Marlene had
come on the ICSF tour expecting to meet like-minded people and to examine the projects she
supported as a donour.

I met Marlene on what she thought was probably her fifteenth trip to Israel. She had
first travelled to Israel in 1972 in order to "see Israel, to experience Israel" and had "found it
tremendously exciting ... seeing all the places that I'd only heard and read about." After her first
trip she had been "excited enough" to get involved for the next few years with the Israeli
Embassy. Her family's involvement in the Jewish community had made that easy for her.

When I spoke to her about Israel and the role it might play for North American Jews she
had this to say:

> ....I think [Israel is] very important if one chooses it to be important. I think its perfectly
> possible to be a North American Jew and not be deeply involved in Israel I suppose.
> That's just not where I come from. There are many parts of the North American Jewish
> community that don't appeal to me at all.

For Marlene, North American Jews do not have a duty to identify with Israel. It is a choice they
make and it was a choice she had made. She also pointed out that the community's interests are
diverse and that not all Jewish community interests were necessarily in her interest to support.

When we later discussed what Israel had meant to her as a Jew, she said:

> ... it's not really possible to separate it as a Jew from as a person and for me that's an
> important point. ... [M]y first trip to Israel in '72... was a real turn on. I mean it was
> very, very exciting to see this new country because it was still very new at that point
> and things that were being created and beautiful things that existed and people who
> were reconstructing lives and families and so on... But after that, my next trip to Israel
> was 1975... very soon after I had become separated and divorced and, for the first
> time,... I was on my own, literally for the first time in my life. So the excitement of that
> somehow became co-mingled with the excitement of the independence here. I made a
> lot of identification that way which is not literally Jewish.... Theoretically I suppose I
> could have gone through that development equally somewhere else but I wasn't drawn
> to do so. Maybe this felt safe in some psychological sense of safe not physical safe.... I

> don't in any sense mean security in its usual sense. Safe because this felt like mine to experience; what it was like to be alone; to be sure a little frightened and a little nervous and a little this, but in a basically comfortable context.

Marlene wanted me to know at the outset that being Jewish should not set her apart in her identification to or with Israel. This theme recurred in all of my conversations with Marlene. It seemed she wanted me to know that her relationship to Israel was less "nationalistically" oriented than might have been expected of someone who had had such long term associations with Israel. Marlene reflected on Israel as a safe, secure space, even for a woman alone. Her identification with Israel was almost as a cocoon-like setting which was interesting for in many cases, Israel was represented as a dangerous place. In Marlene's case, Israel was envisioned in terms one might use to describe "home" or the comforts of one's home.

When we talked about the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords, Marlene smiled and told me that she had been "very excited. I was on the White House lawn.... Oh it was thrilling, absolutely thrilling." A small peace group that brings Jewish and Arab children and teens together for summer camp had invited Marlene, as one of their supporters, to the 1993 signing ceremony at the White House lawn. She said she had been "delighted" to see "... a whole group of their kids, twenty-five or so were on the White House lawn ..." and that she had "a picture of them with Arafat." As she spoke about this event, Marlene's entire demeanour changed. She became more animated and smiled as she told me just how proud she had been to witness the signing. The fact that she kept a photo of Arafat and the children signalled her openness to the peace-building process. I suspect that most of the people I met on tour would have preferred a picture with Rabin. Still Marlene said she felt "reasonably cynical" and cautioned that

> ultimately... there will be tremendous changes... I'm very hopeful but I won't be living [in Israel] so I am fearful, not in a personal sense but for what some people, or maybe all the people here, are going to have to process and go through in order to be part of the new Israel. It is not going to be easy...

When I asked her what the "it" was she said: "Well ... peace has become a word that's ambiguised (sic). Some kind of ...[p]eaceful coexistence, some kind of ability to live side by side in all the senses of life..." Marlene expressed some fear that the Jews in Israel and in North America were

not entirely prepared for what "peace" might in fact bring to the region. She felt close enough to

some of these people to feel afraid for those who might be affected by these changes and yet

distant enough from their perceptions of Israel to be able to assess how such changes might affect

them. We talked about some of these changes and related issues throughout the tour and then

again at her home. Our conversations focused to a large extent on her criticism of the

"Jewishness" of Israel or the exclusivity of an Israel as a state for Jews. Marlene often criticised

other tour participants for holding onto this idea of Israel. When I asked her to elaborate on

those discussions she said:

> Yes, I mean I don't know that I can understand individual by individual but.... If you
> recall I was telling you about my mother who has all this genuinely sophisticated
> background politically and ... who still comes down to the point of saying "Oh my God
> we've got to make sure it remains a Jewish state." So yes I do understand the claim to
> that and what I imagine to be the terror, and that may not be too strong, the terror at the
> contemplation that they're going to wake up one day and it's no longer going to be a
> Jewish state. Not because they have any idea about what that's really going to be like
> but it's a perception. It's a mental experience of huge loss, whether or not it would
> actually work out that way.

While critical of any position that assumed Israel's primary status was as the Jews' state, Marlene

is close enough to community activists – even radical activists – to know that this foundation, if

and when it shifts, could be experienced as "terror" and experienced as "loss." While people

who held such positions frustrated her, she was empathic and understood their fear.

When I asked her to tell me just what she thought was the "Jewish character of the

state," Marlene said:

> Well, when you try to talk about the character of a state or a country or a city... you're
> talking about the avowed values... versus the actual realities. Suddenly the avowed
> values that add up to the Jewish character in this place are about social justice, [and]
> democracy... So I can say that one of the important aspects of [this state's] character is
> democracy even though you and I and a lot of other people know that there are many
> undemocratic if not non-democratic things that happen [in Israel] all the time.

Thus while noting that the "character" of any state is idealised rather than a representation of

reality, Marlene's own cynicism about other Jews in diaspora had crept into the conversation.

She felt that because the ICSF tour had represented Israel as a democratic state, especially in our

meetings with Israeli human rights lawyers, journalists, and feminists, that "suddenly" Jews who

had for so long described Israel as a Jewish state, were now describing it as a democratic state.

The democratic nature of the state was in this way associated with the Jewish character of the state. Many on tour were therefore taking for granted the democratic nature of the state rather than critically exploring to what degree Israel was democratic at all.

One of the most "emotional" moments on the tour for Marlene occurred when we went to the Bedouin community and met with Hanan. She said:

> I've visited some Bedouins in the desert but not since they have become gentrified. But I guess it was when Hanan was talking about how her father and others kept saying she was like a man, like a man when what they clearly meant was "You are competent", "You're good at something" and that rang all kinds of personal bells for me in my relationship with my own father and other people about articulateness, cleverness, quick-wittedness and many other things [women aren't] claimed [to possess as women]. So I remember tearing up a couple times over that. I also, I mean I loved just the Bedouin experience sort of separate from that.

Marlene's tie to Hanan was a feminist one; she identified with Hanan's struggle primarily in terms of her own resistance to patriarchal authority.

Marlene said she had been saddened by the tour because she had not "connected" with others in a way that she had hoped. She had expected to meet "like-minded" people and felt that instead they were more "tied to the status quo ... of what Israel is, of what Israel should be, of what their lives should be...." For example, she felt their reflections on the power of the Ultra-Orthodox in Jerusalem was disingenuous, simply "intellectual... [because] it doesn't influence anything about their religious affiliations." For Marlene, a secular Jew, the other practising Jews on the bus had no right to condemn the Orthodox. Since they too are religious, for Marlene, there is no meaningful distinction to be made among them.

This conversation led us to speak more about Jerusalem. When I asked Marlene to describe Jerusalem for me she said

> A hideout... It is a hideout for, and it's rather strong... for the religious Jews who want to be on top of a mountain, who want to keep the world the way they want it to be, who do not want to make room in their lives or literally, physically, make room for anything different... I have no desire to [return to Jerusalem]... When we reached Tel Aviv I breathed a sigh of relief... [I]t is the secular city and it's where the action is.

Marlene's description of Jerusalem was claustrophobic and this is due in no small measure to her perception of the control the Orthodox have over the City. She felt no sentimental tie to the place at all. Marlene expressed no connection to Jerusalem's history or the Jews' history in the City either. For Marlene, it was in the secular space of Tel Aviv that she felt the sense of freedom and independence that she most identified with Israel.

Marlene and I also had an opportunity to discuss her contact with other Arabs and her exposure to their perspectives on Israel. She told me that indeed she had a very close friend who was "an Arab, [who is] very astute with regards to the political scene ... [and who] appreciates Israel.... " She added that "he has many views of what he feels Israelis must do to make peace possible, in order to right the balance; things on the level... [of] control of water." He had asked that Marlene ask tour organizers and lecturers why Israel had never officially declared her boundaries. It is not surprising that she never did ask this question. She said that in general

> the way I get around all this sticky-wicky parts.... and this is not just getting around [the issue], is simply to say that there ought to be a comparable Law of Return for the Palestinians, rather than debating is there such a thing as a Law of Return or should there be.

Marlene had been engaged in conversation with some of the most controversial issues facing Israelis in her discussions with Arabs and Palestinians. She said she believed there is an imbalance between the parties and that control over resources is also an issue. But rather than simply debating the merits of one's right over another's, she felt that in order to "right the balance" Israel give "comparable" rights to the Palestinians. Marlene thus suggested that the root of the conflict between Israel and Palestine is related, to some degree, to the inability of some Palestinians to "return" to their homes. Suggesting a "comparable" Law of Return for the Palestinians was at once a radical reframing of the issue as well as a reconsideration of the role that Israel might continue to play in Jews' lives. For to propose a Palestinian "return" shifts any future purpose of the Jews' "return" from one based on a Zionist framing of redemption and reclamation to one based on citizenship and human rights. Furthermore, she suggested that the return of the Palestinians was also a matter to be solved by the more "normal" politics of immigration and citizenship. Interesting as well, was the way that Marlene had framed the

possibilities for peace in terms of "righting the balance" rather than in such real-politic terms as "security" or "separation." As committed as Marlene was to the Israeli State, it was a secular and bi-cultural future that she envisioned.

From all that Marlene described, it was apparent that she had not only been exposed to different perspectives on Israel, she had also internalised an "alternative" Israel. Marlene's willingness to participate in discussions about such alternatives indicated to me that while Israel is important to her, she did not necessarily sacralise its territory. Despite her long history and personal attachment to Israel, Marlene seemed least attached to its "religious territorialistic" roots and most engaged with principles of making it a just, democratic and secular state representative of all of its citizens.

Marlene in many ways exemplifies a woman whose relationship to Israel is emotional and personal but also very political. Her commitments to social justice were reflected in her engagements with the very dilemmas that many secular and "progressive" Jews identifying with Israel have been forced to face. It was clear that she was distant from the strictly "nationalistic" perspective on Israel, and that she reflected carefully on what she perceived as problematic positions of a state that claims to be both Jewish and democratic.

Lynn

After about a year or so of meeting at a "Jewish lunch[37]" at a restaurant in the larger metropolitan centre where I conducted some of my research, one of the group members approached to ask me for an interview. I was very pleased and we arranged to conduct the interview after one of the lunches. As kitchen workers and waiters passed back and forth clearing tables and serving others, we "set up shop." It was quite a thrill to be doing this in this space for in many ways it had been transformed into a communal "kitchen table."

Lynn, a woman in her forties who had grown up in a prairie province and now lived

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37. I did not ask any lunch mates for interviews and though I learned a great deal from them all, the lunch was not a research site per se, nor was it a place for "subject searches".

and worked in an eastern metropolis, had always been curious about my work and we had developed a friendly relationship fairly quickly. I recall one of the first things she said to me when we met and discovered that I was living with a resident in psychiatry. She said: "My condolences" and when I asked "Oh, why?" she replied "For living with a psychiatrist." It turned out that her spouse was a psychiatrist – and she added, "I hope you're not with him for the money!" Subtlety was the last thing I could expect when speaking to Lynn and it was a style and personality I was very comfortable with. So I expected our interview to be lively and I was not disappointed.

Lynn made her first trip to Israel in her teens and her last visit had been in 1992. Despite the fact that her parents had no interest in Israel, had nothing to do with "Zionist organisations" and had never travelled to Israel, Lynn had always felt that she had a "very strong relationship" to Israel. "I feel that in a way it's a kind of home away from home and I feel that it's much more than a country that I visit. There's a real kind of psychic connection."

Lynn was 16 when she first visited Israel with "a Zionist group" although she had not been a dedicated group member. She and two other friends had joined the group only six months prior to the tour in order to go to Israel "'cause it was the cheapest trip that we could go." She "could not stand being part of what they called 'the movement' and in fact the only relationship I had to a movement was that we all had diarrhoea all summer. That was what I thought of as 'the movement.' I found the ideology and the rah-rahness actually repulsive but we were able to do our own thing (once in Israel]." Lynn was no follower and her secure individualism had affected all of her experiences and interpretations of Israel.

Once in Israel, she said that each of the teens was "adopted" by a kibbutz family and they all "became very connected to the social group there." They also had to "do Gadna in the army" which was

> a kind of pre-army experience and [in order to] get ... [us to] understand what the army
> is about and I think with the idea of making [us] very rah rah about the army. I was not
> at all rah rah about the army but I was very rah rah about the soldiers!

She reflected on what it had meant for her as a young woman to have left her home city where

> there were 20,000 Jews and I knew every one of them and mostly Jewish men were nothing to write home about. Well, we landed in Israel and we all went 'Oh my God' because it was astonishing that all these gorgeous guys were Jewish and we just couldn't wait to basically drop our pants. So... I would say it was very much an adolescent experience OK and that as far as a Jewish experience went. The Jewish part was almost negligible.

I would suggest, however, that this was more than a simple "adolescent" experience, for what

Lynn expressed here, if perhaps only subliminally, was a "Zionist"-inflected perception of weak

"diaspora" men and strong, "new" Jews or Israeli men (Biale 1992; Breines 1990)

> There was more to her experience in Israel than sex, of course. As she put it:

> There was a whole way of looking at the world and a whole sense of freedom ... that I had never experienced before. And I was very 'taken' with the kind of independence that [Israeli] teenagers had, with the sorts of issues they were involved with, [and] with the politics. And I was fascinated by the fact that they had to go into the army... [that] you needed to protect the Jewish state against people who basically wanted to destroy you. I bought into that and big time. I think the idea that we deserved a homeland ... was a kind of culmination of my Hebrew School which I [hadn't paid] much attention to and really couldn't care less about [at the time]. But having been there all those ideas were actually very strongly reinforced and I came back very, very pro Israel... I came back from a situation where in [my home city] you don't want to tell anyone your last name or admit to being Jewish, to having a sense of pride [of] belonging to really a special group.

For Lynn, Israel was the place that symbolised Jewish strength – the men, the teens, the army –

and it quickly became part of her own identification as a Jew. When she returned to her home

city, she comported herself with a greater sense of security and "pride".

> Lynn returned again to Israel in 1973, only three months before the start of the Yom

Kippur War which she experienced in what she herself described was a naive and idealistic way.

She said

> ... for someone who came from [a Canadian Prairie city] where nothing really ever happened, to going to the middle of a war and being a part of things. It was a very exciting process. I had no fear at all. I did not really understand what was going on. Friends of mine were wounded and I thought that was pretty neat.

> Lynn's identification with Israel evolved from one of blind support attributed in part to

what she considered her "youth" and naivete to a more critical and mature perspective on the

state and the role that it played in Jews' lives, in Israel and in North America.

In 1979, her "jingoism sort of started to decline rapidly" due in part to the realisation that "... people were less enamoured with the whole thing. A lot of the Kibbutzniks [her friends] had changed their opinion significantly."

Another trip to Israel in 1989 had been a real turning point for Lynn. She had travelled after the "invasion of Lebanon" and during the *"intifada,"* and had begun to see

> the army and the whole government situation in a much, much different way. People who had been rah rah and [who] couldn't wait to go into the army [in the past] ... really felt it was a duty that they really couldn't stand."

As a result of these experiences, she joined Peace Now because, she explained "most of the people that I knew there supported it and the people who didn't support it, I felt I could barely talk to. Even her relationship to Jerusalem had changed.

> I mean Jerusalem really changed for me.... [In the past] I did not feel that there was a dangerous presence at all within the city. I never felt fear before. At this point I was quite fearful.... [The tour organisers] said we should not go into the *shuk* [the market] but I went anyway because I really wanted to see [it] and I was very upset by what I saw because ...there was a real economic decline that was visible there and people were also suffering. The whole situation was really untenable.

As Lynn's perception of Israel changed, her travel experiences and what she "saw" also changed. And while she became critical of Israeli government policies, her commitment to the state remained strong. As she noted, she chose to support a peace group that her Israeli friends supported.

On her most recent trip to Israel in 1992, Lynn had agreed to be a "chaperone on a March of the Living" tour which took a group of teenagers to Auschwitz and then to Israel. Lynn was still very angry about her experience on this tour. She said:

> ... I really...felt much more disconnected to this idea of a Jewish state than ever before which is interesting because here I'd come back from seeing the Holocaust and all the horrible things that had happened to Jews and there I was in Israel. And ...they took us first thing to the Wailing Wall and I felt extremely disconnected from this whole kind of Jewish process in some way. ...I guess I also reacted to the same thing that I had [in the past], like this very rah-rahism [being imposed on] the kids. I kept trying to put a damper on it and trying to say 'well, look at the reality of the situation.' So it was a kind of troubling trip for me in terms of the Israel part anyway. When people talked about Israel arising from the ashes of the Holocaust I really wanted to puke. I tried to be a kind of foil ... to that way of thinking.... There was a split among the leaders. We had Rabbis there and we had ...Ultra Zionists who ... just felt that we were right and everyone else was wrong. ...We had people who I thought were quite racist, and [who

said] Palestinians and Arabs were trash, and they had no value for human life and we were the good people and we were the chosen people ...which ...I found extremely difficult and I did try to counteract it [because] some of the kids were quite smitten with that. ....I still felt a real connection with my friends but I couldn't wait to get out of the whole Israel part of the trip and go with my friends.

Lynn was obviously very angry at what she perceived to be an opportunity taken to exploit the

Holocaust and present Zionist jingoism to a group of vulnerable teenagers. As she described it,

this tour had been used to promote an Israel she could no longer identify with. She felt

compelled to renarrativise Israel and the conflict with the Palestinians and Arabs in these spaces

so that the teen participants might gain another interpretation of the meaningfulness of the place

from a more peace-oriented, less classically Zionist (anti-Arab or Palestinian) perspectives. Still,

Lynn seemed to have been overwhelmed with the task and had been so distressed and dismayed

by what she called the "Israel part" of the tour – the more ideological orientation of the tour –

that she could not wait to escape it by joining her more like-minded Israeli friends.

She later added that her own experiences of Israel and her life experience in North

America had prompted her to rethink her relationship to Israel.

> ...I guess what's interesting is – and I don't know if its because of my age or because of the political situation – but ... I have become much more connected to Israel because of my own history and personal relationships there, but much more disconnected from the country itself. At the same time I've become much more connected to being Jewish.... I did not become religious but I became much more interested in the religion and the rituals. ... I moved my daughter from one Hebrew School to another, [because]... I wanted her to learn more Hebrew... I felt Hebrew's the language of access to the Torah.... So I think that I've become much more Jewishly involved and much less Israel involved....

With Israel no longer the symbol of Jewish continuity for her, Lynn had decided to "return" to

"Torah," which she described as the embodiment of Jewish cultural heritage and tradition.

Lynn suggested very early in the interview that Israel's offensive military actions had

affected her perspective on the state. Her reflections on how the conflict in the region was to be

resolved included the following:

> I think there has to be a Jewish homeland but I think that the whole structure of it has to be very very different. ... [M]y views are that there has to be a kind of just divorce. That warring parties – and I'm talking about now about Jews and non-Jews – don't have to like each other but they have to come up with a fair and just settlement. And if it means sacrificing land... The whole idea that the land, the occupied territories have to

be settled and the policies of the last Government are just repulsive to me. So when I
see people who are Jewish acting in this way, I feel very disconnected from them.

Furthermore, Lynn associated this behaviour with the politics and pressures of the Ultra-

Orthodox. She said:

> ...I feel much more connected to the Torah but I feel much less connected to certain
> forms of Judaism. [B]ut I feel total disassociation from the Ultra Orthodox which I did
> not when I first got there. When I first got there I saw well isn't this wonderful. They're
> going to keep the Jewish state alive. I don't have to keep culture or do anything... Right
> now I really ... view them as a much more significant enemy to the well-being of the
> state of Israel, to the well-being of Jewish people in general than in fact I would view ...
> even [Iraq's] Saddam Hussein.... The reason is that I think... by their behaviour, that
> they have discredited the Jewish people, that they have disenfranchised a large number
> of ... Jewish people, both in Israel and here and I just see them as fundamentalists who
> are dangerous like any fundamentalists who are dangerous. That they have a mission
> and they're Zealots and they're a very dangerous element and ... I'd like to see a policy
> to take away their power and ... initiative. But it seems to me that they've been given
> more and more power and more and more of a say and more and more are able to
> define even the questions about Judaism...

Lynn's changed relationship to Israel had also been affected by what she saw as the

undemocratic practices of Israel's religious authorities. Israel was no longer the secular state

Lynn felt she could continue to identify with. Her concern about the continuity and survival of

the Jewish people had shifted from a concern for the state of Israel to a concern that this state no

longer embodied her own ideals of Jewish practice. For these reasons, Lynn had turned to

practices in diaspora that she felt embodied in the cultural and communal practices of "Torah."

When we discussed the importance of tours to Israel, despite her most recent

experience, Lynn said that she still thought they were particularly important for "bringing youth

on board in terms of a Jewish identity." She explained:

> I think that the only way to cement a connection with being Jewish is to visit Israel even
> with all of the negative things because I do think that there's a kind of gruha, I don't
> know how you say it, spirit, that is there that you can't experience in the diaspora.
> What that gruha is I think it still is, number one, seeing a state where most people are
> Jewish. I think that's a phenomenal experience for anyone who lives in the diaspora
> especially if they come from smaller places.

It seemed then that Israel is still a place of difference for Lynn; she holds on to the Zionist sense of

the power and dynamism that the Jews have created in a place of their own. It is for this reason

that Lynn expressed some distress that her daughter showed no interest in Israel and was not at

all compelled to visit.

Still, what Lynn wanted Jewish youth to see and experience in Israel reflected her own

envisioning of the state as well as of Jewish life in North America:

> I think that seeing ... that it's basically a theocracy ... and seeing... how difficult it is to
> be a secular Jew in Israel. ...I think that we don't have that ability to personally choose
> that in the diaspora but in Israel you can say, 'You know what I'm going to a night-club
> on Friday night,' or 'I'm eating bread at Pesah [Passover]' which is something that you
> can't afford to do here in the same way.

"Why not?" I asked and she replied:

> You can't afford to do that because when you're... in Israel if you eat bread on Pesah, if
> you travel on Shabbat, if you spit in the face of the Torah you're still Jewish because
> you're there and you're in a Jewish state. You don't have to be Jewish in Israel to be
> Jewish. In the diaspora if you're not that then ... you can't belong. ... You can't possibly
> be connected in a full way to Judaism, being Jewish or the Jewish experience. It's a
> different kind of statement here than it is there and I think that... young people need to
> understand that sort of statement, so that they can make real choices...

Lynn's description of Israel as a "theocracy" reflected her fear that the Orthodox community was

changing the nature of Israeli society, a society that she envisioned until recently, as a secular one

where you can simply take your Jewishness for granted because you are in a "Jewish" state. This

very taken-for-grantedness of Jewish identity is, of course, the crux of the Orthodox argument

that fears a loss this identity and practices. Lynn also admitted she felt constrained in North

America, where synagogues and temples are the centres of Jewish cultural practices.

Asked what kind of youth tour she would organise if she had the opportunity to do so,

Lynn replied:

> I think what I would try ...meet a lot of other Israeli youth from many, many
> backgrounds and ... I'd have a lot more dialogue. I'd have them meet with Palestinian
> youth. ...I think being on a Kibbutz – although the Kibbutz system is dying – [it] is
> very, very critical because I think that they can understand... something of... the
> residual pioneering spirit. ... I would focus it less Jewishly and more historically and
> the reason is because the Jewishness has been usurped by the Ultra Orthodox now.... I
> would take them to the Wailing Wall but ... I'd talk about how you don't have the right
> to go to the men's section, how it's ... monitored by the Ultra Orthodox.... I would focus
> on Jerusalem as the religious capital of many religions and look at how all those
> religions interact. I think in terms of the physical focus that I would have the kids do
> *Gadna* [pre-army training for youth]. I think that they need to be less enamoured of the
> army than they are, and [they need to] realise how harsh the conditions are and that just
> because you're in the army doesn't mean you're smart..., or even brave and instead of
> looking at the weaponry I think I'd have them talk to people who had been in the
> army... and ... what is it like to serve in the Occupied Territories and to really talk about

> that and the fear and all of that. ...I think that the connection with the land can be forged through much of the natural beauty of the land and that I would ... walk through the wadis, (desert valleys). We would go and visit like Sde Boker [Ben Gurion's kibbutz and site of his tomb] and the field school so that they had a sense of the terrain of Israel not just the cities; do some hikes up in the north. .... [In the Galilee] there's history and there's beauty and there's Jewish sites and there's burial sites. .... We would walk up Masada... We would also talk about what happened there in a less ...heroic gesture and how Masada has evolved and what it means. I think I'd try to bring out a lot more controversy in the tour.

And just as she finished outlining her own tour, Lynn blurted out: "Now that I've recorded this I'm never going to get a chance to take anybody who's Jewishly funded!" In a very interesting way, Lynn had primarily produced an itinerary of site-visits that already exists on all commercial and organised tours to Israel. She still "mapped" Israel using the classical sites and tropes: "the land", the kibbutz, Masada, and the Galilee. What she was insisting on, however, was a re-narrativisation of those spaces as well as a "dialogue" between Israelis, including Palestinians, and tour participants living in diaspora. In other words, Lynn wanted tour participants to "imagine" a complex Israel, while still holding onto the meaningfulness of these "Jewish" sites.

> When I asked Lynn why she had not moved to Israel, she said she had never been prepared to make the personal kinds of financial sacrifices that it took in order to move there. .... Did I want my children in the army? No. ...Could I live through the kind of personal suffering that mothers go through there? No.

While Lynn had been very active, even describing herself as "jingoistic" in her past support of Israel, not even her high level of ideological commitment had motivated her to sacrifice the comfort of her life in diaspora. She also said that she had had the opportunity to think about her life in North America when a "kibbutz friend" had come to visit her. She recounted how they had

> looked at slides of '73-'74 and talked about all the people that we knew... [and] I think that I would have been very bored in Israel. I don't think that I would have found the same kind of intellectual community that I found here. I think that I would have been preoccupied so much by the daily struggles of life that life would have been pretty boring so.... No. If I was extremely wealthy I would go there for 6 months a year like people [who go to] Florida, but that's it.

In many respects, Lynn had shifted in her perspective on Israel from a more classical and idealistic and Zionist one to a more critical, post-Zionist positioning in which both Israel's Jews

ar.d Jews living outside of Israel have places of their own. As critical as she was of Israeli politics, Lynn still "imagined" Israel through some of the most potent symbols of Zionism and continued to feel that Israel is a place with deep significance for all Jews.

Karen and Paul

Karen and Paul were the life-long friends of one of the women I met on the Israel Civil Society Fund tour. I met them in their home in a small, well-to-do suburb of a large central U.S. city. I was invited to their house for coffee, dessert and an interview. A youthful-looking couple in their 60's, they chose to be interviewed together as we sat together in their comfortable living room. Paul has worked within labour organisations and Karen had owned her own small business at one time.

Both had heard about Israel when they were growing up. Paul who said he had been "indoctrinated very early on," remembers the "birth of the state of Israel" which had occurred while he was still in his teens. Paul described his parents, who had contributed "large sums of money" to the state, as being "very active in the formation of Israel." Since his youth, he had "followed [Israel's] events, the different wars, the changing political parties."

For Karen, Israel was always "simply there". She said:

> ...I had simply always felt a kinship, a connectedness.... And there was a period of time in fact I remember, I would say 'we' when referring to Israel and Larry would say, 'But it's not [we]. You're not an Israeli,' and he's right, I'm not an Israeli and I shouldn't be referring to "we" [when I speak about Israelis]... in terms of nationality... but that is what I am talking about – the connectedness – and just it had always been there.

While Israel was always a presence in each of their lives, they only took their first trip to Israel as adults. That first trip, in 1983, was important to them for it not only marked their daughter's Bat Mitzvah, it gave them an opportunity to share their attachment to the state with all of their children.

When they discussed their travel to Israel Karen and Paul emphasised the development of the state. Karen described what had impressed her on the first trip and on subsequent trips as follows:

> I guess one of the things which struck me during our trip ...was ... the conversion of the dry Arab piece of land into lush vegetation sitting next to more dry everglades, and the realisation that the only reason that [there was] was lush vegetation [there] because of [the] technical and scientific advances that simply don't exist in other parts of the world. And it was extraordinarily impressive to see [Israeli] accomplishments. ...I mean it's a brand new country.

Karen imagined Israel in classical Zionist terms: it is a land redeemed and developed into a modern, productive land by the Jews. Paul nodded in agreement with Karen, and then added:

> I guess I tend to talk [to friends and family] about ... the country being there as a bastion of democracy in an area where democracy is not very prevalent. And the history, ... it's impossible not to go there and be overwhelmed with Jewish and Christian and Muslim history. It is all around you. Also there's a third connection in my case. I'm involved with the Labour Movement here and ... there's a powerful tie with Histadrut [the largest Labour Union Movement] in Israel... So that's an additional connection.

Paul's more "political" reflections added to an already Zionist conception. He implied that Israel had not only developed into a democratic modern state, it had also developed strong social institutions, such as the Histadrut. Israel's labour unions have often been associated with an Israel that is fair, egalitarian, and socialist, all important for someone like Paul who cares about labour politics.

When I asked if travelling to Israel had prompted him to think differently about Jews in the world, Paul said,

> I have a feeling of being perhaps even more impressed of the obstacles that the Israelis have overcome through the series of wars when I ... looked from a point in Israel across a very small valley and saw Jordan, an adversary. Or when we went up on to the Golan Heights and looked down on the kibbutz which could be so easily shelled. I had an even greater appreciation for the dangers with which Israel had been presented ever since its formation.

It was very clear that Paul and I had taken very similar tours, his more than 15 years earlier! These sites and sights had in/formed Paul's belief that Israel was militarily insecure and that it had remarkably overcome the great odds posed against it.

Karen added that on her first trip, she had also been particularly "struck with the fact that this was the first time that Jews around the world had a haven, had a home" after having "been dispersed" throughout the world. As she put it: "I knew it before, I knew it theoretically

but it was much more poignant." And Paul interjected with : "There was a feeling that 'Oh my God I'm in the Jewish state.' So there was an emotional response." And later Karen said:

> It's in the abstract for those of us who don't plan necessarily to relocate.... I would say that it's important for most Jews [that] ... the state of Israel continues to exist [to] form Jews as a Jewish communal. I have no evidence to back that up. It's just our communication ... with friends, [and] an awareness of the [commitments of the] Jewish community in this country. It feels very strong that we have the existence of this homeland.

Both Karen and Paul described the importance of Israel in psycho-social terms. That is, they believed Israel helps create a sense of security and communalism for Jews in North America. Just knowing that a Jewish state exists helps to form a stronger bond among all Jews, across the national body, the Jewish community, as well as within the nation-state itself. The fact that Paul and Karen envisioned Israel as a "strong [and] dynamic place" and as "a bastion of western democracy" was all the more important.

Karen and Paul described themselves as "living examples" of the problems facing Jews in North America. While their commitment to Israel and Jewish identification has been very strong, children within the family who had married, had married "out". Thus, their commitment to Israel and Jewish identity had not provided any protection in their family against intermarriage, nor did they express any hostility about this fact either. As Karen put it:

> The only way to maintain Jewish identity is to have oppression because the more oppression you have and the more ghettoisation you have, the more banding together you have. But once you have a.... country that is tolerant of Judaism [like the U.S.] you find a greater assimilation and that is happening here and I think it's probably happening all over the world. And yet there are some families where there is no intermarriage, maybe the more Orthodox. At this point I think that's unusual.

This point reflected Karen's nostalgic appeal for a sense of "community" rather than any desire for a less tolerant North America. But I think Karen's comments are important, for they reinforce her own need for and association with Israel in Jewish communal and collective terms. According to Karen and Paul, this commitment must be extended to include the responsibility of all North American Jews to protect Israel should support for the state lag at the U.S. political

level. As Paul later said:

> I think if the time came when there were a government in this country that wasn't quite sure what its relationship with Israel was going to be, it would be helpful to Israel for American Jewry to [use] all the legitimate political pressures [at its disposal] to say 'Hey don't forget Israel. She's been our friend. We still want her as our friend'.

Karen and Paul did not identify with Israel for individual reasons; they did not cite anti-Semitism or any insecurity in their own identifications as Jews. Even their reflections on intermarriage were not framed in terms of loss or fear but were rather informed by a pragmatism associated with their own choice to live secular lives outside of Israel and in an open society like the United States.

In our discussions about the Oslo Peace Accords, both Karen and Paul said they had felt "delight", "relief" and "happiness" at the time of the signing. However Paul did not think that the Accords themselves had changed the perspectives of North American Jews towards the conflict. Rather, he felt that "more recent events" had shifted North American perspectives. He explained:

> There are at least two or maybe there are three schools of thought ... in this country among American Jews. Number one: What else could Israel do? This Arafat always was, always will be, a terrorist. It's hopeless and it's all his fault. That's number one. Number two: What is this idiot [Prime Minister] Netanyahu doing to screw up the peace process. And then there's at least one other school [and] I think I'm in that school which is: I'm not sure I fully trust Arafat and I think there's a new person there but, on the other hand, we'll never know how far the two groups can travel towards the road to peace if the present Israeli government keeps putting road blocks in the path... I guess... from week to week, from month to month I condemn either or both.

And he turned to Karen and he asked her: "What do you say about that?" to which she responded:

> Well it's interesting. I agree with you.... I don't know that you necessarily can expect somebody to philosophically change – and I'm referring to Arafat now – but at the same time he can become very pragmatic as he recognises that without some form of a peace process that war is going to go on for another 2000 or more... years. So [it's] not that he has changed but that perhaps his thinking is much more focused on trying to resolve some of the issues. Whatever [Arafat's] feelings and thinking is, it's Netanyahu that is a shock to us. We heard him speak at the Israeli Embassy when he was an underling here in this country... [And] he was so impressive... There was a brilliance to this man.

Karen had earlier recalled that on one trip to Israel, she had wondered why there was any need to keep the West Bank at all. She had thought to herself:

> Why are we fighting over this? There are so many ways that the West Bank could be used other than to create controversy between the Arabs and the Jews. It could be [divided] between Israel and the Arabs ... as a Homeland for the Palestinians...

Both Karen and Paul felt that the solution to the problem of the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis should be dealt with pragmatically. They did not reflect on the issues in human rights terms but rather in very political terms citing weak and untrustworthy leadership on both sides of the conflict as problems.

When we turned to discuss the Rabin assassination, both of them said they had felt "shock and great sorrow" and then Paul asked

> what will this mean for the peace process? ...The way things have turned out, of course, [is] to make that tragedy even more tragic... The lunatic that killed [Rabin] has succeeded in doing exactly what he wanted to do [to kill the peace process].

In contrast to those whose response to Rabin's murder was that they were shocked that "a Jew was murdered by another Jew," Paul's immediate reaction to the murder of the Prime Minister was to talk about its ramifications for the peace process.

When I asked if either of them would "ever return to Israel to live, " both immediately said: "Never."

> Karen explained: But that's not [because it is Israel]. If you [asked] would you live anywhere but this country the answer would be never. It's not that we would never go to Israel. We would never leave this country on any basis. .... Why should we? I have no reason to go. There's absolutely no reason to leave a country that we have grown up in, where our parents were born, [and] a country to which our grandparents migrated. There is no...

> Paul: "And that we think is the greatest country on earth."

> Karen: ...Yes there is absolutely ... no motivation [to go] whatsoever. ... I would live in another country for a year ... if Paul got assigned to Switzerland or some wonderful place for a year or two, sure but would I ever permanently leave? Absolutely not.

> Paul: "As much as we have a tie to Israel the tie would never be that strong to make us to leave America and live in Israel."

> Karen: "I find them very frightening, those Orthodox Jews..."

Paul: "... the control they exercise, this tiny little group whom we do regard as fanatics."

Karen: "Any fanatics, it doesn't matter what religion they are."

Paul: "Fanatics and Zealots shouldn't control any country and given the very fragile conditions there now they have a tremendous amount of power. Scary."

In their interaction on this matter, Paul and Karen shifted from reflections on the safety and security of life in the U.S. to the fear of what life might be like in an Israel they perceived to be controlled by Orthodox Jewry. Thus Israel's modernity, development and democracy, while earlier celebrated, came into question and even paled in comparison to what is available for Jews in the United States.

In this way, Karen and Paul's envisionings of Israel were very complex. They identified and idealised Israel in classically Zionist terms and they recognised its communal importance for all Jews living outside the state. Inasmuch as Israel had developed as a modern state, the United States is preferred, especially in light of the rise of Orthodox power in Israel. While expressing some fear that Israel is in a precarious military position, neither Karen nor Paul spoke in militaristic terms nor offered militaristic solutions to the conflicts in the region.

In sum, the Jews in diaspora who travelled to Israel in the period between the victory of the Six-Day War and the 1982 War with Lebanon emphasised a political relationship to Israel. Although they were proud of Israeli accomplishments, they rarely idealised their relationship to the nation or the state. In some cases, in fact, they were quite critical of state practices, particularly the powerful role of the Ultra-Orthodox in Israel. Members of this group seemed optimistic about peace in the Middle East and each expressed a willingness to return land for peace.

CHAPTER 13
BELONGING IN DIASPORA

In this chapter, I explore the meanings of Israel for Jews who had participated on a tour and who had developed a relationship to Israel "in diaspora" at some point after 1982.

Ozzy

I met Ozzy on the Israel Development Fund tour. For the interview we chose to meet at a small vegetarian restaurant set along a the beach promenade on one of the last days of the tour. He was born in Hungary during World War II. He was the head of a medical faculty in a large Canadian city when we met.

Ozzy was the son of Holocaust survivors. He told tour participants the story of his family's "miraculous" survival and of the "heroism" of the man behind it as we all stood in front of a tree dedicated to the Righteous Gentile who had rescued his father. Ozzy's "father and five of his brothers [and] ... brothers-in-law were taken into the Hungarian Work Brigades," but only his father returned after the war. The others had "perished under slave labour conditions" having been "sent to the Ukrainian front to [work in] the mines." His father, along with 120 others, managed to avoid the front lines because a Colonel in the Hungarian army who was a "Hungarian aristocrat, a Christian, a gentleman" sent them to do "menial tasks" instead. Although the Colonel's actions were discovered and he was "court-marshalled and sentenced to death" for his deeds, the Soviet advance into the area saved his life. The Colonel was "rewarded' for his courage by being demoted to night watchman in a shoe factory." Ozzy expressed deep love and respect for the man responsible for his family's survival. He fondly remembered, though he was only 5 or 6 years old at the time, the Colonel's visits to his parent's home after the war, and the love shown by his parents for the man who called those he saved "his boys."

Ozzy was on his third trip to Israel when I met him. One of the reasons Ozzy had come to Israel was to complete a "mission" he had begun two years prior. He had come on this tour,

and to Yad Vashem in particular, in order to "finish inscrib[ing] [the names of] the last of the fifty-one people in my family that perished" in the Holocaust. But he had also come in order to "learn about the country, see the country ... and see some friends" as well as to attend a Board of Directors meeting for a prominent development organisation working in Israel. Ozzy's identification with Israel, though recent, had quickly developed into a commitment to a Jewish organisation engaged in the development of Israel[38].

Prior to his first trip to Israel in 1995 to celebrate the 3000th anniversary of Jerusalem, Ozzy recalled that he had "basically no relationship to Israel... Israel was a stranger to me other than the fact that there were Jewish people living here and some very distant relatives and some distant friends." He'd known Israel only through reading about "the country." Ozzy recounted how he felt after landing in Israel for the first time in 1995 in this way:

> ...I was getting off the plane with this very major question mark in my mind and in my heart. Who am I? How do I fit into this picture? How does this picture fit into me? What is this going to be like? And what am I doing really here?

Ozzy had first come to Israel seeking to answer existential questions about his own place in the world. He described his first tour as a "rollercoaster [of] up and down emotions." One of these emotional moments occurred on the second day in Israel and the first day of tour, as they drove north along the coast. Ozzy described what happened as follows:

> ... [A]s the guide started to talk about history, about things that I was comfortable with [and that were] familiar [to me], I started relaxing. And then, as I was watching there was something that [I] caught out of the corner of my eye: uniforms, soldiers. And I kept on looking at their faces, these children in uniforms, these Jewish children in uniforms – who would maybe live or die, God only knows, but they had to do it – that's where I started crying, seeing those kids. That was my connection at that moment in time with what the hell I was doing here, who I was and it was just an opening and that made the whole trip afterwards a roller-coaster [of] up and down emotions. .... It was... from a personal perspective ... an understanding, an awakening, a fresh start....

Ozzy described Israel as the place for his own "awakening" or "fresh start." It was as though the answer to his family's survival, as well as the reasons for the suffering they had experienced, lay

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38. It was not the same organisation that had organised the tour we were travelling on together, however.

somewhere in Israel. He later described his relationship to Israel as follows:

> ... [I]t's a certain part of my own personal mosaic. I identify with things, [and the] people ... here. It allows me to forge a more secure self- identity and, based on that, exposing my children to this hopefully will allow them to get a better balanced view of what the world is. .... Basically being a descendent of Holocaust survivors, the only identity I had was pain and my mother's denial of who we were all about and what we're all about... Perhaps the positive things that can be happening in Jewish life, that there is a good side to being a Jew, there's things that you can be proud of, things that can be accomplished ... [when you] identify yourself a Jew. It was an option that has been given to me and it's an option that I grabbed onto with two hands. I feel ... I'm more at peace with myself and [with] others.

For Ozzy, Israel represented a positive model for Jews. His personal history of being Jewish had been informed by tragedy, pain and loss. Israel had given Ozzy the opportunity to explore and reflect on a place associated with the Jews' accomplishments and empowerment in the world. While he claimed he had only begun to "put the pieces of the mosaic together," he was obviously attracted to what Israel could mean not only for himself, but also for his children. Ozzy told me that he thought that Israel was "essential" to North American Jewry, explaining:

> It's not only for North American Jews but Jews all over the world. Having lived for thousands of years under other people and having to conform to everybody else's way of life, and being subjected to the more or less discriminatory practices of others – depending who they were under – the simple fact that Jewish homeland exists [is essential]. [A]nd it's clearly not the biblical land that the Mosheah's [Heb. for Messiah] going to come into. It's a political entity. It's a last potential place for refuge. It's a source of pride and peace; peace with the notion that if ... things will happen like they did happen to my family and other people's family... there's a place where we can go home, where we're welcome.

Ozzy envisioned Israel as a political place where Jews could assert their own power after centuries of subjugation. Ozzy's Holocaust experience forms the background to his sense of the need for a safe place of refuge for the Jews.

When we talked about what he might emphasise when he described Israel to friends and family he said:

> It's the land and the people. The land is absolutely breathtaking. The land is full of history, [it holds] a lot of emotions for a lot of people in this part of the world. And... the mosaic of people that you see here is just unbelievable, from all parts of the world, from all walks of life, from all cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds. It's a phenomenal place.

Ozzy did not sacralise the space or idealise it as the Jews' land. In fact, he recognised that the same land has deep meaning for others who live in the region and he seemed to enjoy the "mosaic" or multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious make up of the country. At the same time that Ozzy idealised Israel as a model of the Jew's accomplishments, he recognised that there are "ethnic and religious" differences and divisions in Israeli society, particularly among secular and religious Jews. He said of the intolerance he witnessed:

> [T]he religious don't claim to be tolerant but at least some of the more secular [Jews] claim to be. [But] even within that camp they are extremists who have a hard time getting along with their brethren who practice Judaism, [or] see Judaism in a different form.

For Ozzy, Israel is also a place complicated by the inability of some to distinguish between the religious and the secular. Ozzy reflected on some of the experiences on the tour and said that some Israelis had difficulties "separating" religious narratives from secular ones. He saw what he thought was intolerance on the part of secular Jews who did not, or could not, distinguish how their own practices are in fact also informed by religion.

Ozzy also observed that this tour had provided him with the first meaningful experience at the Kotel, or the Western Wall in Jerusalem. In the past, it had been "difficult" for him to find meaning there because he had experienced a "very secular upbringing." Owing in large measure to his parenting responsibilities, Ozzy had recently developed a new relationship to Judaism. He has taken pleasure in coming to understand more about it. He described what happened at the Wall as follows:

> It was perhaps threatening for me to go up and see all these people [the Orthodox] with their black hats and [to see] things that I didn't understand.... [H]aving had the explanation [by one of the tour guides who had humanised the Orthodox] ... [made] it a lot easier also going up to the Wall on a Shabbat which I've never done before. All of a sudden hearing people singing songs where I recognised the tune and I looked at them – and these are people from all over the world – it made for a sense of commonality. It was not divisive, it was inclusive, and that's what I've been looking for on this trip. What are the inclusives instead of the exclusives, and that has made a difference for me.

The IDF tour of an Orthodox section of Jerusalem had enlightened Ozzy to the degree that he no longer felt "threatened" by the difference of the Orthodox. A secular man who had been searching for the roots and the meaning of his own identity as a Jew, and who had had no

upbringing in Judaism, Ozzy found the Wall to be the one place where the Jews' continuity as a people was being positively expressed in a communal way. But it was meaningful for him not because of its religious power, but because of the tradition embodied in the songs and the communal atmosphere the people there created. The Wall, once only an intimidating space for Ozzy, had become a place of tradition and communal expression; it had become a meaningful place.

When Ozzy and I discussed the relationship of North American Jews to Israel, Ozzy said that he had hoped that in the future, Israel's dependency on North America would shift so that there would be what he called "a two-way street." He paraphrased comments he heard Shimon Peres make on an earlier tour: "'Israeli Jews can learn a little *yiddishkeit* from North American Jews and [North American Jews] can learn a little Hebrew from [Israelis].'" Ozzy envisioned an Israel that was dependent on North American Jews' financial wealth as well as their political "clout." He went on to say:

> I believe that North American, [and] world Jewry in general is very important [to Israel]. When it's lonely at the United Nations... Israel still has to think and, hopefully the people in Israel know that there are people out there who care.

In this comment, the Israeli government was positioned as fairly weak in the international arena, needing not only political support but moral support from those "who care."

But Ozzy added that the close relationship between North America and Israel could also be blamed for Israel's recent Americanisation, something Ozzy said he did not appreciate. He said:

> I'm a throwback I guess, from the pioneer days. I liked the spirit this country had before Coca-Cola and McDonalds invaded, [before] the me, me, me. [I preferred] the let's get together [and] work together. But I guess it's the price you pay when you get out of the ghetto mentality. But I wish they would have emulated something a little bit more worthwhile. .... There's nothing wrong with money but this buy, buy, buy, [it's] materialistic, [and the] spiritual loses.

Ozzy imagined Israel was once a less commercialised and more communal place. For him, Israel's "modernisation" and subsequent Americanisation was a disappointment.

Twice during our conversations Ozzy made it clear that he had been watching me during the tour, hoping to get some understanding of my perspective at different sites. When I asked him what he would tell friends and family about this tour, he mentioned that he had experienced "the pleasure of seeing first hand the mixed emotions of individuals of mixed backgrounds and how this place affects them." And when I asked him if there was anything, any event, personality, or place visited ... that prompted him to think differently about Palestinians he said:

> Yes, you did.... because you qualified it. With this trip the simple fact is we have not had contacts with the Palestinians.... Other than the odd time in the hotel, somebody running by you whose nametag clearly ... [is] not found in Judaism, [or] walking by them in the markets... there was no provision for interaction with people. There's no provision [made on this tour] to allow [for the] exchange of ideas, opinion and that's also very difficult because language barriers do crop up. So vicariously I had to see it through your eyes; [to see] some of the difficulties and some of the perhaps pain that has been encountered by positions taken by people or government agencies, whatever that may be.

I was interested that Ozzy thought it important to try to understand another perspective on Israel and that he had assumed my perspectives would be informed by my "Palestinian" and "mixed" backgrounds. It would have been valuable to have asked him to say more about how he thought my perspective might be "different," but I was caught off guard by his answer and, unfortunately, did not return to it later.

When we discussed the signing of the Oslo Accord, Ozzy recalled how in 1993 he had felt a "guarded hope." The "history of the region [and] the difficulties encountered in the past between combatants" made him cautious. In response to my question "Do you think the Oslo Accords change North American Jews' perspectives on the Israel-Palestine conflict" he replied "In essence, no" and explained:

> the reason I say in essence no, [is that] fundamentally I don't think that North American Jews and or even a North American Palestinian for that matter has the hands-on information that is accurate, [or] in-depth, [or] that reflects the true reality on the ground. You read what you read, you hear what you hear, you try to glean in between, you get whatever information that you can and then try to sort of come up with a position or an understanding.... [W]e're not being sold the true bill of goods by anybody. We hear only a certain elite or a certain voice emanating. ...Had I had the opportunity to go in to ... live with somebody on the West Bank and speak Arabic with them and live with them, them not knowing who I was, and truly get into there, that's how you'd get a totally different answer. But North American Jews, I don't think so

because they are not privy to the truth. The world is not privy to the truth.

Ozzy was critical of the kind of representations he had been exposed to with respect to the Israel Palestine conflict. It was interesting to me that he had gone so far as to say that the "truth" could only be found by experiencing the conflict "on the ground" and in the West Bank! Though I did not ask Ozzy to elaborate on what he meant when he said that he did not feel safe in the West Bank as a Jew, his disposition and his general ability to empathise, lead me to think that he thought the conditions of occupation would make such a trip unsafe for him as a Jew rather than any general animosity of the Arabs towards all Jews.

It was apparent to me upon my first meeting Ozzy that he was a thoughtful and engaged traveller. He and I struck up a friendship with an elderly couple who helped us to understand a number of the more religious practices we witnessed or were asked to join. Ozzy was friendly but quiet, observing all of us and staying some distance from most of the other tourists.

For Ozzy, Israel was an enchanting if complicated place. Early on in the interview, he described Israel as "a diamond; it has got a ton of faces and I'll never cover them all in a lifetime."

Josie

Josie was the donour coordinator for one of the organisations I toured with. A few months after our tour through Israel, we met in her office in a large urban centre with the intention of conducting an interview. As it turned out, she was unable to take time for the interview at the time, so we agreed to conduct a telephone interview instead.

Josie had grown up in Brooklyn, New York, having no relationship to Israel. Though her Jewish mother

> really knew Israel. Israel to me was a tiny little plot on the globe that was fun to try and find when I was growing up.... [O]ther than that I had absolutely no relationship to Israel.

Josie had begun "working on and developing [her] Jewish identity as a young adult and felt ... Israel was ... the next step in that process." Soon after, a professional opportunity opened up for

her.

Josie had travelled to Israel for the first time in 1993. She had only just become a part of a Jewish philanthropic organisation and one of the Board of Directors' meetings was being held in Israel. The trip was "a very strange and disappointing experience." She explained:

> I felt, I thought I was going to have a 'click' when I got there.... I got off the plane and thought 'Ah, here I am. This is ... going to concretise the sort of Jewish things that I've been thinking about and learning about and trying to incorporate into my life' and it didn't [happen] at all. I felt no 'click.' I felt no connection. I felt no passion. I felt really empty about the trip.

She recalled how, upon her return, one of her childhood friends had asked her: "'Well what was it like to be in a place where everyone was Jewish?'" to which Josie "immediately" replied "Well, not everyone's Jewish.... There are more people who are Jewish in Brooklyn than there are in Israel." Josie had felt completely out of place when she returned to the United States, not knowing if she belonged in a job where she would be "working in the Jewish Community where everyone just ... grew up with Israel as a mantra in their home."

But Josie described her second trip to Israel, as a "life-changing experience." She attributed this experience to the fact that she had been lucky enough to join a group of "ten incredible women" and that she was pregnant at the time which "furthered" her "feelings for her own Judaism." It was also the first time that she made friends with an Israeli, another staff member in the organisation. Josie recalled that when she returned from her tour, she had said to her spouse: "When are we going, when are we moving, when are we going back?" She explained:

> It was amazing and I just developed this passion that I'd never felt before for a place. I mean I've always loved different places in my life. I loved France when I lived there and I loved places but I never felt this. There's something about Israel that got to me inside that I had never felt about any place before and my love for it, my connection to it, my understanding of it has deepened since then.

One of the most important moments for Josie had been the experience of memorialising the Holocaust in Israel. This was how she described her experiences in the Holocaust Museum in

Washington and later at Yad Vashem in Israel:

> Before that second momentous trip to Israel the Holocaust Museum opened ... in
> Washington. I went a couple of times with [my spouse] and the first time that I went I
> ended the trip in the Holocaust Museum, ... and [I had] the overwhelming feeling that I
> wanted to have children. That was like how I felt coming out of the museum. It was
> very intense understanding [of] what continuity was about. And then we left and [I]
> forgot about it. [I] went back to the museum a couple of months later and [I] felt that
> again after I left and [I] thought 'Oh my God that's what I felt the first time I was here.'
> And when I went to Israel and was actually pregnant it kind of was a closure for me of
> that feeling. It was a sense of I understand there, [and]... I understand here what it
> really means to want to have children. ...And [when a friend told me that the
> experience of the Holocaust Museum in Israel would be more powerful]... I just didn't
> understand what that meant and I went to Yad Vashem my first trip and said 'Oh it's an
> old dusty museum, it's not particularly innovative and I don't understand it.' And then
> when we went back on the second trip, I understood it. I understood what it meant to
> be at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem versus being at the Holocaust Museum in Washington.
> ...You know we grew up in an age where the Holocaust was discussed, there were
> Holocaust classes at my high school and college... So I feel like in some ways – and
> that's how I felt when I went to Yad Vashem the first time – I've seen this, I've done
> this. And since I didn't have the sensibility of Israel, the land... at that time... it wasn't
> moving. I mean it's always moving but it wasn't particularly moving to me. But that
> second time it really was. And the second time I went I didn't even go into the
> museum. We took the group and I sat out in one of the gardens and that was much
> more meaningful to me.

In Israel, Holocaust memorialisation had become sacralised for Josie. The museum's age and

shabby appearance were no longer "important" and she already knew the narrative. What

remained important was its location in the place of renewal, return, and rebirth in Israel. Josie

had made the connection between the Holocaust, Jewish continuity and Israel and had reflected

these symbolic representations onto her own body through her desire to be pregnant and, once in

Israel, her experience of that pregnancy.

When I asked Josie if she believed that tours were an important means of linking North

American Jews to Israel, she said:

> ... I think that going to Israel, going someplace and walking the streets and feeling the
> pavement underneath your toes and really talking to people who live there and
> breath[ing] it and see[ing] it everyday gives you a very different perspective on what
> it's about and why it's important to have Israel... Not only are you linking yourself to
> your history and you're linking yourself to the land, ...you're linking yourself to the
> current day Israel, you're linking yourself to the people you're travelling with and the
> people that you meet there.

On the importance of Israel for North American Jews, Josie said that it "represent[s], ... the

continuation and the continuity issues of the diaspora community... [They] look to Israel for a

sense of having a homeland...." In Josie's view, then, Israel's primary role for Jews living in North America was to be the place that embodied Jewish tradition ("continuity") as well as providing the security of having a place to call one's own (a "homeland").

I expected that Josie, who worked for a development organisation in diaspora, would tell me that it is important to maintain strong relationships between Jews in North America and Israel. In fact she said that trips to Israel were one of the most important tools at the disposal of such organisations. She explained:

> Those are incredible experience and meetings... and it makes you think about your life and their lives and what the intersections are and aren't... It's the same thing when you meet one of our Arab grantees working in the Arab community. When you meet [a woman] up in Nazareth, think about the work that she's done to set up pre-schools and equivalent head-start... programs and to try and bridge the gap between Arab schooling and Jewish schooling in Israel and you think: 'Oh my God, ... that happens in my country too.' I understand what this means now. I can see it. And ... [the Arab woman's] not sitting there with a *kafiah* on her head; she's this woman, this incredibly educated, very beautiful woman who is doing work to help the children of her community. So I think those are the experiences that really change people's lives and views and thoughts about their relation to the world.

To Karen, the point of these organisations is to bring people to places where they will feel comfortable knowing their donations are going to provide services they can identify with.

Josie was an interesting example of a person who had had no relationship to Israel and whose relationship to Israel evolved as she developed closer and closer ties to the Jewish community. Her attachment to Israel was based on experiencing Israel as part of a collective. Once she came to accept her place within that collective she could more fully understand the importance of Israel for the Jewish community. Israel only became meaningful to Josie once she accepted its role in the survival and continuity of the Jews and her own relationship to that process.

Gillian

Gillian, a nurse from a Canadian prairie city, in her late 50's, was on her second trip to Israel in almost 10 years. We met on the Israel Development Fund (IDF) tour and I interviewed her in the quiet lounge of our hotel, a few days before our departure from Israel. Though her

father, originally from Odessa, Russia, was Jewish, she had not been "brought up Jewish." She

did tell me that she had promised her father before he died that she would attend services every

Yom Kippur because she remembered him saying: "Anybody that has an ounce of Jew in him

should be in *schul* on Yom Kippur...." Her brother-in-law had been the one who had "really

sparked an interest in" IDF, an organisation he volunteered for. Gillian had brought her partner

along for his first tour of Israel.

When I asked Gillian what her reasons were for coming to Israel and what her

relationship to Israel was, she said:

> ... I feel like I have roots [here]. My father is Jewish and it's something that I've just
> always wanted to experience. .... I feel a sense of belonging. Maybe I'm being too
> presumptuous when I say that but I just feel like it's a part of me.... [It had evolved
> from] a curiosity, [and] grew to an interest and ... it's a passion now.

Gillian's connection to Israel was based on her imagining of it as a Jewish state and her tie to it

was based on that Jewishness. That very sense of belonging was what I really wanted her to talk

to me about, and when I asked her how she described Israel to others she said:

> [What] I always say to them is that I can't begin to describe to you the feelings I
> experience when I'm over there, the emotional roller-coaster you get over there. It's just
> beyond words and, ... when I talk to friends and when I talk to family and some of my
> family have been here, immediately they say, 'No more. We know exactly what you
> mean'.

When I asked what that "roller-coaster" was about, she said:

> I guess the height for me is the Western Wall and I know when I was there last night,
> everything just overflows. .... And I can't really explain it. I don't know what it is
> ...why I'm touched so much at that point, but I am. And it's just like I'm in my own
> little world and I come away with a great sense of strength of peace and I had that
> experience the first time I was here too. .... I came back [to Canada] with a very strong
> sense of well-being and ...rejuvenation. ...[I]t's like a source of strength here and I wish
> I could explain it better but I can't. It's just an emotion that I feel and that I experience.

Gillian represented Israel and the Western Wall in particular as a place imbued with spiritual

significance, but it was not her religiosity that was key; it was her sense that there she had

connected with her "roots", the ancestral or collective identity of the Jews. Israel was a place to

be experienced "emotionally" and remained indescribable. It was interesting that Gillian did not

at all feel threatened by the Ultra-Orthodox at the Wall. She never even mentioned anything

about the role of the Ultra-Orthodox in Israel.

Gillian had been impressed by the work of organisations engaged in developing Israel. She had been especially surprised by the Canada Centre, a community centre built with the support of the IDF in the city of Metulla in the Golan Heights. Gillian assumed that Israelis were heavily dependent upon such external funding and that any diaspora organisation's fundraising involvement in Israeli life was important and necessary.

When we discussed whether there was some personality, event, or site that we met or saw that prompted her to think differently about Israel, Gillian replied that she had been much "more impressionable" on her first tour but that she didn't feel this tour had changed anything. When I asked her to explain she said:

> I think that when you're ... away from Israel, you listen to the news, you listen to people's opinions and you can become influenced so easy from the truth. ...[W]ith my first trip, I really experienced the Israeli, the Jewish-Arab relationship; it became very real to me. And when I went back [to Canada] after my first trip, when I interacted with other people, whenever they said something about 'Oh those poor Arabs,' I became very defensive and I said, 'You must go and see for yourself.' 'You have to get it first-hand.' And again [on this trip] I will come away with that and [my partner who] has never been here .... I [tried] to impress on him – like he's often said 'Oh yes sure but there's this small piece of land and they both have the right to live here' and on and on ...[and] I said to him: ... 'Let's talk about it after the trip. Just come down here and be open-minded and keep your eyes open, your ears open and see. I'm going to see a change in you.' Not that he was prejudiced in any way. He was ignorant, like most people are when they haven't experienced it and yesterday he said to me, 'I'm beginning to see the light.'

And when I asked her what she thought might have prompted such a change in him, she said:

> ... I think a lot of things [like] the Prime Minister's speech. ...[H]e's never had the greatest respect for him and where that came from I don't know but after listening to him I think he realised that yes [Netanyahu] really does want peace, he does want a peaceful settlement, ... [Netanyahu would] like everybody to live in peace but he understands, I think, that peace isn't all about [Jewish] sacrifice. I mean the one party can't keep on sacrificing and sacrificing territory and rights and etc. It's got to be both ways and I think [my partner] became more aware that maybe the Arab role is a little too demanding.

Gillian's interpretation of the conflict and of Netanyahu's speech was that "the Arabs" want more than they deserve and that they are forcing the hand of the Israelis; the Arabs seem to have equal or greater power than the Jews. She described the Palestinians as Arabs, a description that portrays them as part of an amorphous "other" Arab population. Gillian thought the bias of

those who didn't "see Israel for themselves" was against Israel and tended to misrepresent the situation in favour of the Arabs. In fact when we discussed whether there was anything that prompted her to think differently about Palestinians or Arabs, Gillian said:

> Well, I didn't realise that, like [at] the hotel [Jerusalem], that the employees are 50% Jewish, 50% Arabs... I didn't realise that and I understand that's a lot. ...I was told they have to be 50% Arab and 50% Jewish. ...I was very amazed at the openness demonstrated even by our tour guide. Like he does not speak negatively about the Arabs at all. In fact he's very positive. And that was ... shocking to me because I thought that there would be more of a distinction between them and us and I didn't sense that at all.

Gillian had envisioned Israel as a tolerant society and thought the representations of the Arabs by the tour guide had been positive. Her perception that the Arabs are Israel's enemies is unmistakable.

Gillian said that she had "always hoped that Jews and Arabs could live peacefully" but she "wondered" if "two separate identities" or nations could do so and she felt that "[t]ime can be stubborn and so that makes for problems..." She did not believe that "signing a treaty" would bring peace because "it's a little more involved." Getting Gillian to elaborate, I asked her if she thought the Oslo Accords had transformed her own or others' perspectives on Palestinians or Arabs or the conflict and she said:

> I think the prejudice [against the Palestinians] probably came out stronger. I think it's the land issue. Eventually you feel like how much more does Israel have to give up? Like I mean when is it enough? When are they going to be satisfied enough and say, O-kay, we won't make any more demands? So when you hear that it just seems like it was never enough so then you sort of became resentful, at least I did, you know.

When I asked against whom she held this "resentfulness" she said: "The Palestinians." And she added: "Although I know they have a right to be here, ... I think they're too demanding." Again, Gillian perceived the problem of implementing peace in the area rests on the Palestinian's unreasonable demands for land. Israel is represented as "giving up" land rather than returning it. However, Gillian never represented the Palestinians as violent, only unreasonable, nor did she reflect on the conflict as a security issue. In an interesting way, Gillian saw the primary conflict as based strictly on the sharing of, or dividing up, of the land, something the Palestinians and Gillian would have agreed about. In this way, she recognised the basis for the conflict as

and-based. She was most concerned with the problem of how two nations could share one land. And if they could not share the land, how much would one party have to "give up" in order to have "peace?"

When I asked Gillian if anything on the tour had prompted her to think differently about Jews in the world, she said:

> Yes actually. I had heard about the Ethiopian immigration and it was starting to sink in, in a sense. Now isn't that interesting because you don't think of Jews as being Ethiopian — which is very naive on my part — but I just felt a greater unity with other Jews in the world and I think ... they're demonstrating it with the invitation for anybody to return. Like the return law, the Laws of Return I think have become very open and liberal and that again tells me that, yes they want the people back.

Gillian represented Israel as a place that could evoke her own sense of "unity with other Jews." And the significance of the Law of Return was that Israel could bring "the people back." For Gillian, Israel is a multicultural Jewish space that ensured the "return" of the Jews to their rightful place. Significantly, she did not represent it as a safe haven.

Gillian's reflections on Israel and the North American Jewish context are significant for they again revealed her imagining of Israel as a "spiritual" space. This was what she had to say when I asked her if there was anything that she had learned on the tours that prompted her to think differently about North American Jewry:

> I think there's a big difference between the Israeli Jews and the North American Jews. ... ...I feel it's more of a cultural thing in North America ... and here I feel it's very much a spiritual thing. I come away with this feeling — in attending Synagogue back home —... that it's almost a form of socialising. It's like a club ... more than an [opportunity for our] identification with the roots [of our culture].

Gillian's experience of Israel was as a place imbued with the spirit of the Jews' heritage, their "roots," an organicity linking the Jews to this land; it is the authentic place to be Jewish. On the other hand, Jews' practices away from Israel were described as more "club" like, more about socialising than practicing one's Jewishness. For Gillian, the synagogue in North America was no substitute for Israel.

When I asked if Israel was important to North American Jews Gillian said: "Not important enough," and proceeded to explain that she felt that there should be more of an effort

made by other Jews in "rebuilding Israel." She felt that their responses were intermittent,

prompted only when Israel was "threatened by an attack ... [then] everybody's heart pounds."

She went on to say that even if Jews can

> survive without Israel. ... I think Israel really does need North America, they need
> support from North America. .... [f]inancially and emotionally, spiritually. I've noticed
> on the trip, several times, and appreciated the expression of gratitude [shown by
> Israelis] that we have chosen to come at this particular time to show support.

For Gillian, North American Jews are secure even "without Israel" but Israel is still an insecure,

isolated state, in need of outside political and financial support.

Despite her position in regard to the Palestinians and the Arabs in the region, Gillian,

her partner and I shared quite a bit of our time together while on tour. We had all chosen to sit at

the back of the bus and had developed a camaraderie along the way. Our experiences together

led me to believe that Gillian was unhappy about how she had been treated by other Jews on the

tour, so when I asked her at the end of the interview if she had anything to add, I was not

surprised by her comments.

> I probably would like to say this: I found that at the beginning of the tour, I didn't
> know whether it was me or whether it was my defensiveness ... but I felt that people
> were less open to me than they are at this stage of the game. Now that can go
> anywhere because you put a bunch of strangers on a bus and at first it depends who sits
> around you and so I really enjoyed getting to know you, chatting with you, that was
> really nice. Now as the week progressed more people are more open. But what I found
> quite unusual... [was that] they asked why did I want to go on a tour with [IDF] and
> they have a right to know ... and they were very diplomatic about it and they said, 'You
> don't have to tell us.' And when they asked me [about] my religious orientation and
> again they said 'You don't have to answer this,' well I said 'I have no problems
> answering it.' And when I explained both [my partner's] and my [own] background,
> 'Well,' they said, "that's very interesting.' They were very accepting of it but once I got
> on tour I felt there was a wall. ...[I]t was ... 'Why are they on our tour?' And as the
> word got around several people, in fact as late as today, came up to me [and said] 'Oh, I
> understand your father was Jewish.' They said that to [my partner] too: 'Oh, I
> understand your father was Jewish.' Now, all of a sudden there's an acceptance. ... I
> almost feel like we qualify now....

Gillian's perception of other's suspicions was very accurate. A number of people had even

approached me – I believe because I had been chatting with Gillian and her partner – to ask why

she had taken the tour and why her partner had come along. Her interpretations of the tourists'

responses to her were very much associated with her feelings about the Jewish community in her

home city, where people were more "socially" oriented. For Gillian, Jews in diaspora had formed a group that closed itself off from those they perceive to be "outsiders."

This situation was in stark contrast to her experience in Israel, where all kinds of Jews are accepted because, as Gillian understood it, their relationships to one another were more spiritually connected. In Israel Jewishness was heritage. It was not her Judaism that defined her relationship nor was it a history of association or practices as a Jew. Rather what Gillian had found in Israel was a place that was connected to her past, to her "roots;" it was a place that connected all Jews to their homeland.

Her imagining of an Israel that is a tolerant nation-state was connected to her perception of the state as a society that brought all the different "types" of Jews together in a "return "to their homeland. Hers was a nationalist imagining of Israel and the place of Jews in the world, where Jews should be even more responsible for Israel's needs. It was significant that Gillian had these impressions while not at all being engaged in North American Jewish community organisations or activities.

Hope

The Israel Civil Society Fund tour was Hope's first trip to Israel. I interviewed her after breakfast in our hotel restaurant on the last day of the tour.

Hope is an experienced political consultant living near a large city in the north-western United States. She "started out being very involved in the feminist movement" and eventually became very involved in "women-only organisations ...that elect women (and help women get] appointed to public office...." She managed the political campaigns of three "underdogs", all of whom were elected to public office. Hope was involved in "affirmative action" programs, describing herself as "working to reflect the diversity of our community." In her own working environment, she hired "people of colour" and the majority of her staff were female. She recounted how this was "a little bit difficult on the white males that worked there but that was o-kay. They adjusted or they left." Hope was clearly committed to activist-liberal principles.

Hope had never been a member of Temple, never had her Bat Mitzvah and had never been affiliated with any Jewish organisations. Her family does celebrate Hanukah and Passover but "in conjunction with Christmas and Easter". For Hope, this was more about participating and learning about "religious pluralism," that is Christian and Jewish religious traditions, than maintaining any tradition in particular.

Hope said that though her parents were both Jewish she had not grown up learning very much about Israel. Her father, who was going to become a Rabbi before he decided to become a doctor, had "a great love for religion, and the history of religion, and the really positive aspects of religion" and had spoken about and travelled to Israel. But rather than connecting her to Israel, she felt that she had been "instilled" with a "very strong sense of family and [of] not forgetting the past." Hope felt that becoming a grandparent changed how she felt about Israel. She said: " Whenever you go through those major transitions [you think about] what [you]... want to pass on to the next generation." She felt that she did not know enough "about the Promised Land or ... about Israel" and because she was not religious, she was not interested in "the biblical parts" but rather "Israel and the whole meaning of Judaism [which are]... a lot bigger than just Israel.... [It's about] heritage...."

Hope described Israel as "the place that many Jews, after World War II came to because they hoped that in the Promised Land nothing like what [had] happened to them could possibly ever happen [again]. ...[I]t was ... like seeking Nirvana, seeking a place free of discrimination."

Hope had come to Israel in order to meet with her relatives and in order to "get in touch with [her] own roots." She had hoped to gain a better understanding of issues that she had only read about. One of the most important things she discovered was that Israel is not as "homogeneous" as she had thought. As she put it: "I can see that the spectrum in Israel among Jews and non-Jews is as wide as it is in North America...." Hope had "seen" an Israel that was more than a Jew's state.

Hope also decided she needed to find out why it was that Jews "had chosen to make

[Israel] their home." In general she said she had discovered:

> ...they feel like there's more they can do here, there's more opportunity to make a difference in their society. They're fully cognisant ...of the problems. They're secular Jews. But they feel – like the pioneers – that there's a chance here to make a difference whereas in the [United] States they'd just be ... like everybody else: work hard, get rich but not really make a big difference. ...[C]learly it's their roots, it is their home.

Until Hope had come to Israel, she had envisioned it as a very dangerous place and she could not

understand why anyone would choose to leave the comforts of their lives in the United States.

After this trip she felt that those Jews who had made *aliyah* had made more meaningful lives for

themselves in Israel, in part because they had "returned" to their "roots," their "home."

Hope compared the moment when Rabin was assassinated to the assassination of

President John F. Kennedy and said:

> The idea that a Jew was killing a Jew was just terrifying. I mean I just couldn't believe that it happened.... [B]ecause I had assumed that if there was an assassination it would be an Arab killing a Jew, (the enemy) not from within. Yes, ... it was incongruent. It was terribly sad. ...I always thought of killings as something that a terrorist or a madman or an enemy would do but not someone that was one of your own...

In Hope's opinion, the assassination of the Prime Minister by another Jew was "incongruent".

She had accepted the naïve myth that all Jews supported one another and that they would not

hurt one of their "own." Immediately after talking to me about Rabin's murder, Hope launched

into a discussion of the power of the Orthodox in Israel. She said:

> I really can not identify at all with the Ultra Orthodox segment of Judaism. I don't understand how anybody in modern times can cling so much to the past and be blind to the positive parts of progress.... I think they're all sort of nuts. ...[S]eeing the Hassidic Jews, ...very religious Jews praying at the wall and then getting on their telephone, ...to me that was an anachronism I'll never get over. ... I just don't understand how people can believe this nonsense. It's a fable. It's a story and why they can't see reality, and this would be true of any religion... I mean their day, their night, their week, their clothes, ... everything is connected to the past. ...I have a sort of very negative, negative feeling about it...

As a secular North American, Hope could not at all identify with the Orthodox practices, seeing

them as ridiculously "clinging" to their traditions and in the process denying the "positive"

aspects of modernism or "progress." She did say, however, that she could wholly identify with

all of the women we met on tour. She explained:

> I felt much more connected to the women, both Arab and Jewish Israelis because I do feel that women are very much the same the world over. [They are] the nurturers, the gender less willing to go to war, that will do anything to try to work things out... I mean they're pretty much like you and me in their hopes and their aspirations and just the way they're trying to work for change. I think the women are much more, from what I could tell, willing to try to change the patterns of the past then the men are...

Hope believed that Israel is a "young troubled country that has traditional values" which is "working very hard at living peacefully with her neighbours." Hope was very protective of what Israel symbolised while being critical of some of its policies. When I asked her about the discussions that had occurred during the tour about the Jewish and the democratic character of the state, she said:

> I think a true democracy... and the statehood of Israel being a religious state are incongruent. [I]t will always be a battle because a true democracy doesn't value one point of view, be it a religion or a type of state. It allows true freedom of choice and as we've seen .. there are a lot of areas where there is no freedom of choice, the right to marry or be buried,... or get an equal education are all controlled by the state, the religion. And I don't see how they're going to totally reconcile [this] – I don't this will ever be a real democracy as long as laws of the land are embedded in a religious foundation. Until we have separation of Church and state, you're never going to have a true democracy, in my opinion. And that's troublesome. I can't reconcile it.

Our conversation took several more turns and then we arrived to a point when I asked if she thought that Israel could be the state of her citizens rather than the state of the Jews. She said:

> That's difficult. I guess I would agree with it, ...reluctantly. Yes reluctantly. It's tough. I would rather redefine what a Jewish state is than abandon the notion of a Jewish state. I'm not comfortable just throwing it open for the person who grabs the most land regardless of nationality, regardless of religious heritage. I guess I'm not just for starting all over with an open desert and seeing who inhabits it. On the other hand, I certainly don't think that the Jews should hold all the power and we saw how they just stomp on the Arab citizens, [and] non citizens. Obviously that's despicable but I'm afraid I don't have the answer but I sure see a problem the way it is.... I guess its because I'm Jewish. I don't know. ...[P]erhaps it's not really rational; maybe it's just more emotional. I'm not sure that's definitely one of the things I'm contemplating and trying to figure out. I guess I do identify with the Jew – emotionally now not intellectually – then I identify with the Arabs just because that's me. On an intellectual level I see that it's absurd but ... we all are ... [p]roducts of where we came from. Both my parents were Jewish. My grandmother was killed in the Concentration Camp. I do have that identity and I've always said that I'm a Jew. I've always felt that I just didn't do much with it. So to suddenly just throw it all away doesn't feel right.

Hope felt conflicted when it came to articulating just what kind of Israel she could identify with. Her own strong feelings that "church" and state must be separated conflicted with the need for Israel to be a Jewish state. In the end, for Hope the Jewish national priority takes precedence over the need for a fully democratic polity.

The tour had a life-changing effect on Hope. She became much more "emotionally and intellectually" engaged with Israel and planned to get more involved in a Jewish fellowship group when she returned to the United States. She expressed some trepidation that her new involvement would affect her marriage. Her husband is secular and non-identifying, and she said: "Well it's going to be a problem because on a Friday night he's going to want to go to the movies or go see our kids or do something else and I'm going to want to go to this...."

Ian and Samantha

One summer day I took a trip to the suburb of a Canadian metropolitan area to meet with Ian and Samantha. While I had not spent much time with them on the Israel Land Fund (ILF) tour in Israel, we had maintained some contact by letter writing and they had shown interest in my research. They invited me to come to their home. Ian and Samantha had been Social Workers and were in their late 60's or early 70's when we met.

Immediately after I entered their home, we began to speak comfortably. Two cats on soft couches greeted me as well and I could smell of the fresh pizza that was being baked for our lunch. While I was somewhat nervous at first – this was my first formal interview – Ian and Samantha immediately put me at ease by discussing the political struggles over social services occurring in the province at that time and by feeding me a wonderful lunch.

Samantha had grown up in a "remote area of" Canada and so "Israel was also a remote thing. It was way out there." She remembered her parents talking about Israel "like (it was) a dream (and) something unusual" and how they would speak about Ben Gurion with great admiration, but she couldn't recall Israel having "much meaning." As Samantha had an opportunity to move away from a Christian dominated community to areas where she "mixed with a Jewish community [she] began to hear more about people's feelings [and] it began to be a

little more meaning[ful]." She began to hear "about Israel as a homeland" and she became

"attracted" to Israel "more and more as the time grew on... especially ... the potential of being able

to see historic sites that were centuries old...." Her "first encounter" with Israel came at university

when she was brought by a friend to a "Ha'Bonim" or "pioneers" organisational meeting. There

she met others her own age who "were interested in going to Israel and becoming pioneers and

they were quite fervent in how they spoke about it. And it was almost like ... a religious revival

in the way they felt [about]... what they were going to be doing." Although some group members

she knew made the decision to go to Israel, she "didn't have, at that point, ... the urge to go and

visit it."

Ian had been raised by a "strong, left wing yiddishkeit family" in what he said was

"not... an anti Zionist but an A-Zionist milieu...." Ian described how

> every time someone of note came here from Israel, we would attend the lecture and
> learn something more about the politics, sometimes religion, the country... And these
> opened up areas ... you wouldn't normally care about... you might read [about it] but
> when you hear someone who's participated and been there [it's different]....

Ian's "identification with the Jews of Israel began [in]... 1947, [with the] UN Resolution on

Palestine, as it's been called." He

> began to see Israel, as the years progressed ... [and] as it developed as any other state.
> [It was] somewhat different from what many of the early Zionists wanted it to be, but
> [it was] still a state where a lot of survivors of the Holocaust went... and where many of
> the grandparents and parents of the Jews who had been pioneers and drained the
> swamps, [and] dreamed [about] the land, lived.

His feelings for Israel had "remained fairly constant" over the years. He "worr[ied] about the

situation in that part of the world not only because I'm concerned about Israeli-Jews, I'm also

concerned about Palestinians and Arabs as human beings in the Middle East."

Soon after we ate lunch, and once the interview began, I asked Ian to repeat a comment

he had made when we were discussing my research interests. He said:

> I [had] commented on the whole concept that you mentioned about Israel as 'home.' I
> don't consider Israel as home, I consider Canada as home. I was born here. My parents
> and the grandparents came here early in this century to this country. There was gold
> along the golden land, ... and that's basically what I identify with. Israel is the home of
> a portion of the Jewish people. It's a state. It's a state like any other state. It wasn't
> supposed to be a state like any other state but it is. In terms of Israel, I can identify with

the early Halutzim, the pioneers – one of whom was an uncle of mine who still lies buried somewhere in Israel, [and who] was there at the turn of the century. [He was] one of the early Zionists – I can identify with the sweat and tears that those people went through. On the other hand, I regret that in order for the state to be established another people were dispossessed, the Palestinian people. And mine is, as you know, ... a minority opinion in the Jewish community but that's what I feel, that's the way I was raised...

The ILF tour had been Ian and Samantha's first trip to Israel. When I asked why they had chosen to travel in 1995, Samantha said "... everybody seemed to be going to Israel, ... [and], the price was right, which is an important factor and ... we both decided it was time that we joined everyone else to see our origin." And Ian added: "... I wanted to go because I'm... a history buff and I wanted to see ...the first Jewish state in almost 2,000 years." Samantha too was interested in the "historical sites,... the people, the completely different land, customs and things that ... certainly we [don't] see here." Ian described Israel as follows:

> Well Israel to me is Kibbutzim. It's the only place in the world where some form of socialist experimentation is taking place which, until recently ... worked. [They are] ... an illustration of a kind of idealism which motivated the early pioneers who went to Israel and, to some extent, has been betrayed in Israel. Israel to me is the cosmopolitan areas of Tel Aviv, the historic sites in Jerusalem and Israel. Also to me [it] is the slums of Jaffa which [we] visited and considered to some extent an eye sore and an eye sore which, sadly enough, has been neglected by successive Israeli governments. Israel to me is ... seeing Jerusalem when we first arrived. And I don't know whether my ancestors were there 1900 years ago, 2000 years ago, where they stayed..... I really don't know but the thing is that I think through conditioning that [overlooking Jerusalem] was the most touching moment of the trip as far as I'm concerned and I can remember Rabbi Leopold getting us together and I believe we sang the hymn to hope. That's what Israel is to me.

And Ian said that he was "most impressed" by

> the greening of the land... Driving along the Jordan River and seeing basically ... desertification in Jordan and ... the green belt areas on the Israeli side. And ... standing at the wall in Jerusalem and touching the stone and realising that those stones go back to King Herod. That's King Herod's wall, King Herod's time and you really get a sense of the history of that particular piece of real estate in the world.

Ian essentially described a Jewish Israel. Its contemporary history was linked to the development of its kibbutzim and Ian's connection to Israel was based in part on the belief that his own ancestors had lived there long ago.

When I asked Ian and Samantha what they would talk about when speaking about Israel to family and friends, Ian said that

> Generally speaking when I talk about Israel it's ... the anxiety of the situation there, a regret... [I]n 70 the Jews took a wrong turn. [They] revolted – a hopeless revolt – against Rome and they were crushed and there wasn't a Jewish state then for almost 2000 years. And I think what's regrettable are the Jews are missing out on a peace...; that they made a mistake of electing a government which is going to lead to another Holocaust. That's what I'm afraid of. It's going to lead to another Holocaust in the Middle East.

While distant from "Zionism" Ian and Samantha had mapped Israel in Zionist terms, particularly identifying the "pioneers" and their work on the land. Their recognition and "regret" that the Palestinians have been "dispossessed" provided an important contrast to their use of Zionist imaginings, however, and it was clear that they also saw Israel as a "normal" state. As Ian put it, Israel is composed of "survivors of the Holocaust and the children or the grandchildren of the original pioneers who went there... [and] [s]truggled. They drained the swamps and then irrigated the land. It sounds like propaganda but a lot of it's true." Samantha concurred with this perspective adding that the pioneers had also "started... farming."

> Ian later said he didn't feel
>
> there was anything on that tour ... that prompted us to think differently about Israel. I think we're together in our feelings that when it comes to propaganda we Jews don't take second boat to anybody and I think... the problem with that ... tour is if they were going to show us another reservoir – and the reservoirs are important in what they did in bringing water to the ... other parts of Israel [and] it's important in planting trees [but] [w]e knew about this... before we visited Israel – but if we were going to see another reservoir I think I would have blown up the bus.

Yet both Samantha and Ian had also been impressed by "all the plaques and things" honouring "the people [who] have really extended themselves to help the country, to make the country greener, to help it prosper...." They both felt "warm" knowing "that there was some connection between ... some Jews in the diaspora and Jews living in Israel." And they felt it was important that "that support came through agriculture, [and]... reforestation.... And these are... the most positive aspects of the Jewish settlement." For both Ian and Samantha, reforestration was symbolic of the care and support given by North American Jews for the Israelis, and was an area that seemed virtuous because it involved supporting agricultural development.

For Ian, Avi, the Brigadier General and tour guide's assistant, was the most interesting person he met on the tour. He described him as follows:

> He's almost got the flavour of a Jewish peasant ... and I don't say that in a pejorative sense.... This is something which, in terms of the diaspora Jews, is a difference. diaspora Jews are intellectuals. They're business people but you don't see very many Jewish farmers in the diaspora but you do in Israel. And not only was he sort of a peasant but he was also a soldier. Well he fought on Golan Heights didn't he?

Samantha was not quite as taken by Avi as Ian had been, and suggested that "[Avi] had participated in something awful," though she could not remember what it was and could only say "He was part of something where there was a lot of killing." Ian explained to Samantha that Avi had been on the Golan Heights and that there had been a "very big battle there... in the Six Day War where the Syrians came down and came into Israel, and there was a lot of people killed, and there are still mines in that area...." Ian described the Israelis in Zionist terms – as new men who could be farmers and soldiers. In addition, his understandings of the conflict over the Golan Heights corresponded with, and may even have been based on, Avi's presentations on tour. Avi had legitimated the Israeli war with Syria by reiterating that the Syrians had entered Israel during the Six Day War, and thus Israel had to defend itself against an invading army. Samantha then added that Talia, the guide on the ILF tour, had made a mixed impression on her. She explained:

> I can't say she impressed me but [she] represent[s] a very, and I met a few others, not many, Israeli women but a few others like her who are very harsh and very aggressive and ... as we both understand, it's how they grew up, how they struggled, how they've fought to get where they are and like many others, of course, she spent her time in the army and she's still an army person .... And it's sort of a personality type and I've heard other people describe Israeli women in that way. I mean they can't all be that way but a significant number I'm sure fought their way into whatever they're doing in the country. So although we didn't like her as a tour guide we had to think of her as a particular kind of personality.

Thus for Ian and Samantha, not only Israeli men but Israeli women can be described as different kinds of people. They are tougher, brasher, and more "aggressive." Samantha believed this behaviour reflected harsh Israeli life experiences as well as the skills needed to cope with them.

Ian, however, felt very strongly that Talia had been a "little patronising and insulting" when she spoke to the group about the

> War with Iraq, when Israel was under threat and [there were] scud missiles from Saddam Hussein.... [S]omebody at the front of the bus said 'You know we were very worried about you people, we were very worried about the people of Israel' and she said 'What do you know about something like that? ... What do you know about it? We were here.' In other words you had to be there on the land in order to appreciate what was going on there. Well, most Jews weren't in occupied Europe ... between 1939 and 1945 but many of us lost relatives there and we could identify. We didn't have to be there to know what kind of slaughter that was... I don't think you have to, I think to some of the Zionists, – I don't know if Ben Gurion was one of them – who said that in order to be Jewish you really have to live in Israel. Well that eliminates a hell of a lot of Jews ... [it] certainly eliminates a lot of North American Jews because ... the *aliyah* to Israel from North America is practically nothing. It's very, very small and I think ... the formulation is you can't live a full Jewish life unless you live in Israel. Well it depends on what you mean by living a full Jewish life. I think Samantha and I have a full Jewish life. .... I'm involved in different kinds of activities, social action-wise against the present provincial government ... and I think that's very Jewish. That's leading a full Jewish life and when I'm a member of Peace Now that's leading a Jewish life... Trying to push for a more egalitarian society in Israel, that's Jewish.

Samantha concurred, adding: "I think social activism and participating in things like that had more meaning to me to be Jewish and to show how I felt about it than just the mere act of going to Israel or the mere act of participating with a Jewish group." Here Zionism's "negation of diaspora" was reframed. One could support the state of Israel while recognising there was strength in a Jewish identity that was unrelated to settling in Israel or committing to the state in Zionist ways.

> When asked what they had learned about Palestinians or Arabs, Samantha said:

> The fact is we find and we feel very strongly about [the fact] that their living standards are so low and [they] are not properly attended to. And there's a feeling on their part about why are they [being] treated in this way. And certainly we began to think, well how can they have any great feeling for the Jews in their country or the country where they live if they're living in proximity with them but not benefiting from the same things as other people. We began to have a different perspective [on Israel] and I think when we saw poverty in some of the areas and knew who [suffered] it ... I think this hit home very hard. We were seeing it, [though] we weren't hearing remotely [about it from the guides]... and to us as Jews and ... with our focus on the social needs of people, I think it really hit hard.

Samantha and Ian had taken side trips during the time we were in Israel. They had gone off on

their own in and around Tel Aviv on the first day we were in Israel. As Ian put it:

> [I]t's interesting, anything that we saw ... that pertained to Palestinians was not part of
> the tour. ... [It was] a tour of Israel without Palestinians, and that's interesting because
> Herzl in his book The Jewish State talks about ...a country for a people, a country
> without people or people without a country. And of course this is [because] ... he'd
> never been to Palestine but obviously there were people living there, indigenous people
> living in Palestine. So the ILF tour was like the Herzlian type of thing where they
> [represented] ... a country without Palestinians.

Ian and Samantha put the Palestinians back into the history of Israel's establishment in a way that

not only challenged the Zionist story of settling an "empty land" but that also defined such

practices as in conflict with the Jewish principle of caring for the social welfare of all peoples.

When I asked "How important is Israel to North American Jews?" Ian and Samantha

expressed their shared belief that, as Ian put it:

> ...[I]t's very important.... [F]or many North American Jews it's about the only
> identification they have with Jewry. Israel is like the secular religion of the North
> American Jewish community. And I can understand that importance. It's important to
> me too because there are four million Jews [living there] and I guess a million – I don't
> know how many – Palestinians were there and the lives of these human beings are at
> risk. And I think it's important that a lasting peace be evolved there... I think to a great
> extent what the Palestinians have been given is a form of Ghetto type of thing and I
> think as Jews, because we are the more powerful party, [we] could have afforded to
> have ... done a bit better.

Both Ian and Samantha's feelings for Israel were based on a concern for their national kin living

in another place, although in many ways Israel did not "play a role" in "many areas of [Ian's]

personal life."

For this couple, Israel is special because of its tie to Jewish history, but it was not

described as an extraordinary state and neither Samantha nor Ian felt any particular duty to live

in or support Israel.

Ian said that he was concerned about certain things in the province and in Canada and

Israel doesn't fit into that at all except for one aspect: "The same idiot, who is the Prime Minister

of Israel, ... [has as] his Gentile counterpart ... the Premier of the [Province]." For Ian, the

connection between Israel and Canada revolved around his concern to prevent reactionary right

wing political policies from dominating in both places.

Among this last group of profiles, there were a range of envisionings of Israel, from those who simply celebrated the existence of the state to those who wanted to give it even more attention and "protection." Despite the differences among those profiled, however, there were similarities with respect to the celebration of the state's accomplishments, particularly the achievements of the Israelis in the Negev Desert and, as importantly, the recognition that non-Jews as well as "different" kinds of Jews live within the state. Moreover, the language of tolerance and recognition was part of every discussion.

CHAPTER 14
RE-LOCATING JEWS "HERE" AND "THERE"

> I would like ... to imagine a place in which humans can live. A place more desirable than the failure which we presently inhabit. This failure which, we fear, cannot be defeated. I will admit that my purpose is utopian if that won't mean that my purpose is laughable. To be sure it's not, then, let's be sober about our utopia. Let's understand by it the simple notion that there are ideas as yet unrealised which if realised would transcend our present reality.... Let me put it this way, I'm after a real nowhere. A realisable illusion (Author Curtis White from The Idea of Home 1992:9-10.)

Making Nation Make Sense

A complex array of power relations can be seen in every attempt of the Jews in diaspora to make sense of the nationalist narratives they have been presented with. These narratives urged them to see and act in particular ways. But power is involved not only in the relation between the audience and the narratives but also in the relation between the ethnographer and the rules, assumptions, and practices which define his/her own life. Understanding the interpretations of such narratives is useful anthropological as well as political work.

Overview of Profiles

While the tours generally presented an exclusivist, territorialist, Zionist narrative about the Jews' place within the land of Israel, the narratives at community presentations at times complicated such narratives, some presenting the problematics of such exclusivist politics (e.g., the geographer and politician's presentations discussed in Chapter 9). Both positions elicited a response from some tour participants and audience members signalling an awareness of the classical Zionist narratives as well as of the non-Zionist or post-Zionist narratives.

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The profiles of Jews living in diaspora represent numerous identifications with and to the state of Israel. The views represented here were not the only ones to be found in the Jewish communities in North America[39] and these views included much diversity, as the profiles show. Nevertheless, there are grounds on which to expect that some of the viewpoints identified here were widely held in North American Jewish communities.

Whether those I interviewed had travelled to Israel for the first time in their lives or for the fifteenth, many but not all of the Jews in diaspora involved in this study had poached the majority of Zionist narratives presented to them: they situated the Jews' ancestral, biblical heritage in Israel; they expressed the need for a national state of refuge for all Jews; and they proudly envisioned and imagined Israel as a modern and democratic state. Included in these reflections was great pride in Israel's development practices, for example in the systems of water redistribution, reforestation, desert agricultural production, and technological developments.

Yet holding these views did not preclude the participants from also raising the problems of citizenship, equality, democracy and most surprisingly, security, as issues that Israel must confront on terms not simply defined by Zionism, but rather the real-politic of state-craft and human rights. Thus the same people who imagined Israel in Zionist-historical terms, at other times also reflected on Israel as a state, with its "normalised" existence and troubles, rather than its "unique" qualities as a Jewish state. These shifts were the ones that suggested to me that a national but not territorial concern strengthened their tie to Israel, for such concerns were about governance and the security of a population of Israelis, not about land per se.

Many of those interviewed, and not just those cited in the earlier chapters, were very troubled by the power wielded by the Orthodox minority within Israel's democracy. Some feared the anti-modernising tendencies of this group whom they characterised as holding pre-modern values that could potentially push Israel "into the past." These interviewees expressed

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39. Shapiro (2000), for example, discusses the impact of travel to Israel through an Israel Experience Program on young, unaffiliated North American Jews. Her study focusses on the ways in which the constructions of Israel, Jews and Judaism presented through the Program influence participants' subsequent self-identification as Jews and their relationships to Israel.

some fear that should Israel become even more influenced by such "theocratic" authorities, the state would become disassociated from its role as the primary symbol of modern Jews' accomplishments.

The reflections of Jews in diaspora about the extraordinary power held by the Orthodox must be understood as a consequence of other issues including the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by an Orthodox-Jew, as well as the "who is a Jew" controversy. With respect to the latter issue, the Orthodox were represented by the Jews in diaspora as potentially having the power to determine their lives even though they live outside the state of Israel. Thus, the responses of diaspora interviewees to the Orthodox were not so much a matter of their desire to see a secular Israel (which was what this argument was about within Israel) as a response to Orthodox principles, considered by many to be an anti-modernising, undemocratic force in Israeli society.

Some interviewees said that their trip to Israel led them to (re)connect with Judaism and "Torah" in diaspora. One tour participant said she had made this decision as a result of her own lack of identification with Israel; it no longer represented a place that could fulfil her need for Jewish authenticity. Her return to the Book rather than to the Land of Israel was a diasporic, deterritorialised gesture. It suggested that the Jews in diaspora can create and maintain their identity and the survival of their tradition without territory, as they had done over the centuries (Biale 1986, 1992; Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; for pre-Zionist perspective, see Dubnow 1961).

The knowledge of Israel held by Jews in diaspora was also one not simply associated with their ancestral, spiritual, historical and traditional ties. Jews in North America were very much aware that they were claiming ties to a contested territory, although the degree of knowledge about that contest varied, with some people having a very superficial sense of it and others very much engaged by what was at stake for all the communities involved. In contrast to many of the narratives they were presented with on tour, and much like some of the narratives presented by some Israelis in public culture events in the communities, many Jews in diaspora used the language of peace and coexistence when discussing terms of engagement and peace between Palestinians, other Arabs and Jews. Militaristic narratives affected some participants'

perceptions that Israel is a "tiny" country under siege, but even those people sought not to continue the war, but to bring peace to the region. Many participants who represented Israel in celebratory Zionist terms often also recognised the plight of the Palestinians, particularly those living in the Occupied Territories, but sometimes also including the Palestinians within the state of Israel. The inequalities that exist between Palestinians and Jews within the state of Israel were, however, not often recognised. Overall, those interviewed seem less concerned about any threat from "the Arabs" and more concerned for a good Israel, an Israel that could be true to the ideals of democracy, equality and peace.

Generational differences in identifications with and envisionings of Israel were also crucial (see Troper 1996). Those who personally experienced anti-Semitism in their youth, and who remembered a time before the state of Israel was founded, envisioned Israel as a model of all the best that "liberated" Jews bring to the world, and as a potential place of refuge should Jews ever again be endangered as they had been in World War II.

Among those who spent a period in their teens or early adulthood in Israel's time of glory in the 1970's, it seemed that celebratory remembrances were displaced in the 1980's. Critical awareness was raised with the unpopular Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the growing recognition that the war of 1967, celebrated for "reuniting Jerusalem," also resulted in the occupation not only of a territory but of a people – the Palestinians. Within this group, there was not only a nostalgic longing for the glorious Israel of that other time, there was also a sense of disappointment that Israel was not as it had once been or what they once thought it could be. The perception of many interviewees was that the conflict between Israelis and Arabs would and could be resolved if there was meaningful cooperation and the recognition for coexistence.

And finally, among those who had recently become identified with Israel, a range of relationships had developed to Israel. Some had decided to take greater responsibility for Israeli state-building projects by becoming more active in Jewish organisations that supported these projects in Israel. Others were turning their attention to Jewish-identified practices in North America and simply celebrating the progress and security of the state. Among this group, there were those who said Arabs are not to be trusted, but they used language that was tame

when compared to some of the tour guides' and hosts' representations, and coexistence and cooperation among Israelis and Arabs was described as a possibility and a desire.

Among those Jews in diaspora who had travelled to Israel most often there was relatively complex understanding not only of Israeli politics but of the conflict in the region as well. In other words, those who had a history of identification with and commitment to the state – usually in their youth – were also most critically aware of the state's complex realities and most committed to peaceful coexistence among the peoples in the region. Within this group of interviewees, there was a range of envisionings of Israel. Some expressed the need for a safe haven for all Jews. Some described the conflict in terms that did not recognise Palestinians' rights, but they too did not primarily speak in militaristic terms.

Consistent with other researcher's findings (e.g., Cohen 1983; Liebman and Cohen 1990; Heilman 1999; Levitt and Shaffir 1993; Liebman 1999; Shusterman 1993) very few Jews in diaspora had thought about making *aliyah*. In fact there was not one person that I interviewed who said he or she wished he or she had made *aliyah* and only one who wanted to make *aliyah* but couldn't (see Jeremy below). All had pragmatic reasons for staying in North America, and only a very few expressed any guilt over such a decision. No one expressed any regret. In all cases there was a sense of the permanence of diasporic existence for the Jews and any notion that they lived "in exile," somehow out of place, did not play a role in their envisionings of Israel or of their own place in the world.

Instead of the concerns over *aliyah*, Jews in diaspora were most concerned that they might not continue to identify with a nation-state that no longer represented their ideals, especially with respect to democracy. Israel held pride of place within an ethnic or national framing – "we are all Jews" - but it was not of the same import with respect to cultural politics – "we are all living authentically Jewish lives but we do not yearn to become Israelis." This approach is certainly in contrast to classical Zionist theories which deny the possibilities for Jews to live full, safe and secure lives in diaspora.

Some readers of these profiles may read "Zionism" where I read "diasporicism" because many of the Jews in diaspora used Zionist symbols, tropes and markers to describe

!srael. But the concerns and ambivalence about the relationship of Jews in diaspora to Israel were rarely expressed in terms of whether or not they belonged "here" or "there" (see "Sarah" in "Warren and Sarah" above) nor did these individuals describe Israel in territorialist terms.

Moreover, as I compared the responses of Jews in diaspora who have a more distant relationship to Israel (those who had taken only one or two tours to Israel and who are uninvolved in Israel-Diaspora development organisations), to those of diaspora Jews who were most committed to Israel (those who take frequent trips or are involved in fundraising activities), I noticed that among the latter group there was a greater commitment to a non-violent, non-military resolution to the Israel-Palestine and Israeli-Arab conflict. This difference is not an issue I have seen explored by those who suggest that travelling is a simple matter of strengthening Jewish identification. This is one area that I believe deserves further research.

At this point, I would like to return to Liebman and Cohen's (1990) findings mentioned earlier in Chapter 3. Their description of Jews with strong identifications with Israel does not account for the fact that many who might fit the category of "pro-Israel" Jews may also be highly critical of Israeli politics. Such individuals could not describe themselves on such limited terms. By simply deciding to call a Zionist-minus-the-aspirations-to-make-*aliyah* "pro-Israel" Cohen (1983) and Cohen and Liebman (1990) missed the opportunity to explore what in fact it means to be "pro-Israel."

But the importance of Israel was not expressed simply in terms of the realisation of the founding of a state for the Jews; nor the realisation of the new Jew; nor the Zionist tropes and symbolism of development, redemption, modernisation and democracy amidst chaos and primitivism. Most importantly Israel provided a symbol of the survivalism of the community, of the Jews as a nation – a nation within both diasporicist and Zionist frameworks. As such, when Jews in diaspora "imagined" Israel they were also "imagining" the history, survival and continuity of their community, the nation of Jews.

I think this aspect of their continued identifications with Israel is central to any understanding of Jewish identificaiton with Israel. Jews in diaspora took up some but not all of Zionism's tenets and, in important ways, reformulated nationalist longings not as a simple

territorial be-longing but as a diasporicist be-longing on the basis of kin and co-responsibility, much as anthropologist Pnina Werbner (1998) pointed out in her insights into the practices of members of a community in diaspora.

Without the emphasis on territory, nationality could be as authentically experienced and maintained in diaspora as in Israel. Further, Israel as territory seemed less important to Jews in diaspora than was the care for their kin, the population of Israeli-Jews. As such the national concern was a concern for good government and the good state in Israel. This post-Zionist shift, from imagining Israel as nation to imagining Israel as state, opened up opportunities for the kinds of discussions and debates I witnessed, and was privy to, during the research period.

I would call these imaginings "diaspora nationalism" in order to highlight that when the security of the community imagined as a nation is no longer seen as being guaranteed by a territorial imperative, in the form of the commitment to *aliyah*, then support of and identification with Israel could become deterritorial and *one of a number* of commitments Jews could make to their nation, their homeland, and their nation-state of Israel.

A Post-Zionist understanding does not shift the emphasis away from kin and responsibility to the nation, but rather shifts the basis for the relationship away from a primarily territorial state-building practice to one that is framed within nation-building (Cohen 1995; Evron 1995; Silberstein 1996, 1999). For this reason, I believe, Jews in diaspora easily criticise those who are territorialist, like Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud government, and at the same time may seek a return to spiritual and religious practices as defined within Judaism, and heritage. This "return" is a return to the fold, rather than a "return" to Israel.

Moreover, the role of kin and the associated responsibilities that define nationalist longings and belonging explain how it is that cultural conventions and inventions situated within personal histories allow for the "taking up" of these interpolations.

I discovered that a number of people characterised my interview questions as very "personal" or "emotional." I realised that what I had assumed were political questions were, in fact, questions that asked people to reflect on their place in the world: their familial experiences –

tragic and survivalist at the same time – and their understandings of kinship and responsibility. Not only had the nationalism literature, moored as it is within a politico-institutional framework, affected my thinking about these questions but also my own bias toward this community was revealed to me. I had mistakenly conceived of Jews in diaspora as primarily a politically committed community, particularly in relation to the Israel-Palestine conflict, and this left me unprepared for the strength of their emotional commitment to the Jewish collectivity. As well, Zionist narratives may have resonated for Jews in North America in part because the majority are, or are descendants of, Jews from the areas in Europe most affected by the Holocaust. And these origins contribute to feelings of co-responsibility for the nation's survival, in order that it has the safe haven that the Jews of Europe were denied. This may also have contributed to their taking up survivalist narratives at Jerusalem, Masada, and military sites.

I suggest then that all of these factors have led to the emergence of a diasporicist ideology that can only be understood within the development of a Post-Zionist era (Cohen 1995; Evron 1995; Silberstein 1999). Post- Zionism should not be confused with anti-Zionism nor with non-Zionism. Post-Zionism is, like post-modernism's relationship to modernism, a reflexive ideology that neither fully transcends nor fully rejects Zionist conceptions of history or praxis (Collins 1989; Hutcheon 1988, 1989; Rose 1991). It is Zionism's project – the existence of Israel as nation-state for the Jews – that has informed this sense of security and this ability to look "beyond". My use of the term "beyond" should not be misunderstood as in any way a negation of Zionism's "accomplishments" either.

The Post-Zionist era has opened up new possibilities for North American Jews to identify with Israel as a secure space, and their sense of their own place "in diaspora" was represented by them as equally if not more secure. This was reflected in the nature of my discussions with interviewees where there was a sense of the "permanence" of diaspora rather than a yearning to change the status of those living in diaspora. With the rise of Zionism came the concept of the need to "negate the diaspora" – that is to return to a territory of that would be the Jews' own – in order to "normalise" their lives. With the establishment of the Jewish state in Israel, there would no longer need to be diaspora (Meir 1986; Yehoshua 1986). This concept has

formed the background to longstanding debates and discussions about the survival of the diaspora and the roles that Israel, and *aliyah*, should play in Jewish contemporary life (Eisen 1986; Levine 1986; Levitt and Shaffir 1993; and as satirised in Roth 1986, 1993; see also Cooper 1996; Ezrahi 1996; Furman 1997). However, I feel that the discussions taking place among Jews in diaspora that I observed were about the permanence of Israel *and* the permanence of life for the Jews outside of Israel.

At community events, when *aliyah* became an issue in the responses of Israeli-Jews encountering resistance or a difference of opinion from their North American audiences, it seemed to me that both sides – Jews in diaspora and Israeli-Jews – came to these encounters from positions of strength.

Paradoxically, then, a territorial nationalism, Zionism, may have achieved the security not only of a homeland for the Jews but of a deterritorialised diaspora nationalism as well. As a result, there are possibilities for the emergence of a new politics of North America Jews' "locations." While there have been countless critical and celebratory analyses of Zionism (e.g., D. Goldberg 1996; Wheatcroft 1996), they are not about how Zionism may have contributed to the sense of achievement expressed by diaspora Jews in North America. I believe that this is a potentially rich area for further research.

Some readers may wonder if people that I spoke to had shielded me from their most vociferous feelings about Arabs and Palestinians. That may also be the case. However, I do not think such a response was common, in part because the interviewees seemed honest and forthcoming and were often critical of Palestinian and Arab practices; and, if people had very strong feelings, I think I would have heard them expressed during the tours or in community settings. While the researcher is clearly part of the research situation in any participant-observation fieldwork (e.g., Azoulay 1997; Abu Lughod 1986; Jackson 1987; Kugelmass 1988; Narayan 1997), I do not believe I could have affected all of the practices of those I worked with all of the time.

I imagine that some readers might argue that those people with whom I engaged with also most likely to hold more "diasporicist" attitudes that I have outlined above. Could it be the

case that I only had the opportunity to meet or get close to those willing to have any encounter with a "Palestinian"? My answer to this question is mixed.

Some tour participants warned me, sometimes obliquely, sometimes not, to stay away from other tourists. On one occasion I was told that one of the tourists didn't think that I "looked Jewish" and that I should probably stay away from her. On another occasion, two tourists told another that the research effort was "bothering" them, but my "informant" said she thought that "anti-Arab" sentiments underlay their wariness. Some people in the community shunned me as well. I never did approach or reach out to those few whom I had been warned to stay away from, as I wanted the research process to be developed on the basis of trust and reciprocity. Thus, some people with strong feelings may not have been approached for an interview nor did I have the benefit of engaging in long conversations with them.

It is true that many of the tourists and community people with whom I developed long-term relationships were at least sympathetic to a peace agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis, though it is significant that I did not and could not know about such sympathies prior to meeting these individuals. In fact, only a few of the people I met in the Jewish community were engaged with the issues to the degree that we could fully discuss the debates about the "alternative" history and Palestinian or non-Zionist counter-narratives of the founding of the state of Israel, and the implications for such "new histories" (e.g., Evron 1995; Mahler 1997; Silberstein 1999). It is also true that not all of the people I became close to were sympathetic. More importantly, the majority of people I met were neither activists nor on the front lines of peace building between Jews or Israelis and Palestinians.

The Other Israel

Despite the fact that details of Israel's discriminatory policies toward and maltreatment of the Palestinians were available to Jews in diaspora, the range of interpretations and understandings of such politics and policies were limited. I believe these limitations are due to the overwhelming number of accounts that present Israel as a democratic, fair, pioneering, glorious, heroic, threatened, small, and creative nation-state. As well, as noted earlier, there were

few or no opportunities for tour participants or community members to meet with Palestinians or other Arabs, limiting the possibilities for Jews in diaspora to have personal contact and exposure to narratives of others' experiences.

Among those interviewed, the terms for any discussion about "democracy" in Israel were limited to the threat that the Ultra-Orthodox posed for an Israeli-Jewish democracy. Unfortunately, this analysis never extended to include what the implications might be for non-Jews, which is particularly strange when one considers that many Ultra-Orthodox Jews continue to lobby against any Peace Agreements with the Palestinians, and promote the continuation of building settlements in the Jerusalem area and in the West Bank region.

It is also clear to me that most Jews in diaspora who expressed some sympathy with the Palestinian plight did so only on the premise that Jews and Palestinians would be separated into two entities, a Jewish state and a Palestinian state or entity. Such proposals would grant land and some sovereign status to "both" communities. But they are limited by one important factor, as Warren, one of the tour participants profiled above hinted at: that Palestinians who continue to live on their land within the state of Israel would have to continue to live as second class citizens. They are not nationals in a Jewish state; they are its "citizens" and in Israel the ramifications of such a status are great. Land, education, military and social policies all favour nationals, that is Israelis who are Jews (see Halper 1998; Peled 1992, 1995; Rabinowitz 1997; Shalev 1989, 1992).

There were few tour participants or community members with whom I could discuss Israel's land policies. On some occasions, I tried to suggest that Israel is a state *defined* by what I call a kind of "demographic denial". That is, in regions where the Palestinians continue to be the majority, or where Israelis view it is possible that Palestinians will become a majority, Israeli land and settlement policies are used to seek to change the demographic profile.[40] When I expressed this viewpoint, I was often treated with either hostility or incomprehension. Moreover, reactions

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40. The Judaisation of the Galilee region; the "Greater Jerusalem" program; and even within the framework of the Peace Plans, the prevention of any contiguous Palestinian areas that might "threaten" the Jews' majority.

to my proposal that we might begin to re-envision Israel on binational terms that account for and would thus diminish such demographic policies ranged from surprise to anger. Such an idea was described as "impractical" or "impossible," because "no state has ever been bi-national," or as "racist" and "anti-Semitic" because it denies Jews their own land.

I would add, then, that the perspective of Jews in diaspora envisioned the region in terms of a Eurocentric ideal according to which nations self-realise as territorial nation-states; that is, to each nation, a state (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983; Smith 1986, 1991). This perspective denies the realities of the histories of peoples in the Middle East (and perhaps many other regions as well) and often burdens religious practices with national practices. In this way, "Druze," "Christians," "Bedouins," and "Jews" are, by virtue of their different cultural or religious or political practices, transformed and separated into different "peoples." This limited interpretation of peoples and their places not only elides the shared geographies and histories that exist in one place, it creates a distorted sense of the Middle East as a messy space of "mixed peoples" (e.g., Lebanon as presented on tour), and is set in contrast to an ideal "pure" nation-state, the Jews' state, that Israel is, or is becoming.

Moreover, tours and community presentations did not show how it is that the peoples of Israel-Palestine live alongside each other and that even the Oslo Accords' proposed "bypass roads" can only be used to "bypass," rather than separate, communities of people living on the same land. The maps were nothing if not reifications (Black 1997). They did not represent the realities of those who live on the ground and thus they did not represent the fact that Israeli-Jews and Palestinians endure the effects of one another's politics, economics, and social welfare no matter how many roads criss-cross the territory. The histories of all of the peoples in the region are, as ever, intertwined not only by conflicts but also by daily interactions in the marketplace, at work, in the streets of Israel, and in those areas that have been militarily occupied. Lack of awareness of these rich encounters and the experiences of these lived intertwinings, as well as of the difficulties of sustaining separations in the everyday domain, limits the understandings and experiences of Jews in diaspora. This lack of awareness may also be the reason that Israelis and Jews in diaspora sometimes seemed to be talking past one another in community settings. For

example, to the Israeli-Jews proposing peace, those in North America envisaged "impractical" and "idealistic" hopes when they imagined Israel's future on pre-Oslo terms.

While I have set out the many differences, disappointments, and constraints within which I have discussed the conceptualisations of community, nation, territory, and the past with community members, there were also many fruitful moments of sharing.

In my examinations of the specific contexts for the reception of organised representations of Israel, I have not only shown that nations are (re)narrated and (re)imagined, I have also demonstrated the ways in which these narratives were open to challenge as well as to (re)interpretation. The relation of the Jews in diaspora to what they participated in and heard was thus both constrained and free. There are similarities with respect to which of the narratives interviewees poached (e.g., biblical heritage, national refuge, modern state), and which narratives were not poached (democracy is coincident with a Jewish state, militarism is essential), signalling the power of certain narratives over others. Indeed, each of the points of resistance was closely tied to personal experience or liberal North American ideologies – separation of "church" and state, multi-culturalism, peaceful solutions.

As de Certeau (1984, 1986) makes clear, there is always the possibility of innovating against the rules – the *possibility* of creating by bending or breaking convention, of drawing on other "rules" from other areas of life. These possibilities depend on the existence of conventions, while not being entirely constrained by them. Such practices and resistances may or may not have rich consequences, but the fact that it is possible to resist, reinterpret, and select, and that the consequences of such practices are not simply determined by one set of conventions alone, allows more freedom than attributing practices to a top-down, "ideological" power would suggest. Thus people, readers, "consumers" or tourists are not only located in one "ideological" or "power" convention, but rather they live in several. It is not clear that de Certeau (1984, 1986) has this particular approach in mind when he describes the practices of poaching.

Diaspora Nationalism

At the same time that anthropologists face questions arising from a postmodern moment in a "global world" which describes identities as hybridised, creolised, diasporicised, exiled, migrant, and deterritorialised identities (Appadurai 1988; Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Clifford 1997; Hannerz 1996; Lavie and Swedenburg 1996; Olwig 1997) this research shows that some of the most explosive political and cultural questions facing North American Jewry in today's world emerge from a deterritorialised politics and identification with a homeland. While much of the postmodern and diaspora literature points to the potential displacement of nations as the basis for collective identity, I have learned that this is a simplistic reading of diaspora subjectivities and particularly of their relationships to "nation" as I observed them. It turns out that the diaspora Jews' relationships to Israel are much more complexly intertwined with imagining the nation than the anthropological and cultural studies literature on diaspora had led me to believe.

While Jewish communities in diaspora have had several frameworks for identifying with their "Jerusalem," for example, a pre-Zionist spiritual relationship to the Temple and a Zionist national-territorial for Israel (Baer 1947; Eisen 1986; Hertzberg 1976; D. Goldberg 1996), I believe I have observed an emergent Post-Zionist identification with both the nation – the Jews – and with the state of Israel (e.g., Evron 1995).

Other researchers have explored some of the possibilities opened up by the study of the changing relationships of Jews to Israel (e.g., Heilman 1999; Liebman 1999), but their work has been non-ethnographic, or has described other settings. Particularly interesting are those scholars who have shown that there are many elements within Jewish tradition which can be drawn on in a recasting of "diaspora" politics and Israel-diaspora relationships in order to include a non-exclusivist, non-territorialist perspective on Israel. For example, in "an alternative story of Israel" anthropologist Jonathan Boyarin and cultural theorist Daniel Boyarin (1993) call into question the idea that a people must have a land in order to be a people (1993:718). Citing

biblical scholar Thomas Davies, they argue that in fact,

> The Land of Israel was not the birthplace of the Jewish people Israel was born in exile. Abraham had to leave his own land to get to the Promised Land: the father of Jewry was deterritorialized (Davies as cited in Boyarin and Boyarin 1993:718).

With such "deterritorialized" beginnings, the Jews' survival is attributed to dialectical tensions they had to endure as a people who were defined on "national," "genealogical" and "religious" terms. The Boyarins argue that a people can "maintain its distinctive culture, its difference, without controlling land, *a fortiori* without controlling other people or developing a need to dispossess them of their lands" (1993:723). Moreover they write that "Diasporic cultural identity teaches us that cultures are not preserved by being protected from 'mixing' but probably can only continue to exist as a product of such mixing" (1993:723). Thus they reconceptualise in confident terms the Jews' existence without their own territorial state and suggest that, in fact, the Jews' survival is predicated upon their continual "wanderings" rather than upon settling in one place.

I think the Boyarins' attempt to reconceptualise "diaspora" for contemporary Jews is an important theoretical move (Clifford 1997). While not an accurate reflection of how Jews I met and engaged with envisioned their relationships or identifications with Israel, some of what the Boyarins point to does take us in the same direction, primarily in their recognition of the possibilities and celebrations of a deterritorialised Jewry. The Boyarins advocate a spiritual rather than national identification with Israel, primarily because they identify nationalism with territoriality, as do most nationalist theories, and in this context, like Zionism. But by assuming that nationalism is territorially-based, the Boyarins miss the point that the relationship of Jews in diaspora to Israel is not specifically limited to territory and that it is about Jews' heritage – as represented by their relationship to, and survival as, a people from the land of Israel. Equally important, it is about the survival of Jewry through their responsibilities to other Jews.

The concept of Post-Zionism, which has been applied by some scholars to describe Israeli-Jews' renegotiated relationships to "Israel" (Cohen 1985; Silberstein 1996; 1999; Sternhall 1998), might also apply to Jews in diaspora – those Jews who identify with Israel while living outside the state. I suggest that these people have shifted from a Zionist territorial identification

to one defined by a strongly diasporicist or deterritorialised identification with and imagining of Israel. As I indicated above, I call this relationship "diaspora nationalism." In doing so, I do not suggest that Jews in diaspora are outside a place they define as their homeland, but that they define that relationship to homeland on national terms. Such a definition is fundamentally structured by identification with the nation as Jews, rather than by any territorial imperative, and/or the need to make *aliyah*.

These identifications focus on a (re-)territorialized homeland insofar as it is an ancestral land, but diaspora Jews are not tied to its territory so much as its population – its Jewish population – as members of the same nation, and kinship collectivity. This diasporicist identification with Israel "imagined" (Anderson 1991) in diaspora, and imagined on the basis of the "ontological security" provided by nationalism (Giddens 1987; Paine 1989), is primarily based on the practices of "co-responsibility" to others of the nation (Werbner 1998). This perspective emphasises the relationships of Jews in diaspora to Israel as homeland and to its population as kin, but unlike the problematic that Zionists had identified prior to the founding of the state, these Jews envisioned Israel from a secure position outside the state.

Thus the narratives and practices reported here exist in a complex and changing historical moment in which many are rethinking ideas and practices that have dominated the last century. It is also a moment in which there is unprecedented success and security among Jews in North America as well as in Israel. And, it is a time when the Peace Accords have initiated new contacts and hope for peace in the Middle East. In these contexts the constrained openings I have found in this study could become part of an active process of rethinking and social action in and about the "new" Middle East (Frankel 1994) as well as greater understandings among all involved community members – Jews, Palestinians, and other Arabs – both "here" and "there."

Fielding Questions Of Identity

On many occasions throughout my fieldwork, I was asked to "locate" myself vis-à-vis Israel. A year into my research, I was invited to give a presentation at a Reform Temple breakfast meeting. This event was to lead to new contacts in the community where I had chosen to do

some of my research, as well as to a number of invitations to speak for other community organisations, including a U.S. Reform Temple, and radio and television programs. It was pretty clear to me that I had been invited to present at least one version of an "alternative" narrative of Israel. Everyone asked that I reflect on what it means to be "both Jewish and Palestinian." What follows is one version of this presentation:

"Jewish and Palestinian: The Challenge of In-Betweeness"

I believe that part of the reason I have been asked to speak to you today, is that I have lived in that "in-between-ness" that most people on either side of the Palestinian/Israeli divide cannot claim. My mother is an Ashkenazi Jew whose parents survived the horrors of fascism and the holocaust by leaving Germany for Israel in the early 1930's. My father is a Christian Palestinian whose family was forced off their land and moved into what was to become the state of Israel in 1948.

The one thing you learn, as an anthropologist is how it is that the narrative of one life is part of an interconnected set of narratives, it is embedded in the stories of those groups from which individuals derive their identity. I do not and cannot remember the Nazis or Germany in the 1930's or the Holocaust. I do not and cannot remember the displacement of my father's family either or the confiscation of other peoples' lands. I can only tell you those stories that are important to me and helped form my identity. My stories are their stories. They are based not in the historians' truths but in people's memories and experiences. The import of the stories is the memories they hold of betrayal and trust, of displacement and nation building, of love and sharing, and of one man's inhumanity towards another.

On Palestinian memories

Beisan, my father's village, is a very different kind of Palestinian village from the one's many have heard about or written about. It was not "abandoned"; it was occupied, in 1948. The Israeli army came to the village after a night of sonic booms to scare the villagers and announced that all Palestinian Arabs were to be evacuated and moved to the Galilee region (an area not yet declared to be part of the new Israeli State), or to Lebanon. My father remembers people – women, children, old and young men – streaming out of town along the road North with whatever belongings they could carry with them. My family, along with many other families, were all loaded into buses and dropped off at the edge of a small town and forced to walk the distance to what was then the new border of Palestine and the town of Nazareth. Border shifts and boundary shifts. They walked in, literally empty-handed – no clothes, no food, and none of their belongings. My father was just 15 years old.

For weeks on end my father remembers all the men sitting in cafes drinking coffee, watching war planes overhead, discussing their return home to family, friends and work. But all the talking and hoping never brought their moment of return. Dad believes most everyone was in shock, never coming to terms or even understanding what had really happened. Some years down the road, my grandfather who had worked for the British government as a land surveyor and one of the first Palestinians ever hired by the Israeli state, went to his "compatriots" (British and Israeli) to ask for an explanation: why was the family moved from Beisan? There had been no resistance,

there were no arms in the whole of the village, so why did they have to move everyone out? He did not get an answer. Beisan was simply occupied and then emptied of its Arab population -- it was "ethnically cleansed" in today's terms.

I returned to Beisan only a few years ago. The pass laws had been removed for Israeli Arabs (not for Gaza or West Bank Palestinians of course) and so I asked my uncle to take me. It was eerie walking around the ruins of what was once the house that my father lived in. His school still stands but is surrounded by a fence. The government building that my grandfather worked in also stands, empty. The Palestinian part of the town that my father lived in is uninhabited — no new buildings, no new schools, nothing, a ghost town. A kibbutz was built alongside the old town — but why were the Palestinians moved? Why were their lives ruined? Why the trauma? Why?

On Jewish Memories

My grandparents were communists. The stories they told me of the rise of the Nazis were not the same stories that I hear told by survivors here; my grandparents always insisted that the Nazis arose at a time of economic despair and not necessarily of Jewish hatred. They wished they could return to Europe to live but only did so as tourists later in their lives. While their story is no less true than the stories told by survivors that I have heard speak in Canada, many of whom emphasise the anti-Semitic nature of the Holocaust, rather than the political and economic strategy of a political power gone mad, my grandparents' taught me that the lessons of the Holocaust was to learn to stand against fascism and political inequality, and not necessarily to be wary of anti-Semitism.

And while it is their teachings as well as my parents' teachings that brought me to activists' circles time and again, against poverty, racism, sexism, and inequality in my community in Canada as well as in the Middle East, I must admit that my grandparents' emphasis did not prepare me for an encounter I had when working for peace in the Middle East. I was eating breakfast with a group of Palestinian refugee women who had recently immigrated to Canada. Two in a group of ten women began to talk about their experiences in the West Bank and while their stories were heart wrenching, they repeatedly used the most hateful of stereotypes of Jews and repeated many a death wish to Jewish families. My emotions barely concealed, I drank my coffee and left soon after breakfast was finished, never having said a word to them.

I couldn't believe that after all the years of standing up for the rights of Palestinians, my people, I had had to endure such hateful and spiteful language. And though I wished more than anything I had at least acknowledged my Jewish heritage, more than anything else I felt betrayed by other Palestinian, Canadian, and Arab women who never said a word on my behalf, never once stood up and said they abhorred the racist language these women were using to dehumanise the Jews, also my people. And while I knew that I should have acknowledged my own identity, I also knew that other issues would have been more difficult to deal with. What could I have said? That not all Jews support Israeli aggression? That not all Israelis support Israeli government policies? That my grandparents suffered a similar fate, having been moved out of their beloved Germany, away from family and friends, and their culture? That though my father's history paralleled their own, he married a Jew because he loved her and in spite of the politics that was meant to keep them apart? But was it fair to tell them all this when they had just suffered the fate that Palestinians continue to suffer -- not just in 1948 but up until this day — displacement, confiscation of lands, occupation, incarceration, a silencing of their needs, and continued emigration to new lands — some welcoming them (Canada), others not (Egypt, Jordan, etc.). This personal and collective loss of power is difficult to respond to from any point of view.

On the Possibilities for Dialogue

I would like to move away from these experiences and say only that the greatest advantage I feel I have had is the advantage of dialogue. Many claim that dialogue has become a cliché, but I believe it is still one of the most profound acts and political devices for you can persuade and be persuaded in many ways – not only by words but also by feelings, gestures, and intuition. The exchange is one that can reveal strengths while nonetheless exposing one's vulnerabilities. It can be a frightening, emotionally draining and even physically threatening experience. It can also be exhilarating. I have spoken to and been privy to the thoughts of all parties to this crisis. And many people have taken me in, so to speak – to tell me their deepest fears, their many regrets, and their hopes for a lasting peace. The one thing that strikes me about all of the people I have met along the way is the depth of their wishes for normalcy and this means, more often than not, to be able to plan a future without the fear of war. Many have commented on the twisted priority that land is more important than human life.

But I have to admit that I too am vulnerable. There are times when I feel I can't fully answer questions people pose, especially those that come from a place of hatred rather than understanding. There are times when I wish I could give people the reassurances they seek – that the one side is better than they think, that they are more humane than they seem. But neither side comes to me as any more secure than the other does. And that to me is a strange thing, for one side really is more secure than another on the face of it: it does have an army, a state, world wide standing, a vote in the U.N., – what seems like a future as a state. While the other side sees itself locked in a struggle for recognition of its own state-rights, its own future. And, while one side has been given some compensation (though there could never be enough) for those who suffered the horror in Europe, the other side still seeks at least a similar sort of arrangement. I want to end by saying that while there are great lessons to learn when one is so close to one conflict, there is also the emptiness that one feels that such traumas are being repeated around the world. When Timothy Garton Ash writes in the latest New York Review of Books that "Some Bosnians say despairingly that they are fated to become Europe's Palestinians [while] Others are determined, however wild or unlikely it may sound, that they should become Europe's Israelis" (p. 30), I feel I can claim there is something both truly tragic and at the same time inspiring about my homelands and my people's histories. My only hope is that true dialogue can prove to others that there are possibilities outside the war system that will promote their ends.

In many ways, I felt I had opened up to community members in these presentations. I was hoping that they would sense my own vulnerabilities as a person caught between two communities each of which has members who define their own positions and op/positions one to the other only in the narrowest of terms. And while I was not there to represent "both" communities, I wanted to set out just how each community had some responsibility for coming to understand the other's experience of Israel. Despite the fact that I set out to define myself as BOTH Jewish and Palestinian, I was continually asked to locate myself on one side or the other one side of this divide. In some cases, these experiences only proved to me the depth of

commitment to and the strength of the narratives of Israel as the site of a nation exclusively for the Jews, as well as showing me that the silencing of Palestinian traditions and histories was profoundly greater than I had expected. In other cases, our discussions led to some very interesting new political moments of realisation and the very "dialogue" that I desired.

Gayatri Spivak speaks of the "subject position" in what I think is an appropriate and useful way. She writes:

> Quite often when we say "subject position" we reduce it to a kind of confessional attitudinizing. We say, "I'm white, I'm black, I'm a mulatto, I am male, I'm bourgeois." A subject-position is not, in fact, a confessional self-description either in praise or in dispraise... This is because the position of the subject can be assigned ... and "assigned" means, I think, that it can and must become a sign; not for the person who speaks, but for the person who listens, not for the person who writes, who can say what she likes about who she is, but for the person who reads. When, in fact, the responsible reader reads the sign that is the subject position of the speaker or the writer, it becomes the sign, let us say, of an ethno-politics, of a psycho-sexual reality, or an institutional position, and this is not under the control of the person who speaks. She cannot diagnose herself; we are given over to our readers (Spivak 1989:208).

Throughout my fieldwork, I was to discover just to what degree my "assignments" were defined by national, cultural and, most importantly, political terms set within Middle East politics. I have been and continue to be introduced to Jewish community members as follows: "Jasmin is a Palestinian with a Jewish mother"; or "Jasmin is an Arab but she's more Jewish than some Rabbis." I cannot recall ever having been introduced to anyone in the community simply by my first or by my first and last names. At first, I wondered why such introductions would be so important to people and I feared that they were signaling my "difference" to others who might not "see" it. But then I had to ask myself, what could the motivation be for such a practice? What "difference" does my "difference" make? Were people simply introducing me in order to count me in (as a Jew) or were they raising flags so that others would not somehow be surprised to find out independently who I *really* was (also a Palestinian)? Was I being included or excluded by these introductions? After several conversations I began to take notice of just when my "Jewishness" was taken for granted, when it was questioned, and when I became a Palestinian. I think it rare for people to have seen me in terms of both/and, but that is true of the way that many people define each other more generally – that is, in terms of each other's national identity.

But the strangeness of my combination catches me within politicised communities where to be a Jew or a Palestinian-Arab is simultaneously recognised as signalling nationality, personality, and politics. If my mother had simply married a non-Jew that would be one thing. To have married a Palestinian within a community that for some time now defined Palestinians and Arabs as the enemy is quite another matter. For this reason, I believe that people I met could not help but set me into the history and histories of identities and the politics of Israel and Palestine.

Once during my fieldwork at a lunch meeting, Bernadette, a woman I had come to know quite well over the research period, told me that her initial response to me was to be "intrigued," especially about my "background," as she called it. We had been discussing intermarriage and the relationships that people develop across cultures and nationalities, and she told me she was concerned about the high rates of "intermarriage" within the Jewish community. When she asked me how I felt about this issue, I said that I opposed identity politics or community practices that denied people the choice to live and share their lives with whomever they wished. I added that such politics were particularly strange for me anyhow as a person who could never claim any one "identity" defined by nationality. I think because she sought to reassure me by assigning me one identity, Bernadette then confided that over the time with me, she had decided that I really wasn't "one of them," meaning of course a Palestinian, an Arab. She said this to me openly and without any hesitation. I remember being quite startled by her response, because only two months earlier on an art gallery tour together; we had discussed Israeli settlements around Jerusalem. I had said that Jerusalem needed to be a shared "unified" city, and Bernadette had said to me: "Jasmin, you will never know what it means to be a Jew."

On other occasions, I was taken to task for suggesting that my multi-national (Jewish, Palestinian, Canadian) identity be taken seriously since I cannot and would not want to separate myself into one of these "identities". When I attended Hebrew lessons at the Zionist Council, my tutor, a Canadian Jew in his 70s who had emigrated from Russia, continually asked me:

> Why do you say you're Palestinian *and* Jewish? As far as I'm concerned, you're a Jew. You should know, you probably already know, that according to our laws, you are a Jew so you don't need to worry.

He expressed some degree of frustration that I would "deny" myself a "proper" identity and offered advice as to how I could legitimately "hide" that "other" identity if I ever felt the "needed" to do so.

Rather than throwing open for discussion the issue of what it might mean to be a Jew who takes certain positions on the Israel-Palestine conflict, such as the position that recognises both nations' right to continue to exist not as two separate entities but on the same land, my father's nationality seemed to over-determine all other aspects of my experience and practice. My interlocutors would dismiss the political ideas I expressed by claiming that the Palestinian in me overshadows the Jew. This attitude precluded any acknowledgement that my position is rooted within a radical or "progressive" Jewish-Israeli-left and liberal Palestinian tradition (e.g., Pappe 1992; Silberstein 1999; Said 1998). In this way, my position was often discredited as "pro-Palestinian" and even anti-Semitic.

When I was invited to speak in the community on the Israel-Palestine conflict, it was suggested to me that my access to the Jewish community was permitted only insofar as my specifically Palestinian self could be "controlled" by the fact that I was also a Jew. During a Jewish night school class presentation about "being Jewish and Palestinian" I asked if anyone in the class had ever met an Arab or a Palestinian in their travels to Israel or in their home community and when all but one young woman said "No", one young man turned to me and said, "You don't think you'd be invited here to speak to us if you weren't at least half Jewish, do you?" He was right, of course. Of all of the invitations that came to me from Jewish organisations, few of them had ever invited a Palestinian to speak about the Israel-Palestine conflict.

These examples open up a discussion on identity that focuses on the practices of identification. The question is not so much "Who are you?" as "What do you do that allows me to decide who you are?" And "What do you do that makes you think you're a Jew?" I think these questions are crucial for understanding why it was that I was initially confused by the strategies that my interlocutors followed for identifying me, and how they could be confused by my identifications. I found that when my attachment to Israel was not like that of other Jews in

diaspora, I simply became a Palestinian. This signalled to me that there is an expectation that as a Jew one knows how to identify with Israel, and one will do so correctly. That is, my positions on Jerusalem, on the exclusivity of the Jewish state, and on the problem of intermarriage all signalled to those I spoke with that I was not a Jew in the same way that they were Jewish. My mother's Jewishness conferred upon me the right to call myself a Jew, but that was not sufficient for identifying as a Jew.

Thus, community members often identified me in terms of my "other" or hybrid self on the basis of their political understandings that fit the logic of nationalist systems of identity. Theirs was not a celebration of "creolised" or "hybridised" beings (and I'm sure this perspective is not particular to this community). The way that I was assigned a singular identity was more often than not based on understandings of what it meant to be a Jew in diaspora. If I did not respond in a way that was comprehensible on those terms, I "became" a Palestinian.

What I discovered then was the *strength* of a representational order in which the concept of national identity is central to members of what the postmodern theorists would define as a "deterritorialised" community. As much as I wanted to insist on the hybridity and multiplicity of the "location" of Jews in diaspora, they insisted on an authenticity in relation to Israel. And when I positioned my self as multiply located, they resisted the possibility of such a position by locating me in different settings, as a member of one group or the other.

As I thought these issues through, I wondered if perhaps I had gone about this research in the wrong way. What if in my meditations on the postmodern ways in which identities are constructed, I as a fieldworker, had left behind how the experiences of identities are continually being reconstructed not as plural identities but in terms of authenticity, as a singular identity? For throughout my research, notions of hybridity failed to open spaces for sustained interpretive discussions or reinterpretations of nationalities – despite the claims of Mouffe (1994) and many postmodern anthropologists (Appadurai 1990; Clifford 1997; Lavie and Swedenburg 1996). Here I would like to return to Mouffe's quotation cited earlier and set it within the context of national

identifications and identities:

> ... resisting the ever-present temptation to construct identity in terms of exclusion, ... we can "convert the antagonism of identity into the agonism of difference", as William Connolly puts it, and thus stop the potential for violence that exists in every construction of an "us" and "them." Only if people's allegiances are multiplied and their loyalties pluralized will it be possible to create truly "agonistic pluralism". Because where identities are multiplied, passions are divided (Mouffe 1994:111).

Perhaps we cannot "escape" the antagonisms of national identity at all, and the agonisms are about how deterritorialised identities may be in the process of reconfiguring, reterritorialising or re-locating national identities precisely in order to escape the antagonism of dis-location – of being "no-where" – in a world where nation-states are the primary arenas for representation.

Perhaps the diaspora nationalism of the Jews points the way to an understanding of how even deterritorialised identities are locatable or situated identities. While escaping the "antagonisms" of cultural identity founded on the unity of territory and nationality, peoples "in diaspora" become "re-located" rather than "dis-located" in ways demonstrated by Jews in diaspora: they maintain their sense of "location" in community and in relation to Israel. Jews in diaspora – those maintaining a relationship to Israel – thus locate themselves as members of a nation that has a history, memory and most recently, a territory, Israel. But these Jews do not territorialise that identity.

Perhaps Mouffe's comment "where identities are multiplied, passions are divided" (Mouffe 1994:11), should be revised to state "commitments must be multiplied, in order that passions can be allied." For as much as I could "see" hybridity among the Jews in diaspora, I now have to ask: what if those with whom we meet and engage refuse to acknowledge the pluralities of their own "locations"? What if people *do not* self-identify as plural identities but are rather guided by the terms set by notions of authenticity and identity? And what if this too provides openings?

Locating an/Other's "Israel"

> As practitioners with 'history, biography, psychology,' we occupy structurally
> 'different' locations. Unless we are to become hopelessly disembodied, distanced and
> destabilized within our own identities ... our locations need to be accounted for, not
> willed away, disguised, denied or melted down into some big pot of sameness....
> To speak about and search for a "politics of location" is not to desire a final resting
> place, an essence that we can comfortably attach ourselves to, but a "position" that
> works against disembodiment, immobilization and silence (Feminist Art Historian, Joan
> Borsa 1990, Pp. 24 and 40)

Since I am also interested in highlighting the ways that politics and dialogue can occur

across nationally defined borders, I turn now to one of those moments when being "part"

Palestinian presented an opportunity to share "place".

I met Jeremy on the Israel Development Fund tour. He was on the tour as an IDF

representative. He has a Master's degree in Jewish Social Studies from a U.S. institution and has

been a Jewish educator and fundraiser since completing his degree.

Jeremy had travelled to Israel five times in his life. The first time was in 1984, when he

took a leave from his university degree program and worked on a kibbutz for six months. He

described his first trip as "unbelievable. I was real excited. Everything was in bloom and I really

felt like I was in Israel. It was a real exciting feeling.... [M]y ...fondest memory [was] ...the real

sense of community that exists [on a Kibbutz]...." Although Jeremy lived among Israeli Jews, he

was also housed with other non-Jewish visitors to the kibbutz. Still he felt there was a real source

of connection with what he was learning that was very different from the non-Jews' experience of

Israel. He felt that

> they saw it as another part of History but I felt a real personal part of that history... I
> think it was really learning about the land... To me the land incorporates the people,
> the history, the language, the land, the physical. I took a lot of classes in Jewish history
> and I think that by going there it sort of illuminated a lot of the things that I was
> studying in school. It made it a lot more tangible talking about biblical history and then
> also jumping into present day Jewish history, the establishment of the state of Israel.
> Everything became real. It just wasn't something that was taken out of a book. I didn't
> have the connection before through the books but that connection became even more
> real. ...As you're just walking around I just kept on thinking back to myself: Jews
> walked on this spot before I have. They fought for this land. ...My first trip to Masada
> ...was a very moving, very emotional experience, just thinking about the whole story
> that took place on top of the mountain, about Herod's palace, the Zealots that so as not
> to be taken captive by the Romans elected to kill themselves. To me it still represents ...

captivity they shouldn't fall into. I really felt for them a connection in that space of 2000 years where they lived for their ideals. They were born as Jews they'll die as a Jews. This will never happen again. [And] the Wall [represents] 2000 years of history... it represents a strong connection [for me].

When I asked Jeremy to describe Israel to me he said, in part:

Falafel. ...Guns. Tension. Turmoil. ...Responsibility. Beauty. Hope. Future. ...I think Israel is a country relative to the future, sort of placed on a pedestal. A country to respect, for the most part, to admire the way they've taken in people from around the world and I think ... To me it represents the essence of what it means to be Jewish and I hope that after me, these feelings will be carried on into the future. Politically people may disagree and that's OK but I still think that wherever you come from [it's ours].

Jeremy reflects on Israel in much the same way as did my other interlocutors. He is tied to Israel as a Jew; he felt it was the Jews' land, that it held meaning for all Jews in terms of history, tradition, ancestry. He had committed to working in the Jewish community and in particular with those committed to strengthening Israel.

While on the tour we had a number of conversations. On one occasion, on our way to an Israeli Air force base, I asked him why he thought that Jews who normally would be anti-military would so admire the Israeli army. He said to me: "Think about it. The key word in Israel Defence Force is 'defence'. This is not like any other army in the world. It is defensive."

After the Friday evening "services" at the Wall, Jeremy came to me and asked if I would walk through the "Arab" Quarter of the Old City on our way back to the to the Hotel for Shabbas dinner. At first I thought he was joking and laughed it off but he became very serious and said he really wanted to go through the area with me. He had something he wanted to ask me. So as night fell, we began walking from the Plaza in front of the Wall towards the (Christian) "Arab" Quarter. As we walked, we talked about the day's events, including the visit to Yad Vashem and the presentation by Benjamin Netanyahu. Jeremy said that he always feels angry when at Yad Vashem and he feels that there one senses just how important Israel is for the Jews. When I asked him if he really felt like the Jews would always be threatened if they didn't have their own "territory" he replied in the affirmative. And when I asked then why he remained in North America he said it was because his spouse did not want their children to have to serve in the Israeli army. Again, pragmatism outweighed any sense of danger in diaspora. For Jeremy,

Israel is a safe place to take refuge, should anything go wrong for the Jews living outside of Israel. His spouse feels differently. To her, Israel represents danger, particularly because it would mean her children would be conscripted into the Israeli army.

As we walked through the dark alleys and closed shops, passing Palestinian teenagers and elderly men as well as Israeli soldiers, we continued to talk. And then, all at once, Jeremy stopped, turned to me and said: "Okay, so how do you feel now?" and I was baffled. "What do you mean?" I asked him, and he said: "When I'm in the Jewish Quarter I feel like I belong here, like it is home. I just want to know how *you* feel here." Meaning, of course, can a Palestinian feel at home in a place like Jerusalem in the same way that a Jew can feel at home in a place like Jerusalem? I replied that while it felt "familiar" I couldn't help but "feel the oppression of the place." That as Israeli soldiers walked by I couldn't help but ask myself, "What are they doing here?" And Jeremy was astonished. He said: "You don't think we have to give up Jerusalem do you? This will never be a part of Palestine!" And I shot back "For as long as there are soldiers here it is nobody's place and for as long as it is occupied and people have to live under military rule, there will never be peace." There was silence as we walked through the Old City and until we passed through the Jaffa Gate. Jeremy then stopped and once said again expressed his anger toward the Germans for what they had done to the Jews. He set the Holocaust in a long historical line of atrocities committed against the Jews, a hated people throughout history. We talked then about the heinousness of the Nazi crimes. I asked Jeremy if he thought the root of hatred toward the Jews was a natural occurrence or if it was learned, if the Germans had to learn to be Nazis? He replied that he thought that they must have had to learn to be Nazis, and that all people had to learn to hate; it wasn't natural. It was at that moment that I came up with an idea. I asked Jeremy if he had ever met an Arab or a Palestinian family before and when he replied in the negative, I was not surprised. I asked him if he would accept the "challenge" of putting a face to the "enemy" so to speak, and come to visit my family. He hesitated but then accepted.

As we neared the hotel, Jeremy became increasingly sure that such a visit was exactly what he wanted to do and encouraged me to telephone my uncle immediately to arrange for a trip the next day since we had no activities scheduled on our tour. At that point, I wondered if in

fact I had made a mistake. I would be putting my family members in a position I had been put in over the years, of having to share their painful experience of Israel as Israeli Arabs, as Palestinians. Nonetheless, I telephoned my uncle, told him that Jeremy was a fundraiser for a major Jewish organisation and asked if my uncle would meet with him. My uncle said he was delighted, if only because it would give him another opportunity to spend time with me (!), and we agreed to meet the next evening outside the hotel in Jerusalem.

On the Saturday, my uncle, a building contractor in his late 50's and my cousin, a college student in her early 20's, came to pick us up. After a few brief introductions and my uncle's "sizing up" Jeremy (rubbing Jeremy's chin, in fact, and asking why he had not shaved for the occasion – the formality of the Palestinian up against the informality of the North American!) we climbed into my uncle's gray and rusting Citroen. We puttered along in the pouring rain, with windows rolled up and gas fumes filling the interior. My uncle said he thought it would be interesting to have Jeremy see the new state of Palestine. Jeremy later confided that this had made him more nervous than anything but when I asked him if that was o-kay, he said bravely "Sure". The discussions began almost immediately. My uncle said that he and Jeremy would get along fine as long as Jeremy treated him with the respect he would show others:

> As long as you agree we are both human, we will get along. I don't care who you are as long as you come to me as a human being first, then we will be able to judge, to talk, to agree and to disagree. But only as human beings first.

We drove through Jerusalem and passed the Israeli military checkpoint and then the Palestinian Authority checkpoint before coming into Ramallah. We literally hit Ramallah with a bang as we sunk in and out of large potholes. Jeremy commented that these roads were very unlike any of the roads we had travelled on the tour and my uncle turned to him and smiled knowingly. My uncle drove around the central square where people avoiding the pouring rain ducked in and out cafes and shops. Jeremy took in the sights, commenting on the new buildings being built alongside the old and dilapidated ones. When we passed a group of Palestinian police standing in a circle at a corner, Jeremy asked if they were the "security" police and my uncle said: "They're just police." My uncle pointed to areas where he and my aunt had lived for a time in the 1970's

and then he hopped out of the car to see if we would be welcome to visit at a family friend's house. We were, of course, and we climbed up a steep set of stairs and into an old stone house.

We were greeted at the door by a woman in her 90's and her daughter-in-law. She was expecting her son to join us at any time. We sat on two old sofas and were offered cold drinks and cookies. As we sat and drank, Jeremy looked around, noted the television in the room set on CNN and seemed to relax. Soon the discussion began. The elderly woman was introduced to Jeremy and was told that he was a member of a Jewish organisation from North America. She said that her son was also an "American citizen" but that while working in the West Bank, he had to carry his Palestinian I.D. cards and wasn't allowed to travel with his U.S. Agency car. Jeremy expressed his view that such oppression was wrong but then immediately launched into a discussion of how wrong it had been that people could not accept the Jewish state in 1947, and how things might have been different if the state had been accepted. My uncle immediately responded: "Why did you come here and take my land? What did I do to you? Why couldn't you come here and live with us instead of taking the land from us and asking us to live with you?" The elderly woman cut in and said that the situation in the area was much more complicated than whether or not the Palestinians would have agreed to any settlement in 1948. She pointed to the furniture we were sitting on and said that it was furniture that she had lost in her house in Ramle (now an Israeli city) in 1948 and that she could only reclaim it after Israel occupied "the rest of Palestine" in 1967. She said nothing much had changed from 1947 to this day, as she continued to live under occupation.

The conversation then took on a life of its own with comments and counter comments flying. Jeremy's interjections ranged from "How could your people murder innocent people in a market or on a bus?" and "Why didn't you stand up for those innocents?" My uncle, the women and the young son, who now joined us, answered with "Wait a minute, this is not all Palestinians that are doing this," and "Why do you think that Arabs are less human than you? When do you stand up for us?" At every point when there seemed some sense of "location" or political resolution on the table, Jeremy would say: "This is such an emotional issue and there is no truth, only perspective." My uncle at one point said: "This is politics, not psychology." When my uncle

and the son argued that without land, compensation and return, there would never be peace, Jeremy seemed almost cowed into an agreement, but then quickly said he didn't think return was possible and left the discussion at that.

After about one hour of watching both Jeremy come close to tears as he argued from his position and my uncle and family friends shake their heads in disbelief, I felt completely drained by the experience. And hungry! We thanked our hosts and my uncle then invited us to a steak dinner at a nice restaurant in Ramallah. We were seated in the large restaurant and as we continued to discuss the situation of Palestinians in the West Bank, the Oslo Accords, the role of American Jews in Israeli politics, a lightness entered the conversation and my uncle and Jeremy began to joke around. Everyone seemed somehow more relaxed and ready to enter into serious discussion once more. After a fulfilling meal, the best either Jeremy or I had eaten in all the time we spent in Israel on tour, we travelled back to Jerusalem. On the way in, there were no Israeli soldiers waiting for us at the checkpoints. I asked Jeremy what he thought of the fact that, for all the talk of terrorism and the "infiltration of terrorists from the West Bank" and all the fear that was instilled in the Israeli population, we had just passed through what is for all intents and purposes an "open border" between Ramallah and Jerusalem. Jeremy simply replied that it scared him and that he could not understand how it was possible.

From that moment to this day, Jeremy and I have chatted on the phone about Israel, Jewish politics, American politics, personal relationships, and just about everything. And we have had two opportunities to meet as well. Jeremy has told me that he really appreciated the opportunity to speak to my family and family friends, and though it was hard for him to listen to what they had to say, he felt that perhaps it had been hard for them to listen to his perspectives as well. I was pleased that he had made the effort to meet with them and to try to take the issues on with people who experienced the ramifications of a politics that only legitimated the Jews' location in Israel.

When I asked Jeremy in a post-tour interview what he most remembered about our tour, he recounted our trip together to the West Bank as follows:

> [I met this woman]. She still has a lot of family on both sides, mother's side and father's side and when we were in Israel I was invited to join her together with all the different relatives and I believe it was the highlight out of all the trips I've ever been in Israel. Palestinian Arabs who knew that I was Jewish, who knew my passion for the land and the people, but again it was a very, very meaningful, because I could see that by being invited into their home, not that anybody noticed, they were people just like myself and my family who wanted to [live normally]. And just by being in their homes.... It was so crazy, why can't two people co-exist with one another? We're all different. They can go their way we can go our way but still get up in the morning without fearing for their lives, for no reason whatsoever and it was, again it was a very emotional experience for me, to think that. I think there is hope for peace between the Arabs and Jews. We have to actively change their attitude towards each other and I think it won't happen overnight, but it has to happen though.

It was by virtue of "locating" Israel in the lives of Palestinians that Jeremy could see that something other than a one nation-one land model might be possible. He had reconfigured his earlier definitions from separation to sharing; and he had humanised the Palestinians. This step is a small one of course. And there are many who have taken much larger steps. But here was a man who is committed not only to the Zionist ideal – he was the only person I met over the course of the research period who wanted to make *aliyah* but could not for personal reasons – who was reconsidering a politics of dispossession and speaking about the possibilities that the Jews and Palestinians could co-exist with one another. Jeremy is not alone in his experience of one Israel and yet he, like Lynn and Marlene (profiled above) owing to their commitments to Israel, set out to discover all they could about the Israel-Palestine conflict. Lynn believes that more contact with Palestinians could lead to greater understanding between Jews and Palestinians, particularly the new generation of youth in diaspora. Marlene promotes and supports such contact both in Israel as well as in North America in the programming she funds. They have each in their own way rethought their relationship to the state without any diminished commitment to Jews or Jewishness.

I would add that the implications of such thinking about identity and ties to home and homeland are profound when turning to examine the relationships of migrant workers and refugees to their homelands. This topic is beyond the scope of this dissertation but it is an area to

which I hope to turn in future research.

Imagining "Place"

I began and ended this dissertation with reflections that express utopian desires: Hannah Arendt's call on each of us to be able to "be" and experience in an/other's place in order to judge appropriately, and Curtis White's desire for a "real nowhere," a play on imaginary realities and illusory places and the place of utopia's in our imaginings. Both quotes speak to my own desire and ambivalence about the nature of positing utopian possibilities for practical identities and geographies. I have claimed that on the one hand locations and nations in the world are imagined and that, at the same time, such imaginings have social, that is "real" consequences for people's lives. But I hope I have also shown that these imaginings are defined by their fluidity, their constructed forms. Everyday actions and imaginings are at once a means of making places and local identities. By engaging with others, we transform the world, making it into a world of places. To say "nation" is not to limit it to location. Nations are named, they are experienced, and they are narrated or given meaning.

Caught as I am between/among the named, imagined places and "nations" of Israel, Palestine and Canada, I imagine a time when others might feel "caught" too. In such a time, we may be able to shift our analytical frameworks to explore and enrich our practices as the hybrids that we all are.

We need a utopian sense of collective place.

APPENDIX A

Guiding Questions Used For Interviews

1) Was this your first trip to Israel? If yes, why did you choose to travel now? If no, how may times have you travelled to Israel in the past? What were your reasons for coming to Israel in the past? What was your reason this time?

OR

When was your first trip to Israel? Why did you choose to travel then? How many times have you travelled to Israel? What were your reasons for travelling back to Israel?

2) Can you say something about your relationship to Israel? How has it evolved over the years?

3) Describe Israel to me.

4) When you speak to your friends and family about Israel, what do you emphasise?

5) Was there any event/personality/place visited on a tour to Israel that prompted you to think differently about Israel? About Jews in the world? About Jewish identity? About North American Jewry? About Palestinians? About Arabs?

6) In your opinion, how important is Israel to North American Jews? In what way is it an important place? In what way is it irrelevant, if any?

7) Similarly, in your opinion, how important are North American Jews to Israel? To Israeli Jews? In what ways are they irrelevant, if at all?

8) Do you believe that tours to Israel are an important means of linking North American Jews to the state of Israel? To Israelis? To other Jews? If yes, how so? If not, why not?

9) How do you feel about the Oslo Peace Accords signed between Israel and the Palestinians? Do you think this agreement has transformed North American Jewish perspectives on the Israel-Palestine conflict? If so, how? If not, why not?

10) Do you think you will return to Israel? Why or why not?

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