

arly a unity in the world has been the defense of Jewish rights. The great Jewish leaders of the 19th century concentrated their energies in the relentless, unceasing struggle for Jewish equality. From Mendelssohn through David Friedlander through Abiel Reiser—go down the list—Herzl and Pinsker for that matter, the battle is the battle for the establishment of Jewish equality and political rights.

The American Jewish community at this moment organized either in defense of its own rights or in the defense of Israel. That is the lowest common denominator, the active principle, the actual, pragmatic, existing principle of Jewish unity. One of the explanations is Auschwitz; another is the tremendous emotional attachment to Israel. One of the explanations that great outpouring of emotion in 1967 is that whatever Jews the world over may be, they do have a sense that they are politically—not any of the surface political senses of dual allegiance, etc.—interwoven and involved in each other's destiny. But this politics has not necessarily translated itself into either theory or any really serious action in the field of culture. True, Israel itself represents in its own culture an attempt to create a national culture on the basis of the tradition, in line with it and yet different from it. And yet, it is an open secret that that attempt is in the process and has far from succeeded, and that its most serious problems, the problems of the *Kulturkampf*, are still in the future. In the United States and in the rest of the Diaspora, nothing is clearer than that Jews are politically Jewish and culturally quite seriously assimilated, and that there is no definition of a Jewish cultural modernity to tide us over or to root us in this modern era.

I do not think that we are going to have too much trouble arguing with each other about the specificity of the revolutionary era of Jewish politics. I think that there is very nearly consensus on the notion that Jews are not indissolubly part of the forces of this or the forces of that. I know very few people now who believe that any revolution will automatically solve the political problems of Jewish existence. Beyond

that, in this era, the end of the era of Emancipation, we are moving towards something new. What a modern Jewish culture that is at once modern and Jewish can be—that is an open question.

Up to now I think that what I have said will be either accepted or rejected among the Dialoguers not on American Jewish or Israeli Jewish bases; here we are going to disagree on the basis of our various Jewish and historical convictions. But there is one specifically American Jewish point that I would like to make, and that is, I fully believe that Jewish politics in the Diaspora is not enough. By Jewish politics in the Diaspora I mean also the United Jewish Appeal, and Bonds, and all the rest of it. That, too, is part of the act of identification with the specificity of Jewish need, of the need of the Jewish communities. If Israel can sweep under the rug for another half generation, perhaps even more, its problems of cultural definition and hope that life will solve its problems, remember that for Israel, land and language, people, state, the very things that Zionists set out to achieve, are the guarantees of survival and continuity until this country finds its Jewish spiritual and cultural destiny.

In the United States Jewish politics has become Jewish culture, has be-

come the content of American Jewish life to a very great degree and, in some of my blacker moments, I imagine "American Jewish" as a kind of sitting in the stadium, watching Israel, cheering it, being pleased with it, etc. I would like to suggest to the Americans in this discussion the problem of Jewish cultural definition in the post-Emancipation, post-Revolutionary era—the problem of what is the thing to which we are loyal. What is this tradition which unites us? What is that which American Jews would do the day after Mr. Sadat would send his foreign minister to meet Mr. Eban and Mrs. Meir? What would happen after Mr. Brezhnev let all the Jews out of Russia? What would the content of American Jewish life then be? These are very pointed and very serious questions.

I would like to conclude by saying that I do not think, oddly enough, that what we normally say is true. We normally say that the American Jewish community and the Israeli Jewish community have a history, a tradition, a culture in common—and their political situations are radically different. I would propose that American Jews and Israel have one Jewish politics, the task of keeping the Jews alive and free, wherever they are in the world, and that the problems of cultural apartness and definition are becoming ever more pressing.

## Our Place in the Human Scheme

### A Presentation | ABBA EBAN

I have pondered on the specific theme that has been chosen for your Dialogue. It is the problem of the relationship between the Jewish people and Israel to the new revolutionary movements. The fact is that the question is pervaded by an atmosphere of disquiet. We feel that the new revolutionaries do not like us, and we are traditionally and historically most anxious to please.

Let my first reflection be about the obsession of the Jewish people

and of the State of Israel with the question of their image. It is a specific product of Jewish history. We are constantly looking at ourselves in every mirror. The question "what does the world think of us?" breaks in upon our consciousness morning, noon and night.

The fact is that whatever other people thought of us could determine not merely our sense of self-esteem but our very prospect of survival. What other people thought of Jews

would determine whether they would remain alive with any kind of dignity or whether they would be consigned to the most odious of violent brutalities. Hence, this rather restless, neurotic insistence on being admired does deserve the respect of historic justification. Nevertheless, it has disconcerting effects. Here Israel is the inheritor of the predicaments of Diaspora Jewry.

Other sovereign nations do not continually ask themselves what others think of them. The main objective and theme of foreign policy is not to be universally loved. The questions asked by a state in its international and external relations are these: Do our international relations suffice to ensure us the means of our physical security? Do our international relations suffice to ensure us that measure of economic sustenance and interchange without which a viable society cannot be maintained? Do our international relations suffice to preserve and develop us as a trading unit able to nourish its existence by a balanced and expanding commerce?

But the State of Israel must ask, additionally: Are our international relations sufficient to save us from the depressive effects of isolation? Because precisely in the light of Jewish traumatic experience, if Israel were really a kind of leper colony, boycotted, shunned, banished, denied the equality of status in the international enterprise, then the resulting mental and psychological effects would be severe.

When I ask these questions about policy, I reach an affirmative answer: Yes, our foreign relations are adequate to ensure our security. Do not the past five years prove it? Yes, our external relations are sufficient to ensure that Israel, during its period of inevitable economic imbalance, can receive from outside, in various forms, the additional nourishment that its society and economy need. Yes, Israel is integrated into the rhythm of international commerce, reflected in the most impressive of statistics, its commercial relations with 103 countries. Its gross national product has increased in the past five years from IL 11 billion to IL 23 billion; its export earnings have gone

up in that period from \$700 million to \$1,300 million; the movement of pilgrimage and tourism has gone up since 1967 from 270,000 to 690,000; its average per capita income is now overtaking that of many Western European countries, which is, however, offset by the monumental dimension of our per capita debt.

The fact is that Israel as an economic and commercial unit has developed a vitality out of all proportion to its size. Those who look at the map and speak of 100 million being a bigger market than 3 million are now talking statistical nonsense. This month Israel's gross national product—this country of three million—overtook that of Egypt with its 40 million people. Israel's imports from the European community countries are greater than what the European countries export to all the Arab countries put together. And this is not the only aspect of Israel life in which the physical dimension is irrelevant to a true understanding of its inherent nature.

**Y**ou will notice that I have not included within the fundamental aims of a foreign policy that we should be universally loved. First of all, nobody has achieved this. Our adversaries have achieved it, perhaps, less than anybody. Normally, a certain amount of sympathy goes out to the victims of history but not to those who surmount the vicissitudes of history in triumph. The victor is usually not popular. The extraordinary achievement of the Arabs in 1967 is that they managed at the same time to be the underdog and unpopular in the eyes of many.

It is the total weight of values and interests which, in the last resort, determines a nation's place in the world. To those who have come from the United States, may I offer this reflection from the news of the week. It has so often been said, for example, that the United States had no possibility, so long as it maintained its present support of Israel, to achieve its two major objectives in the Middle East, namely, the withdrawal of Soviet power leading to a favorable transformation of the American strategic balance, and the expansion or recuperation of American interests

in the Middle East.

Well, here we find that this prophecy is completely refuted. It has nothing to do with being liked. It has everything to do with the way of interests. The United States, through the tenacity that it has developed—if I might say so behind the Israeli wall of tenacity—has recently, without any change of its attitude to Israel, celebrated the exit of Soviet strategic power from Egypt and without any way affecting its relations with Israel it finds itself pursued by a long line of Arab states—Sudan and Yemen and Algeria and Iraq—seeking the resumption of relations with it. In other words, problems of popularity and of sympathy are not, in the long run, decisive.

With Israel there must also be a due sense of balance. The key to our history—and here I speak of Jewish history in its long and mysterious continuity—is the word "persistence." Jewish history is the story of a people's unprecedented resolve to persist in conditions completely uncongenial to its persistence. It is the only case in which this miracle of persistence has evolved without a continuous territorial base, without the national and social cohesion that comes through the powers of central institutions. In other words, this instinct for persistence must have been immeasurably more potent than any similar instinct in history, for the fact is that other nations, subjected to the same destiny of exile and loss of territory and absence of autonomous compact territorial institutions, have never survived, in the deep sense of the term "national survival."

Let me then put this problem of what the Left and the revolutionary movements think of us in its right perspective. It would be good if they thought better of us. We never relax in the effort to improve and expand what is called our "image." I think that Thucydides would not have denied Israel the appraisal that he formulated about ancient Athens: "This people was born to have no rest itself and to give none to others."

One of the things on which we give no rest to others is this attempt to affirm the legitimacy and the justice of our historic efforts to maintain our survival.

My next point complements, inadvertently, something that Prof. Hertzberg has already said. There are illusions about the past relationship between the Jewish people and the revolutionary Left. For a century and a half, the liberal Left supported Jewish political and social rights. But this attitude was always ambivalent. One of the payments that the revolutionary Left asked of the Jews in return for individual rights was disappearance. What the revolutionary Left said to us was: "We will give you your individual freedom, but at the expense of your collective liquidation."

The assumption was that in a free national society there would be no room for the maintenance of Jewish particularism. Throughout the 19th century, the revolutionary Left literature is full of invidious remarks about the Jewish insistence on self-affirmation and survival.

It was assumed that the destiny and the duty of Judaism was to disappear in the universal Utopia. When Zionism came on the scene as the product not only of specific currents in Judaism but also of European nationalism, the phrase "nationalism" no longer had about it the fine glow that it possessed in the days of Garibaldi and Mazzini. There was now a great amount of talk concerning reactionary nationalism. Reactionary nationalism is the nationalism of others.

We should note, however, that the moderate Left, the Social Democratic Left, reconciled its support of Jewish individual rights with an imaginative assistance to the Zionist movement which it recognized as a movement of national liberation and self-expression.

Recently we have witnessed the rise of the New Left which identifies Israel with Establishment, with acquisition, with smug satisfaction, with, in fact, all the basic enemies against which its assault is waged. Let there be no mistake: the New Left is the author and the progenitor of the new anti-Semitism. One of the chief tasks of any dialogue with the Gentile world is to prove that the distinction between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism is not a distinction at all.

Anti-Zionism is merely the new

anti-Semitism. The old, classic anti-Semitism declared that equal rights belonged to all individuals within a society, except the Jews. The new anti-Semitism says that the right to establish and maintain an independent, national, sovereign state is the prerogative of all nations, so long as they happen not to be Jewish. And when this right is exercised not by the Maldives Islands, not by the state of Gabon, not by Barbados, not by 23 American republics and not by 50 African states, but by the oldest and most authentic of all nationhoods, then this is said to be exclusivism, particularism, and a flight of the Jewish people from its universal mission.

Therefore, neo-anti-Semitism is a legitimate label to put upon the denial by the New Left and others of Israel's right to its national identity. The common element between the two anti-Semitisms is discrimination.

A factor in the hostility of the revolutionary Left, perhaps becoming increasingly marginal in the general socialist world, is the fact of our victory. The tendency is to associate Palestinian terrorism with the concept of liberation. It is of course an antiliberation movement. It is a conscious attempt to destroy an enterprise of national liberation that has already been achieved. The ideology is sustained by false analysis and analogies. Of course it is true that the Mau Mau liberated Kenya from the British, and that the FLN liberated Algeria from France, but they didn't liberate France from France, and they didn't expel Britain from Britain. The Fatah and kindred movements seek to free Israel from Israel. They do not seek to expel a foreign or external colonial presence. Their efforts are dedicated to "politicide," that is, the assassination of a state.

The problem of our victory is also of psychological importance. The generous, liberal Gentile mind is well conditioned to the spectacle of Jewish fragility, vulnerability and defeat. It has not grown accustomed to the phenomenon of Jewish security and self-expression. In a sense we have done many people a vast injury by ceasing to be an object of their benevolent indulgence. We

have withdrawn ourselves from the scope of their compassion. There is therefore a certain logic in the slogan which was so current shortly after the 1967 war: David unfair to Goliath.

Let us not attempt the impossible. I suggest to you that to win the sympathy of the New Left is something that is in its totality not feasible. I don't say that the phenomenon of alienation cannot be restricted, but the alienation is inherent in the ideological world of those movements which are in conflict and collision with our own world of Jewish values.

If we are true to our set of values, we cannot win the approval of any ideology that is based on negativism, on nihilism, on anarchical revolt, on contempt for the human legacy. If these people are wrong about everything else, why should they be right about Israel?

I do not believe that any argument, however sophisticated, can probably change the convictions of Noam Chomsky or of I. F. Stone whose basic complex is one of guilt about Jewish survival. They feel themselves associated with our unpardonable audacity at not having been destroyed or eclipsed or, more accurately, at not having been merged into some homogenized universalist Utopia.

The fact is that Israel can only be approved within the framework of a positivist philosophy, and not of a nihilist philosophy. Israel, whether it is fashionable to say this or not, is still an essentially positivist venture. In Israel growth is still the central theme. It is still more important to say what you build than what you destroy, to say what you are for than to declare what you are against. Affirmation is more important than protest. If the New Left asks of us to separate ourselves from traditional values, the answer can only be that an Israel that is cut off from its continuous legacy cannot possibly be Israel in any essential meaning of the term. An attitude of iconoclastic revolt against traditionalism is not consistent with the Israeli personality. Innovation, yes. The adaptation of the old legacy to the new needs, certainly. But a sundering of one's self from roots in past history would

be more destructive of this nation than of any other.

Therefore, the only answer to ourselves and to others is to find out what are Israel's essential dimensions. What are those dimensions that enlarge it beyond the restrictive effects of its geography and its small physical size? I suggest to you that there are four or five such dimensions. There is, first of all, the Jewish dimension. To the extent that Israel is Jewish, it is not just a small Middle Eastern country. By developing its Jewish dimension it saves itself from the perils of provincialism and regional limitation. It is no longer a small country but a people that strides across unlimited vistas of time and space.

All the literature about Israel attempts to relate Israel to various terms of reference: Are we going to be Orientalized? Are we going to be European? Are we going to be Western? All the learned gentlemen who discuss Israel in such terms overlook the other possibility, namely, that we are going to just be Israel, that is to say, we are going to stand firm in the belief that we have meaning only insofar as we stand high and aim straight within our own distinctive frame of values. Israel is affected, of course, by universal currents but remains persistent in its particularity.

**I**t is this tension between universalism and national specificity which animates the whole of Jewish history. To be Jewish means having the special relationship to the sources of Israeli identity, to prophetic Judaism, to liberal nationalism, to democracy, and to contemporary humanism. Thus, to be a Jewish state means that there cannot be full separation between state and religion. Our unique faith is one of the elements at the source of Israel's particular identity.

The relationship can be modernized, it can be humanized, it will have to be taken out of its present harsh and rigid orthodoxies. But what is called the status quo is not a parliamentary conspiracy. It is a contract between the secular majority and the religious minority with both aiming at preserving the unity of the Jewish people, because without such a contract it is not certain that this

unity could be preserved.

The contract has got to be modified and humanized as have all contracts, but the matter cannot be resolved by the secular majority sweeping aside the special place of faith in Jewish national identity.

To be Jewish also means to be Hebrew, and here I want to express a concern for Israel's cultural future. There is a danger of inundation. There is a growing and regrettable admiration of certain meretricious externalities of Western civilization. We must resist being smothered by what is in general a beneficent contact with Europe and America and thus lose that which is specific in our own culture. In a sense, all nations are like other nations, joined together in the same destiny, but that which each nation holds particular to itself might be its real contribution to the universal storehouse of culture.

The other danger derives from our regional position. It is the danger that we shall be "Arabized." I am not speaking about the immigrants from Arab lands, I refer to the effects of the present political and territorial situation. We must reach a firm decision on how Jewish we want the Jewish state to be. We are now in 1972. Let us take the year 1990, in which I have no doubt we will be having a Dialogue here on this very subject. 1990 is not a very remote date. I shall be at the age at which Israelis usually begin to qualify for the highest office.

In 1990, if we take the Israel before 1967, with Jerusalem, that area will have 4 million Jews and 900,000 Arabs. But if we look at the situation in 1990 within the present cease-fire lines then, according to the statistical evidence that our Cabinet has received and which has in any case been published, there will be in this country either 6.7 or 7.5 million persons—the latter figure based upon the idea that there will be an immigration of at least 50,000 for every year until then. Of that 6.7 million or 7.5 million, there will be 40-43% Arabs.

The destiny of such a society will not be the subject of Jewish decisions, because a 40% Arab minority will in effect constitute a majority, be-

cause our 60% Jewish population is a pluralistic population. It reaches its decisions by controversy, not by consensus. Therefore, on any issue on which Jews are divided, the Arabs will decide.

Our political life will be dominated by a constant pursuit of the Arab vote. I take it that if we decide on a unitary state that there will have to be free and equal rights. Whatever you say of that society, it will not be Jewish in the sense that the main decisions about its security, its economy, its social structure will not rest with the Jewish people.

To say that this doesn't matter, and to speak contemptuously of demography—I heard one of my colleagues solve the problem by saying "demography, shemography"—is to be guilty of utmost frivolity and lightheadedness. There is no modern instance of a state existing in a condition in which 40% of its citizens give their deepest loyalties and sentiments not to its flag and its culture and its memories and its associations, but to the flag and the culture and the memories and the associations of its neighbors. Therefore, a lot depends upon whether we find a way, which I think we must find, of ensuring for a majority of the Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza a separate political destiny.

I believe that a separate political destiny is not incompatible with a high measure of social, economic integration and the maintenance of processes of mutual human accessibility. I believe it is possible to reconcile separate sovereignty with the creation of larger units of economic energy and organization and, above all, keep the frontiers open. I believe that this decision gives not total but maximal satisfaction to self-determination. Self-determination is not an absolute right: the absurdity of Arab nationalism in its official policy is that it demands 100% of self-determination, saying that all Arabs wherever they are must live under their sovereign flags.

We must retain the possibility of developing our pioneering dimension, namely, the special Israeli talent for not acknowledging the impossibilities of nature. There is also the social dimension, the search for original ex-

pressions of individual liberty and equality. And if this element in our national tapestry were to be lost, then our appeal to all progressive movements would be diminished. And finally, there is the special scientific and intellectual vocation which is essential for a nation that seeks to transcend matter and quantity by mind and quality.

Our dialogue with the outside world must be based on an element of self-understanding. We need not have any exaggerated view of our place in the human scheme, and yet it is difficult not to be impressed by

the disproportionate impact of this small Jewish people upon the intellectual and spiritual history of mankind.

The human composition of our country is not less important than its geographical configuration, for when all is said and done, we will have to make our own revolution. We are a people that has had a continuous experience of contact with all the intellectual currents of history, from ancient prophecy to modern science, from the dim roots of man's past to the shining possibility of his future. The fact is that Israel is a revolu-

tionary movement in its own way because it is an effort to transform human and physical realities.

I can only hope that a dialogue of this kind—and a dialogue is not a discussion between two, but a discussion between many—will not be externally directed to a disproportionate extent. The problem is really not what the New Left thinks of us, but whether we are ourselves true to our most essential image. To be or not to be is not the question. Everybody wants to be. How to be and how not to be, that is the essential question.

## Second Session

Tuesday Morning  
August 1, 1972

### Jews and Revolutionary Movements

A Presentation | MARIE SYRKIN

In revolutionary movements the role of Jews is as paradoxical as in other aspects of the social scene. Whether it be Czarist Russia, or pre-Hitler Germany or the contemporary United States, Jews enjoy a prominence both relative and absolute. If you take the New Left in the United States as an example, a small minority of the Jewish population may be involved, but this small minority represents a larger proportion than that contributed by other groups. Furthermore, positions of leadership within the movement, from the intellectual authority of Herbert Marcuse to the clownings of Abbie Hoffman or the mysteries of Mark Rudd's Weathermen, are often held by Jews. This involvement has endeared the Jews neither to the Right nor to the Left. That the Right exploits the activities

of Jewish radicals for the propagation of anti-Semitism is traditional. But that the non-Jewish radicals have often proven to be openly anti-Semitic and that Communist movements, as in Eastern Europe, have spewed out their zealous Jewish disciples has been perennially surprising to the Jews affected. Even more so when these Jewish communists or radicals could truthfully claim that they had themselves subscribed to the anti-Jewish disparagements of their masters. All this is dreadfully familiar and each day brings renewed evidence of this state of affairs.

Yet familiarity, while it may lessen the shock, does not explain. Each thread in this tangle bears looking at. First, why are Jews overrepresented in revolutionary movements? We know the usual answers. In coun-

tries of persecution a despised minority will naturally join the rebels hoping that the social revolution will bring the remedy for its sufferings. Such an explanation certainly held good for the oppressed Jews of Czarist Russia. But then how do we account for the preponderance of children of affluent middle-class and upper-middle-class Jews among the ranks of SDS and other extremist groups in the United States. Is there among Jews a higher measure of social idealism, the "heritage of the prophets," which predisposes them to take up the banner of universalist redemption through socialism? It is a tempting thesis often propounded. But then what about Jewish overrepresentation at the other end of the spectrum? The peddler who becomes a successful merchant is as authentic a Jewish stereotype as "my son, the revolutionary," so lending plausibility to the classic dual charge of anti-Semites that Jews are at the same time capitalist exploiters *par excellence* and communist subverters of the social order.

Furthermore, if we examine degrees of eminence in the arts, performing

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