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BRITISH JEWRY, ZIONISM, AND THE JEWISH STATE, 1936–1956

STEPHAN E. C. WENDEHORST

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By

STEPHAN E. C. WENDEHORST

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To my parents

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Preface

This book has a long and complicated history. It is the published version of my doctoral thesis which I submitted back in Oxford in 1997. Rather than making the necessary revisions straight away and immediately taking up the offer to publish it in the Oxford Historical Monographs series, in this instance, as in others, I exercised insufficient discipline and turned to other callings: academic administration, family, and new fields of research. To my relief, eventually Dr Peter Pulzer, now Gladstone Professor Emeritus for Government and Public Administration, who had inherited the supervision of my thesis from Dr David Sorkin, and Oxford University Press put an end to my unending waverings and forced me to part with the manuscript. Despite the book's overly long gestation period and the fact that the prospects of both the Zionist project and project Britain look less bright and more uncertain than they did when I wrote the original manuscript, no developments have occurred since then that would have compelled me to change its basic argument or alter its overall structure. The argument advanced in this book is that during the period under consideration, British Jewry underwent a national transformation in a Zionist key and that the best way to understand this process is to look at British Zionism as part of a set of interrelated processes of state- and nation-building played out in three arenas: transnational politics, the British-Jewish community, and the British polity.

If, despite the lapse of several years, the basic argument of the study has to my mind remained intact, this does not mean that I would not have made several changes if I had written the original manuscript more recently. In the first place, in terms of chronology, I would have the story start earlier and end later. The time frame from 1936 to 1956 is dominated by the two turning points of twentieth-century Jewish history, the *shoah* and the establishment of the State of Israel. A longer period of investigation, from the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to, at least, the Six-Day War in 1967, would be better suited both to bring out the relation of events to structures in determining the responses of British Jewry to the Zionist project and to help draw a balance between contingent and structural factors explaining the rise of Zionism.

In terms of proportion, the preponderance of part two, 'British Jewry and Zionist State- and Nation-Building', still betrays the origins of this book, which began conventionally as a study on 'Anglo-Jewish responses to the establishment of the State of Israel'. In retrospect, part three and part four in particular deserve more weight. The relations between

Zionism and British state and society could be further explored in two directions only hinted at in this book: the background of the asymmetrical ecclesiastical constitution of the United Kingdom and in comparison with the accommodation and exit strategies of the Irish, Scottish, Welsh, and English subnationalisms.

In all, this is a book on a specific theme, not a general account of the history of British Jewry in the twentieth century. At the same time it provides an interpretation that attempts to cover a significant part of what this history is about.

A note on usage: first, in two instances key terms used in the original manuscript have been changed in the published version. The apposite, if somewhat awkward term 'inter-state' that is frequently employed to denote the Jewish sphere of interaction transcending state boundaries has been replaced by 'transnational', which is used interchangeably with 'trans-state'. The term 'supplemental diaspora nationalism' used to characterize the variant of British Zionism adapted to the fabric of British state and society in contradistinction to that geared to exit the United Kingdom, has been changed into 'diaspora subnationalism'.

Second, the terms 'Britain' and 'Palestine' are, for different reasons, inevitably difficult to handle. Strictly speaking this book is about the relations between the Jews of the United Kingdom with the Zionist project. Since the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a somewhat longwinded term and lacks a corresponding adjective, I have used 'Britain' and 'British', although technically this excludes Northern Ireland. It is only when the term United Kingdom is technically necessary or where it means something significantly different from Britain that the official name is employed.

As to the usage of 'Palestine' two notes of explication, one relating to the contemporary sources and one to methodological approach, are called for. If today 'Palestine' is almost exclusively associated with Arab Palestine, this was not the case during the British Mandate for Palestine and the subsequent years, when the term 'Palestine' was current not only in British official language, but also among British Jews and Zionists. The Zionist Federation hosted 'Palestine Weeks', the Board of Deputies of British Jews had a Palestine Committee, and the London Board of Jewish Religious Education ran a course on 'Palestinography'. Methodologically, the term 'palestinocentric Jewish nationalism' is used to distinguish Zionism from 'Jewish diaspora nationalism' in the Bundist tradition.

Third, concerning the transliteration and use of Hebrew and Yiddish terms I have usually, though not consistently, opted for the contemporary usage as found in the sources, rather than a uniform system. As a consequence we read Mizrachi rather than Mizrahi, Agudas Israel alongside Agudath Israel, B'nai Brith as well as Bnei Brith, galuth as well as galut.

Acknowledgements

The publication of this book gives me a welcome, if belated opportunity to acknowledge the countless personal and intellectual debts that I have incurred over the years. From my undergraduate education at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University at Munich Dr Christian Meier, Professor for Ancient History and the late Dr Thomas Nipperdey, Professor for Modern History, left lasting impressions on me. A seminar on the Middle East conflict, jointly organized by Dr Hans Günter Hockerts, Professor for Contemporary History and Dr Michael Wolfsohn, Professor for Modern History, for which I wrote a paper on the Greek position towards the establishment of the State of Israel, first aroused my academic interest in the diplomatic and transnational dimension of Jewish history.

At Oxford University I was fortunate to meet Dr David Sorkin, now Distinguished Professor of History at the Graduate Centre of the City University of New York, thanks to whom my stay in Britain originally scheduled for one year turned into a D.Phil. project. After his much regretted departure I had again the good fortune that Dr Peter Pulzer, Gladstone Professor Emeritus for Government and Public Administration, took on the supervision of my doctoral thesis. They taught me to ask the kind of questions that academic pursuits live on. I owe them thanks both for their direction and the liberties they allowed me and have looked on them as exemplars of scholarly life ever since.

Much appreciated orientation came from the 'angry young men' of British-Jewish historiography, Dr David Cesarani, Research Chair in History at Royal Holloway College, Dr Mark Levene, Reader in Jewish History at Southampton University, Bill Williams, Founder and Honorary President of the Manchester Jewish Museum and Dr Tony Kushner, Marcus Sieff Professor of the History of Jewish/non-Jewish Relations at Southampton University, in particular, as well as from Dr David Rechter, Fellow in Jewish History at St Antony's College, University of Oxford. They have read the manuscript, one or more individual chapters, offered critical counsel and spared me from many infelicities and errors. Any that remain are my responsibility alone.

During my year of research in Israel the late Dr Jonathan Frankel, Professor for Russian Studies and Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Dr Norman Rose, Professor for International Relations, and Jeremy Tarsh, who introduced me to the Central Zionist Archive and the Israel State Archive, discussed the topic of my dissertation with me. I would also like to thank my examiners Dr Ross McKibbin, Fellow in Modern History at St John's College, Oxford University and Dr Todd Endelman, Professor of Modern Jewish History at the University

of Michigan for their constructive criticism and for suggesting the manuscript to Oxford University Press, as well as the editors of the Oxford Historical Manuscript series for accepting it.

It has been a pleasure working with the staff at Oxford University Press. I owe them an apology for being the perennial nudnik. I am particularly grateful to Stephanie Ireland, Jackie Pritchard, Briony Ryles, and Gillian Northcott Liles for their exceptional patience as well as for their determination to see the manuscript eventually in print.

In the writing of this book I have benefited hugely from the kindness of interview partners, willing to share their memories with me, as well as of librarians, archivists, and community officials at the Agudath Israel World Organization, the Archives of Religious Jewry at the Mosad HaRav Kook, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Bodleian Library, the British Library, the Brynmor Jones Library, the Central Zionist Archive, the Edinburgh University Library, the Hebrew University's Institute of Contemporary Jewry, the Israel Labour Party Archives at Beit Berl, the Israel State Archive, the Jabotinsky Institute, the Lavon Institute, the Leeds Jewish National Fund Commission, the Liverpool City Libraries, the Manchester Central Library, the Manchester and District Zionist Central Council, the Manchester Jewish Representative Council, the MAPAM archives at Givat Haviva, the Marks & Spencer Company Archives, the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, the National Film and Television Archive, London, the National Museum of Labour History, Manchester, the Public Record Office, the Rothschild Archive, the Scottish Jewish Archive Centre, Sheffield University Library, Southampton University Library, the Weizmann Archive, and the Yad Tabenkin Archives, who made their treasures available for research. I could not possibly thank everyone in person, but I hope that for all its faults the work itself will stand as token of gratitude.

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I would like to thank my family. As an inadequate recognition for all that they have given to me, I dedicate this book to my parents. Final thanks are reserved for my own family, especially for my wife Christiane and our children Bendix, Hanno, Ferdinand, and Henriette each of whom in his or her own way provides a constant source of inspiration and distraction.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI	Agudath Israel
AIGB	Agudath Israel Organization of Great Britain
AIWO	Agudath Israel World Organization
AJA	Anglo-Jewish Association
AJC	American Jewish Committee
AJEX	Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women
AJR	Association of Jewish Refugees
BACHAD	Brith Chalutzim Datiim
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BETAR	Brit Trumpeldor
BoD	Board of Deputies
CBF	Central British Fund
CO	Colonial Office
CP	Communist Party
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CZA	Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem
DPs	Displaced Persons
<i>DW</i>	<i>Daily Worker</i>
FWZ	Federation of Women Zionists
FZY	Federation of Zionist Youth
HH	Hashomer Hatzair
HU	Hebrew University
ICA	Jewish Colonization Association
JA	Jewish Agency
<i>JC</i>	<i>Jewish Chronicle</i>
JDC	Joint Distribution Committee
JFC	Joint Foreign Committee
JFF	Jewish Fighting Force
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNH	Jewish National Home
JPA	Joint Palestine Appeal
JSP	Jewish State Party
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Jewish Social Studies</i>
KH	Keren Hayesod
KKL	Keren Kayemet Leisrael
LBJRE	London Board of Jewish Religious Education
M&SCA	Marks & Spencer, Company Archives, London
MP	Member of Parliament
NAFTA	National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association

NFTVA	National Film and Television Archive
NJC	National Jewish Committee
NMLH	National Museum of Labour History
NZO	New Zionist Organisation
PAI	Poalei Agudath Israel
PATWA	Professional and Technical Workers' Aliyah
PEP	Political and Economic Planning
PPC	Parliamentary Palestine Committee
PRO	Public Record Office
PZ	Zionist Jewish Socialist Party
RA	Rothschild Archive
RASC	Royal Army Service Corps
SJAC	Scottish Jewish Archive Centre
TAC	Trades Advisory Council
TvA	Torah v'Avodah
UJA	United Jewish Appeal
UMPA	United Mizrahi Palestine Appeal
UN	United Nations
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
UOHC	Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations
UPA	United Palestine Appeal
US	United Synagogue
VC	Victoria Cross
WA	Weizmann Archives
YCL	Young Communist League
ZCC	Zionist Central Council
ZF	Zionist Federation
ZO	Zionist Organization
ZOA	Zionist Organization of America
ZR	<i>Zionist Review</i>

Assimilation to English life seems to us—that is to say to me and all my Jewish friends and, I believe to the great body of English Jews—to be the civic ideal. We desire to see Anglo-Jewry sharing to the utmost in the life of the country, contributing all they can to it, and especially as a religious community, enriching its spiritual treasury in a way only possible to those who feel and show themselves to be completely ‘assimilated’, i.e. identified in their aims and in their secular life with their fellow citizens of other creeds. We entirely repudiate the idea that because Hitler’s attack on civilisation has included a virulent persecution of Judaism in Germany, ‘assimilation has broken down’ in any country which has not fallen victim to Nazi tyranny, or that its ‘breakdown’ will continue in any country after its freedom has been restored by a British victory. So far from representing a capitulation or an abandonment of our sense of history, our traditions and our dignity, we think assimilation represents the true fulfillment of the Jewish ideal at its best.

(Anthony de Rothschild to Selig Brodetsky,
16 December 1940, WA 2261)

In 1917 the leaders of Anglo-Jewry... believed in and lived on two illusions. Their principal illusion was that ‘emancipation’ was the key to the whole Jewish problem. This illusion rested upon two other illusions—that Liberalism was the gospel of the non-Jews, and that there was no such thing as a Jewish nation. From this sprang the active opposition to the issue of the Balfour Declaration.... It is much to be doubted whether any section of Anglo-Jewry’s leaders would be disposed to repeat that historic error. Their faith in the all-healing and universal influence of Liberalism is less robust and their scepticism with regard to the Jewish nation is much more tenuous. It cannot be disputed that the old Anglo-Jewish families have in large measure lost their authority partly because of that error and partly because of factors beyond their control. They two are among Hitler’s victims.... Two facts have revolutionised the Jewish position since 1917—Hitler and the Jewish National Home. Even the old guard of Anglo-Jewry know that the Jewish problem cannot be considered without taking Palestine into account.... the Jewish National Home is the most vital thing Jews have achieved in some 2,000 years. What else have they to be proud of as Jews?

(Harry Sacher to Schneier Levenberg and Chaim
Weizmann, 16 October 1941, unpublished draft
for publication in the *Zionist Review*)

The idea of the Zionist state is the opposite of Judaism and everything that it has brought into being, is completely opposed to the name under which it goes: Instead of being the source of salvation it is the greatest Jewish anxiety.... From Zion whence the Thora should emerge, there comes forth heresy and defilement of Klal Yisroel.... We wish to ascend to Eretz Yisroel with the future Redemption which Shem Yisborach has promised us... We shall not go to the strains of the Zionist Hatikvah but we will go up to the music of Divine Illumination of the whole of creation.

(I. Domb, *The Transformation* (London, 1958), 242–4)

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Introduction

On Questions, Methodological Approaches, and Sources

The purpose of this book is to explore the relationship between British Jewry and Zionism from 1936 to 1956. While scholarship frequently acknowledges the prominent position which Zionism had come to assume in the self-perception and organizational infrastructure of British Jewry by the second half of the twentieth century,¹ little effort has been invested to answer the question of what it was, to identify the underlying causes of this phenomenon, and to account for the fluctuation and variety of the Zionist attachments of British Jews. The argument advanced in this book is that during the period under consideration British Jewry underwent a national transformation in a Zionist key shaped by the specific conditions of British politics and society. British Jewry experienced a particular, but not untypical, variant of that profound change of consciousness, the rise of modern nationalism, which occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a result Zionism came to occupy centre stage in the British assemblage of composite modern Jewish identities.

Chronologically, this study takes the history of Zionism in Britain up to 1956, a year marked simultaneously by the Suez crisis and the tercentenary celebrations of the resettlement of the Jews in Britain. Like research on British Jewry beyond the inter-war period in general, historiography on British Zionism for the 1940s and the subsequent years is scarce. Yet, rather than merely extending the extant scholarship on British Zionism roughly by another two decades, this book is primarily an attempt to make a contribution to the understanding of the relationship between Zionism and British Jewry through its analysis in a particularly momentuous period. The reluctance to deal with the war and the immediate post-war era is all the more remarkable since this period coincides with the two

¹ Geoffrey Alderman, *Modern British Jewry*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1998), 314; Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley, 2000), 183–256, in particular, 183, 217, 229; Natan Aridan, *Britain, Israel and Anglo-Jewry 1949–1957* (London, 2004), 255.

turning points of twentieth-century Jewish history, the *shoah* and the establishment of the State of Israel. British Jewry, though not itself exposed directly to persecution and destruction nor occupying centre stage in the process of Zionist state- and nation-building, faced pressing challenges as a result of the fate of continental Jewry and the emergence of the sovereign Jewish state. British Jews were citizens of the country which had been entrusted with the Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations after the First World War, which was locked in an increasingly bitter conflict over the future of Palestine with the Zionist movement, and which alone fought against Nazi Germany throughout the Second World War from beginning to end without being overrun. British Jews were therefore placed in a unique, if also particularly delicate position during the 1930s and 1940s. Their actions, when confronting the exodus of Jews from Germany and Central Europe, the destruction of continental Jewry, the controversies over a Jewish Fighting Force (JFF), the displaced persons (DPs), and British Middle East policy, were characterized by a specific mixture of opportunities and constraints.

Thematically, the study intends to break fresh ground in four respects, first by exploring the entire spectrum of British-Jewish responses to Zionism, second by placing them within the transnational Jewish public and social sphere, third by examining the place of Zionism in British politics and society, and fourth by looking at the performative, social, cultural, and institutional dimension of Zionism. First, as the three introductory quotations representing the British variants of liberal assimilationism, Zionism, and radical Orthodoxy intimate, the book is concerned with capturing the plurality of British-Jewish responses to Zionism rather than with merely presenting a survey of the British Zionist movement. While organized liberal assimilationism has been taken into account by historiography as the background against which the rise of Zionism unfolded,² attitudes towards the Zionist project originating from Jewish Communist or ultra-Orthodox quarters have been skirted. The book highlights not only the variety of British-Jewish responses to the Zionist project, but also the diversity within the British Zionist movement. So far research has been biased in favour of General and Labour Zionists and the organizations dominated by them, to the exclusion of Religious and Revisionist Zionists.³

² Gideon Shimoni, 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937–1948', *JJS* 28/2 (1986), 89–115; Rory Miller, *Divided against Zion. Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945–1948* (London, 2000), 82–120.

³ In contrast to the other Zionist parties and funds, Poale Zion and Hashomer Hatzair are the only segments of the British Zionist movement which have been explored in their own right: Gideon Shimoni, 'Poale Zion: A Zionist Transplant in Britain (1905–1945)', in

Second, apart from redressing the ideological imbalance favouring the centre and the moderate left of the Zionist movement to the detriment of developments on the Zionist margins and on the Jewish non- and anti-Zionist scene, this book places particular emphasis on the contextualization of the relationship between British Jewry and Zionism, locating it both within transnational Jewish politics and the British polity. The suggestion to investigate British-Jewish involvement in the Zionist project as part of the transnational Jewish public and social sphere of interaction may sound like asking for the obvious. Yet this approach is to a remarkable extent absent from historiography. The literature on British Middle East policy,⁴ on Mandatory Palestine,⁵ on British responses to the persecution and extermination of continental Jewry,⁶ and above all on Zionism follows, considerable overlaps notwithstanding, different agendas.

Zionist historiography is characterized by a marked bifurcation. One body concentrates on the transformation of the *yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine, into the Jewish nation-state, Zionist diplomacy, decision-making at the Zionist leadership level, and internal party-political divisions within the Zionist movement. For the post-1948 period this trend blends into a historiography of the State of Israel as that of the Jewish nation-state. Focusing on the Zionist movement from the perspective of its aspirations, the reconstitution of the Jews as a national society, and the establishment of a Jewish state, it is political,⁷ intellectual,⁸ or

P. Medding (ed.), *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. ii (Bloomington, Ind., 1986), 227–69; Stephan Wendehorst, 'Between Promised Land and Land of Promise: The Radical Socialist Zionism of *Hashomer Hatzair* in Great Britain', *Jewish Culture and History*, 2/1 (1999), 75–101.

⁴ Ilan Pappé, 'British Foreign Policy towards the Middle East Conflict', in *Britain and the Arab–Israeli Conflict 1948–1951* (London, 1988); Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan* (New York, 1988); Keith Kyle, *Suez* (New York, 1991); S. I. Troen and M. Shemesh, *The Suez–Sinai Crisis 1956: Retrospective and Reappraisal* (New York, 1990); R. L. Owen and L. Epstein (eds.), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (Oxford, 1989).

⁵ Bernard Wasserstein, *The British in Palestine: The Mandatory Government and the Arab–Jewish Conflict 1917–1929* (London, 1978).

⁶ Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939–1945*, 2nd edn. (London, 1979); Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination: A Social and Cultural History* (Oxford, 1994); Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews* (Cambridge, 2000).

⁷ See for example: Walter Laqueur, *A History of Zionism*, 2nd rev. edn. (New York, 1989); David Vital, *The Origins of Zionism* (Oxford, 1980); idem, *Zionism: The Formative Years* (Oxford, 1982); idem, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford, 1987); Mitchell Cohen, *Zion and State: Nation, Class and the Shaping of Modern Israel* (Oxford, 1987); Ben Halpern and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.), *Zionism and the Creation of a New Society* (Oxford, 1998).

⁸ See for example: Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1969); Arthur Hertzberg (ed.), *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (1959; repr. New York, 1981); Shmuel Almog, *Zionism and History: The Rise of a New Jewish Consciousness* (New York, 1987); Gideon Shimoni, *The Zionist Ideology* (Hanover, NH, 1995); Yosef Gorny, *The State of Israel in Jewish Public Thought: The Quest for a*

prosopographic in character.⁹ The diaspora complement to this trend measures the achievements of local Zionist movements in terms of their contribution to Zionist state- and nation-building in Palestine, using membership figures, *aliyah*, fundraising, lobbying, and diplomatic activity as criteria for assessment. The British variant of this strand of historiography focusing on Zionist high politics and the Jewish polity is represented by studies that investigate British diplomatic activity surrounding the emergence of the Jewish state and highlighting the role which British Jews played in it,¹⁰ examine the effects of Britain's Middle East policy on British Jewry,¹¹ or portray individual prominent British Zionists.¹²

The other body of scholarship investigates the unfolding of Zionism in the diaspora within a communal frame of reference, judging its success and failure according to whether it answered the needs of the respective Jewish community *in situ*, sometimes going as far as explaining diaspora Zionism as a function of local circumstances.¹³ In the British case it is the studies by Stuart Cohen, David Cesarani, and Gideon Shimoni, where the focus shifts from the arena of high politics and the prosopography of eminent personalities to the internal workings of British Jewry.¹⁴ They have sought to explain British Zionism primarily in terms of generational change, class, and the power struggle for the exercise of communal

Collective Identity (New York, 1994); Amnon Rubinstein, *From Herzl to Rabin: The Changing Image of Zionism* (New York, 2000).

⁹ See for example: Ben Halpern, *A Clash of Heroes: Brandeis, Weizmann and American Zionism* (New York, 1987); Anita Shapira, *Berl Katznelson: A Biography of a Socialist Zionist* (Cambridge, 1985); Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann*, vol. ii (Oxford, 1985–93).

¹⁰ Norman Bentwich, *Wanderer between Two Worlds* (London, 1941); Paul Goodman, *Zionism in England 1899–1949: A Jubilee Record* (London, 1949); Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism* (London, 1951); Leonard Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (London, 1961); Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews* (London, 2007); Michael Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 2nd edn. (London, 2004).

¹¹ Natan Aridan, *Britain, Israel and Anglo-Jewry 1949–1957* (London, 2004), 204–52.

¹² Israel Cohen (ed.), *The Rebirth of Israel: A Memorial Tribute to Paul Goodman* (London, 1952); Jacob Talmon, 'Lewis Namier', in idem, *The Unique and the Universal* (London, 1965), 296–311; Norman Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism* (Oxford, 1980); Isaiah Berlin, 'L. B. Namier', in idem, *Personal Impressions* (Oxford, 1982), 63–82; Bernard Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel* (Oxford, 1992); Amy Ng, *Nationalism and Political Liberty: Redlich, Namier, and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford, 2004).

¹³ Stephen Poppel, *Zionism in Germany, 1897–1933* (Philadelphia, 1976); Jehuda Reinharz, *Fatherland or Promised Land* (Ann Arbor, 1975); Melvin Urofsky, *American Zionism from Herzl to the Holocaust* (Lincoln, Nebr., 1995); Ezra Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford, 1993), 132–9.

¹⁴ Stuart A. Cohen, *English Zionists and British Jews: The Communal Politics of Anglo-Jewry, 1895–1920* (Princeton, 1982); David Cesarani, 'Zionism in England, 1917–1939', D.Phil. thesis (Oxford, 1986); Gideon Shimoni, 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry (1939–1945)', *JJS* 22/2 (1980), 125–61; idem, 'From Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry, 1917–1937', *JJS* 28/1 (1986), 19–47; idem, 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937–1948', *JJS* 28/2 (1986), 89–115.

authority between the Anglo-Jewish establishment and second-generation immigrants.

These two strands of Zionist historiography have their indisputable merits. The first highlights the focal points of the visions of the Zionist movement and accounts for the direction of much of its practical activity, while the other directs the attention to two decisive questions: why was Zionism attractive to Jews in the diaspora, and how was it rendered compatible with Jewish existence under the conditions prevailing in the respective country of residence? Yet they also have their shortcomings. The historiography of Zionism and the Jewish state that is written in the vein of a national master narrative has an inherent tendency to minimize, externalize, or eclipse altogether the impact that agents outside the *yishuv* and, in particular, outside its Labour Zionist component, such as the Rothschilds, the Jewish diaspora in general, or the British Mandatory regime, had on the Zionist project.¹⁵ On the other hand, the functionalist, community-oriented approach tends to neglect the impact which factors external to the local Jewish community or the country of residence exerted on the development of local Zionism. It disregards the fact that 'local Zionism anywhere drew its *raison d'être* from being part and parcel of the Zionist movement as a whole—a movement . . . in spite of everything still cohesive enough to keep its different branches together, actively directed towards the realization of its major goals', as Evyatar Friesel has pointed out.¹⁶ The communal or social framework of analysis, thus, leaves several questions open. First, it does not explain why Zionism was attractive to British Jews who were unaffected by the internal workings of Jewish communal life; second, it is silent on the question of why Zionism became more and more acceptable to the assimilationist part of the community; third, it fails to give proper weight to the impact of antagonistic forces on the development of British Zionism; fourth, it neglects the significance that participation in the world Zionist movement had for British Jews; and fifth it does not account for the practical expressions of British Zionism, such as donating money or going on *aliyah*, that had their focus in the Jewish National Home and subsequently in the State of Israel, not in Britain. The chronological coincidence of the rise of British Zionism with the consecutive Jewish crises and catastrophes of the 1930s and 1940s, culminating in the *shoah*, and with the crucial phase of Jewish

¹⁵ Simon Schama, *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (New York, 1978); Derek Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918* (Bloomington, Ind., 1991), 5–6.

¹⁶ Evyatar Friesel, 'Criteria and Conception in the Historiography of German and American Zionism', *Zionism*, 1/2 (1980), 301.

state- and nation-building in Palestine points to the importance which external factors had on the development of British Zionism and highlights the shortcomings of looking either at the diaspora or at the Jewish state-in-the-making at the expense of the relationship between them.

Third, this book explores the relationship between British Jewry and Zionism not only as part of the transnational Jewish public and social sphere, but also as part of the specific political and social fabric of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is in two areas, British parliamentary politics and the English school system, that the impact of Zionism on British Jewry will be scrutinized against the background of the exceptional construction of the British polity out of pre-modern foundations, Empire, and nation-state, the specifically British pathway of Jewish emancipation as co-optation and the British Mandate for Palestine. Placing the encounter between Zionism and British Jewry squarely within British history is not only a prerequisite for a satisfactory understanding of this part of British-Jewish history.¹⁷ It may also provide an example of where the significance of Jewish history in relation to general British history lies, in its heuristic value. If, in terms of proportion, David Cannadine's sweeping dismissal of British-Jewish history as 'in the context of British history . . . not all that important' has, when compared to topics like class or the Irish question, not been entirely off the mark, it misses out on its potential to serve as a barometer for ascertaining shifts in the social, religious, and national fabric of the British polity.¹⁸

Fourth, the book aims at a broader and at the same time less essentialist understanding of Zionism, in terms both of the variety of its manifestations and the depth and fluidity of its entrenchment in British-Jewish life, by looking at its performative, social, cultural, and institutional dimension. Traditionally the relationship between British Jewry and Zionism has been explored in terms of ideology and class, by constructing ideal types of Zionists, non-Zionists, and anti-Zionists and by subsuming individual personalities, milieux, and institutions of British Jewry under these ideal-typical categories, or in terms of ethnicity, by seeing Zionism as a secular expression of Jewish ethnicity.¹⁹

The thematic reorientation outlined above also has methodological implications. If it is not the goal of this study to paint just a broader and more differentiated picture of Zionism in Britain by adding on new

¹⁷ For a particularly successful contextualization of Jewish history see David Feldman, *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914* (New Haven, 1994).

¹⁸ David Cannadine, 'Cousinhood', *London Review of Books*, 27 July 1989, 10–12.

¹⁹ Todd Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley, 2000).

aspects and by introducing new perspectives, but rather to arrive at a more integrated understanding, asking whether its multifaceted manifestations added up to more than the sum of its parts, then an adequate framework of analysis is required. In order to accommodate the different factors that shaped the British part in the Zionist project as well as its varied expressions and to avoid their isolated treatment, this study looks at British Zionism as part of a set of interrelated processes of state- and nation-building played out in three arenas: transnational politics, the British-Jewish community, and the British polity. This approach is indebted to scholarship on transnational politics,²⁰ to studies of the Jewish diaspora,²¹ to British as opposed to English history,²² and above all to modernist theories of nationalism.²³

The conceptual tools of extant as well as modified modernist theories of nationalism offer a framework of analysis according to which the Zionist reinvention of British Jews may be understood as a particularly complex, yet not untypical variant of the profound national transformation of identity that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The modernist view that the rise of nationalism was predicated on the disintegration of a traditional social and religious order suggests that Zionism needs to be studied not as a given phenomenon, but as emerging out of a varied set of stable status quo arrangements and fragile, carefully balanced equipoises. The concept of the antagonistic 'Other' as a catalyst of nationalism helps to understand the extent to which the Zionization of British Jewry was forged by recurrent confrontations which encouraged British Jews to define themselves collectively as Zionists against external and internal opponents. The manifold opportunities of participation and identification offered by modern state- and nation-building provide a third category for the explanation of the Zionist success and its fluctuations.

The analysis of the relationship between Zionism and British Jews in three arenas is not only an attempt to bring out the multiplicity of manifestations of Zionism in Britain as well as its Jewish competitors,

²⁰ Gabriel Sheffer, 'A New Field of Study: Modern Diasporas in International Politics', in idem (ed.), *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (New York, 1986), 1–15.

²¹ Arieh Bruce Saposnik, 'Will ... Issue Forth from Zion? The Emergence of a Jewish National Culture in Palestine and the Dynamics of Yisuv–Diaspora Relations', *JSS*, 10/1 (2003), 151–84.

²² Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London, 1977); Alexander Grant and Keith Stringer (eds.), *Uniting the Kingdom: The Making of British History* (London, 1995).

²³ For the different theories of nationalism see Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London, 1998); idem, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London, 2000).

but also the interaction, the chains of cause and effect, that existed between these arenas. By showing that events in one arena could prompt reactions not only in the same, but also in the other arenas this book provides an integrated perspective on what has hitherto been studied as varied, if not entirely separate phenomena. For example, instead of only drawing a clear line of distinction between those Jews who saw their identification with Zionism as compatible with their existence in the diaspora and those for whom Zionism opened up a new vista, involving radical change, it becomes also possible to explore both as participating in different ways in the transnational Jewish sphere redefined in Zionist terms. Whereas some British Jews reinvented themselves as full-time members of the new Palestinocentric Jewish nation, substituting the Jewish National Home and later the State of Israel for their country of residence and as the main focus of national identification, the majority reinvented themselves as part-time Zionists, developing a Jewish diaspora subnationalism adapted to their participation in the British polity.

Through the combination of modernist theories of nationalism with a three-level analysis this study attempts to provide answers to such simple, yet fundamental questions as: What was British Zionism? What does its rise during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s tell us about British Jewry and the British polity at large? Why did it occur at this particular historical juncture? And how do we account for the variety of its expressions?

PLACING DIASPORA ZIONISM WITHIN THEORIES OF NATIONALISM

If the tools borrowed from modernist theories of nationalism promise a better understanding of British Zionism, the study of diaspora Zionism as a variant of modern nationalism also highlights unresolved problems within the field of theories of nationalism. While general works on nationalism as well as the scholarship on Zionism, for the most part, regard Zionism as a form of nationalism, this is less the result of systematic analysis than a generally held assumption. The former tend to treat Zionism as exceptional, making little or no attempt to integrate Zionism into their concepts of nationalism. With few exceptions,²⁴ Zionism is either

²⁴ Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (London, 1977); Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Jewish and Other Nationalism*, based on the fifth Herbert Samuel Lecture delivered on 2 October 1961 under the auspices of the British Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (London, 1962); George L. Mosse, 'The Jews and the Civic Religion of Nationalism', in idem, *Confronting the Nation* (Hanover,

treated as *sui generis*,²⁵ forcefully assimilated to ill-fitting categories,²⁶ features as a curiosity escaping any classification, is relegated to the footnotes,²⁷ explicitly or implicitly denied a place in the debate, or silently omitted.²⁸ Conversely, the latter has also been reluctant to explore Zionism within the context of theories of nationalism.²⁹ To some scholars the novelty of the emergence of a Zionist identity has been obscured by the conviction that a longing for a Jewish home in Palestine had always been an integral part of Jewish consciousness.³⁰ To others the reinvention of the Jews as a modern nation, the transformation of parts of the Jewish population into a political nation, and the creation of a Jewish state seem to have been, if not the natural unfolding of what has been the central message of Jewish history since the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans, then at least its most promising route and, therefore, in little need of explanation.³¹ To the extent that scholarship on Zionism engages in the theoretical discourse, three trends predominate: the primordialist approach, the revisionist ethnosymbolist school of nationalism theory,³² and the interpretation of Zionism as an ideology.³³ The tendency to regard Zionism as part of an unfolding sacred or secular national teleology, as the logical

NH, 1993), 121–30; Oliver Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890–1940* (Houndmills, 2003), 25–6, 72–9.

²⁵ F. H. Hinsley, *Nationalism and the International System* (London, 1973), 164–5; E. Mendelsohn, *On Modern Jewish Politics* (Oxford, 1993).

²⁶ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 1983), 101–9; Hinsley, *Nationalism*, 164.

²⁷ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd edn. (London, 1991), 149 n. 16.

²⁸ Anthony Birch, *Nationalism & National Integration* (London, 1989), 77–137. William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge, 1990); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge, 1985); Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (eds.), *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge, 2005).

²⁹ Ben Halpern and Jehuda Reinharz, *Zionism and the Creation of a New Society* (New York, 1998).

³⁰ See for example Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism* (New York, 1982), 31; Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of the Asian and African Peoples* (Boston, 1969), 106, 156; Stuart Cohen, “How shall we Sing of Zion in a Strange Land?” East European Immigrants and the Challenge of Zionism in Britain, 1897–1918, *JSS*, NS 1/2 (1995), 101–22.

³¹ David Vital, ‘The History of the Zionists and the History of the Jews’; idem, *The Future of the Jews* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); idem, *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (Oxford, 1987), 358–76.

³² Aviel Roshvald, *The Endurance of Nationalism: Ancient Roots and Modern Dilemmas* (Cambridge, 2006).

³³ Gideon Shimoni addresses the relationship between Zionism and nationalism in chapter 1 of *The Zionist Ideology*, 3–51, where he suggests a modified primordialist reference of analysis for the study of Zionism, but otherwise presents Zionism as an ideological platform, following in the footsteps of Arthur Hertzberg and Ben Halpern.

progression of Jewish history, rather than as a break with it, has not gone uncriticized,³⁴ as has the tendency to take it for granted that, somehow, Zionism qualifies as a form of nationalism without exploring it, however, within the context of nationalism theory.³⁵

To interpret diaspora Zionism as a variant of nationalism raises additional questions. Neither has British Zionism, nor has, with one notable exception,³⁶ British Jewry been investigated explicitly in terms of nationalism. To conceptualize diaspora Zionism, especially in countries with a liberal political tradition, in terms of nation and nationalism, sits uneasily with the concept of the nation-state, the self-presentation of Jewish diaspora communities, and the East–West divide in Jewish historiography.³⁷ According to the legal-civic idea of the nation, the right to self-determination is synonymous with the exercise of political power and rests with the majority within a territorially defined political unit. Derived from the merger of the sovereign territorial state and the citizen republic, the modern nation-state accords legitimacy to national identification only on the basis of territorialized citizenship and is, therefore, inherently hostile to claims to the right of self-determination advanced by religious, ethnic, regional, or competing national movements whose political ambitions lack a corresponding territorial basis. Its main drawback is its static quality, presupposing a given state and society and, therefore, incapable of accommodating emerging nations or non-state nationalisms. As Karl Deutsch has pointed out, it is impossible to square Zionism with this idea of the nation: ‘the Zionist movement culminating in 1948 in the erection of the State of Israel had been carried on over two generations by members of a people which had not had a common territory for centuries and was most actively opposed by the inhabitants of the very country in which the

³⁴ Michael Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture and West European Jewry before the First World War* (New York, 1993), 5–6; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, ‘Israel, the Unexpected State: Jewish Messianism and the Zionist Revolution’, lecture delivered at the Carl-Friedrich-von-Siemens Stiftung, Munich, 7 November 1996.

³⁵ Mitchell Cohen, ‘A Preface to the Study of Jewish Nationalism’, 82–9; for the desirability of applying Anthony Smith’s theory of nationalism to the study of Zionism see S. Volkov, *Juden in Deutschland 1780–1918* (Munich, 1994), 125–9; Thomas Nipperdey, ‘Nationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Über einige Formen des Zionismus’, in Helmut Berding et al. (eds.), *Vom Staat des Ancien Regime zum Modernen Parteienstaat: Festschrift für Theodor Schieder* (Munich, 1978), 385–6; Oliver Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890–1940* (Houndmills, 2003), 73.

³⁶ Henry Felix Srebrnik’s *London Jews and British Communism, 1935–1945* (London, 1995).

³⁷ In his careful reassessment of the East–West dichotomy in the study of Jewish history, Jonathan Frankel still contrasts the post-assimilationist, pragmatic, or philanthropic Western Zionism with ‘real’ all-embracing nationalism: ‘Modern Jewish Politics—East and West (1840–1939)’, in Zvi Gitelman (ed.), *The Quest for Utopia* (Armonk, NY, 1992), 81–103, in particular 84–93, 97.

Zionist State was to be erected.³⁸ To Dominique Schnapper who argues that 'L'État inscrit la nation dans l'espace: la nation est une unité politique territorialisée', diaspora nations are a contradiction in terms: 'Les populations diasporiques, même si elles continuent à entretenir par-delà les frontières des liens culturels, religieux ou économiques, ne forment pas une nation.'³⁹ Schnapper, rather than probing alternative answers to the equivocal question of the social unit entitled to the revolutionary claim of self-determination,⁴⁰ quickly returns to the safety of the normative civic-territorial definition of the nation. Eric Hobsbawm is likewise vehemently opposed to claims to nation status advanced without the basis of an already existing territorial state: 'It is entirely illegitimate to identify the Jewish links with the ancestral land of Israel . . . with the desire to gather all Jews into a modern territorial state situated on the ancient Holy Land.'⁴¹

Diaspora nations present challenges not only on a theoretical, but also on a practical level, not only for political and social theory, but also for their own members. Jews living in the Western diaspora, including Zionists, were careful not to present themselves in terms of nation and nationalism. Once the State of Israel had been established, one strand of Zionist thought adopted the prevailing notion of the territorialized nation-state as the only legitimate habitat of the nation. In Britain Lewis Namier and Arthur Koestler, from whom this line of thought came to be known as Koestlerism, took this view to an extreme by presenting diaspora Jews with the choice of either emigrating to the State of Israel or fusing with the society in which they lived. Since British Zionists, like any other diaspora Zionists living in liberal nation-states, proved unlikely candidates for the voluntary liquidation of the *galuth*, there was little sign of such a neat compartmentalization taking effect that would have conformed to the schematic predilections of both Zionists in the narrower sense and the prevailing nation concept. Although the vast majority of Zionists in the Western diaspora were more likely to stay in their countries of residence than to go on *aliyah*, the notion that in order to qualify as a Zionist one had eventually to throw in one's lot with the Jewish polity, and, conversely, that a Jew living in the Western diaspora, however emphatically protesting his Zionist commitment, was no Jewish

³⁸ Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 18.

³⁹ Dominique Schnapper, *Community of Citizens/La Communauté des citoyens: sur l'idée moderne de nation* (Paris, 1994), 117.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 162.

⁴¹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth and Reality*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, 1992), 47–8.

nationalist in the real sense was deeply ingrained, dovetailing with the bipolarity of Jewish historiography.⁴²

Rather than compartmentalizing diaspora Zionism into two halves or resigning oneself to treat it as the odd one out, this study makes an attempt to integrate it into the theory of nationalism. Whereas received opinion stresses what distinguished Zionism from other examples of nationalism, such as the lack of territory or the Jewish diaspora, one may alternatively follow Zionist politicians who saw Zionism as a particularly advanced form of nationalism or scholars who accord Zionism paradigmatic value for the study of nationalism, like Thomas Nipperdey who maintained that 'Der Zionismus ist geradezu ein klassischer Fall für die nichtstaatliche Konstitution einer Nation.'⁴³ Arguing that Zionism shows all the elements characteristic of nationalism—the language renaissance, the fight against the loss of an assumed national identity, the instrumentalization of history, the usage of national symbols, the self-perception of the World Zionist Organization as the sole authentic representative of the Jewish people, and the struggle for a national polity—he suggested Zionism should be studied as paradigmatic of the general characteristics of nationalism and for its value for the comparative analysis of nationalism.

The study of British Zionism as part of a wider, transnational Jewish national movement, extending to both British Jewry and the transnational Jewish sphere of interaction, presupposes a concept of the nation that accommodates nationalisms cutting across state boundaries. By drawing on the legal debate on the equivocal question of the social unit entitled to the revolutionary claim of national self-determination and on the appropriate forms of national self-determination⁴⁴ and by pushing Ernest Renan's, Hugh Seton-Watson's, and Benedict Anderson's definitions to their limits, we may arrive at concepts of nation and nationalism that are also suitable for the study of diaspora Zionism. Regarding a 'common history and common programme for the future' as essential for a nation, Renan offers a voluntarist definition: 'A nation is therefore a large-scale solidarity, constituted by the feeling of the sacrifices that one has made in

⁴² In his careful reassessment of the East–West dichotomy in the study of Jewish history, Jonathan Frankel still contrasts the post-assimilationist, pragmatic or philanthropic Western Zionism with 'real' all-embracing nationalism.

⁴³ Zionism is the almost classic case of the creation of a nation without the backing of a state. Nipperdey, 'Nationalismus', 385.

⁴⁴ For the legal controversy over the right to self-determination and national self-determination: Antonio Cassese, *Self-Determination of Peoples* (Cambridge, 1995); idem, 'The Right of Peoples to Self-Determination: Historical, Political, and Legal Aspects: East-Timor, Palestine, Gibraltar and Eritrea', lecture delivered at the University of Oxford, Trinity Term 1992; James Crawford, *The Creation of States in International Law* (Oxford, 1979); James Mayall, *Nationalism and International Society* (Cambridge, 1990).

the past and of those that one is prepared to make in the future. It presupposes a past; it is summarized, however, in the present by a tangible affect, namely consent, the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life. A nation's existence is... a daily plebiscite.'⁴⁵ Seton-Watson has identified the essence of nationalism as 'the application to national communities of the Enlightenment doctrine of popular sovereignty',⁴⁶ to which he adds as a second source the cult of individuality instigated by Romanticism. His definition of the nation is primarily subjective and elective: 'a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one.'⁴⁷ Anderson defines the nation as 'an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.⁴⁸ The category of nationalisms that he calls the 'The Last Wave' comprises the profoundly modular twentieth-century variants whose complexities, ambivalences, and contradictions are the result of the possibility of drawing on more than a century and a half of human experience and by copying, adapting, and improving on three earlier models of nationalism and their main characteristics: 'official nationalism' and its educational system, 'popular nationalisms' of nineteenth-century Europe with their political and cultural associational life, the citizen republic originating in the Americas, as well as the nationalisms of societies which reimagined themselves as nations only when the nation had become the norm.⁴⁹ The modernist voluntarist, subjective, and hybrid concepts of nation and nationalism can accommodate diaspora Zionism along with other nationalisms cutting across the boundaries of the state, provided their conditionality on the nation as a territorially delimited political unit is dropped. Radicalizing Anderson's approach we may take nationalism as a form of identity which can be projected onto any social terrain, irrespective of whether or not it coincides with a territorialized political unit, and the nation as an imagined community that may or may not be resonant with a political community. As a consequence, the politics of nationalism vary, depending on the direction of the drive for national self-realization, with aims ranging from the establishment of a nation-state, the attainment of formal national minority rights, or the formation of a non-state subnationalism under the conditions of an already existing nation-state.

⁴⁵ Ernest Renan, 'What is a Nation?', trans. Martin Thom, in Homi Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990), 8–22.

⁴⁶ Seton-Watson, *Nations*, 445.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 5.

⁴⁸ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 135–40.

DESIGN, STRUCTURE, AND IMPLEMENTATION

When working with definitions of nation and nationalism that are valid independent of a resonant state, British Zionism may be explored as part of the wider process of Zionist state- and nation-building cutting across state boundaries. In order both to accommodate the multifarious expressions of British Zionism and to demonstrate their interdependence this study employs a three-level analysis. In the first place this approach allows the examination of the relations between British Jewry and Zionism in three areas: the transnational Jewish public and social sphere, the British-Jewish community, and the British polity. By examining this relationship in the context of the wider transnational Jewish sphere and as being refracted against the dominant fabric of British state and society, it becomes possible to take into account the impulses this relationship received from developments external to British Jewry, as well as to account for the repercussions that extended to the transnational Jewish sphere or to the British polity, rather than to the British-Jewish community in isolation. In addition to presenting a more variegated picture of the interaction between British Jewry and Zionism this framework of analysis makes it possible to identify chains of cause and effect cross-cutting these spheres. By demonstrating that British Jews responded in one sphere to developments in another it becomes possible to establish links between the causes and the expressions of British Zionism in a comprehensive way and to accommodate what otherwise would be discrete phenomena. There is one drawback about the three-level analysis adopted here: thematic repetitions. Fundraising, for example, can be examined as a means of support for Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East, as an avenue of internal nation-building in Britain, and as barometer for the relations of British Zionists with British politics and administration.

Part I attempts to account for the rise of Zionism in British Jewry at a particular historical juncture. Why did British Jews become Zionists on an increasing scale from the mid-1930s? The ascendancy of Zionism in British Jewry will be explained as the result of a combination of structural, long-term developments and temporary, but no less decisive factors. They are grouped in three categories: first, the disintegration of traditional religious and social frames of reference; second, antagonistic 'Others' against which British Jews identified themselves collectively; and third, the attractions which the Zionist project held out to British Jews. Part II traces the engagement of British Jews with the Zionist state- and nation-building project, featuring political lobbying, fundraising, and *aliyah*, from the Peel Commission until the Suez crisis. In order to illustrate the character

of Zionism as a novel form of British-Jewish identity, this study is not restricted to charting the development of the British Zionist movement, its institutions, and parties, including the Zionist Federation (ZF), the General, Socialist, Marxist, Religious, and Revisionist Zionists, the Federation of Women Zionists (FWZ), the Keren Kayemet Leisrael (KKL) and the Keren Hayesod (KH) as the main Zionist funds, the London Executive of the Jewish Agency, and the infrastructure for *hachshara*. It also traces its interaction with its competitors. The emphasis is not on the influence, or rather lack of it, that British Zionists, liberal assimilationists, Communists, and the radical Orthodox exerted on British government policy, British public opinion, and British-Jewish opinion, but on the motivation of Jews, the internal workings of British-Jewish politics, and the ways in which British Jews sought to promote their aims with the wider public and the British government.

While Part II of the volume is concerned with British-Jewish responses to the Zionist project in the Middle East, Part III investigates the rise of Zionism as a national movement aiming at capturing the Jewish community. It charts the growth of the Zionist movement as well as the Zionist proliferation in already existing Jewish organizations, from the Board of Deputies (BoD) as the representative organ of British Jewry, down to the synagogues as the basic unit of Jewish associational life in Britain. The operational mechanics of British Zionism are illustrated by reconstructing the ways in which British Jews came to experience Zionism through participation in a range of activities from the annual conferences of the ZF, fundraising, mass meetings, demonstrations, and petitioning to the everyday events of associational life such as committee meetings, garden parties, lectures, and bazaars. If the establishment of Zionist hegemony in the communal institutions of British Jewry coincided with the social transformation of communal authority, the book questions whether milieu and class are the appropriate parameters with which to explain the ascendancy of Zionism in British Jewry.

Part IV explores the impact of Zionism on the modes of Jewish integration into British state and society. The specifically British variations of Zionism on the nationalist theme are explained through their refraction against a particular political and social order, in this case British state and society. The interaction of Zionism with British state and society is discussed against the background of the specific features of the British-Jewish condition as well as those of British state and society characterized by a mixture of surviving elements of the *ancien régime*, the presence of the Empire, and the trend towards the nation-state. Two case studies exemplify the place of Zionism in British-Jewish relations with the larger society: the Zionist representation in British parliamentary politics, and

Zionism in the English educational landscape. As the involvement of British Jews with the Zionist enterprise and the processes of Jewish state- and nation-building took place under the conditions of the British state and society, Zionism touches not only on the Jewish condition in Britain but also on British state-ness and nation-ness.

SOURCES

Given the paucity of historiographical treatment of the topic in the period under scrutiny this work is predominantly based on primary sources, the archives of the various Jewish organizations, Israeli and British government departments, the Jewish press, and private papers. Interviews with British Jews from a variety of backgrounds have helped to fill gaps where the official records remain silent or have been lost.

I

THE MECHANICS OF BRITISH ZIONISM

The dominance Zionism had attained in British-Jewish life by the 1950s appears to be at a certain contradiction to its diverse if not entirely disparate expressions, ranging from *aliyah* to making the proverbial donation to help someone else resettle a Jew from somewhere else in the Jewish National Home. If Zionism had become more and more pervasive during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s it was neither ubiquitous nor evenly distributed. The purpose of Part I is to introduce the actors and the factors as well as to lay out the mechanisms of the interplay between them that shaped the relationship between British Jewry and Zionism. It attempts to account for the undoubted if chequered rise of Zionism in British Jewry at a particular historical juncture, encompassing the *shoah* and the establishment of the State of Israel, as the result of a combination of structural, long-term developments and temporary, but no less decisive factors. Borrowing from modernist theories of nationalism these are grouped in three categories: first, the crisis and disintegration of a given traditional religious and social order; second, antagonistic 'Others', against which British Jews identified themselves collectively, and third the attractions which the Zionist project held out to British Jews. The first section of Part I sketches the crisis of the social, communal, and religious status quo of British Jewry in the inter-war period, the erosion of the Anglo-Jewish and the second-generation Eastern European immigrants' milieux and their communal and religious institutions, such as the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Joint Foreign Committee, the United Synagogue tending to the Anglican-style Orthodox, and the Federation of Synagogues catering for the Yiddish-speaking Orthodox clientele. As a third component of British Jewry, in addition to the Anglo-Jewish and the second-generation Eastern European immigrants' milieux, the refugees from the Continent need to be taken into account. The second section of

Part I introduces the antagonistic catalysts of British Zionism, both those without British Jewry, foreign and domestic anti-Semitism as well as other factors perceived as narrowing Jewish space, and those within, liberal assimilationism, Communism, and radical Orthodoxy. The third section of Part I presents different avenues of Zionist nation-building in which British Zionists participated and through which they reimagined themselves as members or part-time members of the new Palestinocentric Jewish nation.

1

Preconditions of British Zionism

According to the modernist strand of the theory of nationalism, the emergence of nationalism—the existence of antecedents notwithstanding—is a phenomenon predicated on the dissolution of traditional political and social orders and corresponding religious world views.¹ The transition towards modernity was characterized by the substitution of vertical, national barriers for horizontal, social ones and corresponding modes of identification.² As, over the past 200 years, belonging to a nation became more important than belonging to a religious community, estate, or corporate group, nationalism has come to occupy the dominant place in the mix of human identities. If one follows Anderson in considering nationalism as the fundamental form of modern human consciousness, it is best understood not by putting it into one category with political ideologies, but instead with the encompassing cultural systems out of which and against which it came into being: traditional political, social, and theological orders.³ The shift from religion to nationalism as the dominant pattern of identification has been stressed by research in the history of ideas, theology, and anthropology.⁴ Conversely, the categorization of nationalism as a civic or secular religion also implies an understanding of the emergence of nationalism as a fundamental change in human consciousness. The obvious Jewish variant of such a dissolution of a traditional political and social order and a corresponding religious world view were the break-up of the corporate *kehilla*, the erosion of traditional Orthodoxy

¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9–36; Anthony Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, 2nd edn. (New York, 1983), 41–64, 109–50; Gellner, ‘Nationalism and the International Order’, in idem, *Encounters with Nationalism* (Oxford, 1994), 25; Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*.

² Gellner, *Nations*, 107.

³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 12.

⁴ Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 4th edn. (Oxford, 1993); P. Sherrard, ‘The Non-Christian Sequel: Greece and the Modern West’, in idem, *The Greek East and the Latin West* (London, 1959), 58–88; Paschalis Kitromilides, ‘Greek Irredentism in Asia Minor and Cyprus’, in idem, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe* (Aldershot, 1994), xiii. 1–17; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9–36.

as an encompassing lifestyle, and the, however incomplete, emancipation and integration into the fabric of the respective nation-states.⁵ Yet one may apply the concept of the break-up of a traditional social and religious status quo as a precondition for the rise of nationalism also to other Jewish social and religious orders, such as a given post-emancipationist Jewish community, or a specific segment of it. In using this concept it becomes possible to show Zionism as the beneficiary of the crises and transformations which the Anglo-Jewish milieu, inhabited by the long-established, liberal-cum-assimilationist section of the community, underwent in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s as well as the refugees from the Continent, who did not in their entirety choose to make use of a 'Second Chance' to become 'Continental Britons' as the titles of two publications suggest,⁶ and the second-generation immigrants.

The latter's case will be looked at in greater detail. From the inter-war period it showed rapid signs of disintegration.⁷ Compared with their parents' generation, which had arrived in Britain in the late nineteenth century, second-generation immigrants could take for granted neither demographic and occupational cohesion, nor common religious and social practices. At the turn of the century around 90 per cent of London Jews lived in the East End, worked in selected occupations, and were organized in a host of specifically Jewish religious, cultural, educational, social, and political organizations from trade unions to burial societies. The majority of them were bilingual, speaking English and Yiddish with the latter often remaining the medium of conversation at home. The picture in the provinces was similar. After the First World War the cohesiveness of the immigrants' milieu was under threat from several directions. Geographically, immigrant Jews and their descendants moved out of their original areas of settlement, socially they were upwardly mobile, religiously they became less observant, culturally *Yiddishkeit* gave way to an English lifestyle, and English-Yiddish bilingualism came to be supplanted by the monoglot use of English. With the welfare state rendering basic Jewish social work superfluous, the Jewish friendly societies and other social agencies which had sustained a distinct social sphere of Jewish interaction

⁵ Salo Wittmeyer Baron, *Modern Nationalism and Religion* (New York, 1947), 217–21; Harry Sacher, 'A Century of Jewish History', in idem, *Zionism and the Jewish Future* (London, 1916), 21; 'The Contribution of the Marks "Family" to Zionism', ch. i, 6–7, M&SCA.

⁶ Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi-Germany* (Oxford, 1988); Werner E. Mosse (ed.), *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tübingen, 1991).

⁷ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 306–8; idem, 'English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion? Reflections on the Emancipation of Anglo-Jewry', in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States and Citizenship* (Princeton, 1995), 156.

lost importance. Statistical evidence for the disintegration of the immigrants' milieu in the period stretching from the 1930s to the 1950s is provided by the declining number of Jewish youth attending the part-time religion classes of *talmud torahs* and the closure of Jewish day schools.⁸ The cumulative effect of these developments was that the answer to the question of what it meant to be a Jew in Britain was less evident to a second-generation immigrant than it had been to his parents. In the late 1940s Israel Finestein, President of the Federation of Zionist Youth (FZY), summarized the loss of orientation in the following words:

The sons of the immigrants might be in revolt against much that their parents did, but an obvious orientation had been given to their thoughts. It was as obvious in the East End of London as in Eastern Europe. It became less obvious in those areas of London and the country where the Jewish environment was less natural . . . The community has lost much of its geographical concentration, and must strengthen its bonds through other means.⁹

If, given the ratio of roughly one to three between native and immigrant Jews after the mass immigration from Eastern Europe, the crisis of British Jewry was particularly visible in the immigrants' milieu, it was not restricted to it, but had its parallels in the Anglo-Jewish milieu, characterized by high degrees of acculturation, integration and assimilation, liberal optimism, and the Anglicized, United Synagogue version of Orthodoxy. 'De-Judaization', an aspect of the general trend of secularization, which found expression in falling synagogue attendances, increasing laxity in the observance of Jewish ritual, and the diminishing inclination of Jewish parents to secure a Jewish education for their children, was a trend that affected both milieux.¹⁰ In 1939 the Council for Jewish Education estimated that in London only slightly more than half of the Jewish children received any form of formal religious instruction and in the provincial communities even less.¹¹

The disintegration of an accepted social and religious way of life is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the emergence of nationalism. Internal developments of the potentially national collective have to be complemented by real or perceived antagonists, which will be discussed in the next part.

⁸ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 8.

⁹ Israel Finestein, 'An Aspect of Anglo-Jewish History', *Gates of Zion*, (October 1947), 29.

¹⁰ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 306–9; idem, 'English Jews or Jews of the English Persuasion?', 156.

¹¹ *Report of the Central Committee for Jewish Education, 1938/39*, 24.

2

Antagonists as Catalysts of British Zionism

The existence of the Other, of real or imagined antagonists, within or without the putative nation, has been recognized as a crucial determinant for the development of nationalism.¹² English nationalism developed in response to the absolutist and Catholic aspirations of the Stuarts and recurrent wars with France. The nationalisms of the Americas defined themselves against Britain and Spain, French nationalism of 1789 against the representatives of the *ancien régime*, German and Spanish nationalisms against revolutionary and Napoleonic France, Belgian nationalism against the Netherlands, German nationalism against France and an array of internal *Reichsfeinde*.

While the immediate experience of anti-Semitism has been recognized as crucial for the rise of Zionism in Eastern and Central Europe, it was less decisive for the development of Zionism in Western societies. Although more recently even general accounts of British history have come to see anti-Semitism as less marginal to British history than hitherto acknowledged,¹³ the concept of the antagonistic Other, in order to help explain the rise of Zionism in a liberal country such as Britain, needs to be more sophisticated, including anti-Semitism, but not being limited to it. It must cover a range of variables which, although not necessarily anti-Semitic by themselves, differentiated Jews qua Jews from the surrounding society and potentially placed them at a disadvantage in relation to the majority society. Such factors will be subsumed under the term 'anti-Semitism by default'.

Bill Williams has made an essential contribution to the understanding of what anti-Semitism in Britain in the first place meant by complementing the picture of traditional, exclusive anti-Semitism by an inclusive

¹² Linda Colley, *Britons* (London, 1996), 387; Hobsbawm, *Nations*, 91.

¹³ Ross McKibbin, *Parties and People: England 1914–1951* (Oxford, 2010), 191; Keith Robbins, *The British Isles 1901–1951* (Oxford, 2002), 103, 220–1.

version: the 'antisemitism of tolerance'.¹⁴ In contrast to a pluralist liberal society, the uniforming strand within liberalism proved hostile to Jewish distinctiveness. Jews were not accepted qua Jews, but on the tacit understanding that they discarded their particular characteristics and conformed to the standards set by the majority.¹⁵

As well as differentiating between anti-Semitism and 'anti-Semitism by default' as being responsible for the rise of Zionism in Britain, distinctions are made between external antagonists and those internal to the supposed national body; between general and specifically British factors; between long-term, structural trends and temporary developments; between developments which had an immediate impact on British Jews and those experienced more indirectly; and between direct aggression against Jews and developments which, although not anti-Semitic as such, turned out to be hostile to Jews or particular Jewish concerns.

Therefore, antagonistic catalysts of British Zionism encompassed variegated factors such as persecution and extermination of the Jews by Nazi Germany, domestic anti-Semitism, disillusionment with the democracies which failed the Jews during the *shoah*, British obstruction of the Jewish National Home, or the pressures for conformity exerted by modern, British society. Before scrutinizing them in more detail, it is useful to remember that incidents of anti-Semitism or disregard for Jewish concerns neither had to happen frequently, nor had to be experienced personally to unfold their impact and become a preoccupation on a British Jew's mind.

THE ENEMY WITHOUT: ANTI-SEMITISM

The upsurge of anti-Semitism after the First World War, abroad and at home, was one of the key antagonists on which British Zionism thrived. In the inter-war period, British Jews witnessed the rise of anti-Semitism on the Continent, in particular, in the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires, and in Germany.¹⁶ Although it was in

¹⁴ Bill Williams, 'The Anti-Semitism of Tolerance: Middle Class Manchester and the Jews, 1870–1900', in Alan J. Kidds and K. W. Robberts (eds.), *City, Class and Culture: Studies of Social Policy and Cultural Production in Victorian Manchester* (Manchester, 1985), 74–102.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the Jewish relationship with American liberalism and additional literature on the ambivalence of the Enlightenment tradition to the Jews in general, see Ira Katznelson, 'Between Separation and Disappearance: Jews on the Margins of American Liberalism', in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Jews, States and Citizenship* (Princeton, 1995), 157–205, esp. 160–70.

¹⁶ Mark Levene, *War, Jews, and the New Europe: The Diplomacy of Lucien Wolf 1914–1919* (Oxford, 1992); Carole Fink, *Defending the Right of Others: The Great Powers, the Jews, and International Minority Protection, 1878–1938* (Cambridge, 2004), 101–365.

a mediated form that British Jews confronted the persecution and extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany and those parts of the Continent under its control, British Jewry was affected in several ways. With the influx of refugees in Britain after 1933, the search for possible escape routes during the war, and the debate over the relocation of the survivors of the *shoah* thereafter, the fate of European Jews had become a British-Jewish concern, with many practical repercussions. In the long run probably of far greater consequence than witnessing the horrors of the persecution of the Jews on the Continent or the experience of anti-Semitism at home was the growing conviction that anti-Semitism came to be taken for granted. In 1942 Selig Brodetsky, President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews from 1939, reminded his audience that the British government had ceased to intervene on behalf of Jewish minority rights in 1925.¹⁷ He considered anti-Semitism to be a general as well as an increasing problem: 'The Nazi race ideal . . . has given humanity a new conception of anti-semitic insanity, the effects of which cannot be interpreted as a temporary exhibition of a special German idea, which will disappear when the Nazis have been removed from the world.'¹⁸ Therefore, he demanded the establishment of an international committee concerned with the elimination of anti-Semitism after the war, which 'will have much to do everywhere, in the countries of the west as much as in the countries of the east; for Hitlers are not natives of Germany alone'.¹⁹

Against the background of the contrast between the National Socialist extermination of the Jews and the continuous political and social integration and the economic advancement of British Jews, domestic anti-Semitism has long been dismissed as a marginal or passing phenomenon.²⁰ Recent scholarship has shown anti-Semitism to be much closer to mainstream British life than hitherto acknowledged.²¹ This reassessment of British anti-Semitism has highlighted the anxieties of British Jews and their impact on Jewish identity, solidarity, and political behaviour.²²

¹⁷ Selig Brodetsky, 'The Jews in the Post-War Settlement', Lucien Wolf Memorial Lecture, 30 May 1942, 2, CZA A82/6.

¹⁸ Ibid. 8.

¹⁹ Ibid. 15.

²⁰ Gisela Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918–1939* (London, 1978), 153–4, 170–7.

²¹ David Cesarani, 'Joynson-Hicks and the Radical Right in England after the First World War', in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *Traditions of Intolerance: Historical Perspectives on Fascism and Race Discourse in Britain* (Manchester, 1989), 118–39; Tony Kushner, *The Persistence of Prejudice: Antisemitism in British Society during the Second World War* (Manchester, 1989); Alderman, *British Jewry*, 282–95.

²² Alderman, *British Jewry*, 282; idem, 'Anglo-Jewry: The Unspoken Fears', *Forum on the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel*, 37/1 (1980), 54–5.

The proponents of a more critical approach to British-Jewish history have found the communal leadership ultimately wanting in their willingness to defend Jewish interests in the political arena during the 1930s, when it would not take the combat against fascism to the streets²³ and acquiesced in the government's reluctance to increase the number of Jewish refugees for fear of growing anti-Semitism,²⁴ or during the war, when they proved incapable of influencing the government to make the rescue of Jews a higher priority.²⁵ While the actual scope of manoeuvre enjoyed by the Jewish communal leadership to influence the course of events remains controversial,²⁶ less doubt exists about domestic anti-Semitism being a factor which shaped British-Jewish behaviour. While manifestly in a different category from the open persecution and extermination in continental Europe and not necessarily part of the personal experience of every British Jew, domestic anti-Semitism had become a pressing communal concern by the 1930s and continued to be so.²⁷

Contemporary Jewish public pronouncements, internal estimates from the assimilationist no less than from the Zionist quarters of the community as well as their translation into practical measures, testify to the awareness of the existence and the rise of domestic anti-Semitism since the 1930s.²⁸ These were the days too, of social and political crisis in the home affairs of Britain which saw the rise of the precursor of Fascism—the increasing force of anti-Semitism of which there had been exceedingly little in Great Britain.²⁹ One is tempted to dismiss such a post factum assessment as well as contemporary comments such as those made by Berl

²³ Geoffrey Alderman, *The Jewish Community in British Politics*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1983), 116–23; David Cesarani, 'The Transformation of Communal Authority', in idem (ed.), *The Making of Modern Anglo-Jewry* (Oxford, 1990), 128–31.

²⁴ Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews* (Cambridge, 2000).

²⁵ Richard Bolchover, *British Jewry and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 1993).

²⁶ For stern criticism of Bolchover's book see A[ri] Joshua Sherman, *Island Refuge: Britain and the Refugees from the Third Reich, 1933–1939*, 2nd edn. (London, 1994), 1–8; see also William Rubinstein, *A History of the Jews in the English-Speaking World: Great Britain* (London, 1996) and idem, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies could not have Saved More Jews from the Nazis* (London, 1997).

²⁷ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 285.

²⁸ Brodetsky, 'The Jews in the Post-War Settlement', 5; 'Statement presented to members of the House of Commons representing Manchester, Salford, South East Lancashire and Cheshire Constituencies by a Deputation representing the Jewish Community of Manchester and District', 21 September 1944, 1, CZA F13/166; BoD, 'Report of the Standing Committee on Community Libel', July 1945, CZA A330/684; Aubrey [Abba] Eban, 'Afterword', in Lev Semenovich Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*, ed. Aubrey Eban (London, 1937), 77; Joseph Litvin, 'Comments', *Gates of Zion* (October 1948), 35; *Council of Manchester and Salford Jews: Annual Report*, 1948/9; 'Marks "Family"', ch. iii, 32; Basil Henriques, 'Anti-Semitism and its Causes', in *Frates: Club Boys in Uniform. An Anthology* (London, 1951), 138–42.

²⁹ 'Marks "Family"', ch. iii, 32.

Locker who wrote that anti-Semitism was a 'disease which crosses all frontiers; even in a war of life and death it moves across fronts from the country which happens to be its breeding-ground. The Jews of America and Britain are experiencing this during the present war. . . . The symptoms are visible . . . "The Jews" are responsible for the Black Market, are guilty of living in luxury, of occupying the best seats in dining cars and crowding the best restaurants; indeed, it is hinted that "the Jews" are not really enemies of Hitler', or by Harry Sacher, who saw 'Anti-Semitism . . . all around us, a miasma of which we are all conscious',³⁰ as lip-service to Zionist dogma. Yet the public admission of British anti-Semitism by outspoken assimilationists such as Neville Laski, President of the Board of Deputies until 1939, the Liberal Rabbi Israel Mattuck, and Basil Henriques, scion of a prominent Anglo-Jewish family and social worker, pointed to the same direction.³¹ Henriques's anthology of wartime letters written by members of his youth club provide a vivid picture of their experiences of domestic anti-Semitism.³² In 1945, the Board of Deputies' standing committee on community libel reported that British Jews had since the early 1930s been 'subjected to continuous attacks and to a flow of abuse, both orally and in publications, as well as in certain types of press correspondence'.³³ The report continued to record increasing attacks on British Jews, with accusations of Jewish warmongering and blackmarket-eering during the 1930s and the war, and instances of holocaust denial after the war, claiming that the 'general result of the unchallenged and unchecked campaign of anti-Semitism has been to create in England a problem which was never known before and which is depriving this country of its claim that under the British flag all citizens . . . have equal rights, with no discriminatory bars against them'.³⁴ It concluded: 'As a consequence, the relations existing between Christians and Jew in this country have considerably deteriorated and there are signs of social and business discrimination against Jewish citizens.'³⁵

Domestic anti-Semitism was reinforced during the final years of British Mandatory rule over Palestine. After the end of the war, under the impact

³⁰ Harry Sacher, 'Anglo-Jewry: The Vacuum in Leadership', 19 June 1942, 2, CZA A289/65; Berl Locker, *Palestine and the Jewish Future* (London, 1942), 9–10, reprinted from *New Left News* (March 1942).

³¹ Basil Henriques, letter to the editor, *The Times*, 10 October 1936; Neville Laski, *Jewish Rights and Jewish Wrongs* (London, 1939), 116; Israel Mattuck, *What are the Jews? Their Significance and Position in the Modern World* (London, 1939), 70–1.

³² Henriques, 'Anti-Semitism and its Causes', 138–42.

³³ BoD, 'Report of the Standing Committee on Community Libel', July 1945, CZA A330/684.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

of the escalating tensions between the *yishuv* and the Mandatory administration, the relations of British Jews with the larger society became increasingly strained. Anti-Semitism among the British serving in the Mandate did not go unnoticed by British Jews. The anti-Semitic diatribes in which the British counsel for the defence indulged during the 1943 arms trial, when Palestinian Jews were prosecuted for the illegal possession of arms, were considered particularly offensive.³⁶ Quoting from an article written by a non-Jew on the loose talk among British service men in the Mandate along the lines that they 'ought to have given Hitler another couple of years and let him finish the job', Litvin, a Rabbi and Religious Zionist, drew the attention of the readers of *The Gates of Zion* to anti-Semitism in the Palestine police force.³⁷ While social ostracism based on the implicit assumption that British Jews could be held responsible for acts of terrorism in Palestine was widespread, there were few violent attacks against British Jews. And only rarely did British Jews regard the anti-Jewish disturbances in Britain following the attacks by Jewish terrorists on British military personnel in Palestine as a first sign of Britain following in the footsteps of tsarist Russia or Nazi Germany.³⁸ While British Jews, as a rule, insisted that any direct comparison with Germany was out of place, the sense of overall security which had characterized British Jewry until the inter-war period had nonetheless suffered a blow. As one sceptic put it: 'The example of Germany need not at all be regarded as a precedent, but it is there for all to see or to ignore.'³⁹ While the 1947 anti-Jewish riots fell into a different category from the *shoah*, 'the absence of extermination is not the same as the absence of anti-Semitism'.⁴⁰

With many British Jews, including Zionists, stating that they had never been discriminated against as Jews during the period under scrutiny, the extent, but not the existence, of domestic anti-Semitism is debatable.⁴¹ Whatever the precise number of British Jews personally to have experienced anti-Semitism, by the end of the 1930s it caused sufficient concern for the Board of Deputies to establish two defence agencies, the Defence Committee in 1938 and the Trades Advisory Council (TAC) in 1940, the

³⁶ Linton to Stein, 20 August 1943, CZA Z4/10.181-A; letter to the editor by Capt. Halpern, *JC* (August 1943); Israel Cohen, *A Short History of Zionism, 1860–1944. Lecture VI: The Second World War, 1939–1945* (London, 1945).

³⁷ Morris Richardson, 'Farewell to Palestine', *The Observer*, 13 July 1947; *Gates of Zion* (October 1947), 36.

³⁸ *Gates of Zion* (October 1947), 35.

³⁹ C. C. Aronsfeld, 'The Desecration of Synagogues: Germany's Example. It cannot happen here', *Gates of Zion* (April 1947), 32.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Interview with Walter Eytan, 8–9, HU, tape 2354; interview with Ernest Frankel, 2, HU, tape 2218.

staff and budget of which exceeded those of the Board of Deputies proper.⁴² The establishment of defence agencies in the late 1930s amounted to a recognition by the communal leadership that British Jews were not just like other British citizens but had to struggle for equality of rights. The continued existence of institutionalized communal defence as well as the incorporation of defence work as an important plank in the platform of Jewish organizations such as, for example, the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (AJEX), is sufficient evidence that domestic anti-Semitism was a factor which influenced the behaviour of British Jews.

ANTI-SEMITISM BY DEFAULT

Although domestic anti-Semitism was closer to mainstream British life than has long been acknowledged and although the rising tide of anti-Semitism abroad had a strong, if mediated impact on British Jewry, in Britain Zionism thrived predominantly on anti-Semitism by default. By which is meant that structural conditions which were not anti-Semitic by design, but which reduced the scope of the social and public Jewish sphere, accentuated the difference between non-Jews and Jews, or put the latter potentially at a disadvantage in comparison to members of the majority society. They included the relative inferiority of British Jews as a minority in the British state and society, the failure of the British state and society to satisfy expectations raised earlier that the differences between Jews and non-Jews would disappear or become irrelevant, the continued limits of social acceptance, the insecurity resulting from the dependence on the surrounding society, philo-Semitic condescension, the pressures for conformity exerted by the larger society, growing state intervention, and the impossibility of leading an unfettered collective Jewish existence in the British diaspora. With many of these factors being intrinsically linked to the British state and society, Jewish nationalism has therefore primarily to be explained by such antagonistic variables which were bound up with, rather than being deviations from, the liberal state and society.

Universalist panaceas and their Zionist discontents

There were two sides to the Zionist critique of universalism: classical liberalism and, by extension, Communism. On the one hand, Zionists

⁴² Draft article by Sacher, 17 July 1942; Sacher, 'The Community and the T.A.C.', 5 November 1942, CZA A289/65; *Gates of Zion* (July 1947), 17.

contested the claim that a social and political order perfected according to liberal or Communist designs would automatically result in the solution of the 'Jewish Question'. Here, the Zionists' main criticism of liberalism and Communism was that their panaceas for the Jewish condition were predicated on the renunciation of the Jews' particularity and their ultimate disappearance. On the other hand, Zionists did not criticize liberalism and Communism as such, only their imperfect extension over society.

Both before and during the Second World War, British Zionists argued that the logic of the liberal nation-state ran counter to Jewish collective continuity. In a poignant exposition of the national Jewish critique of universalism, Aubrey Eban, President of the Federation of Zionist Youth (FZY) in Britain and later Israel's representative to the United Nations, Ambassador to the United States, and Foreign Minister of the State of Israel, questioned, first, whether Jews had to renounce any particular interests in order to bring about a perfected world. He argued that it was

the tragic error of the 19th century Jews who thought that the victory of liberalism would put an end to the Jewish problem. The Communist position differs not at all from that of many 19th century liberals who urged the Jews to renounce separate aspirations and to become tolerated instead of persecuted minorities within other nations.⁴³

He contested the Communist claim that 'Jewish troubles are only part of the general social maladjustment; and that this must be corrected on a world scale, if the Jewish grievance is to be redressed' and that 'Zionism deviates Jewish attention and effort from wider social objectives which would include the solution of the Jewish problem without being specifically directed to that end'.⁴⁴ The Zionist counter-argument was that the 'Jewish question' was not part of wider political, social, or economic problems, but cut across them. Eban saw proof for the Zionist claim in what was a deplorable, but by the Zionists' own reasoning not illogical, fact that progressive forces had regularly failed to champion the Jewish minorities in the hour of their agonizing crisis.⁴⁵

Two interlocking aspects of the Zionist charge against liberalism and Communism per se emerge from the preceding quotations. On the one hand, Zionists saw universalist political and social agendas flawed by their failure to address the Jewish question as a problem in its own right, resulting from the assumption that its solution would automatically follow the organization of state and society according to progressive general standards.

⁴³ Kedourie, *Nationalism*; Eban, 'Afterword', 78.

⁴⁴ Eban, 'Afterword', 71-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 79.

On the other hand, Zionists not only criticized liberalism and Communism for evading the 'Jewish question', but were apprehensive that their social visions would eventually leave no space for Jewish distinctiveness.⁴⁶

The latter argument was advanced on three levels. First, Zionists criticized liberalism for its very success and its consequent corrosive impact on Jewish unity, arguing that, in societies where Jews were not held together by external pressure, increasing numbers of them left the community. While the massive immigration of Eastern European Jews had long concealed the losses of British Jewry, concern over shrinking numbers had featured on the communal agenda of British Jewry since the inter-war period. Second, although Zionists recognized that it was for individual reasons that many Jews left the fold, they saw the underlying cause of this development in the pressures towards conformity exerted by the majority society, which worked against Jewish continuity. In reviewing a book by US academics on the contemporary Jewish condition, Lewis Namier, historian and intimate adviser of the London Executive of the Jewish Agency, noted, for example, that the contributors had declared the bankruptcy of the concept of assimilation without realizing it.⁴⁷ The general tenor of the contributions had been that Jews who retained certain peculiarities were bound to become an irritant in societies striving for consistency. They had, therefore, advocated not only acculturation and assimilation, but the Jews' merger with the surrounding society as the best means of overcoming anti-Semitism.⁴⁸ Third, however satisfactory the position of the individual Jew might be in a liberal democracy, even in the most perfect of liberal worlds, Jews would be denied the expression of their collective identity in a nation-state:

Even if the world were a federation of free, democratic states devoid of the least hint of anti-Semitism, Zionists would not surrender their claim to win a national existence of the Jews. In fact, a free and egalitarian world society would throw the inferior status of the Jews into even stronger relief. The contrast between nations occupying vast areas of land, free to determine their own forms of political and cultural expression—and the Jews still scattered as guests in every country, torn between assimilation and their group-consciousness, would stand out more blatantly than it does today, when more than one nation is undergoing oppression and

⁴⁶ For further example of the Zionist case for an international as opposed to a cosmopolitan world order: Joseph Cohen, *The Communist Challenge and a Zionist Reply* (London, 1936), 13–16; Locker, *Palestine and the Jewish Future*, 5; The Toynebee–Eban controversy provides a sequel to the cosmopolitan versus the internationalist debate: Abba Eban, *The Toynebee Heresy* (New York, 1955).

⁴⁷ Isaac Graeber and Stuart Henderson Britt, *Jews in a Gentile World: The Problem of Anti-Semitism* (New York, 1942), esp. 418–32.

⁴⁸ Namier, 'Anti-Semitism', in idem, *Facing East* (London, 1947), 129–41.

conquest... To take a topical instance—the Indian nationalists desire their freedom because Imperialism keeps them in the throes of subjection. But they would not desire their autonomy any less if the Imperial Government treated them with the most liberal and kindly tolerance imaginable. Similarly, the actual misery of the Jews in the Diaspora fortifies but does not create the necessity for Zionism.⁴⁹

However laudable their efforts on behalf of the Jews as individuals, neither liberals nor Communists would remedy the reduction of the Jews from a subject to an object of human history. When talking about the ‘emancipation of the Jewish people from what has been the greatest discrimination in history’, Brodetsky emphasized that he was not referring ‘to the Nazi policy against the Jews... not... to antisemitism... but... the fact that for centuries the Jews have been condemned to be victims of world policy... The fundamental basis of the idea of assimilation is the poison which has entered the minds of so many Jews who cannot any longer see the Jews as participants in the making of world policy, as partners in humanity’.⁵⁰ Zionism, he argued, consisted ‘fundamentally in the emancipation of the Jewish people from that position of inferiority which excluded it from the counsels of the world and made it only the recipient of the kindnesses or wickednesses of the world’.⁵¹

Until the early 1950s, the USSR enjoyed credit among British Jews for outlawing anti-Semitism and providing security to the individual Jew.⁵² The Zionists’ main charge against Soviet Communism was its denial to the Jews of full nation status, while ‘[s]mall backward and half-forgotten nationalities have been established in the free exercise of their language and culture, so that no national problem confuses their social purpose or their solidarity with the Union as a whole’.⁵³ In Zionist eyes the USSR had failed not in the individual, but in the national emancipation of the Jews: ‘I do not look with any pleasure on any solution of the Jewish problem which is based upon the conception that the Jews are a lot of individuals running about who are occasionally persecuted’.⁵⁴

Different from the Zionist critique of universalist social and political visions and practical politics as such were Zionist doubts about their viability. The crisis of liberalism since the late nineteenth century called into question the capacity of the liberal democracies to live up to their

⁴⁹ Eban, ‘Afterword’, 81–2. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁰ Bodetsky, ZF, 41st Annual Conference, 25 January 1942, 57–8, CZA F13/42/II.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Brodetsky, ‘The Jews in the Post-War Settlement’, 1, 3.

⁵³ Eban, ‘Afterword’, 80.

⁵⁴ Bodetsky, ZF, 41st Annual Conference, 25 January 1942, 66–7, CZA F13/42/II.

own standards and extend the corresponding benefits to the Jews. Eban reminded his readers that by the late 1930s Jewish civic equality was confined to a few countries. Where it still existed, it had come under threat from domestic anti-Semitism, as in Britain or the USA, or from German encroachment, as in the Netherlands, Belgium, or Switzerland.⁵⁵ The assessment by British Zionists of the waning fortunes of liberalism since the inter-war period and the consequent deterioration of the Jewish position took two different forms. One school of thought was not only pessimistic about the present condition of liberalism but also about its prospects for recovery. There was a note of fundamental disillusionment in Sacher's diagnosis that Hitler had dealt the death blow to the illusory belief that 'Liberalism was the gospel of the non-Jews'.⁵⁶ On the other hand British Zionists did not necessarily despair in principle about humanity's capacity for progressive objectives. What they doubted was whether without being organized as a nation, the Jews would benefit from their realization rather than being destroyed in the course of the struggles for their achievement:

the greatest danger to the future of our people is the suggestion that our safety can be secured by a change in Jews or by a change in the world. The world has changed over and over again during the last 2,000 years; has there been any progress with regard to the Jewish people? It is true that between the middle of the nineteenth century and our time we had a short period of comparative freedom from anti-Semitism; but looking down the centuries of Jewish history can we say that Jews in the twentieth century are better treated than in the nineteenth or in the eighteenth century, or in the darkest ages of early and later medievalism? Is not Jewry to-day in a far worse position than it has ever been in its history?⁵⁷

This second strand of thought was not a critique of liberalism *per se*, but of its imperfect realization. Even the radicalism of the more extreme voices such as Sacher's was characterized not by the outright rejection of liberal tenets but by a profound scepticism about their viability among non-Jews. Democratic government and a society perfected according to liberal or socialist designs of various degrees enjoyed the Zionists' full support. In order to enjoy their benefits both as a collective and on a permanent basis, however, they argued, the Jews had to terminate the revocability of the liberal offer by constituting themselves as a nation: 'The aim of our people must be to become free, and to take part as a people in the human struggle.'⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Eban, 'Afterword', 77.

⁵⁶ Sacher to Levenberg, 16 October 1941, WA 2330.

⁵⁷ Eban, 'Afterword', 265.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 266.

Apart from the general, long-term deterioration of the Jewish position, in particular since the First World War, the *shoah*, and the response of those who witnessed the unfolding catastrophe, dramatically reinforced British Jews' disillusionment with the non-Jewish world. The *shoah* had dealt a blow to the liberal belief in the progressing perfection of human society.⁵⁹ This operated on two levels. First, the collapse of European civilization in Auschwitz resulted in a deep-seated sense of alienation from those responsible for it: the Germans and their collaborators.⁶⁰ Second, there was a sense of isolation from the larger society on account of the Allies' response to the *shoah*.⁶¹ When the Allied Declaration of 17 December 1942 condemned the Nazi extermination of the Jews, but avoided any practical promise of rescue, this was deplored at the ZF's 1943 annual conference by Easterman, Locker, and Brodetsky.⁶² Elaborating on Brodetsky's speech Locker said the former had wanted to

express the feeling that sympathy, emotion, and all these things are very good, very humane very important, if at the same time those who have shown this sympathy are really showing signs of searching for every possibility in order to save Jews from Nazi murder. This is not the case at this present moment; we have not yet seen very many steps taken in order to put this into action. . . . we know the difficulties are tremendous but we as Jews know that 'but for the grace of God it might have been us' It should not be impossible to save at least a considerable part of our people, and we have a right to demand from the world that though there are great difficulties extraordinary measures must be taken to overcome them.⁶³

The numerous instances when governments refused pleas to intervene on behalf of persecuted Jews or to admit Jewish immigrants, most notably at the Evian Conference, where the representatives of Jewish organizations were not allowed to take part in the proceedings and were hardly allowed to state their case, exposed the isolation and marginalization of the Jews in the political arena.⁶⁴ The failures of the Evian and Bermuda conferences to find homes for Jewish refugees were criticized at the time and became fixed in the memory of British Jews.⁶⁵ After 1945, with the majority

⁵⁹ Brodetsky, 'The Jews in the Post-War Settlement', 3.

⁶⁰ Litvin, 'Zionism and the Synagogue', in Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 130.

⁶¹ For Allied government responses to the *shoah*: Martin Gilbert, *Auschwitz and the Allies* (London, 1981); Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939–1945* (Oxford, 1979); for a cultural and social survey of the Allied response to *shoah*: Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust and the Liberal Imagination* (Oxford, 1994), 119–278.

⁶² Brodetsky, ZF, 42nd Annual Conference, 16 January 1943, *Palcor Bulletin*, 19 January 1943.

⁶³ ZF, 42nd Annual Conference, 17 January 1943, 5, CZA Z4/10.346-I.

⁶⁴ Davis Vital, *A People Apart* (Oxford, 1999), 881–91, 896; Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939–1945*, 2nd edn. (London, 1979).

⁶⁵ Locker, *Palestine and the Jewish Future*, 12–13.

society back on track again and British Jews left to contemplate the *shoah*, the feeling of having been let down by the democracies became more pronounced:

the annihilation of Central European Jewry . . . has been a dark blot on our whole civilisation. Indeed, this unprecedented crime of Nazidom has been amplified by the sinful indifference and the heartless passivity of the free nations of the world. Even the re-birth of the State of Israel by the decision of the United Nations can hardly be said to have atoned for the destruction of six million innocent victims. Whilst we rejoice at the realisation of our dreams, let us not forget too the horrors that our earlier hesitations and dissensions brought to our people.⁶⁶

When the liberal democracies showed neither inclination to open their countries to the Jewish Displaced Persons nor undue haste in finding alternative solutions to their plight, Jewish hopes in the new world order were disappointed.

With the *shoah* and the indifference of those witnessing the unfolding catastrophe, two of the external catalysts of British Zionism assumed an unprecedented intensity. In the more radical interpretations these external factors shaded into one another, resulting in the assumption of a conspiracy of silence against Jews.⁶⁷ British Zionists saw the *shoah* as a bitter vindication of their analysis of the Jewish condition and their demand for national self-determination:

If the Zionist conviction about the nature of the Jewish problem has ever needed confirmation, then the events of today make any further confirmation unnecessary. Millions of Jews are exposed to cold-blooded, calculated murder, and the civilized world looks on, unable to take any step to stop the process. . . . When civilization is fighting, in the words of the American President, in order to establish the freedoms of thought, of religion, from fear, and from want, the Jewish people is alone with the tragic problem of fighting for its freedom to live. When a people is reduced to this situation, it becomes childish for it to discuss whether it prefers to live under its own responsibility, and if necessary to fight for its own safety or whether it wants to depend for ever upon the kindnesses of those peoples whose treatment of Jewry has eventuated in the unimaginable disaster of to-day.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Israel Sieff, 'Anniversary Address', ZF, 48th Annual Conference, 1949, 8, CZA F13/1004/II.

⁶⁷ Easterman, ZF, 41st Annual Conference, 25 January 1942, 47, CZA F13/42/II; Joseph Hertz, *D[avid] Sandelson: Memorial Address, Leeds, 13th August 1944—5704*, 7–8.

⁶⁸ Selig Brodetsky, 'The Balfour Declaration: Its Political Significance', in Paul Goodman (ed.), *The Jewish National Home: The Second November 1917–1942* (London, 1943), 254–5.

The *shoah* and the non-Jewish response to it had not only radicalized British Zionism but also increased the acceptance among broader British-Jewish circles of two arguments on which the Zionist critique of liberalism rested. First, if the extermination of the Jews, as well as their prominence among the refugees and Displaced Persons, did not outright prove the Zionist claim that there was a 'Jewish question' and that this question was a national one, cutting across wider political, economic, and social questions, it made at least the adoption of specific measures to alleviate Jewish suffering plausible. Second, the inadequate non-Jewish response to the Jewish catastrophe had underlined the marginality of Jewish minorities in a world of nation-states.

The British Zionists' critique of Britain

Apart from the disillusionment with universalist panaceas for the Jewish predicament and with the liberal democracies' response to the *shoah*, which acted as general catalysts of British Zionism, the specifically British antagonists which facilitated its rise need to be taken into account. As Britain remained a liberal country in contrast to most countries on the Continent, this chapter is concerned less with the insecurity of the British-Jewish condition as a result of the fragility of the British political system, than with British policies and public opinion, which ran counter to Jewish concerns.

It was only for a brief period, in the final months of the Chamberlain government, that there was apprehension in British-Jewish quarters about the sustainability of Britain's political system. In June 1940, David Kessler, one of the *Jewish Chronicle's* directors, asked Ivan Greenberg to frame a leader reflecting 'the possibility in England of a repetition of the French *political* catastrophe', where the 'Government... got into the hands of a Fascist clique who want to do a deal with the enemy'.⁶⁹ Kessler suggested three measures to avoid a British repeat performance of the French débâcle and a negotiated peace with Germany: '1) Churchill must be given dictatorial powers—if necessary for a period of 6 months. 2) The Fifth Column must *all* be locked up... 3) We must make a military pact with Russia.'⁷⁰ After Churchill had replaced Chamberlain as Prime Minister, it was no longer the viability of Britain's liberal political system which gave rise to Jewish concern. Instead, a number of specific British policies as well as the attitude of the British public fuelled British-Jewish discontent which, in turn, sparked off Jewish nationalism.

⁶⁹ David Kessler to Greenberg, 19 June 1940, AJ/110/2.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

During the 1940s the sense of difference from society at large which British Jews felt was reinforced as a result of British policy in three areas: the rescue of Jews from extermination, the Jewish DP's problem, and Mandatory Palestine. While the first two issues were not the exclusive concern of Britain, but also of the Allies, the neutral countries, and the international community, British Jews were particularly sensitive to British policy in these fields as it was their own government which blocked the way to what came to be seen as the most expedient solution to the plight of Jewish refugees. Britain's commitment to the May 1939 White Paper, which amounted to the rejection of an active rescue policy as well as to a volte-face on Britain's original intentions for the Jewish National Home, impressed on broad sections of British Jews the feeling that their concerns did not overlap with the priorities of the larger society.

As long as the outcome of the war hung in the balance, British Jews kept a low profile on rescue.⁷¹ Although negotiations with the government took place about the rescue of Jews from extermination, British Jews made it neither the central purpose of fundraising nor of lobbying, as Maurice Rosette of the JA's Information Department in London self-reproachingly remarked:

Eleanor Rathbone has privately from time to time expressed amazement at the way in which we are dealing with the situation here. . . . I know that there has been no public appeal, and, therefore, perhaps the man in the street cannot be blamed, but we, who are responsible, and I include myself without hesitation, should have done more. . . . As for public agitation, can we honestly say that we have done anything approaching even that which is being done in America, and I would not exonerate them entirely.⁷²

The lack of British-Jewish lobbying for rescue should not to be mistaken for indifference. Since 1942 the British ban on immigration into Palestine was branded on Jewish platforms in uncompromising language as sealing the only escape route from Nazi persecution and as responsible for the death of thousands of Jews.⁷³ That Jewish refugees were excluded by Britain from the one country to which they had a claim sanctioned by international law and where they were, in the words which the present Premier had uttered back in 1922, 'as of right and not on sufferance', caused bitterness beyond Zionist ranks proper. Sympathetic pronouncements in December 1942 by the government and the House of Commons which acknowledged the enormity of the *shoah* and threatened

⁷¹ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 302.

⁷² Rosette to Greenberg, 23 February 1944, AJ/110/2.

⁷³ Brodetsky, 'The Jews in the Post-War Settlement', 2; 'Historicus', 'The Balfour Declaration: The Last Decade', in Goodman (ed.), *Jewish National Home*, 88–9.

the perpetrators with retribution after the war were welcomed as public gestures, but ultimately dismissed as empty rhetoric when it became clear that they were not followed up by concrete action. At the ZF's 1943 annual conference, it was only for tactical considerations that the participants' sense of betrayal over British policy was not reflected in the resolutions. With the feeling prevailing among British Jews that they had to subordinate their interests to the imperatives of the war effort, it was only with victory in sight that they brought their concerns over rescue to the attention of the British public at large:

The Jewish citizens of Great Britain have recognised that the War needs of the United Nations were paramount and that since the critical days of 1940 sectional needs however urgent and pressing must be subordinated to the general need. It is for this reason that despite the unspeakable tragedy which has befallen their brethren in Europe . . . and despite the special problems which concern immediate measures of relief and their future as a people the Jewish community of Manchester and District has refrained from bringing to your notice the several problems which have from time to time caused them intense anxiety.⁷⁴

The simultaneous pursuit of two conflicting goals, the support of the British war effort and the struggle against British Palestine policy, presented British Zionists with an acutely felt dilemma:

[t]he government expected the British Jews to be loyal and fight as Britishers but it had already, with the MacDonald White Paper, rubbed out its recognition of the Jewish Nation and become an enemy of the Jewish National Home which Britain had called upon the Jews to create. . . . The British Jews, and especially the British Zionists, were thus thrust into an extraordinarily difficult position. They must perforce combat the Government on its betrayal of the Jewish Nation and at the same time join in the war against the Nazis.⁷⁵

For the duration of the war the sense of isolation from the larger society which British Jews experienced over the government's stance on rescue and Palestine had been outweighed by the feeling of belonging to the British national community engendered by their participation in the war effort. According to estimates of the War Office around 60,000 Jews, excluding Palestinian Jews, or 15 per cent of an assumed Jewish population of 400,000 as compared to 14.2 per cent of the general population had served in the armed forces of the United Kingdom between 1

⁷⁴ Norman Jacobs to Bakstansky, 22 September 1944, 'Statement presented to members of the House of Commons representing Manchester, Salford, South East Lancashire and Cheshire Constituencies by a Deputation representing the Jewish Community of Manchester and District', 21 September 1944, 1, CZA F13/166.

⁷⁵ 'Marks "Family"', ch. vi, 8, M&SCA.

September 1939 and 14 August 1945.⁷⁶ The second half of the 1940s, by contrast, saw British Jews and the larger society drift apart more openly over such divisive issues as the future of Palestine, Jewish DPs, and the memory of the *shoah*.

With the war won, whatever the long-term effects on Britain's political and economic standing, the world of the majority society was essentially a world restored, proud of its success and moving on. The mental landscape of British Jews was less clear-cut. Their sense of a world restored was checked by the sense of a world irretrievably lost. The *shoah*'s memory had opened a gap between Jews and non-Jews: 'While all nations were celebrating peace we Jews were contemplating the inordinate losses we had suffered...' ⁷⁷ With the pressures for national conformity diminished after the victory over Germany, the separation of British Jews from the larger society in their attitude to rescue and Palestine policy came to stand out in stark relief. A further, topical factor which reinforced a sense of British-Jewish distinctiveness was the continuation of the May 1939 White Paper by the Labour government voted into power in 1945.⁷⁸ Labour's volte-face on all its previous pronouncements on Palestine which had raised expectations to the contrary dealt a blow to those who believed in the identity of purpose between Zionism and progressiveness. Whatever the actual changes brought about by Labour during its years in power, the mood of the country was set for change.⁷⁹ Many British Jews shared the radicalism of the immediate post-war years, but found themselves excluded from the national consensus on account of the issue of Palestine. Labour's Palestine policy had a more far-reaching effect than furthering Jewish disenchantment with the political Left. Disappointing as it had been that the White Paper policy was upheld by a government least expected to do so, the fact that the disillusionment of British Jews with British Palestine policy was not limited to the new Labour government, but extended to the previous governments, had a more disconcerting impact in terms of Jewish relations with the larger society. The uninterrupted commitment of all British governments, irrespective of political colouring, to the May 1939 White Paper left British Jews with the impression that on this issue they were persistently out of tune with their own government. While it remained open to speculation whether Churchill would have abrogated the White Paper if the Conservatives had

⁷⁶ Nathan of Churt to Greenberg, 11 June 1946, 4-5, AJ/110/2.

⁷⁷ Litvin, 'Comments', *Gates of Zion* (July 1948), 25.

⁷⁸ 'Marks "Family"', ch. vi, 31; ch. vii, 1-3, M&SCA.

⁷⁹ Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson, and Nick Tiratsoo, '*England Arise!*' (Manchester, 1995), 76-168; Kenneth Morgan, *Labour in Power, 1945-1951* (Oxford, 1985), 1-44, 285-329.

won the 1945 election, his wartime record on Palestine provided opportunity for criticism: 'Certainly his premiership had made no difference to the Administration in Palestine nor had it prevented the sinking of the refugee ships off the shores of Palestine or facilitated Jewish immigration into Palestine on a larger scale.'⁸⁰ Brodetsky applauded Churchill for his attack on the Labour government in the Commons on its Palestine policy, but did not fail to add: 'Not only... had this Government had no Palestine policy, but the former Government had no policy either... One from whom they expected a policy with regard to Palestine, was—with all due respect—Mr. Churchill.'⁸¹ Due respect may have been paid by the Zionist grass roots to Churchill, yet any sign of latter-day glorification was markedly absent.⁸²

In the second half of the 1940s, faced with the unresolved problem of the Jewish DPs, the anger of British Jews at the White Paper was mounting. It found expression in acerbic assessments of British policy towards the Jewish DPs, which was aligned with British passivity during the *shoah*, and ever more vehement demands on the government to allow Jewish immigration into Palestine. Litvin compared Britain and the world at large which tolerated the White Paper with the bystanders of *shoah*: 'The civilised countries behave like the barbarous urchins of the savage Ukrainian villages.'⁸³ During the war, he reminded his readers, 'Jewish women and children who miraculously escaped Hitler's ovens were sent to the bottom of the sea: none of us can forget the incident of the Struma.'⁸⁴ If the language of Litvin's articles was exceptionally aggressive, the sense of profound dismay over the response of the liberal democracies, and, in particular, of Britain, to Jewish suffering emerges no less from the speeches of more moderate and representative figures like Brodetsky, who described the 1940s as a period during which the greatest tragedy in human history overtook the Jewish people—a period in which we looked to the world, at any rate to that part of the world which was fighting for justice and liberty, to do something to prevent, even if only in a small way, the Nazi assassination of Jewry, and they looked in vain: They looked to the one country—our own—which had domain over Palestine, to let the land of Israel be a home of safety for those who could escape from Nazi

⁸⁰ 'Marks "Family"', ch. vi, 27, M&SCA.

⁸¹ ZF, 45th Annual Conference, Political Address by Brodetsky, 1946, 9–10, CZA F13/1004-1.

⁸² On Churchill's attitude to the Jews in general and the Zionist project in particular see the contrasting interpretations by Michael Cohen, *Churchill and the Jews*, 2nd edn. (London, 2004) and Martin Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews* (London, 2007).

⁸³ Litvin, 'No Ostrich Policy', *Gates of Zion* (October 1947), 37.

⁸⁴ *Gates of Zion* (January 1948), 2.

assassination. They looked in vain . . . after eighteen months of so-called Peace . . . the hundreds of thousands of Jews who had no homes when the war was over, still had no homes . . .⁸⁵

In addition to Britain's upholding of the White Paper in the face of the Jewish catastrophe and subsequently the DP problem, British Palestine policy as such proved a factor dividing British Jews from the larger society. Considering the impact of Britain's Palestine policy on British-Jewish relations with British society as a whole, one can distinguish between the consecutive crises of the final years of the Mandate, and Britain's long-term retreat from its original terms.

Of the numerous controversies surrounding the last years of Britain's administration of the Palestine Mandate, the responses to Jewish acts of terrorism illustrate the separation of British-Jewish from general opinion most visibly. There were two sides to this. On the one hand British Jews tended to explain them in a context only shared by a minority of non-Jews; on the other, broad sections of the majority society expected British Jews to explain themselves because of them. Although British Jews were near-unanimous in their condemnation of terrorist acts committed by Palestinian Jews against members of the British Mandatory administration, there was a marked tendency to blame the lack of direction of Britain's Palestine policy, its questionable legality, and its insensitivity to the Jewish DPs' needs as ultimately responsible for the creation of an atmosphere in which such outrages were possible. Radical voices went as far as showing understanding for Jewish terrorists against the background of Britain's enforcement of the White Paper:

And what a difference there is between the terrorist activities of some Palestinian Jews and the terrorist activities of the British. The Jews have no Army, no Fleet, no Air Force. They have no courts, no prisons and no gallows. The Jews lost 6 million, slaughtered by the Nazis: hundreds of thousands of Jews who escaped Hitler's ovens are still suffering in the Displaced Persons' Camps. . . . In such conditions there can be some, if not excuse, at least explanation for the terrorist activities among certain desperate Jewish groups. But what can justify terrorist activities among the British?⁸⁶

Easterman justified outbreaks of violence in Palestine as the result of repression by drawing historical parallels: 'every people and every nation had been forced, at one time or another, to win its freedom by what was called "direct political action". The classic examples were the struggle for the independence and freedom of Ireland, the freedom and independence

⁸⁵ ZF, 45th Annual Conference, Political Address by Brodetsky, 1946, 7–8, CZA.

⁸⁶ Litvin, 'No Ostrich Policy', *Gates of Zion* (October 1947), 36–7.

of India, and the freedom and independence of the U.S.A. itself.⁸⁷ Sidney Hamburger, President of the Manchester Zionist Youth Council, incriminated not only the government, but the British people as a whole: 'if we denounced terrorism without condemning the breakdown which had led to it, we were traitors to our own people. The British people themselves were responsible for terrorist activities in Palestine today through the policy they had pursued... They had never... imagined that the day would come when British Tommies would fire on innocent Jewish refugees seeking to enter their National Homeland.'⁸⁸ Zionists argued on Jewish as well as general platforms that the acts of terrorism committed by Jews were symptoms of a malady generated by despair over British policy.⁸⁹ If the outright attribution of Jewish terrorism in Palestine to British policy and the nationalist language in which it was cast were restricted to Zionist circles, the view that the Palestine imbroglio, including its terrorist excesses, were the unfortunate result of British Palestine policy and would only be remedied upon its reversal enjoyed wide but not universal currency among British Jews. There were also voices like that of the Brighton delegate at the ZF's 46th Annual Conference who equated Jewish with Fascist terrorism and condemned it unconditionally.⁹⁰ Brodetsky can be taken as representative of British Jews when he condemned Jewish terrorism, but left no one in doubt where to look for its underlying causes: 'These criminal acts of terrorism had, in fact hurt the Zionist cause and done untold harm to the national cause of Jewry, but when all was said and done, and when every criminal had been hanged, repression would not solve the problem...'⁹¹ The same combination of condemnation of Jewish terrorism and indictment of British Palestine policy characterized the parliamentary speeches of Zionist MPs.⁹² At Westminster, Whitehall, and the British public at large British Jews, who ultimately ascribed Jewish terrorism to the desperation brought about by what they saw as cynical British policy, were met with little

⁸⁷ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, Political Session, 2 February 1947, 17, CZA F13/1004-I.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 37.

⁸⁹ Marks, letter to the editor, *The Times*, 4 May 1946; Sacher, letter to the editor, *MG*, 19 June 1946; Easterman, 'Notes of Statement at BoD Meeting', 16 February 1947, 2, CZA C2/Easterman; Silas Perry, 'Exposition of the Jewish Case', ZF, Political Committee, March 1947, 7, CZA Z4/20, 161.

⁹⁰ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, Political Session, 2 February 1947, 27, CZA F13/1004-I.

⁹¹ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, Political Address by Brodetsky, February 1947, 11, CZA F13/1004-I.

⁹² For the speeches of Janner and Silverman, see Hansard, Commons, 31 January 1947, c. 1310-14, c. 1336.

understanding. One could agree to differ, as did the Zionist representatives, including two British Zionists, and the officials at the Colonial Office, whom they met, yet one still differed.⁹³

The escalation of the Palestine crisis differentiated British Jews from the larger society in two interlocking ways, not only by provoking their criticism of British policies, but also by casting a shadow on the British-Jewish condition. Symptomatic of the tense atmosphere to which British Jews were subjected as a result of the showdown between the Zionist movement and the British authorities in Palestine⁹⁴ was the barely veiled threat implicit in the scenario which a representative of the Colonial Office anticipated in case the Jewish Agency did not bring Jewish terrorism to a halt. He reminded the Zionist side that Jewish terrorist outrages created anti-Semitism not only among the British in Palestine, but that 'each soldier had a family in this country', whose cumulative effect he intimated was likely to change 'the attitude towards the Jewish problem' in Britain.⁹⁵

More characteristic of their condition during the final phase of the Mandate than acts of violence was the isolation which British Jews encountered. When Bevin's Palestine policy came under increasing pressure from the British public, this was not out of consideration for Jewish concerns, let alone the Zionist case. As the parliamentary debate on Palestine on 31 January 1947 showed, demands for the abandonment of the Mandate by Britain in order to save British lives or for economic reasons were perfectly compatible with high-handed criticism of what appeared to be the Jews' unreasonable behaviour in Palestine and with insinuations about the implication of British Jews.⁹⁶ As Litvin was not alone in observing, British public opinion remained silent on the enforcement of the White Paper, the deportations of illegal immigrants, and the increasingly authoritarian style of government in Mandatory Palestine: 'We do not hear any protest against these activities of the brave British, neither bishops nor professors raise their voices in indignation. Even the Socialists are silent. . . . The Labour Government's policy in Palestine is poisoning the British Army, poisoning the British public . . .'⁹⁷ Not only was there little criticism of British Palestine policy forthcoming, but a

⁹³ Meeting between representatives of the JA and the CO, 9 October 1946, CZA Z4/302/31.

⁹⁴ David Cesarani, *Major Farran's Hat: Murder, Scandal and Britain's War against Jewish Terrorism, 1945–1948* (London, 2009).

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, Political Session, 2 February 1947, 26, CZA F13/1004-I.

⁹⁷ Litvin, 'No Ostrich Policy', 37.

substantial part of the articles which appeared in the British press was sensationalist and biased. Referring to the press coverage of the evacuation of British women and children from Palestine, Hamburger complained about 'a deliberate policy of misrepresentation and distortion in the press'.⁹⁸ The resulting climate in which British public opinion from archbishops to MPs called upon British Jews to explain themselves on the question of Jewish terrorism caused resentment and anxiety among British Jews.⁹⁹ Three Jewish MPs—Barnet Janner and Sydney Silverman who were Zionist as well as Labour, and the assimilationist Lipson, an independent Conservative—took part in the Palestine debate on 31 January 1947. In his capacity as the unofficial parliamentary mouthpiece of the British-Jewish community, Janner read out parts of the statements of the Board of Deputies and of the Zionist Congress in Basle on terrorism to the Commons. The wording of his speech reflected a balancing act between impressing the abhorrence of British Jews at acts of Jewish terrorism upon the non-Jewish public and criticism of British Palestine policy.¹⁰⁰ While Lipson, in contrast to Janner and Silverman, advocated that the British authorities in Palestine be given wider powers to put down terrorism, and rejected Janner's demands for changes in British policy as a justification of terrorism, he was at one with them in expressing resentment at the charges of dual loyalty and the insinuations by fellow MPs and the broader public that British Jews shared in the responsibility for the course of events in Palestine: 'it is no good calling upon British Jews, because they have no influence over these people.'¹⁰¹

The strains in the relations of British Jews with the larger society generated at the height of the Palestine crisis should not obscure the long-term process of British-Jewish disillusionment with Britain's disengagement from the original terms of the Mandate. With the Balfour Declaration and Britain's assumption of the Mandate for Palestine, the Zionist project in the Middle East had become a communal concern far beyond Zionist ranks. British Jews were uniquely aware that, however critical they were of its execution, the British Mandate provided an indispensable framework for the development of the Jewish National Home, and staked their hopes for its success on British cooperation. It was precisely because of their high expectations that their disappointment was all the more profound when the response they believed they had a

⁹⁸ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, Political Session, 2 February 1947, 37, CZA F13/1004-I.

⁹⁹ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, Political Address by Brodetsky, February 1947, 10–11, CZA F13/1004-I.

¹⁰⁰ Hansard, Commons, 31 January 1947, vol. 432, c. 1310–14.

¹⁰¹ Hansard, Commons, 31 January 1947, vol. 432, c. 1316.

right to expect was not forthcoming. A second reason for the increasing potential of British Palestine policy as a source of friction between British Jews and the British public was the emergence of new facts on the ground. The *yishuv*, which at the turn of the century might have still been regarded as a *quantité négligeable*, had become a formidable reality since the First World War. By the 1940s, the Jewish population of the Mandate had reached over half a million, approximately one third of the total population. The anti-Jewish riots by Palestinian Arabs in January 1929 and the subsequent reassessment of the Mandate in the Passfield White Paper did not only cause the first open clash between British Zionists and the government, but led to the identification of broad strata of British Jews with the Zionist project in the Middle East, irrespective of their views of the merits of the Zionist case as a whole.¹⁰²

In the long run, British Palestine policy drove a wedge between British Jews and the larger society, since it left much to be desired in their eyes.¹⁰³ Sacher described the shifting emphasis in the interpretation of the respective constitutional provisions of Mandatory Palestine—the establishment of the Jewish National Home, the development of self-governing institutions, and the safeguarding of the civil and religious rights of all inhabitants—as the triumph of all the qualifying phrases over the original intention of the Balfour Declaration to see a Jewish polity ultimately established in Palestine.¹⁰⁴ He considered two factors responsible for this process, dislike of Jews and considerations for imperial policy. The Palestine administration, usually carefully distinguished from the British government and the British people, was the foremost target of British-Jewish discontent. It was criticized for sabotaging Britain's promises to the Jews; favouring Palestinian Arabs over Jews; dallying with treason by selling out British interests to the Axis' ally, the Mufti;¹⁰⁵ incompetence;¹⁰⁶ and anti-Semitism. The conception of a positive obligation for development, Sacher argued, had hardly existed in the history of British colonial administration until recently.¹⁰⁷ British obstruction of Jewish state- and nation-building in Palestine, instead of causing despair, created a sense of muted insubordination and pride among British Jews, a feeling which derived from their assistance in the

¹⁰² Alderman, *British Jewry*, 265–8.

¹⁰³ Harry Sacher, *The Mandate and the Building of a New Zionism* (London, 1943), 3; Easterman, 'Notes of Statement at BoD Meeting', 16 February 1947, CZA C2/Easterman Papers.

¹⁰⁴ Sacher, *The Mandate and the Building of a New Zionism*, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Marks and Sacher, *Palestine*, 14 June 1939.

¹⁰⁶ Brodetsky, 'The Jews in the Post-War Settlement', 9.

¹⁰⁷ Sacher, *The Mandate and the Building of a New Zionism*, 3.

expansion of the JNH in the face of adversity.¹⁰⁸ The more British Jews identified with the JNH, the more they took the view that, while Jews were engaged in an unquestionably constructive enterprise, the creation of a society which was both modern and Jewish, 'simultaneously Jewry led by the Zionists, had to wage a ceaseless political struggle in Palestine against the Arabs and the British Administration and in Britain against the British Government itself'.¹⁰⁹

As a result of Britain's retreat from the Mandate, British Jews who identified themselves with the Zionist project in Palestine, which in one way or another the majority of them did by the 1940s, felt increasingly excluded from the national British consensus. The 1939 White Paper was almost universally condemned by British-Jewish public opinion, including many prominent assimilationists.¹¹⁰ The feeling of isolation is brought out by the recollections of the First World War and its immediate aftermath, betraying a roseate nostalgia for a time when, with the Balfour Declaration and Britain's subsequent assumption of the Mandate for Palestine, British and Jewish, and more specifically British and Zionist, interests had ostensibly marched together.¹¹¹ Weizmann's alliance with the 'New Imperialists', from the foremost makers of liberal public opinion at the *Manchester Guardian*, C. P. Scott and Sidebotham, to Lord Balfour and David Lloyd George, then Foreign Minister and Premier respectively, was remembered not only by Weizmann's aides-de-camp.¹¹² In 1917, Weizmann recalled, the War Cabinet had consisted of sympathetic personalities and Jews were regarded as a 'world power', a belief destroyed by Hitler.¹¹³ In the 1940s, by contrast, the Zionists were shunned: 'there was a tendency to ignore them... and there were many people who were ready to lose the war without the Jews than win it with the Jews.'¹¹⁴ In contrast to 1917, 'they were a small and isolated group', whose relations with the corridors of power depended on the occasional contacts established by Simon Marks, Sacher, Lord Melchett, and James de Rothschild, and whose friends in government circles could be counted on the fingers of one hand.¹¹⁵ The absence in the 1940s of the particularly British 'blend of imperialism and idealism',¹¹⁶ which had generated the climate in which the Balfour

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.; 'Marks "Family"', ch. v, 16, M&SCA.

¹⁰⁹ 'Marks "Family"', ch. v, 20, M&SCA.

¹¹⁰ Robert Henriques, *Robert Waley Cohen, 1877-1953* (London, 1966), 369-70.

¹¹¹ 'Marks "Family"', ch. vi, 7, M&SCA; *The Memoirs of Israel Sieff* (London, 1970), 86-92.

¹¹² Sieff, *Memoirs*, 86.

¹¹³ JA (London Executive), 16 February 1944, WA 2489.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Sieff, *Memoirs*, 92.

Declaration was issued was no less emphatically regretted by Easternman, who, in general politics, was very much to the Left.

The waning appeal of Zionism in Britain during the inter-war period and the 1940s can be gauged from the Zionists' increasing difficulties in finding a sympathetic audience in British political circles and the press. A case in point, which is at the same time indicative of the dependence of Zionism's acceptance on its coincidence with British imperial interests, was their relationship with Churchill. After he had become Prime Minister, Zionist propaganda continued to quote from a speech he had made in support of a Jewish state back in May 1920, as no similar remark was forthcoming in the 1940s, despite intensive soliciting. Weizmann enjoyed no immediate access to Churchill and virtually had to beg for his rare meetings with the Prime Minister.¹¹⁷ After 1945, he was treated with icy politeness or simply snubbed by Whitehall.¹¹⁸ Not only did Zionists find themselves increasingly barred from the corridors of power during the 1940s, but also the coverage of Zionist state- and nation-building by the British press had become markedly cooler and during the final years of the Mandate overtly hostile. Britain's international isolation over its handling of the Palestine crisis had been reported accurately only by the *Manchester Guardian*, *New Statesman and Nation*, and *Tribune*.¹¹⁹ A letter written by Isaiah Berlin to Weizmann in 1948 conveys the mood prevailing in Britain: 'and altogether the anti-Jewish war, real though it may be in Palestine and the F.O., is half-hearted and riddled with moral doubts and a sense of failure on the part of public opinion—which because it is troubled and uncertain and dislikes umkreisung by foreign criticism, is correspondingly anti-Semitic.'¹²⁰ About his Oxford colleagues he had the following to say: 'some are pro-Jewish and like Coupland and Annan ashamed, but by and large they behave like Chamberlainists at Munich: and still [have] their doubts and stifle their consciences and think about [the] two sergeants or the King David.'¹²¹

Once a fait accompli, the Jewish state enjoyed the near-unanimous support of British Jews. Their sympathies fixed on the Jewish state, irrespective of, and possibly divergent from, what the government defined

¹¹⁷ Weizmann to Lady Colefax, 11 January 1942, Bodleian Library, MS Eng. c. 3170, I am grateful to Ross McKibbin for alerting me to this source.

¹¹⁸ Isaiah Berlin, *Chaim Weizmann* (London, 1958), 47.

¹¹⁹ *Daily Telegraph*, 1 February 1947, 1.

¹²⁰ Berlin to Weizmann, 6 June 1948, 8, WA 2841.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 3.

as the national interest, made for a measure of potential separation of British Jews from the majority society. This was the case even when British-Jewish sentiment and British government policy converged, as during the Suez crisis, when British Jews and the government found themselves in the same camp for different reasons. The widespread support which the British intervention, striking at the most formidable enemy of Israel, enjoyed among British Jews was not to be mistaken for their approval of the government's motives.¹²² In the long run the Arab threat of renewed war and the failure of the international community to back the State of Israel served as the most potent, if mediated, antagonistic catalyst for British Zionism.¹²³

There were further more structural shifts in British society impacting on the British-Jewish condition. Not only were the Empire and Britain's status as a world power to go, but also the Liberal Party, Nonconformity, and other social movements that had once been the 'natural' allies of the Jews and the Zionist cause in Britain had disappeared in the inter-war period or during the Second World War. The 1940s recast progressive politics: 'The whole world of the Left Book Club and the Penguin Special . . . was equally undermined. The destruction of Fascism, the emergence of Soviet Communism as something objectively bad, rather than, as it was to many in the 1930s something objectively good, and the alienation of much of the middle class from the Attlee government also subverted the broad-based, but essentially middle-class, progressive culture of the later 1930s . . .'¹²⁴ Also gone were the League of Nations Union, which Brodetsky had supported, Political and Economic Planning (PEP), of which Israel Sieff had been a prominent member,¹²⁵ and the international orientation of the Labour Party in the inter-war years.¹²⁶

The appeal of technocratic planning, social advancements, and international cooperation had secured Zionism a foothold in the progressive culture of the 1930s. The subsequent recasting of progressive politics pushed Zionism to the sidelines, into isolation, or into new alliances, a shift paradigmatically expressed in the dramatic change in the Labour Party's relations with the Zionist movement.

¹²² Memorandum by Edmund de Rothschild at the request of the FO on British-Jewish opinion on the government's Suez policy, 9 September 1956, Edmund de Rothschild private papers; Memo by Sacher, 26 November 1956, CZA A 289/19; Sacher, 'Present and Future', 29 November 1956, CZA A 289/19.

¹²³ Israel Sieff, 'Zionism and the Diaspora'. Address delivered to the 55th Annual Conference of the Zionist Federation, 14 April 1956, *Gates of Zion* (July 1956), 2.

¹²⁴ Ross McKibbin, 'Politics and the Medical Hero: A. J. Cronin's *The Citadel*', *English Historical Review*, 123/502 (2008), 651–78, 676; S. Hodges, *Gollancz: The Story of a Publishing House* (London, 1978).

¹²⁵ M. Ceadel, *Semi-Detached Idealists: The British Peace Movement and International Relations, 1854–1945* (Oxford, 2000). Daniel Ritschel, *The Politics of Planning: The Debate on Economic Planning in Britain in the 1930s* (Oxford, 1997).

¹²⁶ R. M. Douglas, *The Labour Party, Nationalism and Internationalism, 1939–1951* (London, 2004).

THE ENEMY WITHIN: LIBERAL ASSIMILATIONISTS, COMMUNISTS, AND THE ULTRA ORTHODOX

Like other national movements, Zionism developed not only in response to opponents from without, but also from within. As the Zionist movement was as much a reaction against Orthodoxy as well as against assimilationism, the place of the internal villain in Zionist thought was occupied variably by the Orthodox and the assimilationist Jew, whether of the liberal bourgeois variant or more to the left.¹²⁷ Neither ‘petrified Orthodoxy’ nor ‘“Liberal” Judaism’, Sacher argued, had ‘any use for Judaism as a reality, a force permeating and shaping the Jewish people’.¹²⁸

In terms of practical politics, with British radical Orthodoxy still in its formative stages in inter-war Britain, it was more often, though not exclusively, the assimilationist rather than the Orthodox Jew whom British Zionists placed outside the boundaries of the supposed national body. In the long term, British Zionists fought for the survival of the Jews as a distinct national group against the trends towards assimilation and absorption by the larger society. In the short-term perspective, British Zionists were, during the 1940s, engaged in a dramatic battle for the command of the BoD as part of the campaign for a Jewish state. In this struggle British Zionists were not concerned with the inroads which intermarriage and drift had made into British Jewry, but with those Jews who were propagating an alternative Jewish identity, the underlying foundations of which were hostile to the definition of the Jews as a nation and the demand for a Jewish nation-state. It was these Jews who still claimed a voice in Jewish affairs, rather than those who had effectively left the community, whom British Zionists regarded as dangerous competitors both for the ear of the government and the control of the representative institutions of British Jewry. Given its success the British-Jewish liberal-cum-assimilationist position, which had never been translated into an assertive platform on the lines of the German *Centralverein*,¹²⁹ possessed only an amorphous organizational shape whose corner stones were the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA), the informal grouping of the New Court circle, and the Jewish Fellowship.

¹²⁷ For an overview of the internal enemies of Zionism see Haim Avni and Gideon Shimoni (eds.), *Zionism and its Jewish Opponents* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1990).

¹²⁸ Harry Sacher, ‘Judaism and Nationality’, in idem, *Zionist Portrait and Other Essays* (London, 1959), 140–1.

¹²⁹ Avraham Barkai, ‘Wehr Dich!’ *Der Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens* (C.V.) 1893–1938 (Munich, 2002).

For the most part, British Zionists did not reject the Jewish liberal-cum-assimilationist position as a whole—they had taken much of what it stood for on board, but only specific aspects of it: the denial of a Jewish collectivity which was not defined in religious terms, the opposition to a Jewish state, and what they saw as the lack of commitment to Jewish continuity. While the scope of their criticism was restricted, British Zionists were uncompromising in the denial of their assimilationist opponents' Jewish legitimacy. By portraying assimilationists as halfway out of the community, if not lumping them together with those who had dissociated themselves from British Jewry, British Zionists branded the former as traitors to their people and denied the legitimacy of their participation in the shaping of the Jewish future. Jews, they argued, who were neither interested in Jewish collectivity nor continuity had better keep silent on Jewish politics. Sacher was typical in his denial that the Zionists' assimilationist opponents stood for an authentic Jewish way of life: 'They are just a herd of individuals, seeking their own individual interest without a care for anything beyond', not 'a group animated by a common purpose, a common spirit, a common philosophy, an entity which seeks something over and beyond the interests of the individual members, something which belongs to the totality and for which the individual is willing to make some sacrifice'.¹³⁰ Apart from denying that assimilationists had a Jewish case, British Zionist propaganda clichés included allegations of assimilationist collusion with non-Jewish anti-Zionists, self-advancement at the expense of personal dignity, and the propagation of a self-defeating, eventually self-destructive version of Jewish identity. When Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck criticized the stance on Jewish terrorism adopted by Dr Herzog, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine, he was denounced in *The Gates of Zion* as someone, 'who, in Germany, preached the gospel that the Jews were Aryans of Jewish persuasion and who, after being ousted from Germany by the Nazis, are now in England propagating the same gospel under the new guise of "Jews are Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion"'. That these creatures have the temerity to launch an attack upon Dr Herzog . . . need cause no astonishment.¹³¹ The depiction of German Jewry, widely taken to have drifted furthest from the path of Jewish national virtue and subsequently headed for disaster, as a warning example to British Jews became a topos in British Zionist writing.¹³²

¹³⁰ Sacher, 'Our Anti-Zionists', 9 December 1942, 2, CZA A289/65.

¹³¹ *Gates of Zion* (July 1947), 40.

¹³² Berlin, 'The Life and Opinion of Moses Hess', in idem, *Against the Current* (London, 1979), 249; Paul Goodman, *History of the Jews* (London, 1939), 220; Schneier Levenberg, 'The Tercentenary Period: Retrospect and Prospect', in Beatrice Barwell and

While the critique of those parts of the liberal platform which were hostile towards Jewish distinctiveness belonged to the Zionist standard repertoire, a fundamental rejection of liberalism, the view that the heritage of the Enlightenment was an artificial, non-Jewish implant without meaning for Jews was restricted to the radical religious circles of British Zionists: 'We Jews do not need the culture of the Gentiles . . . not *Kultura*, as it is called in *Haskalah* Hebrew, but *Kol Torah*.'¹³³ The avowed secularism of the *yishuv* and Israeli society supplied British Orthodox Zionists with a constant source of criticism: 'It is time that the University in Jerusalem and all those connected with it became inspirations of true Jewish learning, wisdom and ethics, as contained in our holy Torah and as preached by our holy rabbis in the Talmud, in the Zohar . . . and not by those quarter-Jews, quarter-Christians and semi-who-knows-what . . .'¹³⁴

In nationalist thought, the external Other tends to possess an internal complement. In times of national crisis, external as well as internal antagonists are portrayed as conspiring to destroy the nation's unity and objectives. During the 1940s, British Zionists saw the 'important, though numerically small, section of British Jewry who, in their false British patriotism, found it their duty to attack . . . Zionism' as the fifth column of the Foreign Minister, the Foreign Office, the Palestine administration, and all those bent on the obstruction of Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East.¹³⁵

The 1930s and 1940s saw the intensification of developments which were antagonistic to British Jews as a collective. These catalysts of nationalism, which differentiated British Jews from the larger society and placed them at a relative disadvantage, played a necessary but not sufficient part in the rise and radicalization of British Zionism. A further set of variables was at work, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The task of finding a safe haven for persecuted Jews could serve as a justification for Zionism, and in turn release British-Jewish support for it. Although not affected themselves by the Nazi onslaught, British Jews came to regard the *yishuv* as providing the most expedient solution to the refugee crisis. This trend intensified after the war, when the Jewish state-in-the-making attracted British-Jewish support as a remedy for the Jewish DP's problem.

Woolf Perry (eds.), *Aspects of Anglo-Jewish Life, 1656–1956: A Tercentenary Brochure* (London, 1956), 6.

¹³³ Litvin, 'Zionism and the Synagogue', in Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 131.

¹³⁴ Joseph Litvin, 'Comments', *Gates of Zion* (April 1948), 33.

¹³⁵ *Gates of Zion* (January 1948), 3.

‘Building Jerusalem in England’s green and pleasant land’: the politics of liberal assimilationism

The purpose of this part is to chart the development of the liberal assimilationist faction as one internal villain of Zionist state- and nation-building, to identify its various strands, and to attempt an explanation for the disintegration of vocal liberal assimilationism in the late 1940s. Assimilationist British-Jewish organizations were, like their counterparts in the USA and France, numerically weak, in contrast to the German-Jewish *Centralverein* which was a mass movement combining defence work with an assimilationist platform. Organizationally the Board of Deputies, until 1939, the Anglo-Jewish Association, and the Jewish Fellowship served, to varying degrees, as formal platforms for the assimilationist point of view. In addition, there was the informal New Court circle, whose most influential participants were Lord Rothschild, Anthony de Rothschild, Lionel de Rothschild, Lord Bearsted, Lionel Cohen, Basil Henriques, Sir Robert Waley Cohen, Leonard Montefiore, and Neville Laski.¹³⁶

British assimilationist positions

By the late 1930s the assimilationist position had been cornered by the two-pronged assault of increasing pressure from anti-Semitism and Zionism. It was, thus, from a defensive position that shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War Neville Laski, then still the BoD’s President, and Israel Mattuck, Rabbi of the Liberal Synagogue, published their books expounding the assimilationist case.¹³⁷ As a communal politician concerned with defence work, Laski had written his book as a response to the growing British anti-Semitism of the 1930s rather than as a theoretical exposition of what it meant to be a Jew in the modern world. Mattuck, on the contrary, writing from the point of view of anti-Zionist Liberal Judaism, was motivated in the first place by the internal Jewish battle raging between Zionists and assimilationists over the nature and purpose of Jewish existence.¹³⁸

The debate over a Jewish state triggered by the Peel Report was a matter of great concern to Jewish assimilationists. There were essentially two sides to the Zionist enterprise, the creation of a JNH in Palestine and the formation of a Jewish nation. While the former evoked a variety of

¹³⁶ Rory Miller, *Divided against Zion: Anti-Zionist Opposition in Britain to a Jewish State in Palestine, 1945–1948* (London, 2000).

¹³⁷ Laski, *Rights*; Mattuck, *Jews*.

¹³⁸ Mattuck, *Jews*, vii–viii.

responses, which were partly positive, from British assimilationists, the latter was anathema to them. For religious and historic reasons the Holy Land made a sentimental appeal to British Jews, whether Zionist or not. Although more cautious in their assessment of Palestine's absorptive capacity, assimilationists also looked to the Jewish National Home as a refuge for persecuted Jews.¹³⁹ On the other hand, the political aims of the Zionists, to turn the Jews into a nation and the JNH into a sovereign Jewish state, aroused the opposition of assimilationist Jews as they appeared to threaten their position as British citizens and their vision of the Jewish future. The reason why Laski found it necessary to 'define the attitude of Anglo-Jewry to the concept of a Jewish National Home' was that 'a Jewish National Home, by its very name, might be supposed to make some claim on the allegiance of all Jews wherever domiciled, and this claim might conceivably come into conflict with the claims of the countries of which they are citizens'.¹⁴⁰

To Western Jewry, as represented by many prominent English and American Jews, the idea of a Jewish State is no less distasteful now than it was twenty years ago. . . . They want to see in Palestine neither a Jewish nor an Arab State, but a Palestinian State, and they want the Jews of Palestine to count as Palestine citizens (as in fact they are now), just as the Jews of England are English citizens or the Jews of France are French citizens, as in this way the danger both of a 'dual allegiance' and of injustice to the Arabs would be avoided.¹⁴¹

Mattuck was less concerned with the dangers of Zionism for the standing of Jews in British society than with the threat Zionism posed to Liberal Judaism. His main argument against Zionism was that it would interfere with the universal religious mission of the Jews, which Liberal Judaism regarded as the Jews' *raison d'être*.¹⁴² Jewish assimilationists of the Liberal variant saw Zionism as a Jewish adaptation of nineteenth-century secularism and nationalism, interpreting Jewish life in secular national terms and giving it a corresponding aim:

Modern Jewish nationalism is not an inner product of Jewish life. It is the result of a modern European development and the circumstances of the Jews. It is partly European nationalism applied to the Jews, and partly the result of pressure on the Jews by anti-Semitism, which in itself is in its modern form a product of nationalism. Jewish nationalism and anti-Semitism are branches of the same tree . . . they are both related to the growth of nationalism in the modern world. They both look upon the Jews as a distinctive nation.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Mattuck, *Jews*, 75–6.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. 149–50.

¹⁴³ Ibid. 68.

¹⁴⁰ Laski, *Rights*, 145.

¹⁴² Mattuck, *Jews*, 250–4.

Assimilationists were opposed to the Zionist allegation that Jews could lead a complete and fulfilling life only if they formed a nation of their own, but were unable to do so in the diaspora. Therefore, they were particularly sensitive to the implicit generalizations Zionists were drawing from the segregation and persecution of the German Jews in support of their thesis that the Jewish condition in the diaspora as such was unsatisfactory and lethal in the last analysis:

The Jews of Germany considered themselves nationally a part of Germany, and now see what has happened to them! They rejected 'Jewish' culture and gave themselves up altogether to German culture. In their life, thought and feeling they considered themselves integrated within the German nation, and now they are not only rejected, but cruelly mistreated. They must have been wrong... If the German Jews were wrong in considering and feeling themselves an integral part of the German nation, then the same must be true of English and other Jews in relation to their respective nations. The conclusion would be inevitable that Jews have no share in any national life, and that if they wanted such a share, it would have to be in a separate nation of their own.¹⁴⁴

Several conclusions can be drawn from Laski's and Mattuck's exposition of the assimilationists' case in 1939. While one is justified in speaking of an assimilationist consensus regarding the termination of the debate over the 'Jewish question', the belief in the ultimate eradicability of anti-Semitism, the primarily religious definition of post-emancipationist Jewish distinctiveness, and the opposition to the nationalist side of Zionism, the assimilationist position was far from uniform. Protagonists of an assimilationist *realpolitik*, such as Laski, and the adherents of the kind of assimilationism advanced by Liberal Judaism differed in two respects: in their designs for the Jewish future and the extent to which their views were determined by non-Jewish society. To the former the recasting of post-emancipationist Jewish identity in essentially religious terms appeared to provide the most pragmatic delineation of the Jewish position in Britain. Concerned with the preservation of the status quo their tactics were heavily influenced both by the specific pressures of the rising tide of anti-Semitism in the 1930s and the general expectations of the larger society. To the adherents of Liberal Judaism, by contrast, the conception of the Jews in Britain as a religious minority marked the goalposts of their ambitions, entailing the divestment of Jewishness of everything but its religious content. Contrary to Zionist polemics, assimilationists were not blind to the less attractive side of the Jewish condition in Britain. As far as their awareness of the lack of complete Jewish equality

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. 76.

of opportunities since the emancipation and of the extent of anti-Semitism at home and abroad was concerned, there was little difference between pragmatic and ideological assimilationists as well as Zionists. They differed less in what they saw than in the conclusions they drew from what they saw. Pragmatic and ideological assimilationists both insisted on upholding the religious definition of Jewish post-emancipationist existence, the former as the best option for the preservation of the Jewish position in Britain, the latter as identical with Liberal Judaism's goal for the Jewish future. They were both opposed to the Zionists' national interpretation of the collective element in Jewish life: the former for fear of its reflection on the Jewish position in Britain, the latter for its incompatibility with the Jewish identity they promoted.

In order to assess how the two assimilationist strands depicted above were translated into practice and in what respects they changed under the impact of the *shoah*, the DPs problem, and the establishment of the State of Israel, the remainder of this chapter will scrutinize the politics of the AJA, the Jewish Fellowship, and the New Court circle.

Assimilationism reconsidered: the Anglo-Jewish Association

The AJA's reconciliation with certain tenets of the Zionist programme was a process facilitated by factors external and internal to the British-Jewish community, some of which originated well before the period under scrutiny. The attitude British society and the non-Jewish world at large adopted towards Jewish needs and aspirations were key factors in the shift to Zionism. Both the endorsement of Jewish national aspirations by the non-Jewish world and its indifference to the destruction of Jewish life in the *shoah* paved the way for the accommodation of non-Zionists to the Zionist position. On the one hand, the legitimization of Jewish national aspirations in Palestine by Britain and the international community, as represented by the League of Nations, after the First World War had committed Britain as the Mandatory power to certain obligations that it could not unilaterally revoke. In terms of public debate the tone was set by the Balfour Declaration. Within British Jewry Britain's assumption of the Palestine Mandate was a crucial factor for toning down anti-Zionism. As citizens of the Mandatory power, assimilationist Jews could justify support for the *yishuv* as a patriotic British duty.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, the destruction of European Jewry and the inadequate response

¹⁴⁵ Shimoni, 'Non-Zionists', 107.

which it evoked increased the appeal of the Zionist cause in hitherto non-Zionist quarters. Leonard Stein, the AJA's President, recalled in 1951:

there was a certain bewilderment on the Jewish side . . . at what was felt to be the inadequate reaction of the Gentile world to what had been done to the Jews in Germany and, later in German occupied Europe . . . more could have been done than was done and more feeling could have been shown than was shown . . . They could not very well help drawing their own deductions from the lamentable failures of the Evian Conference in 1938 and the Bermuda Conference in 1943, to say nothing of the events associated with the names *Struma* and *Exodus*.¹⁴⁶

The *shoah* had shaken the 'Whig interpretation' of history to its foundations. The consequence was not wholesale conversion to the Zionist creed, but a more thorough and less naive analysis of Jewish-Gentile relations on the side of the non-Zionists.

During the first years of the war the AJA recognized no discrepancy between Jewish and Allied interests, which were equated with 'the liberties of Europe and the moral code of mankind'.¹⁴⁷ All efforts to alleviate Jewish plight, British assimilationists argued, were predicated on the defeat of Nazi Germany. While his statement at the Annual Meeting of the AJA on 16 June 1941 contained no reference to Palestine at all,¹⁴⁸ Leonard Stein on the same occasion a year later, when the news of the *shoah* had reached Britain, for the first time criticized the immigration policy: 'the highly restrictive policy (to put it mildly) adopted by the authorities controlling admission to Palestine have made escape almost impossible'.¹⁴⁹ Although he saw no possibility of changing the situation materially as long as Nazi Germany controlled the Continent, he emphasized the need to begin thinking ahead about the place to be occupied by the Jews in the structure of the post-war world. This had to be reconsidered in the light of the wholesale destruction of Jewish life, which as it had become clear by 1942 was no mere figure of speech, but brutal reality, and the obvious failure of such provisions as the protection of minorities contained in the peace treaties of 1918 with Hungary, Poland, and Romania: 'Gone is the bright confident morning when it was believed that the Minorities Treaties would be taken seriously and, combined with the Balfour Declaration, would give the Jews almost everywhere the chance of living normal lives.'¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Stein, 'A Decade in Anglo-Jewry 1940-1950', 9-10.

¹⁴⁷ Leonard Stein, *JTA Bulletin*, 6 June 1940, 5.

¹⁴⁸ Statement by Leonard Stein, Annual Meeting, 16 June 1941, AJ37/1/5, AJA Council Minutes.

¹⁴⁹ Statement by Leonard Stein, Annual Meeting, 2 July 1942, AJ37/1/5, AJA Council Minutes.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

In his address at the Annual General Meeting in June 1943 Leonard Stein outlined post-war plans which, while taking into account the specific role Palestine played, not only for Jewish refugees, but for Jews in general, focused on Jewish–Gentile relations in general as the key to a solution of the ‘Jewish question’. The integration of the Jews into the fabric of their respective countries of domicile remained the primary goal:

Recognising the difficulties, acknowledging that they are not imaginary but real and formidable, I am yet unable to conceive of a post-war settlement which leaves Palestine barred to Jewish immigration. . . . Palestine had provided many of the Jews not merely with a refuge, but a home. . . . For a multitude of Jews throughout the world—for the humble, the downtrodden, the disinherited—for them, and not for them only, it has meant a lifting of the heart and a refreshment of the spirit. . . . But even if the way to Palestine was unobstructed, this would not itself dispose of the Jewish problem. That is a truism which no-one disputes. The question still remains: What can be done to regularise and stabilise the status of Jews, wherever they may be, as normal members of society . . . and to share in the national life.¹⁵¹

By August 1943 the demand for Jewish immigration on the largest possible scale had not been complemented by any alterations of the constitutional design the AJA was advocating for Palestine. Consistent with liberal constitutional thought a unitary state, securing the rights of its citizens irrespective of religion or race, remained the ideal.

We could not assent to any agreement which made race or religion the criterion of citizenship or which involved or implied discrimination between citizens of Palestine on grounds of race or religion. Neither, on the other hand, could we assent to any arrangement which closed the door to the eventual admission to Palestine of Jewish immigrants to the full extent of its capacity to absorb them.¹⁵²

In an unsuccessful attempt to dissuade the AJA from making a separate presentation to the government Weizmann had addressed the AJA’s Council in April 1944.¹⁵³ In October 1944 the AJA’s Council adopted a memorandum on Palestine for submission to the Colonial Secretary.¹⁵⁴ Calling into question the legal tenability of the 1939 White Paper and anticipating the displaced persons tragedy, it demanded a thorough revision of British Palestine policy:

¹⁵¹ AJA, Minutes, Statement by Leonard Stein, Annual General Meeting, 2 June 1943, AJ37/1/5.

¹⁵² AJA, Minutes, Statement by Leonard Stein, 30 August 1943, published in Annual Report 1943/4, AJ37/1/5.

¹⁵³ Address to the Council of the AJA by Weizmann, 20 April 1944, WA 2501.

¹⁵⁴ Draft Memorandum on Palestine, 12 October 1944, AJ37/1/5, AJA Council Minutes; Memorandum on Palestine, AJ95/69.

Any adequate conception of a Jewish National Home in Palestine must imply maximum Jewish immigration into the country. We draw attention first to the problem created by twelve years of Nazi oppression, for that is the most pressing need... it would be self-deception to pretend that large scale immigration of homeless Jews will immediately be practicable at the end of the war elsewhere than in Palestine.

The constitutional provisions for Palestine suggested in the memorandum, the 'development of the Jewish National Home in an undivided Palestine', the 'attainment by Palestine of the status of a self-governing territory with a constitution designed to meet the special conditions of the country, within or in close association with the British Commonwealth and Empire', and the guarantee that 'no citizen shall be at any advantage... by reason of his religion or race', and the facilitation of the acquisition of Palestinian citizenship by Jews, 'it being clearly understood that no Government of Palestine shall have... any rights in relation to any person outside Palestine who is not a citizen of Palestine', i.e. Jews living in the diaspora, reflected the components of the AJA's traditional philosophy, the cherished belief in a concurrence of British and Jewish interests, the esteem for liberal constitutional thought, and the concern to remove any possible indication of a dual loyalty.

Although the assimilationists still commanded the scene, it became evident to what extent Zionists had made inroads in the AJA when the draft memorandum, put to the vote at a special general meeting in December 1944, was approved only by the rather unimpressive majority of 24 to 13. In addition, those defeated, in close liaison with the ZF, did not refrain from submitting a minority report to the Colonial Secretary, calling for the establishment of a Jewish state or commonwealth in Palestine preferably within the British Commonwealth.¹⁵⁵

The AJA had been at one with the American Jewish Committee (AJC) in rejecting the demand for Jewish sovereignty put forward in 1942. Their attempt to form a platform of non-Zionist Jewish organizations as a counterweight to the Zionist-sponsored congress convened in spring 1946 in London at a parallel meeting proved abortive. Formal resolutions had not been considered.¹⁵⁶

In November 1946 Stein recommended a policy which marked the decisive, though reluctant shift from the demand for the resumption of large-scale Jewish immigration and the continued development of the

¹⁵⁵ Policy in Palestine: Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for Colonies, 14 March 1945, BoD C 14/28.

¹⁵⁶ AJA, Minutes, Report of General Purposes and Foreign Committee, March–April 1946, AJ37/1/6.

Jewish National Home in an undivided Palestine under the aegis of Great Britain to that for a Jewish state: 'However much the fact may be deplored, the realities of the situation seem to me now to point towards some form of partition . . . I desire to make it clear that it is with reluctance that I advocate partition . . .'¹⁵⁷ In an interview with the Colonial Secretary, Stein and Laski suggested that the proposed government statement would have a better prospect of achieving its purpose if it pointed more clearly to some form of partition.¹⁵⁸ After the Lancaster House Conference had broken down in February 1947 the British government decided to place the Palestine question before the United Nations. The decision to lay down the Mandate was regretted by the Association, which had 'been accustomed to address to the British Government any representations . . . but in this case will, apparently, be unable by these means to obtain a hearing for its views'.¹⁵⁹ The decline of British influence in the post-war world destroyed one of the premisses the AJA's assimilationism was predicated on: the exclusive reliance on Britain in all its dealings in foreign affairs. In much the same way as its peers in the larger society, the members of the AJA, equally steeped in the conventional wisdoms entertained about Britain's place in world affairs, had failed to realize that their country had won the war, but was no longer a power on a par with the United States.

In March 1947 the AJA passed a resolution on Palestine¹⁶⁰ expressing the hope that the involvement of the United Nations 'may lead to the just and lasting settlement anxiously desired by British Jews and by the British people as a whole' and appealing 'to His Majesty's Government to consent, as an act of humanity, to a substantial increase in the existing monthly immigration quota of 1,500 for an interim period of at least six months'. It also condemned acts of Jewish terrorism: 'For British Jews there is something inexpressibly painful in the loss of British lives at the hands of Jewish assassins', and the lack of cooperation on the side of the *yishuv* in suppressing them. While the JA came under criticism for the 'Biltmore Programme' and its rejection of the Morrison-Grady plan, the British government was warned that any constitutional provision for Palestine implying permanent minority status for the Jews could not be regarded as compatible with the standards set by the Mandate. The AJA was alarmed by the mounting tensions between the *yishuv* and the British

¹⁵⁷ Note for Palestine Conference Committee by Leonard Stein, 15 November 1946, AJA 37/6/1b/1.

¹⁵⁸ AJA, Minutes, Statement by the President and Resolution of the Council on Palestine, 4 March 1947, AJ37/1/6.

¹⁵⁹ AJA to Colonial Secretary, 21 February 1947.

¹⁶⁰ Council Meeting, 4 March 1947, AJ37/1/6, AJA Council Minutes.

administration in Palestine. The unequivocal condemnation of Jewish terrorism interspersed with declarations of loyalty indicate the AJA's anxiety about the repercussions the conflagration in Palestine could have on the standing of British Jews: 'In Palestine the course of events has moved from tragedy to tragedy; and they have already cast their shadows over the lives of Jews in this country.'¹⁶¹

The memorandum which the AJA submitted to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) on 24 June 1947, advocating partition and thereby implicitly calling for a Jewish state, came close to the Zionist viewpoint.¹⁶² On the publication of UNSCOP's report, the AJA issued a statement approving in principle the majority report, which favoured partition.¹⁶³ At the same meeting the council endorsed the joint protest which the Chief Rabbi, the BoD, and the AJA had made to the Foreign Office over the *Exodus* affair.

After the UN on 29 November 1947 had recommended the partition of Palestine, Leonard Stein on 27 January 1948 commented: 'no right minded man, whatever the views he formerly held, would not pray for the success of the United Nations' settlement', emphasizing at the same time that it 'would not possess any jurisdiction over Jews who were not its citizens, and the allegiance and loyalty of British Jews would remain an undivided allegiance and loyalty to Britain'.¹⁶⁴

At the AJA's first Council meeting after the establishment of the State of Israel, Leonard Stein described the 'circumstances in which Great Britain laid down the Mandate' as 'deeply depressing and, for British Jews, inexpressibly painful', deploring especially the fact that British officers served in the Transjordan armed forces. On the other hand he stressed 'the contribution made by Great Britain to the development of the Jewish National Home'.¹⁶⁵

The approximation of the AJA's Palestine policy to the Zionist position should not obscure the fact that it had evolved in a context different from the assumptions underpinning Zionism. It was primarily in practical terms that the AJA addressed the Palestine question. When the reintegration of the bulk of the survivors of the *shoah* into the surrounding societies proved to be impossible and the absorption of large numbers of Jews by other countries had to be dismissed as equally unrealistic, the Association took up the possibility of large-scale immigration into Palestine, which, as it frequently stressed, was guaranteed under the Mandate. The

¹⁶¹ Seventy-Fifth Annual Report of the Anglo-Jewish Association, AJ37/1/6.

¹⁶² Memorandum submitted to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, 24 June 1947, AJ 95/148.

¹⁶³ AJA, Minutes, 17 September 1947, AJ37/1/6.

¹⁶⁴ AJA, Minutes, 27 January 1948.

¹⁶⁵ AJA, Minutes, 25 May 1948, AJ37/1/6.

Association's demand for unimpeded immigration into Palestine has thus to be assessed as an attempt to bring about an end to the displaced persons tragedy, not as a deliberate move towards Jewish statehood. On the issue of what form self-government was to assume in Palestine, it was only as a result of the eclipse of the vision of a unitary state that the AJA was eventually prepared to endorse the notion of a Jewish state.

By the late 1940s the AJA's view on Jewish statehood in Palestine had shifted to such an extent that it was hardly discernible from the Zionist perspective. The period from 1942, when the news of the destruction of European Jewry had reached Britain, until 1948, when the United Nations partition plan was implemented, witnessed a readjustment of the AJA's perception of the Jewish condition abroad and to a certain degree at home. As the report of the AJA's General Purposes and Foreign Committee from December 1948 put it: 'There is a need to give twentieth-century British Jews a creed to live by and the committee appreciates that some of the formulae which were current and valid in the nineteenth century are as unrealistic as some of the doctrines which it considers necessary to counteract.'¹⁶⁶ Though far from subscribing to the still much disliked Zionist 'doctrines', the Association, if it was not to close its eyes to the bitter realities, could not but realize the inadequacy of its traditional prescriptions for Jewish misery. It is against the background of the obvious ineffectiveness of liberal values that the Association's departure from its long-established policy to seek a solution to the 'Jewish question' exclusively in terms of universally applicable human rights embedded in constitutional arrangements or binding international agreements has to be assessed. Having become disillusioned with policies solely based on the appeal of human rights, which, however emphatically propounded, could not be expected to lead to early and satisfactory results, the AJA saw itself compelled to contemplate provisions specifically designed to alleviate Jewish suffering. The JNH, a Jewish enterprise endorsed by international law and administered by Britain as the Mandatory power, as well as the subsequent endorsement of Jewish statehood by the international community provided the Association with a means of crossing the dividing line separating a universalist from a particularist approach to the 'Jewish question', as it appeared in the displaced persons tragedy and in the Palestine imbroglio.

In the assessment of the significance of the establishment of the Jewish state for British Jews there remained fundamental differences between Zionists and the AJA. The Association regarded the Jewish state as part of

¹⁶⁶ Report of the General Purposes and Foreign Committee, December 1948, AJ37/1/6, AJA Council Minutes.

the wider reconstruction of Jewish life after the war, rather than as an end in itself, let alone in terms of a Jewish *risorgimento*. Its analysis of the Jewish condition in British society, however, did not fundamentally change as a result of the *shoah* or the foundation of the State of Israel. Although the nineteenth-century belief in progress and an ever more perfected world had suffered considerable injuries, the liberal-cum-assimilationist interpretation of Jewish existence in Britain remained dominant.

*The New Court circle: assimilationists between pragmatic
retrenchment and fighting on*

When, with Brodetsky, a Zionist was elected President of the BoD for the first time, there was growing anxiety in assimilationist quarters that the entire Jewish community would become associated with Zionism in the public eye. An article by Brodetsky in the *ZR*, in which he stated: 'We refuse to accept the *policy of assimilation* not only because assimilation represents a capitulation on the part of the Jewish people, an abandonment of its sense of history, its tradition and its national dignity...', sparked off a correspondence between Brodetsky and Weizmann on the one hand and Anthony de Rothschild on the other.¹⁶⁷ The latter criticized such remarks for creating an 'absolutely erroneous impression of the feelings of the Anglo-Jewish community' and as inviting 'a most damaging resentment in the minds of any Englishman who reads them and accepts them as representative'.¹⁶⁸ Rejecting Brodetsky's article as both unrepresentative of and dangerous for the Jewish community, de Rothschild went on to give a brief outline of the New Court circle's variant of assimilationism:

Assimilation to English life seems to us—that is to say to me and all my Jewish friends and, I believe to the great body of English Jews—to be the civic ideal. We desire to see Anglo-Jewry sharing to the utmost in the life of the country, contributing all they can to it, and, especially as a religious community, enriching its spiritual treasury in a way only possible to those who feel and show themselves to be completely 'assimilated'. i.e. identified in their aims and in their secular life with their fellow citizens of other creeds. We entirely repudiate the idea that because Hitler's attack on civilisation has included a virulent persecution of Judaism in Germany, 'assimilation has broken down' in any country which has not fallen a victim to Nazi tyranny, or that its 'breakdown' will continue in any country after its freedom has been restored by a British victory. So far from representing a capitulation or an abandonment of our sense of history, our

¹⁶⁷ *ZR*, December 1940.

¹⁶⁸ Anthony de Rothschild to Brodetsky, 16 December 1940, WA 2261.

traditions and our dignity, we think assimilation represents the true fulfilment of the Jewish ideal at its best.¹⁶⁹

Anthony de Rothschild concluded his letter by threatening to terminate the cooperation with the Zionists, if the 'elected leader publicly ascribes to the Jewish Community in Great Britain as a whole a desire for a separate nationality which is not only not felt, but actually repudiated by a very large number of Anglo-Jews of all classes'.¹⁷⁰ It was the Zionist claim to speak for British Jewry at large which was most resented by the New Court circle: 'we realise that there are two ideals: "Nationality" and "Assimilation" but until the exponents of the former relinquish their habit of speaking as though they represent the whole, or the greater part of British Jewry it will be impossible to maintain that measure of cooperation which seemed desirable in these critical times.'¹⁷¹ Anthony de Rothschild, his associates, and what they thought was the majority of British Jews had no intention of being identified with Jewish nationalism in the eyes of the British public at large.

Rothschild's reply to Brodetsky had been preceded by a discussion on how to respond. With no love lost for Brodetsky's article among the members of the New Court circle, the line of division had not been ideological but tactical, between the circumspect and the assertive.¹⁷² Lionel Cohen and Waley Cohen occupied either side of the spectrum, the former thinking the time inopportune 'to start a press campaign or correspondence on the conception of "assimilation" or to make public the differences in the Anglo-Jewish community' and the latter deploring the lack of action and denouncing the 'policy of silence in face of the increasingly articulate usurpation of the voice of Jewry by the Zionist rabble' as having already resulted in 'a great deterioration of the Jewish position in this country'.¹⁷³ Anthony de Rothschild's compromise solution had been to take up the contentious issues, but to refrain from turning to the public.

In a further letter to Brodetsky, Anthony de Rothschild elaborated on Jewish relations with the wider society, Jewish identity, and Jewish nationalism. He regarded the position of British Jews in British society as parallel to that of the members of the non-established churches:

the members of the Anglo-Jewish community should be in a similar relationship to their fellow nationals of different faiths as the members of the other Nonconformist Churches, viz. that apart from the religious difference our ideal is to

¹⁶⁹ Anthony de Rothschild to Brodetsky, 16 December 1940, WA 2261.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Waley Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 29 October 1940, RA XI/35/62.

¹⁷³ Lionel Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 2 February 1941; Waley Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 6 February 1941, RA XI/35/62.

assimilate with the rest of the British nation taking our full part as Englishmen without reservation in all secular activities of the nation.¹⁷⁴

By 'assimilation' he and his friends meant a policy leading not to the Zionist scenario of Jewish fossilization but to 'the virile continuity of the community', sustained by the 'Anglo-Jewish twin ideal of taking a full part in the life of the country whilst maintaining the integrity and the full functioning of its own religious community'.¹⁷⁵ Henriques emphasized Jewish religion as the basis of Jewish identity and the only justification for Jewish separation: 'under no circumstances do assimilationists wish to identify Jewish religious principles with those of other religions, but rather to develop and enrich Judaism...'¹⁷⁶ Despite Brodetsky's assurances concerning 'the duties and status of Jewish Englishmen', Anthony de Rothschild suspected that the Zionists claimed 'that the Anglo-Jewish community should be regarded as some kind of national unit forming part of another nation', a conception that he said 'is wholly repugnant to me and my friends and, I believe, also to the great majority of Jewish Englishmen'.¹⁷⁷ He went on to accuse the Zionists of putting the future of Jews of this and other countries at risk and of instrumentalizing the results of Nazi policy for their own purposes.¹⁷⁸

From mid-1941 onwards, British assimilationists were contemplating the creation of a platform which would give them the possibility of expressing their views in public.¹⁷⁹ Anthony de Rothschild, after lunching with Weizmann, confided to Lionel de Rothschild: 'I think that he is as determined as ever and just as dangerous, as he is concentrating on one objective alone...'¹⁸⁰ It was a letter by Weizmann which served as the final catalyst in the transformation of the amorphous group of assimilationists around Rothschild into a more coordinated, if still informal grouping. Weizmann's suggestion of talks caught the assimilationists by surprise. Montefiore, marvelling at what had led Weizmann to 'angle for what support he can get from other quarters', remained suspicious of the Zionists' motives: 'The gang at Gt. Russell Street I would trust as I would adders fanged.'¹⁸¹ He doubted whether negotiations would yield any tangible results: 'I have no solution for the Jews of Central Europe but

¹⁷⁴ Anthony de Rothschild to Brodetsky, 12 February 1941, RA XI/35/62.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Henriques to Anthony de Rothschild, 4 February 1941, RA XI/35/62.

¹⁷⁷ Anthony de Rothschild to Brodetsky, 12 February 1941, RA XI/35/62.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ De Rothschild to Waley Cohen; Waley Cohen to de Rothschild, 27 August 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁸⁰ Anthony de Rothschild to Lionel de Rothschild, 19 August 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁸¹ Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 4 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

neither have the Zionists.¹⁸² He rated the impact of a unified Jewish line on the course of events at nil: 'It is not what the Jews want, but what suits the political necessities of the power dominant in the Eastern Mediterranean that will decide matters.'¹⁸³ Although as much averse to the Zionists' political aspirations and speculative post-war planning as Montefiore, Waley Cohen saw room for a significant economic and spiritual role of the *yishuv*: 'I think we must also try to envisage a positive side in which Palestine can play a part if the Jews would abandon their political aspirations there.'¹⁸⁴ Pointing to 'the creative genius of the Jews', which had shown itself 'in an amazing constructive economic achievement unequalled anywhere else in the world', their raising of 'the whole plane and standard of life there for the whole of the inhabitants of the country', 'the persistent pinpricking opposition from narrow-minded British officials', and the 'nucleus of a spiritual centre in Palestine from which also great things may come', he thought cooperation between 'Anglo-Jewry and the Zionists' possible along the lines of Palestine as the economic power house of the Middle East and as a Jewish spiritual centre.¹⁸⁵ While his designs were couched in universalistic terms, Waley Cohen differed qualitatively from Montefiore in his conception of the scope of the Jewish role in Palestine.

On 9 September 1941, Zionists and assimilationists met at New Court, the former represented by Weizmann, Ben Gurion, Brodetsky, Namier, Locker, Marks, Sacher, and Stein, the latter by Anthony de Rothschild, Lord Rothschild, Lionel de Rothschild, Neville Laski, Leslie Prince, Gluckstein, Bearsted, Waley Cohen, Montefiore, and Henriques.¹⁸⁶ The meeting ended inconclusively.¹⁸⁷ With the exception of Waley Cohen, the assessment of the meeting by the New Court circle was negative, ranging from the Rothschilds' scepticism to Montefiore's and Henriques's open hostility.¹⁸⁸ Anthony de Rothschild's main objection to the Zionists' proposal was their exclusive concern for Palestine:

So far as I understand, he and his friends wish to concentrate entirely on Palestine, which at most affords a solution for three million out of eight million. He leaves the settlement of the others to the Governments concerned and does not seem to care very much what happens, provided he gets his own way in Palestine.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸² Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 4 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Waley Cohen to Montefiore, 5 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Weizmann to Anthony de Rothschild, 2 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁸⁷ Anthony de Rothschild to Lord Rothschild, 12 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁸⁸ Waley Cohen, Notes on the Meeting on 9 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁸⁹ Anthony de Rothschild to James de Rothschild, 10 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

Lord Rothschild gave three reasons for his opposition to Weizmann's scheme: 'the imposition of dual nationality on Jews not living in Palestine'; the population density of Palestine; and the cul-de-sac the British government would find itself in, 'if they approve of this scheme, when the Arabs cry that this is an undemocratic procedure in that it is forcing a majority in a particular country to become a minority'.¹⁹⁰ Montefiore's reply was openly hostile. He opposed Zionism because it enjoyed the support of anti-Semites: 'All Governments (except the Mandatory power) who find Jews a nuisance favour full blooded Zionism, as Weizman said Beck favoured it, so does Tilea the Roumanian, et hoc genus omne. Apparently Ben Gureon [sic!] thinks that H.M.G. should remove many thousands of Arabs, put in many thousands of Jews and then be told "thank you", you can now clear out with all your officials and leave the country to us'.¹⁹¹

The different assessments of the meeting were echoed in the suggestions for the reply to the Zionists. Montefiore suggested that the reply to Weizmann should contain the following four points: first, that the time had not yet arrived to formulate definite proposals as to the post-war Palestine situation; second, that they were prepared to 'cooperate with the Zionists on the lines followed by the Central Council for German Jewry and to endeavour to obtain Government help in settling the largest possible number of Jews in Palestine'; third that they hoped that Britain would continue to exercise Mandatory powers at least for the immediate post-war period; and fourth, that 'we believe that an exclusively Jewish administration exercising control over immigration, land purchase, and taxation, together with other attributes of a sovereign state would prejudice the position of Jews in other countries and impede the extinction of all racial and religious discrimination which we trust may be achieved in the post-war world'.¹⁹²

Waley Cohen, by contrast, urged Montefiore not to be diverted by Weizmann's or Ben Gurion's lack of statesmanship 'nor by whether this or that European crook favours or objects to full-blooded or half-blooded Zionism', but rather to take into account the big factors which had changed between 1917 and now.¹⁹³ First, the 'powerful and systematic preaching of anti-Semitism by the Nazis'; second, the achievements of the Jews in Palestine as a result of the 'power of an idealistic enthusiasm felt by

¹⁹⁰ Lord Rothschild to Anthony de Rothschild, 13 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁹¹ Montefiore to Waley Cohen, 10 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Waley Cohen to Montefiore, Anthony de Rothschild, Lionel de Rothschild, 16 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

the masses of Jews which has made them willing as labourers to endure the pioneering hardships and as capitalists to accept exceptional risks'; third, that 'this had been achieved in the face of continuous and very detailed obstruction by small inexperienced British officials', who were wholly inadequate to meet the demands of a country undergoing such transformation; and fourth, that the failure of British Palestine policy had shaken confidence in British policy.¹⁹⁴ With a definite Zionist assurance on the civic equality of all inhabitants of the Mandate the assimilationists, Waley Cohen assumed, should feel able to work with the Zionists in a community of purpose in order to secure constitutional arrangements for Palestine on the following lines: (a) the creation of a political machinery safeguarding freedom, mutual tolerance, and self-government; (b) pending the establishment of self-government, the establishment of a governing body, based on separate Arab and Jewish electorates, whose representatives were to have full freedom of action if in agreement, and if not, had the right of appealing to a Governor General appointed by the British government; (c) the continuation of a transition period until Arabs and Jews agreed on a constitution; (d) constitutional safeguards against discrimination between Arabs and Jews as such; (e) the repeal of any obstruction by either Jews or Arabs by a final authority set up by signatories of the Atlantic Charter; (f) such framing of the new constitution that Arabs and Jews could be indifferent as to who happened to be the numerical majority; and (g) a definite regulation of immigration. Reasoning that the international community would benefit from Jewish resettlement in Palestine as a contribution to a peaceful world, Waley Cohen expected the international community to bear part of the costs. He explained his suggestions as motivated by the desire to give a constructive, non-Zionist answer to the Jewish post-war plight, a platform 'by which we can escape from the foolish position of just waiting on Weizmann's words of wisdom'.¹⁹⁵ Apart from trying to regain the initiative from the Zionists, he was careful to approach Jewish reconstruction in a context different from that of the Zionists, 'from the point of view of the service Jews can and are willing to render to the world rather than that which I think so unsound in the Zionist Platform, viz. asking for the acceptance of Jewish claims merely on the grounds of Jewish wishes'.¹⁹⁶

When the Zionists approached the New Court circle with a memorandum of 25 September 1941, Anthony de Rothschild informed them that cooperation on the lines they had envisaged was out of the question,

¹⁹⁴ Waley Cohen to Montefiore, Anthony de Rothschild, Lionel de Rothschild, 16 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

while leaving the door open for future deliberations. His reply had been endorsed by Henriques, 'though I don't believe there is a common ground: I feel militantly anti-Z.'¹⁹⁷ Montefiore was close to reality when he stated that he could not imagine that 'the Government is in the least interested in what British Jews think'.¹⁹⁸ The question for the government was: 'does it suit our book better to please American Xtian opinion and Jewish opinion and risk offending the Arabs or does it not.'¹⁹⁹ He objected to Anthony de Rothschild using the term diaspora in the reply: 'I am not a part of the Diaspora, nor are you.'²⁰⁰

When Weizmann expressed astonishment at 'the wholesale denial of everything which we had understood to be common ground between us', a protracted debate in the assimilationist camp followed over the formulation of a more extensive reply to Weizmann, stating the essentials of the assimilationist case.²⁰¹ Anthony de Rothschild's basic proposition was that following the implementation of the Atlantic Charter 'those professing the Jewish faith' should be accepted as equal citizens where they had lived before Nazi persecution began.²⁰² Unless the principle of freedom from racial or religious discrimination was firmly established as a foundation stone of international policy, 'there can be no solution of the Jewish question'.²⁰³ He accepted that for economic reasons, the position of the Jews 'will... of necessity be somewhat different from other inhabitants' and that 'there will, therefore, remain a certain number who cannot be absorbed or who definitely wish to go elsewhere'.²⁰⁴ While he accorded large-scale settlement in Palestine a prominent place on emotional and practical grounds, he did not envisage the Mandate as the only place for Jewish resettlement: 'So far as possible all countries should be urged to take in such amongst these refugees as can be fitted into their national economy.'²⁰⁵ He remained uncompromisingly hostile towards the idea of Jewish sovereignty:

To build a State based on race or religion seems to me fundamentally wrong and is indeed the antithesis of one of the principles for which this war is being fought. Those who advocate it concentrate on a partial solution of the Jewish question and ignore the effect that the creation of this State will inevitably have on their co-religionists who must remain in Central Europe.²⁰⁶

¹⁹⁷ Henriques to Anthony de Rothschild, 19 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁹⁸ Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 18 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 25 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁰¹ Weizmann to Anthony de Rothschild, 23 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁰² Anthony de Rothschild, 'Draft Memorandum', 29 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

Rothschild's draft was circulated among the members of the New Court circle, who with the exception of Waley Cohen returned it either substantially unaltered or framed in a more anti-Zionist tenor. Bearsted's draft reveals an even greater aversion to putting forward a Jewish case. In his opinion the Jews were best served if the rule of law was enforced 'without distinction of race or creed' in accordance with Art. 6 of the Atlantic Charter. 'No action should be taken, particularly by Jews, which would not keep this essential principle inviolate. . . . It will be seen that the idea of a Jewish State immediately cuts right across this principle and seeks to impose a new—and to a certain extent artificial—nationalism on the world. It is not for Jews to make these difficulties. While the whole world has been filled with admiration for the wonderful achievements in Palestine, it will be seen that those responsible have failed in one important respect, that is the achievement of cooperation between Jews and Arabs.'²⁰⁷

As a solution he suggested setting up machinery to prevent the persecution of minorities by majorities: 'This is the way the problem should be approached and it is certainly not for the Jews to complicate it by immediately starting to claim privileges of race and creed for themselves, even in a small part of the globe.'²⁰⁸ Harold Reinhart, a Liberal Jewish minister, whose suggestions had been endorsed by Henriques, wanted to give Anthony de Rothschild's draft more of an anti-Zionist, Liberal edge: 'The prospect of necessary large-scale European emigration of Jews after the war, for all the tragedy it implies, is meat and drink to the Zionist mind; and the Zionists' assumption of that premise now, is not only their idea of precaution against possible Jewish disaster, but also the foundation stone of their whole structure of propaganda.'²⁰⁹ He suggested some alterations making 'the rejection of the "primacy" and "necessity" of Palestine in the Jewish scheme of things' clear beyond doubt, while approving of Jewish immigration into Palestine:

I have faith that if half the zeal and half the money and a tenth of the diplomacy were spent elsewhere, the success would be impressive. The Zionists will scoff: That is only your faith! And I will reply: *Tu quoque*; . . . In the modern world, with its twin perils of anti-Semitism and Jewish nationalism, we must reject out of hand, a Palestine orientation of Jewish life—must reject it not only in theory but also in practice; and we must refuse to enter, either through the front door of Zionism, *or* the back doors of 'economy of immigration'.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Bearsted, 'Draft Memorandum', n.d., RA XI/35/61.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Harold Reinhart to Anthony de Rothschild, 23 November 1941, 1, RA XI/35/61.

²¹⁰ Ibid. 3.

Waley Cohen rewrote Anthony de Rothschild's draft, setting out detailed constitutional arrangements for the future government of Palestine on the lines of his earlier suggestions.²¹¹ His suggestions evoked the polemical criticism of Henriques who was not prepared to concede any role to Palestine:

We want to discourage this longing for Palestine, not encourage it as Bob seems to want to do. . . . The Jew's whole loyalty must be to the state of which he is a citizen. . . . A new market in oranges does not render a service to world civilisation. The lack of religion in Palestine is deplorable. So far there is nothing to make one hope that 'out of Zion shall come forth the Law'—but only oranges.²¹²

Whereas Waley Cohen had stressed the qualities of Jewish emigrants Henriques stated that 'Many of the Polish Jews are anything but "splendid people"'.²¹³ By the end of November 1941 the discussion within the New Court circle had boiled down to Waley Cohen's and Rothschild's alternative drafts. Waley Cohen's insistence on a compromising reply to the Zionists forced an increasingly bored Anthony de Rothschild to arrange a further meeting of the New Court circle. Waley Cohen, he intimated to Bearsted,

wishes to explain to the Zionists how it is possible without forming a Jewish State to get all they want. I feel that, to put it mildly, it is extremely unlikely that I will agree to any substantial alterations which he may wish to propose, but I could not take a leaf out of his book and refuse to give him an opportunity of putting his views before the others. Come if you can, but I shall understand if you are too busy—or too bored as I am.²¹⁴

Three days later, Rothschild, commenting that 'Bob's bark was worse than his bite', suggested to Gluckstein, Bearsted, Henriques, Montefiore, and Lionel Cohen that it might be good policy to accept most of his alterations, the most important of which was the substitution of 'Jews' for 'professing the Jewish faith'.²¹⁵ The change from an unequivocally religious definition of Jewishness to one open to interpretation met, however, with Henriques's resolute resistance: 'I *absolutely cannot agree* to the omission of the definition of a Jew as "one professing the Jewish faith" . . .'.²¹⁶ With implicit approval, he sent Charles Dreyfus's answers to

²¹¹ Waley Cohen to Montefiore, Anthony de Rothschild, Lionel de Rothschild, 16 September 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²¹² Henriques to Anthony de Rothschild, 29 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Anthony de Rothschild to Bearsted, 25 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²¹⁵ Anthony de Rothschild to Gluckstein, Bearsted, Henriques, Montefiore, Lionel de Rothschild, 28 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²¹⁶ Henriques to Anthony de Rothschild, 29 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

a questionnaire he had circulated among British Jews to Anthony de Rothschild. Asked about his attitude towards a sovereign Jewish state, dual loyalty, a Jewish army, and Zionism, Dreyfus's replies exemplify an extreme assimilationist case. On a 'Jewish National State' he commented: 'I would not live in it permanently if you paid me. I would live in it temporarily, as I have lived in Holland, France and Switzerland, as a foreigner.' Conceiving of divided loyalties in terms of either-or, his stand was unequivocal: 'I would willingly sacrifice a thousand unknown foreign Jews to save a thousand fellow-countrymen who were Gentiles, if, for example, they were all in danger of drowning, and I could only save one lot or the other. If I emigrate, which I do not intend to do, it will be to a white, English-speaking part of the British Empire. A little Jewish sugar in Gentile coffee makes a pleasant confection: a concentration of Jewish sugar is a sticky mess, and as likely enough, gives birth to a horrid fermentation.' Unsurprisingly he had no sympathy for separate Jewish military units, nor was he enthusiastic about the Zionist enterprise: 'I am only a Zionist insofar as I will, with extreme reluctance, help a *foreign* Jew to go and live in Palestine. An English Jew who wants to go,—That soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Englishmen.'²¹⁷ Reinhart and Montefiore joined Henriques in his rejection of Waley Cohen's draft.²¹⁸ The latter objected to the passage 'Jewish spiritual ties with Palestine' on the grounds that '[i]f we believe, I don't know that I do, but if I do, that Judaism can be a universal religion there can be no spiritual ties with Palestine. If you ponder on it, the difference between the words is fundamental: It is swallowing Zionism at a gulp.'²¹⁹ To accord the Holy Land special significance was liable to diminish the appeal of Progressive Judaism: 'Xtianity has no spiritual ties with any particular country and to assert that Judaism has such ties is to degrade it to a tribal or nationalist belief which no proselyte can share. No Liberal or Reform Jew could conceivably support such a view.'²²⁰

In his final letter to Weizmann Anthony de Rothschild steered a middle course between Waley Cohen and Henriques. While refusing to commit the New Court circle to any definite policy on Jewish post-war resettlement, on the grounds that it was impossible to foresee with any certainty the political and economic conditions in Europe after the war, he conceded that substantial Jewish emigration could become possible, desirable,

²¹⁷ Henriques to Anthony de Rothschild, 28 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²¹⁸ Reinhart to Anthony de Rothschild, 1 December 1941; Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 30 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²¹⁹ Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 30 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²²⁰ Ibid.

and, in the case of German Jews who had found only temporary asylum, almost certain, although not necessarily on the scale indicated by Weizmann. While the New Court circle advocated Jewish post-war planning within the framework of general continental reconstruction, Rothschild admitted that the Jews' position might however in some states be worse than that of other inhabitants because, in addition to the inevitable destruction due to war, they had before the war suffered spoliation or oppression at the hands of their fellow citizens. Moreover the campaign of hatred against Jews which the Nazis conducted would leave a mark which might be expected to take time to eradicate and many Jews would therefore be less reluctant than their Christian fellow countrymen to face the prospect finding a new home elsewhere. Finally, Jewish ties with Palestine and the presence there of thousands of Jews would render easier the task of Jewish settlement in that land.²²¹

Anthony de Rothschild conceded that there was a special Jewish case, because of the disproportionate Jewish suffering and because of the possibilities for their remedy offered by the *yishuv*. The New Court circle's endorsement of Palestine as a major recipient of Jewish immigration did not extend to the Zionists' political aspirations: 'For such settlement to be possible, there is in our opinion no necessity for the creation of a Jewish State. To found a State based on race or creed is fundamentally wrong and indeed is the antithesis of one of the principles for which this war is being fought.'²²²

The New Court circle's stance towards Zionism resulted from the interplay of two factors: (a) the search for compromise between two competing currents on the assimilationist side and (b) the attempt to meet the Zionists on the practical plane, without sacrifice of principle. The ultra-assimilationist demand for the Jews' identification with their respective state and society to the extent of holding essentially the same views on any subject as non-Jews, including the fate of foreign Jews, had foundered on reality as well as on the opposition of the more pragmatic assimilationists. Extreme notions, such as the active discouragement of Jewish involvement in the Holy Land or the refusal to regard the victimization of the Jews as anything more than part of a larger onslaught on civilization, had not found their way into the New Court circle's eventual platform. The inescapable recognition that the post-war condition of continental Jews would be determined by specifically Jewish push and pull factors paved the way for the New Court circle to make limited overtures to the Zionists. That the Jews' higher likelihood of emigration

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid. 4–5.

because of their disproportionate suffering at the hands of Germans but also of fellow citizens, and the *yishuv*'s interest in their absorption against the anticipated background of a policy of closed doors, ruled out the possibility of a return to the *status quo ante bellum* and could be overlooked only by the ideologically blinkered in the New Court circle. With their endorsement of Palestine's prominent role in Jewish post-war reconstruction based on assumptions at variance with those underlying Zionist politics, the New Court circle was careful to emphasize that their willingness to cooperate on practical issues did not imply a retreat from the assimilationist view on Jewish relations with the larger society in general. For the solution of Jewish 'questions', including the anticipated Jewish post-war plight, the New Court circle kept counting on the pervasiveness of the belief in the potency of universally accepted moral and legal standards in the respective nation-states. The nation-state as the decisive mediator of universal values appeared both to guarantee and to presuppose the Jews' complete identification with their respective national state and society, a narrowly defined sphere of religion exempted.

Weizmann replied to Rothschild's letter of 3 December 1941 in a conciliatory tone and proposed a common platform on the basis of the demand for free Jewish immigration, free acquisition of land, and the necessary administrative and financial control vested in the Jewish authorities in Palestine.²²³ Anthony de Rothschild was 'not very much impressed with Weizmann's letter' and thought 'that the best thing is to let the whole matter drop', for in his first reply 'he went out of his way to state the Zionist view aggressively and after he had received our reply... then sent a hypocritical letter ignoring all the points of difference and brushing aside lightly all the difficulties in Palestine'.²²⁴ Anthony de Rothschild's scepticism as to the prospects of continued negotiations with the Zionists was echoed by Montefiore:

I see no object in pressing for an interview with Weizmann. I think part of the difference between us and the Zionists is that their *first* interest is in the Jews of Central Europe. They earnestly desire an Allied victory for the sake of the Jews of Eastern Europe. We desire an Allied victory first and foremost for our own sake and the sake of our country and in the second place for the sake of our fellow Jews in Eastern Europe. So I feel inclined to say when the issue is certain and assured, then and not till then can I devote my attention to farming plans and possibilities for people in whom I have an interest that comes second to other interests, English interests which override all others. For the moment, I should say, I have no wish to

²²³ Weizmann to Anthony de Rothschild, 22 January 1942, RA XI/35/61.

²²⁴ Anthony de Rothschild to Lord Rothschild, 27 January 1942, RA XI/35/61.

bother and harass the Government with questions regarding future developments in Palestine.²²⁵

Montefiore's attribution of a hierarchy of distinct loyalties to long-established and immigrant Jews met with Anthony de Rothschild's full approval.²²⁶ As far as the contents of Weizmann's letter were concerned, Montefiore rejected the analogy Weizmann had drawn between the relations of the Irish diaspora with Eire, Catholics with the Vatican, and Jews with the projected Jewish state, the first on the grounds that 'Eire . . . has never claimed to be the spiritual and cultural centre for all Irishmen', the second on the grounds that rather than proving the contrary, it illustrated the very predicament the Jews had better avoid. The link with Rome had compromised the standing of Catholics 'certainly in France, possibly in Germany', to which Montefiore added the caustic remark that '[i]f the Vatican with its subtle skilled diplomacy hasn't been able to avoid difficulties, how would Ben Gurion manage, I wonder.'²²⁷ And Ben Gurion had, in fact, just written an article which Lionel Cohen rated as the best presentation of the Zionist case so far, his criticism notwithstanding: 'The fallacy of the article is that it assures the existence of a Jewish nation and the vice of it is that he completely ignores the Arab majority—or indeed the Arabs at all.'²²⁸ To Henriques the article, which did not 'even mention Judaism', claimed that the Jews looked upon 'Palestine as *their* country', omitted the Arab question, ignored 'the idea of the Jew as the loyal citizen of the country in which he resides', and gave the impression that 'P[alestine] would clearly hold the whole 13 million Jews', contained all the Zionists' distortions and false promises.²²⁹ The assimilationists had no time to lose: 'we must become militant. War or no war it is *essential* to set up a non-Zionist movement, which I believe will have the backing of thousands of English Jews.'²³⁰

When Mattuck stated the assimilationist case on intransigent Liberal Jewish lines, he came under heavy criticism from Waley Cohen for missing the point in three respects: First, he contested Mattuck's equation of Zionism with Jewish diaspora nationalism: 'I do not feel that Rabbi Mattuck's rather uninspiring negative program gets us very far. I think Rabbi Mattuck is wrong in ascribing to Dr. Weizman a desire that Jews throughout the world should regard themselves as nationals of the "Jewish

²²⁵ Montefiore to de Rothschild, 21 February 1942, RA.

²²⁶ Anthony de Rothschild to Henriques, 23 January 1942, RA XI/35/61.

²²⁷ Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 25 January 1942, RA XI/35/61.

²²⁸ Lionel Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 16 January 1942, RA.

²²⁹ Henriques to Anthony de Rothschild, 21 January 1942, RA.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

State”); second, he refuted Mattuck’s imputation that Weizmann intentionally pursued Jewish against British interests: ‘Similarly, Rabbi Mattuck ascribes to Weizman a hostility to British interests which I don’t think he feels. He wishes to persuade the British Government to a policy which he feels to be in the interests of Great Britain and the Empire, as well as of Jews’; third, he accused him of being out of touch with reality: ‘With regard to what Rabbi Mattuck calls the non-Zionist policy, it shows a lack of knowledge of the history of Palestine during the last 20 years and I should be very sorry to see us tie ourselves to it. Moreover, his proposals seem to be based on an assumption that Jews would accept the same risks and sacrifices for the sake of developing the wealth of other countries as they have shown themselves willing to endure in Palestine.’²³¹

After further controversy between moderate and intransigent assimilationists Anthony de Rothschild’s reply followed essentially Mattuck who was not prepared to relinquish the traditional assimilationist demand to fight for Jewish emancipation within the respective nation-state: ‘We cannot approve, either explicitly or implicitly, a policy calling upon a proportion of the Jews in any country to emigrate. In accordance with our non-Zionist views, we think it the right policy to fight in every country for equal rights for its Jews.’²³² While holding out the prospect of assimilationist support for a generous policy of immigration, land transfer, and credit for Palestine, Anthony de Rothschild’s reply contained no offer of concerted action vis-à-vis the government.²³³ Instead, Anthony de Rothschild had insisted on the cessation of pro-Zionist lobbying for the duration of the war: ‘we feel that to press the question now can only embarrass those who are, as they should be, fully engaged in the vital task of winning the war.’²³⁴

The issues around which the negotiations between Zionists and the New Court circle revolved featured also in the contacts Anthony de Rothschild maintained with the government and Rabbi Lazaron, the driving spirit behind American anti-Zionists. In October 1941, Moyne informed Anthony de Rothschild of his anxiety over growing Zionist claims. To him, the figure of 3,000,000 Jews which Weizmann wanted to settle in Palestine seemed excessive. Moreover, Weizmann refused to consider the possibility of seeking accommodation for any part of that number outside Palestine. When Moyne advanced alternatives to Palestine such as Madagascar, Anthony de Rothschild left him in no

²³¹ Waley Cohen to de Rothschild, 25 February 1942, RA.

²³² Mattuck to Anthony de Rothschild, 1941 RA XI/35/61.

²³³ Draft ‘A’, n.d., RA XI/35/61.

²³⁴ Draft ‘B’, n.d., RA XI/35/61.

doubt that 'in our opinion Palestine was the only country which could take large numbers in the immediate future at the end of the war', stressing that the work of the refugee committee had demonstrated that no other scheme would take in large numbers quickly.²³⁵ That Rothschild considered the JNH neither as the only, nor as his most favoured, place for Jewish resettlement became no less apparent: 'I emphasised as best as I could the necessity for obtaining equal rights in Europe and that as many as possible should be re-established there in the same way as others who had suffered from the war.'²³⁶ When they came to discuss the defence of Palestine, Anthony de Rothschild's intimation that the *yishuv* would be prepared to accept responsibility for this was ruled out completely by Moyne. When Moyne informed him 'that they had recently turned down Weizmann's suggestion for a Jewish army as it was bristling with difficulties and could not be carried out, although the Prime Minister had apparently at an early stage given some support to the suggestion', Anthony de Rothschild agreed on the grounds that Jews should serve in the units of their respective countries, which the British had prevented in Palestine: 'I told him that I thought this was quite right as the Jews should be enlisted in the units in the countries where they lived, and that I understood that in the beginning great difficulties were placed in their way in Palestine.'²³⁷

To Moyne's question whether the Zionists came in their majority from the immigrant community rather than from the old Anglo-Jewish families, de Rothschild replied that this was in the main correct. Although he described the New Court circle 'as forming 'a considerable body in this country', he intimated that they were neither organized nor able to give definite figures, having the impression that they understood 'this side of the question quite well'.²³⁸ Anthony de Rothschild made it unequivocally clear that he and his friends regretted the rise of Zionism, attributed it to the immigrant community, and wished to dissociate themselves from it, when he handed him Lazaron's memorandum telling him 'that roughly, our views were the same'.²³⁹ On the other hand, he would not lend himself to be instrumentalized by those government officials who wanted to dismiss the Zionists on the grounds of their foreign origin. When Parkinson, a Colonial Office official, hinted that it had been a great mistake to make a foreigner like Brodetsky President of the BoD, Anthony

²³⁵ Anthony de Rothschild to Lazaron, 17 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Memorandum on Anthony de Rothschild's interview with Moyne, 16 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²³⁹ Ibid.

de Rothschild replied elusively 'that this was not perhaps the only appointment to posts of importance which had proved unfortunate'.²⁴⁰ Nor did Anthony de Rothschild comply with the more radical US assimilationist demand to approach Eden with a view to obtaining an authoritative condemnation of Zionist political aspirations.²⁴¹ Anthony de Rothschild left Moyne, Shuckburgh, and Parkinson with the 'impression that, whereas they had no intention of swallowing Weizmann's proposals, they were greatly in the dark without any sense of direction'.²⁴²

When de Rothschild described his reply to the Zionists as a compromise—'The letter to Weizmann may appear to you in some ways to blow hot and cold, but this comes from the fact that it had to please quite a number of individuals and reconcile somewhat divergent views'²⁴³—this was correct only in the limited sense of the New Court circle's recognition that the *yishuv* had to play a major role in any realistic Jewish post-war reconstruction. The New Court circle remained opposed to any move that could be interpreted as a national Jewish aspiration, whether it was the demand for a Jewish army, the rescue of Jews who were technically enemy aliens, or the formation of a Jewish parliamentary lobby. While the New Court circle shared Weizmann's objection to any restriction on the participation of Jews in the war effort, they were adamant that 'there is no need for a Jewish division, British Jews join the British army, Palestinian Jews should join the Palestine forces and neutral Jews would be welcome in the British army as non-Jewish citizens of the U.S.A. have been in the "Eagle" squadron'.²⁴⁴ Zionist lobbying activities both by the Revisionists and the JA were viewed with alarm by assimilationists. Waley Cohen accused British Zionists of artificially creating a Jewish 'question' in Britain: 'One of the problems of the Brodetskys is that because they are much obsessed with the Polish problem they think there is an English problem which I do not think there is unless we allow them to create it. I see signs of their doing that already by stimulating the formation of a "group" in the House of Commons "interested in Jewish problems"'.²⁴⁵

The following observations can be made on the basis of the New Court circle's relations with the Zionists, the government, and like-minded Jews in the USA. Contrary to their public propaganda, the Zionists thought it

²⁴⁰ Anthony de Rothschild to Lazaron, 17 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁴¹ Lazaron to Anthony de Rothschild, 19 November 1942; Anthony de Rothschild to Lionel Cohen, 7 December 1942, RA XIV/35/63.

²⁴² Anthony de Rothschild to Lazaron, 17 October 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁴³ Anthony de Rothschild to Lazaron, 17 December 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁴⁴ Lionel Cohen to de Rothschild, 16 November 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁴⁵ Waley Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 7 February 1941, RA XI/35/62.

necessary to neutralize influential assimilationists. While the Zionists were right in their assumption that government quarters were in contact with assimilationist individuals, they had an exaggerated idea of their influence and, to the extent that they possessed it, of their determination to use it. The debate inside the New Court circle over how to respond to the Zionists reveals that the assimilationists were neither effectively organized nor did they possess a coherent ideological platform. Instead, the assimilationist camp was divided along ideological-religious lines and by questions of tactics. While there had been grumblings of malcontent in assimilationist circles since Brodetsky's election as the BoD's President, it was a Zionist initiative which catalysed the transformation of the New Court circle from a meeting point of the like-minded into a platform with a common programme. The dividing lines, which were not coterminous, ran between quietists and militants, pragmatists and ideologues. Ideologically, the spectrum ran from the adherents of Progressive Judaism to those of United Synagogue-style Orthodoxy. While the former's original insistence on a return to the *status quo ante bellum* had waned in the face of the bitter reality of Nazi policy, they were opposed to according the *yishuv* any significance beyond its part in Jewish post-war reconstruction. The latter, not sharing the Liberal Jews' hostility to special Jewish ties with the Holy Land, restricted their criticism of the Zionists to their political aspirations. The division between those in favour of presenting the assimilationist case to the public and those in favour of keeping silent in public traversed the ideological divide. On the issue of public assertiveness, Mattuck and Henriques who had no interest in a rapprochement with the Zionists found themselves in one camp with Waley Cohen who, from the start, had insisted on efforts to ascertain to what extent an agreement with Zionists was possible.²⁴⁶ By contrast, Montefiore, Lionel Cohen, and Anthony de Rothschild preferred a wait and see approach.²⁴⁷

During the New Court circle's deliberations in the second half of 1942, the problems associated with coming out were clearly seen: first, that 'the whole movement will most likely appear to be Reform or Liberal unless it is possible to strengthen the more orthodox side', and second, that it could not count on the support of those who thought the circumstances inopportune for starting a controversy.²⁴⁸ Waley Cohen was apprehensive that the non-Zionist platform was in danger of being identified with Liberal Judaism, which in Britain represented 'a vociferous but tiny minority of

²⁴⁶ Waley Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 27 August 1941, RA XI/35/61.

²⁴⁷ Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 22 February 1942; Lionel Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 8 March 1942, RA XI/35/61.

²⁴⁸ Anthony de Rothschild to Lord Rothschild, 20 August 1942, RA XIV/35/19.

the Jewish Community'.²⁴⁹ He was convinced that 'a large proportion, possibly the majority, of the young people who feel drawn and attached to Jewish tradition and dislike both the "Liberal" creed of following the passing current of the time and the ultra-orthodox attachment to forms and ceremonies are against a Jewish State, whilst many of them are ready and anxious, as I think Jews everywhere should be, to play any part they can in helping forward the two great contributions which the Jews have shown themselves in Palestine able to make to the advance of the world . . .'.²⁵⁰ He hoped that it would be 'possible to avoid throwing these people into the unsound political Zionist camp by giving the American "Liberal" parsons, including our own two in this country [a reference to Reinhart and Mattuck, who had both come from the USA to Britain], undue weight in the tasks of building up a constructive non-Zionist programme'. Waley Cohen's worries were shared by pragmatic adherents of Liberal Judaism who saw little prospect of allying United Synagogue Orthodoxy to their ambitions.²⁵¹

The Jewish Fellowship: assimilationism reconfirmed

During the second half of 1942, the New Court circle's militant assimilationists decided to translate their ideological views into public action by founding the Jewish Fellowship. Their aim was to have an alternative body ready in order to meet a scenario on the following lines: 'The contingency is when the B of D petitions the Government to create a Jewish Republic in Palestine + claims to be the sole manifestation of Anglo-Jewish opinion + by a carefully created majority of votes gags the expression of any other opinion.'²⁵² The alternative body was to provide British assimilationists with a public platform for the expression of their version of Jewishness predicated on religious differentiation from and complete political identification with the larger society: 'we wish to remain a religious community united by the ties of history, tradition, faith and suffering with the Jews of other lands, but with our political interests merged in and indivisible from those of Great Britain.'²⁵³ It was not until November 1944 that the Jewish Fellowship was launched. Several factors had worked against effecting a swifter realization of the decision to go public: an antipathy to provoking controversy during the war, concern that a merely anti-Zionist platform

²⁴⁹ Waley Cohen to Anthony de Rothschild, 13 May 1942, RA XIV/35/63.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Anthony de Rothschild to Lionel Cohen, 4 November 1942, RA XIV/35/63.

²⁵² Montefiore to Anthony de Rothschild, 14 November 1943, RA XI/35/62.

²⁵³ Ibid.

was too limited to attract broad support, attempts to widen the Fellowship's membership beyond the narrow confines of Progressive Judaism, and ongoing negotiations with the AJA. When Henriques, Bearsted, Schiff, and Anthony de Rothschild met Stein in September 1943 they failed to commit the AJA to an unequivocally anti-Zionist course. Henriques's suggestion that all those who had expressed willingness to join the Fellowship should become members of the AJA was flatly turned down by Stein. The assimilationists' favoured plan to amalgamate the Fellowship with the AJA failed because of the latter's refusal to become associated with the former's pronounced anti-Zionism and its identification in the public mind with the American Council for Judaism.²⁵⁴ When the New Court circle's attempt to take over the AJA foundered, those sympathetic to the aims of the Fellowship were unable to agree on a common course of action. While Henriques was intent on proceeding and turning to the public immediately, Bearsted, Montefiore, Anthony de Rothschild, and Schiff, while ideologically in agreement with the Fellowship's aims, urged Henriques to put its official launch on ice.²⁵⁵

When the Jewish Fellowship was officially launched in 1944, its aims were: '(1) To uphold the principle that the Jews are a religious community, ... (2) To co-operate with fellow-citizens of other creeds in strengthening the influence of Religion in the life of the nation, in bearing the responsibilities of citizenship and national loyalty, ... (3) To assist Jews in other lands ...'²⁵⁶ With an explicit sideswipe at Zionism the Fellowship stated that its 'basic principle...excludes the idea that the Jews are a politico-national group'. Support for the Zionist project was restricted to assistance of the economic and cultural development of Palestine as a refuge for persecuted Jews, which in turn was perceived as only a limited contribution to Jewish post-war reconstruction: 'Though it is hoped that Palestine will play a large part in service to the civilised world and in the rehabilitation of Jews from the countries now ruled or influenced by the Nazis, it cannot offer a complete solution for their problem.'²⁵⁷ The Fellowship's restricted Palestine policy was underpinned by the twin assumption that (a) substantial numbers of Jews would remain in Europe and (b) Palestine would not be the only destination of all those who wished to emigrate. The main emphasis of the Fellowship's policy was directed at the restitution of Jewish equality under the aegis of the

²⁵⁴ Henriques, 13 September, Stein to Henriques, 14 September 1943, CZA A 330/55.

²⁵⁵ Bearsted to Henriques, 7 September, Schiff to Henriques, 14 September 1943, CZA A 330/54; Rothschild to Montefiore, 16 November 1943; Lionel Cohen to Henriques, 6 December 1942, RA XI/35/62.

²⁵⁶ *The Jewish Fellowship: 'Aims'* (London, 1944).

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

United Nations, who were to shoulder responsibility for providing relief for the victims of Nazi barbarism, 'among whom Jews have been outstanding victims, and for their rehabilitation and the complete restoration and safeguarding of their equal civil and religious rights'.²⁵⁸ To the extent that emigration was necessary, the Fellowship called for 'a programme which will, under international supervision, facilitate voluntary settlement elsewhere . . .'.²⁵⁹ In sum, the Fellowship kept insisting 'that reaffirmation be made of the fundamental principle that the Jewish citizens of every land, fulfilling their obligation of loyalty to their respective countries, shall be guaranteed complete equality in every respect'.²⁶⁰ It endorsed the Zionist project only on its merit as a place of refuge.

Even the more restricted circle which went along with the official launch of the Jewish Fellowship was severely hampered by fundamental internal differences. While for the majority of its members the Fellowship served as a platform to parade their Britishness,²⁶¹ for Henriques, Mattuck, and Leftwich, the driving forces behind the Fellowship, it was an agency to promote their religious views, of which anti-Zionism was only one element. The main exponents of the former strand were Gluckstein and the Fellowship's figurehead Sir Brunel Cohen, the treasurer of the British Legion, who in poor Latin stated: 'The reason that I joined the Fellowship is that I am extremely proud of being a British subject, "civus [sic!] Britannicus sum" is as proud a boast as any Roman could have felt and Jews have especially benefited from being under British rule.'²⁶²

For Henriques, Mattuck, and Leftwich, by contrast, the commitment to restore the centrality of religion in a Liberal Jewish version to Jewish life outweighed direct political considerations. These two distinct sets of motives resulted in the Fellowship's failure to agree on a common policy, even on such issues as the 1939 White Paper.

When the State of Israel was established, the rift between ideologically committed militants and those who opposed Zionism on pragmatic grounds was forced into the open. The majority of the Fellowship's members saw no point in its continued existence and decided on its dissolution. For those who had supported the Fellowship for its opposition to Jewish nationalism and Jewish sovereignty, it lost its *raison d'être* once the Jewish state had become an established fact, had been endorsed by Britain and the international community, and made no legally relevant claims on the allegiance of Jews residing outside its territory. Only some of those of the Fellowship's members who combined anti-Zionism with

²⁵⁸ *The Jewish Fellowship: 'Aims'* (London, 1944)

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Frank Samuel to Leon Rees, 2 August 1942, CZA A 330/55.

²⁶² Sir Brunel Cohen to Joseph Leftwich, 27 July 1944, CZA A 330/54.

Progressive Judaism continued a quixotic struggle against what they regarded as the un-Jewish implications of Zionism beyond 1948.²⁶³ Irrespective of whether they adopted an indifferent or critical attitude towards the State of Israel, the former clientele of the Fellowship refused to regard the year 1948 as a significant mark as far as the Jewish condition in the Western diaspora was concerned.

If the Jewish Fellowship's appeal for a return to a perfected version of an essentially nineteenth-century liberal world order did not already compromise its platform as anachronistic, there were additionally more concrete reasons for its failure. The Jewish Fellowship, which owed its origin to the opposition of its protagonists to Zionism, had failed throughout its existence to complement its negative, defensive stance with a positive, coherent programme extending beyond the adherents of Progressive Judaism. Except for the Jewish Fellowship's antagonism to Jewish nationalism, there was next to nothing which held its followers together. They advanced diametrically opposed views on such crucial issues as the White Paper and the Jewish army. The advocacy of a Jewish army by Joseph Leftwich, the Fellowship's secretary, was a source of embarrassment to the clientele he worked for. The poverty of the Fellowship's programme was obvious to pragmatic assimilationists and a key factor for the withdrawal of their support.²⁶⁴ Bearsted put this point succinctly when he withdrew from the Fellowship: 'Anti anything never got anyone anywhere, and I fear that any movement which has not a concrete objective would be doomed to failure.'²⁶⁵

Attempts to give some impetus to the Fellowship's static anti-Zionism foundered on the ideological contradictions of the assimilationist case and the limitations of its social basis. In principle, there were two avenues for turning the Fellowship into a more dynamic movement, the option of a religious revival and that of practical as opposed to political Zionism. The latter, tentatively explored by Waley Cohen, was regarded by most assimilationists as acquiescing in the Zionist case and therefore unacceptable.²⁶⁶ The former, while providing the impetus for the Fellowship's key protagonists, was at the same time responsible for limiting the Fellowship's

²⁶³ Basil Henriques, 'The Attitude to the State of Israel and Jewish Nationalism', in Israel Mattuck (ed.), *Aspects of Progressive Jewish Thought* (London, 1954), 115–20.

²⁶⁴ Bearsted to Henriques, 7 September 1943, CZA A 330/54; Montefiore to Henriques, 4 December 1943, CZA A 330/55.

²⁶⁵ Bearsted to Henriques, 7 September 1943, CZA A 330/54.

²⁶⁶ Contrary to his representation as the most vocal opponent of Zionism in Shimoni, 'Non-Zionists', 90, Waley Cohen was the only member of the New Court circle with pronounced pro-Zionist leanings, and enjoyed corresponding credit with Weizmann, JA (London Executive), 28 January 1944, WA 2487.

potential audience, by and large, to the adherents of Progressive Judaism.²⁶⁷ The drive to promote the assimilationist case on the ideological basis of Progressive Judaism increased the Fellowship's ideological and religious homogeneity in inverse proportion to its mass appeal among British Jews. The dilemma intrinsic to any attempt to make Jewish politics and identity dependent on a religious revival, apart from the indifference it was likely to encounter, was that it was bound to ignite controversies in the minefield of religious polemics, thereby accentuating the cleavage between Progressive and Orthodox Jews. To increase the prospects of attracting mass support for the distinct political message that the Jewish Fellowship stood for, it would have been imperative to steer clear of the shark-infested waters of religious controversy. For the Jewish Fellowship, to become identified with the cause of Progressive Judaism proved lethal in a community which nominally and in sentiment was overwhelmingly Orthodox. Against the background of religious antagonism, formulae presenting Liberal and Orthodox Jews as united by their membership in the House of Israel and the religious character of Judaism did not strike a chord with mainstream Orthodoxy.²⁶⁸ The Fellowship's attempt to win the support of the Chief Rabbi, who had once drawn a distinction between the Shema Jew and the Hatikvah Jew, on the basis of an anti-secularist platform, did not materialize. To include the Chief Rabbi in a 'union of religious Jews', the Fellowship went as far as welcoming the Mizrahi's participation in such a forum.²⁶⁹ To no avail, as Hertz refused to endorse the Fellowship on two grounds: first, the tasks it proposed to undertake were already covered by existing machinery and, second, the Fellowship's indiscriminate equation of Jewish nationalism with secularism was overstretched.²⁷⁰

In the eyes of important assimilationist figures such as Anthony de Rothschild, Montefiore, Lionel Cohen, and Lipson, though they were in agreement with the Fellowship's ideological aims and themselves often members of Liberal or Reform synagogues, the Fellowship's failure to win substantial Orthodox backing doomed it from the start. Effectively reduced to a circle of enthusiasts devoted to Progressive Judaism, the Fellowship held no appeal to those who were interested in the creation of a platform to voice their opposition to Jewish nationalism. Anti-

²⁶⁷ The address list of the Executive Committee and the Council of the Jewish Fellowship reveals that its Orthodox support was restricted to a handful of members of the United Synagogue, Sephardim, and Neturei Karta supporters, CZA A330/54.

²⁶⁸ Mattuck to Leftwich, 4 July 1944, CZA A 330/55.

²⁶⁹ Leftwich to Hertz, 14 February 1944, CZA A 330/54.

²⁷⁰ Hertz to Leftwich, 31 March 1944, CZA A 330/54; Hertz to Henriques, 3 May 1944, CZA A 330/55.

Zionism, not a Jewish religious revival, had been the main attraction for the majority of the Fellowship's members and its potential audience: 'It is I think not open to contradiction that a large majority of the Fellowship adherents were moved by the need of an organisation to voice the opinion of a large number of English Jews in opposition to Jewish nationalism. Although admitting that it is only one of the purposes of the Fellowship, I am convinced that it is *the* one which attracted the main support the Fellowship has so far obtained.'²⁷¹ When it became clear that the Fellowship could not provide those Jews who were opposed to Jewish nationalism with an effective public voice, it lost its purpose for them. Like Anthony de Rothschild, they either never committed themselves formally to the Fellowship or, like Montefiore and Lionel Cohen, withdrew their support when the militants decided to go public.

It was Zionist propaganda that the Jewish Fellowship was a creation of the Anglo-Jewish establishment, if one understands by the term Anglo-Jewish establishment the group of well-connected, long-established families which until the inter-war period virtually monopolized institutional communal life. With the exception of Henriques, not one of the old Anglo-Jewish families had thrown their weight behind the Fellowship. Mattuck found 'the attitude of the "Dukes" very depressing'.²⁷²

The desertion of the pragmatic assimilationists had the ironic side-effect that in its social composition the Fellowship corresponded less and less to the Zionist propaganda cliché, which Harry Sacher presented in a vitriolic article questioning the moral legitimacy of the anti-Zionists:

As you all know, the Jewish nation does not exist . . . Faithful to the traditions of our father Esau we sold our national heritage for a mess of pottage. From a miserable petty people despised and rejected of men, we became world missionaries. . . . We shall fight and die for every nation, but we must spare no pains and shrink from no measure to maintain the will of God in decreeing the death of the Jewish nation. Before Zionism lifted its foul head, how happy we all were! We dwelt secure each under his own vine and his own fig-tree, I mean in Mayfair and Kensington. We were the acknowledged bankers, stockbrokers, and missionaries of mankind. There was no such thing as Anti-Semitism anywhere in the world. Anti-Semitism is the child of Zionism, and it will disappear with Zionism. Let me clear up one point where we are sure to be mis-represented. Though we are against a Jewish nation and a Jewish State, we are not against Palestine. If the British Government wishes to put a ban on Jewish immigration we as loyal British citizens will support it; some of us as M.P.s have already done so. But we do not insist that Palestine shall be closed to Jews. If any Jew can get

²⁷¹ Frank Samuel to Leon Rees, 2 August 1942, CZA A 330/55.

²⁷² Israel Mattuck to Henriques, 10 December 1943, CZA A 330/54.

there in a perfectly legal way and with the sanction of the High Commissioner, well and good. All we say is . . . he must respect the sacred right of the Arab nation to rule over him. How shall we go to work to slay this dragon of Zionism? We cannot preach to the mass of Jews. They just will not listen when we tell them that there is no Jewish nation . . . They will not listen to their betters, so their betters must save them in spite of themselves. And the way is plain. We are not the only enemies of the Jewish nation. There are enemies in high places, there are enemies in other nations. . . . Lets seek them out and whisper in their ears what may not be published to the Jews. In the words of our prophets: 'To your clubs, O Israel.'²⁷³

After Anthony de Rothschild, Montefiore, Lionel Cohen had deserted the Fellowship, it was, in striking contrast to the League of British Jews, made up of figures, some of whom, like Sir Jack Brunel Cohen, possessed considerable prestige, but did not carry much weight as communal authorities. The driving spirits, with the exception of Henriques, did not belong to the legendary cousinhood, but were foreign-born rabbis—Reinhart in the USA and Mattuck in Eastern Europe—and individual enthusiasts.

The Fellowship's politics and its failure resulted from the tension between those who understood it as an agency to restore the centrality of religion to Jewish life²⁷⁴ and those who regarded it as a platform to demonstrate their Britishness. The failure to rally a movement around a Jewish revival based on the religious definition of Jewishness illustrates the distinct roles which the religious definition of Jewishness performed in different contexts. The definition of the Jewish minority in religious terms was the legally enshrined formula for Jewish relations with the larger society. While this formula was accepted by pragmatic assimilationists as a regulation of the status quo leaving open potentially controversial issues, the adherents of Progressive Judaism saw the formula as defining the goalposts of their ideal of Jewishness.

The implosion of liberal assimilationism

For the understanding of the relationship of British Jews with Zionism, the reasons why organized anti-Zionism failed are of greater interest than its limited actions in the public arena. The eclipse of the anti-Zionist position was a process facilitated by factors both external and internal to the British-Jewish community, some of which originated well before the period under scrutiny. The endorsement of Jewish national aspirations by the British government in the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and the League of Nations in the constitution of the Palestine Mandate in 1922, as well as

²⁷³ Harry Sacher, 'An Imaginary Address', *New Judaea* (May 1943).

²⁷⁴ Robert Henriques, *Intention* (London, 1946).

a tradition of solidarity with persecuted Jews, had to varying degrees and in different respects contributed to the gradual erosion of the non-Zionist position. The attitude British society and the non-Jewish world as a whole adopted towards Jewish needs and aspirations had facilitated the shift from non-Zionism to Zionism in two different respects. Both the endorsement of Jewish national aspirations by the non-Jewish world and its indifference to the *shoah* paved the way for the accommodation of the non-Zionists to the Zionist position. The Balfour Declaration and Britain's subsequent assumption of the Palestine Mandate played a key role in toning down anti-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry. When Weizmann reminded Sir Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid after the publication of the Peel Report of 'the bounden duty of British Jews to give their utmost support to his Majesty's Government in carrying through the Palestine policy on which they decided last July', the Zionists capitalized on the assimilationists' dilemma when they were faced with a pro-Zionist British policy.²⁷⁵ Looking at the background developments which determined the scene for the decisive phase of the 1940s, it is ironic to note that it was the British government which dealt the first blow to the assimilationist position. While the Balfour Declaration had provided the basis for the concept of 'Patriotic Zionism', attracting and justifying not only economic and philanthropic, but also political support from far beyond the Zionist movement proper, it had been viewed as a Trojan Horse by assimilationists, such as Robert Henriques, who in his biography of Robert Waley Cohen, published in 1966, stated that 'Anglo-Jewry neither needed, nor could comprehend the need for the national home in Palestine, which without any help from Anglo-Jewry, indeed despite the intentions of Anglo-Jewry had been pledged to Weizmann by the British Government...' and a few lines further on: 'Weizmann and East European Jewry needed Palestine; Anglo-Jewry did not.'²⁷⁶ An obstructionist policy against the JNH as such would have placed the assimilationists in the impossible position of *plus royaliste que le roi* in opposition to Britain, a scenario which, when it became reality as long as Britain contemplated partition in 1937, was exploited by British Zionists who branded the opponents of a Jewish state as sabotaging British government policy. With the JNH an accepted feature of the political landscape, non-Zionists continued to disagree with Zionists on two issues: first, the legal status of the Jewish community in Palestine and second, whether the JNH was established only for persecuted Jews, who had nowhere else to go, or whether it would carry significance also for Jews in the possession of civic rights.

²⁷⁵ Weizmann to d'Avigdor Goldsmid, 31 December 1937, WA.

²⁷⁶ Henriques, *Waley Cohen*, 271.

Apart from the general ascent of Zionism in British Jewry since the 1930s, there were three more specific reasons for the lack of an effective assimilationist platform. First, during the 1940s, not only the presidency and the pivotal committees of the BoD were in Zionist hands, but also two other key communal positions, the chief rabbinate and the presidency of the AJA. As the AJA's President, Stein proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to all attempts to turn the AJA into a vocal anti-Zionist platform.

Second, the concentration on the clash between Zionists and assimilationists in the historical accounts has left the differences between the two camps in their programmatic agendas, and the determination with which they pursued them, largely unaddressed. To portray the showdown between Zionists and assimilationists in terms of a battle between two camps mustering all their resources for the attainment of a goal to which both competitors ascribed equal importance obscures the fact that the Zionists played for vastly higher stakes than the majority of the assimilationists. With the Zionists intent on disseminating a Palestinocentric national consciousness as a new Jewish identity, on securing a dominant position in British Jewry, and on assisting in the state-building process of the Jewish polity, the scope of their agenda was far more broadly defined and their determination to translate it into reality more intense than the ambitions and the commitment of the majority of the assimilationists. With the exception of the militant assimilationists of the Jewish Fellowship, in particular the adherents of Progressive Judaism, who had an equally broad, if distinct, understanding of Jewishness as the Zionists, bourgeois assimilationists were, for the most part, interested in fighting off the repercussions of those tenets of the Zionist programme which they thought incompatible with the status of post-emancipationist Jews. Apart from objecting to the idea of a Jewish state as incompatible with general Liberal democratic principles, they were worried about the possibility of Zionist political ambitions for the diaspora and the Jewish state making claims on the political and legal allegiance of Jews throughout the world or such claims being ascribed to it by non-Jews. As soon as the Jewish state had been sanctioned by the UN, and once it had become clear that the State of Israel neither reflected on the civic position of Jews in Western countries nor would itself advance compromising claims on the political loyalty of diaspora Jews, the majority of British assimilationists had lost their interest in continuing the controversy with the Zionists. With the assimilationists' agenda much narrower than that of the Zionists, the former had great difficulties in mobilizing their clientele at all. While they made no secret of the fact that they regarded the rise of Zionism as unfortunate and the demand for a Jewish state as contrary to democratic principles and dangerous for those Jews whose civic position was not as

entrenched as their own, there is no indication that the bulk of the New Court circle was actively seeking to sabotage the Zionist designs out of consideration for their position in British society as the Zionist conspiracy theories had it. Looked at it in this way, the eclipse of the anti-Zionist position was as much the result of the disappearance of sources of conflict and assimilationist indifference as a Zionist victory, which in turn explains the swiftness with which the vast majority of what was the assimilationist camp until 1947/8 made their peace with the State of Israel and a Zionism which they could either ignore or, as a diaspora subnationalism, include into their own understanding of Jewishness compatible with their position in British state and society.

A third reason why the assimilationists failed to provide an effective alternative to the Zionists was that in contrast to their competitors they were not able to put forward a common platform satisfying diverse interests or a common goal behind which they could rally themselves. Although the assimilationist case looked neat at first sight, it contained two fundamentally different strands: pragmatic and ideological assimilationists. The assimilationists were unable to put forward a practical solution to the two imminent post-war problems, a constitutional arrangement for Palestine and a solution for the DPs, which would have been in accordance with their traditional universalist views, nor could they come to a consensus on such fundamental questions as Jewish immigration into Palestine and the character of Jewish collectivity. Consensus existed in fact on one issue only, opposition to the idea of diaspora Jews forming part of a political Jewish nation. Once it had been proven in 1948 that Jewish sovereignty did not constitute a danger to the position of British Jews, pragmatic anti-Zionism ceased. Opposition to Zionism on ideological grounds, from adherents of Progressive Judaism, continued in the 1950s, though not in an institutionalized form.

In search of the Land of Promise: red assimilationism

The Zionists' clashes with liberal and red assimilationism differed in key respects, not only in terms of ideology, but also structurally in terms of relations with organized communal life and in terms of the numbers concerned. If in contesting the liberal assimilationists the Zionists had fought a faction traditionally entrenched in the commanding heights of the community, but neither able to nor really interested in creating a popular movement, their Communist adversaries had no communal position to defend, yet a mass appeal among British Jews. During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s British Zionists faced serious competition for the loyalties of British Jews from the Communist Party of Great Britain

(CPGB), whose Jewish membership accounted for about 10 per cent of the total, approximately 5,000 out of more than 50,000 at its peak in 1942.²⁷⁷ The involvement of British Jews in the Communist movement was, therefore a source of grave concern for British Zionists.²⁷⁸ What explanation is there for what Barnett Litvinoff termed the 'Jewish infatuation' with Communism in Britain?²⁷⁹

Why did British Jews become Communists? Was there a specifically British way in which the CPGB accommodated Jews? How did Jewish Communists explain anti-Semitism and what attitudes did they adopt towards Jewish nationalism? If Zionism was an issue of controversy between Jewish and non-Jewish Communists, what place did it occupy in the hierarchy of priorities of Jewish Communists?

Several explanations for Jewish attachment to the Left have been put forward.²⁸⁰ Jewish left-wing radicalism has been described as a drastic break with a Jewish past,²⁸¹ as its logical extension,²⁸² or as the result of socio-political self-interest.²⁸³ As an explanation for the involvement of British Jews in the Communist movement, Todd Endelman, Gisela Lebzelter, and Jason Heppel have touched on the impact of Communism's universalist message, an interpretation developed neither by Sharman Kadish nor by Henry Srebrnik.²⁸⁴ The latter, exploring Jewish involvement in British Communism in the 1940s and 1950s in the light of the primordialist theory of nationalism, regards Communism as a vehicle for the expression of Jewish ethnic distinctiveness. Geoffrey

²⁷⁷ Alderman, *Jewish Community*, 118; Jason Heppel, 'Party Recruitment: Jews and Communism in Britain', in Jonathan Frankel (ed.), *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism* (Oxford, 2004), 149–51.

²⁷⁸ ZF, Political Committee, Memorandum by Rosette and Nachman Englesberg, 20 August 1946, CZA Z4/10.299-V.

²⁷⁹ Barnett Litvinoff, *A Peculiar People* (London, 1969), 158.

²⁸⁰ On the 'riddle of Jewish radicalism', that many Communists may have been Jewish, but very few Jews ever turned Communist, see: Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left* (New York, 1979); Frankel (ed.), *Dark Times, Dire Decisions: Jews and Communism*.

²⁸¹ Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (London, 1968).

²⁸² Hyam Maccoby, 'On the Left', *Commentary* (April 1977), 78–81; Zygmunt Bauman, 'Exit Visas and Entry Tickets: Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation', *Telos*, 77 (1988), 72–5; Gerald Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority: American Jewish Immigrant Radicals* (Bloomington, Ind., 1985).

²⁸³ Peter Medding, 'Towards a General Theory of Jewish Political Interests and Behaviour', *JJS* 19/2 (1977), 115–44.

²⁸⁴ Todd Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656–1945* (Bloomington, Ind., 1990), 189–90; Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism*, 152; Sharman Kadish, *Bolsheviks and British Jews: The Anglo-Jewish Community, Britain and the Russian Revolution* (London, 1992), esp. 242–8; Henry Felix Srebrnik, *London Jews and British Communism, 1935–1945* (London, 1995); Jason Heppel, 'A Question of "Jewish Politics"? The Jewish Section of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1936–45', in Christine Collette and Stephen Bird (eds.), *Jews, Labour and the Left, 1918–48* (Aldershot, 2000), 93–121.

Alderman sees two distinct sets of British Jews who identified with Communism either for idealistic or for tactical reasons.²⁸⁵ This study, considerable overlaps notwithstanding, distinguishes three levels of participation in the Communist movement: first, membership of the CPGB; second, temporary support of the CPGB and its front organizations, and third, membership of Communist national Jewish organizations.

Jewish members of the CPGB

To those Jews who joined the CPGB, such as Ivor Montagu, a prominent journalist of the party's paper, the *Daily Worker*, Andrew Rothstein, Jack Gaster, a solicitor and son of the *Haham*, Hyman Levy, mathematics professor at Imperial College in the University of London, Phil Piratin, Communist MP for the constituency of Mile End from 1945 to 1950,²⁸⁶ Lazar Zaidman,²⁸⁷ or Issie Panner, senior lecturer in psychology at Goldsmith College in the University of London, Marxist–Leninist theory provided the intellectual tools and the Soviet Union the practical example of how to approach the Jewish condition within a universal framework. In accordance with Marxist–Leninist theory the CPGB regarded the Jewish 'question' as part of the social question.²⁸⁸ It was only at specific times and then for the most part within the carefully prescribed boundaries of Yiddish cultural activities and the Birobidjan project that the USSR allowed the expression of Jewish nationalism. Conversely, the closer Jews were to the centre of the Communist movement, the more important to them was the USSR's principal approach to the Jewish 'question': the creation of a model society guaranteeing Jews absolute equality, rendering their particular characteristics obsolete and expecting their eventual disappearance. In his writings Rothstein emphasized the increasing assimilation of Soviet Jews to the surrounding, itself steadily progressing, society as the principal avenue of Jewish emancipation. In similar fashion to continental Jewish Marxists, Rothstein, when writing about Communism and the Jewish condition, approached the subject from a universalist angle, deliberately omitting or toning down specifically Jewish issues. While he was happy to write about the national revival of a small Caucasian people, he had little to say about Zionism. He did not mention the Palestine crisis in

²⁸⁵ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 316; Barnet Litvinoff, *A Peculiar People* (London, 1969), 158.

²⁸⁶ Phil Piratin, *Our Flag Stays Red* (London, 1948).

²⁸⁷ Tony Kushner, 'Jewish Communists in Twentieth-Century Britain: The Zaidman Collection', *Labour History Review*, 55/2 (1990), 66–75.

²⁸⁸ *An Urgent Warning on a Most Important Matter: Jews and Fascism* (London, [1935]), 14.

his critique of British foreign policy.²⁸⁹ To Jewish and non-Jewish Communists, the USSR had translated the Marxist–Leninist analysis of the Jewish condition into an exemplary solution of the Jewish question.²⁹⁰ By facilitating the Jewish entry into society through lifting the discriminatory tsarist legislation, outlawing racial discrimination, and suppressing anti-Semitism, the USSR had become a powerful focus for Jewish identification. In the USSR the vision of universal brotherhood, of a world free from social injustice and racial discrimination, and of cooperation between Jews and non-Jews seemed to have been realized or close to realization.²⁹¹

It was by two different, although not necessarily mutually exclusive, roads that British Jews became members of the CPGB. Jews such as Rothstein or Montagu had adopted Communism for its general appeal, with no intention of preserving their Jewish heritage, or even in order to overcome what they saw as its limitations. Although Arthur Koestler had parted with Communism by the time he fled to Britain in 1940, his earlier views on the Jewish condition may be taken as representative of both non-Jewish and a particular variety of Jewish Communists.²⁹² To them ‘the Communist movement appeared as the logical extension of the progressive humanistic trend. It was the continuation and fulfillment of the great Judaeo-Christian tradition—a new, fresh branch on the tree of Europe’s progress through Renaissance and Reformation, through the French Revolution and the Liberalism of the nineteenth century, towards the socialist millennium.’²⁹³ With the rise of Fascism after the First World War, socialism seemed destined to become the heir to Liberalism, Marxist theory and Soviet practice the admirable and ultimate consummation of the nineteenth century’s ideal of progress.²⁹⁴ The Jewish question together with the black question, the Armenian question, and all other questions was expected to be solved within the global framework of the world revolution. The Zionist project, by contrast, restricted in its appeal and beset by provincial chauvinism, appeared unattractive now that ‘a new Zion was in sight, on an infinitely larger, all-embracing scale. It again promised a magic cure—not only for a small ethnic group, but for the

²⁸⁹ Andrew Rothstein, *British Foreign Policy and its Critics 1830–1950* (London, 1969); idem (ed.), *A People Reborn: The Story of North Ossetia* (London, 1954).

²⁹⁰ *Daily Worker*, 7 May 1936, 4; 16 May 1936, 4, 6; 20 May 1936, 5.

²⁹¹ Mendelssohn, *Politics*, 93–103.

²⁹² For the general appeal of Communism: François Furet, *Le Passé d’une illusion: essai sur l’idée communiste au XXe siècle* (Paris, 1995); for the relationship between Jews and Communism: Jacob Talmon, *Myth of the Nation and Vision of Revolution: Ideological Polarization in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, 1981).

²⁹³ Arthur Koestler, *Arrow in the Blue: An Autobiography* (New York, 1952), 283.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. 279.

whole of mankind.²⁹⁵ The desire to join the general Communist movement, rather than a specifically Jewish section, an option available in the Soviet Union and in Anglo-American countries, was typical of assimilated Jews who felt no attachment to Yiddish culture or Jews who saw the general Communist movement as an avenue to escape the narrowness, prejudice, and irrationality they associated with the traditional world of the Eastern European Jewish diaspora.²⁹⁶

While Koestler stressed solely the universalist appeal of Communism and the USSR, others, such as Hyman Levy or Phil Piratin, regarded their Communist commitment as also compatible with, or as the logical continuation of, their Jewish heritage. This distinction was to become important when the myth of the USSR as the harbinger of a world free from anti-Semitism was eventually exploded in the 1950s. While those who had arrived at Communism via the first road tended to stand by the party line irrespective of any persecution of Jews in Communist countries, to those who had taken the second route the anti-Semitic record of Communist regimes could become the touchstone for their Communist commitment.

Calculations of realpolitik

A different category from those who had joined the CPGB were its occasional voters and the supporters of aspects of its platform. In the 1930s the appeal of Communism in British Jewry extended beyond the party faithful for several reasons, historical as well as contemporary. Communism benefited from a long-standing history of pro-Soviet feeling among many Jews.²⁹⁷ Its sources were the memory of the October Revolution; the subsequent emancipation of the Jews; and the unfavourable comparison of the Eastern European successor states with the USSR. In addition to the USSR's popularity, Communism was attractive for British Jews for domestic political reasons. The CPGB was a reliable, sometimes solitary, opponent of manifestations of domestic right-wing extremism.²⁹⁸ In London's East End there was considerable Jewish support for Communism, as the CPGB and the Communist-inspired Jewish People's Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism enjoyed a monopoly

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ For the attraction of US Jews to the general rather than the specifically Jewish section of the Communist movement: Mendelssohn, *Politics*, 87–8.

²⁹⁷ Brodetsky credited the USSR of the 1920s with reasonable treatment of its Jewish population: 'The Communists and the Jews', CZA A82/4.

²⁹⁸ Srebrnik, *London Jews*, 53–82; Alderman, *British Jewry*, 292–306.

in taking the fight against Fascism to the streets.²⁹⁹ To Jews on the periphery of the Communist movement, the long-term and theoretical threats to Jewish distinctiveness raised by Marxist–Leninist doctrine rarely mattered. They were either not taken into account or eclipsed by the appreciation of the USSR’s publicized record on the suppression of anti-Semitism, its encouragement of Jewish cultural activities and of the Birobidjan project, and its role as a bastion against the rise of Fascism on the international plane, as well as that of that of the CPGB as a force against its domestic variant.

National Jewish Communism

Involvement in Communist National Jewish organizations, overlapping, in part, with party membership and transitory support, was a third variant of Jewish participation in the Communist movement. Among the organizations committed to both Jewish nationalism and Communism a distinction has to be made between those of a Bundist type which remained outside the CPGB and those within the formal framework of the CPGB. A whole array of organizations of the radical Jewish Left in the Bundist tradition—Jewish trade unions, support groups of Jewish organizations in the USSR, and most prominently the Workers’ Circle Friendly Society—fell into the former category.³⁰⁰ The official Jewish component of the CPGB, a sub-committee of its International Affairs Committee, which at various stages of its existence was called the Jewish Bureau, the National Jewish Committee (NJC), or the Jewish Committee, fell into the latter category. In marked contrast to Western and Central Europe, the British Communist movement comprised a specifically Jewish section, catering for part of its Jewish clientele, a parallel to the Jewish Bureau of the American Communist Party, the informal Jewish faction of the Australian Communist Party, the Yiddish-Speaking Section of the International Socialist League, the forerunner of the Communist Party of South Africa, and the *Yevseksiia* in the Soviet Union.³⁰¹ Apart from the *Yevseksiia*, Jewish sections of the local Communist parties

²⁹⁹ Cesarani, ‘Zionism’, 433–9; Henry Srebrnik, ‘The British Communist Party’s National Jewish Committee and the Fight against Anti-Semitism during the Second World War’, in Tony Kushner and Kenneth Lunn (eds.), *The Politics of Marginality* (London, 1990), 83.

³⁰⁰ For the history of the Bund see: Henri Minczeles, *Histoire générale du Bund: un mouvement révolutionnaire juif* (Paris, 1996); Gertrud Pickhan, ‘Gegen den Strom’. *Der Allgemeine Jüdische Arbeiterbund ‘Bund’ in Polen 1918–1939* (Stuttgart, 2001).

³⁰¹ Zvi Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics: The Jewish Sections of the CPSU, 1917–1920* (Princeton, 1972); Gideon Shimoni, *Jews and Zionism: The South African Experience, 1910–1967* (Cape Town, 1980), 53–60, 173–4; David Rechter, ‘The Gezerd

were restricted to Anglo-American countries, possibly a reflection of the weakness of the local Communist parties. In order to gain access to the Jewish constituency the Communist parties appear to have been prepared to accommodate, to an extent, Jews as Jews, formally in the USA and Britain, informally in Australia and Canada.³⁰²

The most prominent representative of the Bundist legacy in Britain was the Workers' Circle Friendly Society or Arbeter Ring, part political forum, part Yiddish cultural association, part friendly society, and part social club founded in Britain in 1909 by Eastern European immigrants. Membership figures reached their peak in the 1930s at 3,000. By 1959 they had dwindled to 1,200.³⁰³ Social radicalism and Jewish nationalism were the common denominators of the Workers' Circle movement. Apart from demanding the social revolution, the Workers' Circle campaigned for displaced Jews, a pro-Zionist British Middle East policy, and for legislation against anti-Semitism.³⁰⁴ Under the umbrella of the Central, Propaganda, Management, and Convalescent Homes Committees its twenty branches or divisions represented not only different geographical constituencies, but also distinct ideological strands, ranging from independent radical socialist variants to the CPGB line. Branch 9 (London) and Division 8 (Glasgow) were Communist controlled.³⁰⁵ In contrast to the CPGB and despite its sympathy for the USSR the majority of the members of the Workers' Circle maintained a positive view of the Zionist project. Accusing Communists of ignorance about the conditions in the Mandate, they objected to their wholesale denunciation of Zionists as capitalists and expressed confidence in the progressive character of the *yishuv* and the eventual creation of a 'Jewish Soviet Palestine'.³⁰⁶

Whereas the combination of radical socialism with Jewish nationalism of the Workers' Circle dated back to the early twentieth century, the CPGB's Jewish section was only founded in 1942 on the model of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the USSR.³⁰⁷ It was during those periods in which Communist parties adopted popular front tactics, from

Down Under', in Jonathan Frankel (ed.), *Jews and Messianism in the Modern Era* (Oxford, 1991), 278–80.

³⁰² The CPGB's comparative leeway towards intellectuals during the 1930s and 1940s might be a parallel to its consideration for Jewish distinctiveness: Eric Hobsbawm, 'Afterword', in Geoff Andrews, Nina Fishman, and Kevin Morgan (eds.), *Opening the Books: Essays on the Social and Cultural History of the Communist Party* (London, 1995), 253.

³⁰³ *The Circle Golden Jubilee 1909–1959* (1960), 26; Kushner, 'Zaidman', 68.

³⁰⁴ Workers' Circle, Central Committee, Minutes, 1939–50, Zaidman Collection 8-c, -d, -i, -j, -k, -l.

³⁰⁵ SJAC Pol. WOR.

³⁰⁶ *The Circle-Arbeiter Ring* (December 1934), English section, 3–4.

³⁰⁷ Notes of interview with Chimen Abramsky, London, 11 July 1996.

1935 to 1939 and from 1941 to 1946, that the CPGB was most accommodating to specific Jewish concerns and most successful at tapping the reservoirs of Jewish sympathy. For the duration of the Hitler–Stalin pact Communist parties did not engage in anti-Nazi agitation. During its popular front phases the CPGB allowed doctrinal leeway in practical party work. It thus became possible for the CPGB to seek the support of Jews qua Jews, not only as members of the working class. A result of the new tactic was the Communist sponsorship of, among others, the Jewish People's Council Against Fascism and Anti-Semitism. The encouragement of a more explicitly Jewish campaign especially in the East End found expression in the public launching of the NJC in April 1943 after several months of preparation. At a national conference of Jewish members of the CPGB in January 1943 the chairman expounded the new Communist line on the relationship between Jews and Communism: 'It was . . . a grave political error to assume that to be a Communist is to cease to be a Jew.'³⁰⁸ While he asserted that the 'terms Communist and Jew are not contradictory', he left his audience in no doubt that the CPGB did not consider this relationship as one of equal weight, when he outlined the Jew's proper approach to Communism: 'I am a good Jew, and I realize the tribulations of my people. I therefore dedicate myself to help them, and the only way to help them is to fight for Communism, which is the solution of their problems.'³⁰⁹ While Jews faced specific problems, the argument ran, they could be remedied only by a universal panacea. The CPGB's Jewish section, which was organized in districts in Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, West and East London, published pamphlets, a bulletin with extracts from the British-Jewish press, and a monthly, the *Jewish Clarion*.³¹⁰

Popular front organizations provided the means of drawing a far greater number than the party faithful into the orbit of the CPGB at the price of lowering the standards of Communist orthodoxy. With regard to Jewish issues this meant that the demand for Jewish radical assimilation advocated by Marxist doctrine and exemplified by Soviet practice was toned down and remained confined to the Communist publications on the national level and internal documents of the NJC. At the grassroots level Communist opposition to expressions of Jewish collectivity and Jewish nationalism, although never renounced in principle, paled into insignificance in comparison with the amount of publicity given to points of

³⁰⁸ CPGB, Jewish Bureau, 'Report', Circular No. 2, 18 February 1943, 2, NMLH CP/CENT/CTEE/02/01.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ CPGB, Jewish Bureau, 8 March 1943, NMLH CP/CENT/CTEE/02/01.

common interests between Communists and Jews, especially the defeat of Nazi Germany, the fight against Fascism in Britain, and reports on Jewish life in the USSR. In 1945 the CPGB, capitalizing on its Jewish support, returned Phil Piratin, standing as 'a Communist and a Jew', to the Commons for Mile End.³¹¹

The Zionist politics of British-Jewish Communists

From Marx to Lenin and Stalin, canonized Communist thinkers have consistently denied that Jews were a nation. According to Stalin's *Marxism and the National Question*, originally written in 1913 in response to the Bundist challenge, which determined the attitude of the Bolsheviks, the USSR, and the Communist parties on the subject, a nation was 'a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of life'.³¹² Lacking a territory, Jews did not pass Stalin's qualifying test for nationhood.

While remaining openly hostile to Jewish claims to the status of a political nation and retaining a latent hostility to Jewish collectivity, from the mid-1930s the CPGB adopted an accommodating stance towards Jewish concerns and allowed for the designation of the Jews as a people or nationality. The latitudinarian, by continental standards, attitude of the CPGB towards Jewish distinctiveness was reflected in the semantics of the Communist MP Willie Gallacher and the *Daily Worker* referring to 'the legitimate national feeling of the Jewish people', 'the Jewish people', and 'Jewish comrades'.³¹³ Such recognitions of Jewish ethnicity invariably stopped short of Zionism. Opposition to all aspects of Zionism was, with the brief exception of the establishment of the State of Israel, a persistent feature of the public Communist platform. Dissident demands by Jewish Communists for a reassessment of Zionism remained, for the most part, internal controversies. As far as party resolutions, the national party press, but also the official pronouncements of the NJC were concerned, the traditional Communist analysis of the Jewish question, and with it the rejection of Zionism, remained in place.

The CPGB interpreted the Middle East conflict within a dual framework of analysis, in terms of class struggle and in terms of a national liberation struggle. With the Palestinian Arabs depicted as revolting against British imperialism, and Zionism as serving both the interests of Jewish capitalists and British colonial rule, Jews were exhorted by the

³¹¹ Election material, 1945–50, ZC 9-b.

³¹² Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (London, 1947), 81.

³¹³ Commons (June 1936), DW 8, 20, 26 June 1936, 28 May 1936, 9, 18 June 1936.

British Communist press to support the Arab rebellion under Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem.³¹⁴ The Peel Report's recommendation for the establishment of a Jewish state met with the vehement opposition of the CPGB.³¹⁵ Although Communist proscription of Zionist aspirations resulted in 'considerable confusion' among Jewish Communists, as the *Daily Worker* admitted,³¹⁶ it was only voices which faithfully supported the official line that were given a hearing by the party: Hymie Lee, one of the CPGB's experts on nationalism, contrasted the 'chimerical designs' of the Zionists with the conditions of Jewish life in the USSR, where Jews were living in harmony with other nationalities.³¹⁷ Ivor Montagu, calling the Peel Report a 'naked imperial document', hailed the USSR as the only place where the Jewish problem had been solved.³¹⁸ Jack Cohen, active in both the YCL and the Manchester branch of the CPGB, denounced Zionism as 'a *reactionary* nationalist movement seeking to imprison the Jewish masses within the four walls of a Jewish national state'.³¹⁹

What is striking about a number of Jewish and non-Jewish British Communists is that, while belonging to the foremost critics of Zionism, they took a degree of Jewish ethnic distinctiveness for granted and referred to Jews as Jews publicly. Ivor Montagu opined that the acceptance of the Peel plan by the JA 'must make all Jews proud of their people blush with shame'.³²⁰ Jack Cohen accused some of Jewish Communists of hiding their Jewishness and of abandoning the struggle to defend Jewish rights against Fascism.³²¹

With the entry of the USSR into the Second World War, the CPGB dropped its support for Arab national liberation from British imperialism, but remained opposed to Zionism. In late 1944 the CPGB made an official pronouncement on Jewish issues, asserting that the CPGB was 'in full sympathy with the Jewish people and their desire to be free from the scourge of anti-Semitism'.³²² The pamphlet reiterated the demand for a 'Declaration of Jewish Freedom' which would be part of a worldwide post-war settlement and which would legally guarantee equality of civil

³¹⁴ *Labour Monthly* (July 1936), 410–11, 417; (July 1937), 450–1; (August 1937), 468–9; (April 1938), 251; *DW*, 15 July, 7 December 1938, *LM* (January 1939), 54, 58.

³¹⁵ CPGB, Central Committee, Report to the 15th Party Congress (September 1938), 33.

³¹⁶ *DW*, 28 May, 9, 18 June 1936.

³¹⁷ *DW*, 20 August 1937, 7; 6 August 1937, 7.

³¹⁸ *DW*, 10 July 1937; 28 July 1937.

³¹⁹ *Discussion* (May 1936), 9–11.

³²⁰ *DW*, 14 August 1937.

³²¹ *Discussion* (May 1936), 9–11.

³²² *The Jewish Question: Statement by the National Jewish Committee of the Communist Party* (London, 1944).

rights for all Jews. For the 1945 election campaign the NJC pinned its hopes on a left-wing victory which would eliminate the underlying economic conditions of anti-Semitism. The statement urged campaign workers to promise that care and attention would be paid 'to the special cultural and communal needs of Jews in largely Jewish areas' and called for a 'fight to rally the Jewish people'.³²³ The Tories were depicted as the party of appeasement and Nazi sympathizers, Labour as likely to help create a new world and to cooperate with the USSR. During the election campaign Piratin, who was not a member of the NJC, referred to himself as 'a good son of the Jewish people' and the CP as 'the champion of the freedom of the Jewish people'.³²⁴ Piratin's self-identification as a 'Jew' and the explicit references to the 'Jewish people' in Communist propaganda material represent a deviation from the orthodox Communist view on Jewish collectivity. Since the 1950s Jewish Communists made it a point to describe themselves as being 'of Jewish origin', but 'not Jewish'.³²⁵ As far as the Palestine question was concerned, the CPGB remained committed to the idea of a democratic bi-national state, suggesting that the local CP 'use its influence to bring progressive sections of the two communities . . . together'.³²⁶ Communist propaganda aimed at the Jews in the 1945 election tended to elide the official line of the CPGB. Campaign workers were told to stress the progressive role the *yishuv* was playing in the Middle East's development. The CPGB 'recognises the existence and rights of 500,000 Jews there, and the fine effort they have made in the fight against fascism. . . . It supports the rights of the Jews in Palestine to develop their economy and culture'.³²⁷ It emphasized its opposition to the White Paper, while at 'the same time, in common with many Zionists, it does not see Zionism as being THE solution to the Jewish problem'.³²⁸

While the CPGB appealed to Jewish concerns, especially during the elections in 1945, it did not waive its objections to Zionism, nor did its Jewish section. Countervailing trends within the CPGB's Jewish section rarely found their way into its official pronouncements and never into the programme of the general party. A series of syllabi issued in 1943 by the NJC on Anti-Semitism, Palestine, Zionism, Jews in the USSR, in Europe,

³²³ CPGB, NJC, 'The Election Campaign & the Jewish People', ZC.

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ A. Super to Brodetsky, 9 February 1953; 'Some Notes on Communist Party Meeting at Tyssen School, Oldhill Street, N. 16, on 5th February 1953. Under the General Title of "Hear the Answer to the Slanderers"', 1, 3, CZA A82/9/II.

³²⁶ 'Information Document: Palestine and the Middle East', International Affairs Committee, CPGB, 26 April [1945], 1, 5-10, ZC.

³²⁷ CPGB, NJC, 'Notes for Canvassers and Speakers: The Communist Party and the Jewish People', n.d., ZC.

³²⁸ Ibid.

and in Britain showed no digressions from Communist orthodoxy.³²⁹ An internal statement of the CPGB's Jewish section on Zionism and Palestine condemned the idea of a Jewish state for diverting the attention of the Jews from playing their full part in the Allied war effort, condemned Zionism as contradicting Arab national aspirations and, therefore, conflicting with Communist anti-colonialism, advocated a solution to the Palestine problem on the lines of the *Ichud*, and restricted its support of the *yishuv* to the recognition of the fact that a great number of Jews already lived in Palestine and that a future settlement had to safeguard their existence, on the condition that an understanding was reached with the Arabs about the 'future administration of Palestine, either as a bi-national state or as part of a Federation of Arab states'.³³⁰ A similar document rejected the Jewish army project as bound to antagonize the Arabs.³³¹

The official Communist formula on the Palestine problem in a nutshell: 'Palestine . . . minus political Zionism, and built on Arab-Jewish unity',³³² met with opposition inside the NJC. In April 1943 the NJC called for a re-evaluation of Zionism and Palestine by raising the question whether Palestinian Jews would not qualify as a nation in the Marxist sense.³³³ A draft by the NJC stated that Communists had countered Zionism in a 'negative and unsympathetic way' and suggested examining 'anew our estimation of the problem of Palestine and of related questions . . . in light of the need for greater unity in the fight against fascism'.³³⁴ Later in 1944 the NJC acknowledged the *yishuv* as a community 'playing a progressive role in the economic and social development of Palestine and the Middle East', taking part in the struggle against Fascism, and giving expression to its solidarity with the USSR.³³⁵ The minutes of the NJC reveal considerable discontent over the CPGB's attitude towards Zionism.³³⁶ At its third Annual Meeting the NJC dutifully denounced the 'reactionary character' of Zionist ideology but saw room for a 'sympathetic understanding' of the problems facing the *yishuv*.³³⁷ An NJC pamphlet pointed out that the

³²⁹ ZC 9-f.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ CPGB, Jewish Bureau, Minutes, 26 February 1943; 'Statement on Zionism and Palestine'; 'Statement on Jewish Army', NMLH CP/CENT/CTTE/02/02.

³³² CPGB, Jewish Bureau, 'Report', Circular No. 2, 18 February 1943, 2, NMLH CP/CENT/CTTEE/02/02.

³³³ 'Report of National Jewish Committee to International Affairs Committee', 9 April 1943, 2-3; ZC.

³³⁴ 'Party Work Amongst the Jews in Britain', 9 December 1943, ZC 9-f.

³³⁵ CPGB, NJC, 'Statement on the Jewish Question', ZC.

³³⁶ CPGB, NJC, Minutes, 11 February 1945, NMLH.

³³⁷ 'The Communist Party. National Jewish Committee. Third Annual Enlarged Meeting', 13, 14 January 1945, 3-4, ZC.

Arab leadership in Palestine differed from other countries as it had remained in the hands of reactionary forces. They had come to regard the *yishuv* as the main enemy of the Arab world rather than Hitler's Germany. Britain and the USA, concerned with their oil interests in the Middle East, had joined these reactionary forces. As a result it was not surprising that Jews felt insecure and that 'some feel a longing for some sort of National Home'.³³⁸ The pamphlet further emphasized the progressive role of the *yishuv* and called for the opening of Palestine to Jewish immigration. A statement produced a month later declared that 'Jews—everywhere may aspire to Palestine as a homeland', described immigration as a 'Jewish right', and asserted that the time had come for the Jewish community in Palestine to 'restore many of the glories of which the Jewish people are only aware from their Bible stories'.³³⁹

While Zionism was a source of permanent internal controversy in the NJC, its leadership did not make concessions to demands for its positive reassessment.³⁴⁰ The NJC's internal rebellions notwithstanding, its public pronouncements on Zionism faithfully echoed the party line: 'this reactionary doctrine is the counterpart of anti-Semitism, both deny the basis of national citizenship of the Jews in the countries where they live'.³⁴¹ The considerable opposition to the CPGB's uncompromisingly anti-Zionist attitude within the ranks of the NJC should not obscure the simultaneous existence of indifference on the issue or the willingness to relegate it to a low priority. As the example of the NJC member Hyman Levy demonstrates, it was possible to be deeply concerned with Jewish issues without evincing a particular interest in the Zionist project. Only with the advent of socialism on a universal basis, he argued, would the Jewish problem 'vanish like a forgotten nightmare'.³⁴²

The NJC's internal controversies over Zionism resulted in the reaffirmation of Communist orthodoxy on the Zionist issue. 'Avis' writing in 1946 criticized "certain" comrades in the party who are attempting to apply segregational and anti-assimilationist tendencies to their party work under the guise of "National" activity', for counteracting the eventual goal, the complete assimilation of the Jews.³⁴³ With the Jews being a caste

³³⁸ CPGB, NJC, 'Information Document for International Affairs Committee: Palestine', 16 March 1945, 1–3, ZC.

³³⁹ 'Statement to International Affairs Committee from National Jewish Committee: Palestine, [April 1945], 2, 4; ZC.

³⁴⁰ CPGB, Jewish Bureau, 26 February 1943, NMLH CP/CENT/CTTEE/02/02.

³⁴¹ *The Jewish Question* (London, n.d.), 8.

³⁴² Hyman Levy, 'The Problem of Assimilation', in J. J. Lynx, *The Future of the Jews* (London, 1945), 66.

³⁴³ 'Avis', 'Marxism and the Jewish Question', 7, ZC 9-f.

and not a nation, he argued, the Jewish question was a social, not a national question. In a further pamphlet he asserted that those Jewish Communists were in a majority who 'think of themselves as Communists rather than as Jews and do not claim any special hearing on the Jewish problem', denounced 'the Rabbinical faction . . . in the CPGB' as 'segregationist and absolutely reactionary', and demanded that instead of aiding Yiddish culture it was the duty of every Communist and particularly Jewish Communists 'to aid in every way possible the fullest assimilation of Jews . . . to break down the Ghetto walls from inside, and to explain how Zionist and Rabbinical propaganda are inimical to the Jews themselves'.³⁴⁴ These pamphlets and the choice of two prominent members of the CPGB and the NJC to give evidence before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry suggest (a) that the group dissenting from the Communist orthodoxies on Zionism was of sufficient weight to necessitate countermeasures to reassert the official Communist line on the Jewish 'question' and (b) that the rebellious faction succumbed to party authority.

After the war the CPGB continued its anti-Zionist course, demanding Jewish reconstruction *in situ* within the framework of the new progressive order in Eastern Europe and denouncing the Zionist project as an impediment to an Arab-Jewish rapprochement and a tool of Western imperialism. Articles in the Communist press sought to reassure their readers that Jews would have a place in the post-war Europe, reconstructed on democratic lines, and denounced or played down allegations of Eastern European and Soviet anti-Semitism.

In the arena of communal politics the Communist variant of the assimilationist position expressed itself in the demand for funds for Jewish reconstruction *in situ*, for the rehabilitation of Jewish children from Belsen in Britain, and for the immediate dissolution of the DP camps and the entry of their inmates into Britain.³⁴⁵ The Zionist-controlled Board of Deputies came under criticism for channelling funds to the *yishuv* to the detriment of relief work in Europe.³⁴⁶

Andrei Gromyko's speech to the UN General Assembly on 14 May 1947, extending an unexpected welcome to Jewish statehood, put British Communists in an awkward position. Gromyko had declared that the USSR, although in principle in favour of an independent Arab-Jewish state, was prepared to contemplate the partition of Palestine into Arab and

³⁴⁴ 'Avis', *Jewish Nationality: A Pernicious Illusion. A Study on the Theoretical Roots of the Jewish Question*, [1946], ZC 9-f.

³⁴⁵ *Jewish Clarion*, 20 February 1946, 1; January 1948, 4.

³⁴⁶ *Jewish Clarion*, 20 February 1946, 3.

Jewish states. He expressed understanding for the Jewish desire for a sovereign state, not on the merits of Zionism, but in the light of the Western countries' failure to outlaw anti-Semitism and to ensure full equality of rights.³⁴⁷ This volte-face was difficult to reconcile with the CPGB's earlier stance on the Palestine question. Only a few weeks before Gromyko's speech, Gaster had endorsed a declaration passed at the Empire Communist Parties Conference in London on 3 March 1947, demanding the abrogation of the Mandate and the creation of a unitary Palestinian state.³⁴⁸ After Gromyko's speech, Communist pronouncements were anxious to avoid the impression that Soviet Palestine policy had changed. To the extent that the Communist press acknowledged the Soviet about-face, it was presented as an act of last resort, imposed by adverse conditions.³⁴⁹ Gromyko's speech notwithstanding, the Communist press continued to criticize partition and Zionist support for it. When the Zionists gave evidence before the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), Chimen Abramsky imputed to them more far-reaching goals: 'Zionists to-day want partition. Such a solution would not prevent Zionist chauvinists later demanding expansion at the expense of neighbouring Arab States—if necessary by force of arms', and warned of the 'precarious dependence of a partitioned Palestine on foreign imperialist forces, be they British or American'.³⁵⁰ The argument was based on the assumption that the Zionists, by demanding a Jewish state, had become fellow travellers of the imperialist powers, instead of voicing the true interests of the country's inhabitants.

When the *JC* observed that the *Jewish Clarion* had undergone a reversal in its attitude towards Jewish and Zionist matters during 1948/9 very much in keeping with the changes of the official Communist line, Abramsky denied that the *Jewish Clarion* or Communist opinion, in general, had ever changed their line with regard to Zionism.³⁵¹ He distinguished between Zionism on the one hand and the creation of the State of Israel on the other. The starting point had been that the 'Palestine peoples began to fight for their national liberation'. To this, the USSR's first response had been the creation of an independent democratic Arab-Jewish state. Only with the realization that 'thirty years of British divide-and-rule policy had left their mark on Arabs and Jews' did the USSR propose 'an alternative... the division of Palestine into Arab and

³⁴⁷ *Jewish Clarion* (July 1947), 2–3.

³⁴⁸ *Jewish Clarion* (March/April 1947), 1, 4; CPGB, JNC, Information Document on Palestine, January 1947, ZC 9-d.

³⁴⁹ *Jewish Clarion* (July 1947), 4.

³⁵⁰ *Jewish Clarion* (September 1947), 3.

³⁵¹ *JC*, 29 July 1949.

Jewish states'.³⁵² When the USSR had turned from an opponent into a supporter of Jewish statehood, the *yishuv* was swiftly brought into line with the requirements of Stalin's definition of the nation: 'The Jews in Palestine began to acquire the characteristics of a nation—"a stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture" (Stalin).³⁵³

While the establishment of the State of Israel enjoyed the endorsement of the USSR, Soviet opposition to Zionism underwent no parallel changes. The Soviet about-face in high politics was not reflected by a different approach to the Jewish condition. Typical was an article on Birobidjan which was with unrelenting persistency depicted as being just on the verge of becoming a Jewish Soviet Republic. There, by the 'transformation of the early settlers, who were previously "Luftmenshen", divorced from productive toil, to fullfledged farmers, cattle breeders, shepherds and mechanics', the distorted social structure of the Jews had been rectified.³⁵⁴ By contrasting Zionism and *aliyah* with 'Construction at Home', 'working-class programme', and 'democratic reconstruction' the *Jewish Clarion* left the reader in no doubt where its sympathies lay.³⁵⁵ During the 1950s the tenor became more aggressive. I. Panner extolled Jewish life in the new Poland over life in Israel and accused emigrants of either following illusionary Zionist propaganda or refusing to be fitted into the Polish economy. Although Polish Jewry was treated on the basis of real equality, Zionist propaganda 'has besmirched those who saved them from the incinerators of Maidanek and Treblinka, attempted to create a panic atmosphere among Jews, and, in some reported cases, coerced with threats other Jews who were either undecided or opposed to emigration'.³⁵⁶

Since 1950 Israel became increasingly labelled as an imperialist spring-board for attacks against the USSR.³⁵⁷ Communist sympathies lay with the national liberation movements throughout the world, whether it was in Malaya, Indo-China, China, Egypt, or the Arab states in general. The NJC justified Arab suspicion of the Israeli government and demanded of British Jews that they 'must understand that the movements for national liberation from Imperialism are allies in the struggle for peace against the war plans of the Western Powers'.³⁵⁸

When in 1953 several Jewish Communists stood trial in Prague, the *Jewish Clarion* denounced attempts of the capitalist press—including that

³⁵² *Jewish Clarion* (April 1950), 3.

³⁵⁴ *Jewish Clarion* (May 1948), 2.

³⁵⁶ *Jewish Clarion* (July 1950), 4.

³⁵⁸ *Jewish Clarion* (June 1952), 3.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ *Jewish Clarion* (January 1948), 4.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 2.

of the Jewish capitalists for making a great outcry over anti-Semitism, echoing the CPGB, which summarily accused Zionists and the Israeli government of collaboration with the USA in conspiring to overthrow the Czechoslovak People's Democracy.³⁵⁹ Zaidman and Gaster defended the Czechoslovak government against charges of anti-Semitism by portraying the Prague trial as an incident in the class struggle.³⁶⁰ In January 1953 Rothstein gave a comprehensive account of the Communist attitude to Zionism in the *Jewish Clarion*. He started by questioning the Zionists' claim to the exclusive representation of the Jewish people:

Again, Zionist propagandists would like it to be believed that Zionism is the cause of all Jewish people. Zionist propagandists play, in fact, on the Jews' recollections of their ancient history, on their love of their traditional cultural heritage, on their deep resentment of centuries of ill-treatment and persecution, on their horror of recent Nazi bestialities, on their wish to find security and happiness, to pass Zionism off as the way to put an end to the miseries of Jews in all countries.³⁶¹

The doctors' plot in the USSR sparked off a repeat performance of the publicity surrounding the Prague trial. In a letter to the editor to the *MG*, Andrew Rothstein reiterated the standard Communist argument that anti-Zionism was not synonymous with anti-Semitism.³⁶² In order to counteract the unease among its Jewish supporters the CPGB organized meetings designed for its Jewish clientele. At one such meeting Gaster reminded his audience of the great debt that Jews owed to the USSR for its fight against the Third Reich. Apart from briefly mentioning that neither the charges in Moscow nor the Prague trial involved Jews qua Jews, he repeated the official Communist view according to which 'Jews are composed of two classes, the same as other people', a view he illustrated by references to the cooperation of the Jewish bourgeoisie with tsarist Russia and post-war Germany.³⁶³ The answer to the Jewish predicament was Jewish participation in the class struggle:

The only way in which Jews can fight for freedom is in the same way as Gentiles fight, by fighting the system which makes anti-semitism a weapon. Socialism is the unifying thing that breaks down barriers. Under Socialism antisemitism can have no place. Under Socialism Zionism is a hostile creed.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁹ *Jewish Clarion* (January 1953), 3.

³⁶⁰ Ibid. 1; draft article by Lazar Zaidman, n.d., ZC 9-h.

³⁶¹ *Jewish Clarion* (January 1953), 3.

³⁶² *MG*, 2 February 1953.

³⁶³ A. Super to Brodetsky, 9 February 1953; 'Some Notes on Communist Party Meeting at Tyssen School, Oldhill Street, N. 16, on 5th February 1953. Under the General Title of "Hear the Answer to the Slanderers"', 2, CZA A82/9/II.

³⁶⁴ Ibid. 3.

Gaster denounced Zionism for raising false hopes as neither could Israel offer a solution to all Jews—neither the sick nor the old were allowed to immigrate—nor did all Jews want to emigrate. To the applause and laughter of his audience he joked that on the Jewish prayer ‘Next year in Jerusalem’, he used to comment to his friends: ‘next year may YOU be in Jerusalem.’³⁶⁵

The end of the affair

Despite internal rumblings there was little open questioning of the Soviet record on the treatment of Jews among the CPGB’s Jewish members until 1956. Charges of anti-Semitism against Communist countries were ascribed to Cold War propaganda. Jewish Communists wrote numerous articles praising the USSR and the People’s Democracies for their policy of absolute racial equality and accusing the USA of anti-Semitism instead.³⁶⁶

The *Jewish Clarion*’s immediate response to the revelations of the Stalinist purges, of the closing down of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, of the murder of leading Jewish intellectuals, and of the anti-Semitic background of the doctors’ and Prague trials at the 20th Congress of the CPSU was evasive.³⁶⁷ The *Jewish Clarion*’s next issue, though sounding a more apologetic tone, was, when speaking of ‘abuses of socialist laws and principles’, far from questioning Marxist doctrine or the Soviet practice as such. While the editorial asserted that it was ‘impossible to oversee the shock, the sorrow, the resentment and the questioning which have been caused by the revelation of the facts concerning liquidation of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, the suppression of Jewish culture and the execution of a number of Jewish, political, social and cultural leaders’, it kept reiterating the USSR’s achievements on behalf of its Jewish inhabitants.³⁶⁸

While the *Jewish Clarion* was only prepared to admit a failure in the system, not the flawed nature of the system itself, Hyman Levy thought it imperative to reassess either Marxist doctrine or the model character of Soviet society, as a result of the revelations at the XXth party congress of the CPSU: ‘If political assassination, whether by individuals or through the medium of the secret police, still persists in a Socialist Society, then either that society has not yet achieved its economic freedom or our

³⁶⁵ A. Super to Brodetsky, 9 February 1953; ‘Some Notes on Communist Party Meeting at Tyssen School, Oldhill Street, N. 16, on 5th February 1953. Under the General Title of “Hear the Answer to the Slanderers”’, 2, CZA A82/9/II.

³⁶⁶ *Jewish Clarion* (January/February 1951); (June/July 1951); *World News and Views*, 15 March 1952; *Daily Worker*, 2 February 1953.

³⁶⁷ *Jewish Clarion* (1956), 2.

³⁶⁸ *Jewish Clarion* (July/August 1956), 2.

Marxist analysis is false somewhere.³⁶⁹ He denounced the *en passant* style in which the *Jewish Clarion* had reported on the events in the USSR:

The last thing that Jewish Socialists have expected in the country of Socialism is the arousing of national bitterness, and the extermination of the cream of Jewish intellectuals. In the face of this, your brief editorial comment is a mere bandage across a deep festering wound. . . . If 24 Jewish writers had been merely imprisoned in the United States we would have shouted to the high heavens about such a criminal action. When they are shot in the Soviet Union, and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee liquidated, all you can tell us is that it is an *abuse* arising from the Cult of the Individual.³⁷⁰

With his one-time belief in the USSR shattered, he called for a thorough investigation and the redress of faults:

As fighters for Socialism 'WE EXPECT NOT ONLY LEADERSHIP ON ECONOMIC MATTERS; BUT HONESTY AND FRANKNESS ON MORAL RIGHTS AND HUMAN INJUSTICE' and deplored the fate of 'MARTYRS WHO HAVE DIED FOR THE CAUSE OF SOCIALISM, MARTYRED ON SOCIALIST SOIL FOR THE RIGHT TO JEWISH CULTURAL FREEDOM IN A SOCIALIST COUNTRY'.³⁷¹

Hyman's appeal to speak up elicited a reply stating the official Communist case, whose tenor was that although abuses had occurred they were outweighed by Soviet achievements: 'We were defending the first country in the world which put an end to the greatest evil—the exploitation of man by man.'³⁷² Criticizing Hyman's approach as unbalanced, the *Jewish Clarion* claimed that the majority of Jews under Soviet rule were experiencing freedoms previously denied to them and called upon Jews to renew their trust in Soviet Communism. In September 1956 the NJC and the International Department of the CPGB met for an Emergency Conference. The majority of the members of the NJC expressed their dissatisfaction with the treatment of Soviet Jews and CPGB's handling of the revelations.³⁷³ When Hyman Levy returned disillusioned from a fact-finding tour in the USSR and made his views public, he was no longer tolerated by the CPGB.³⁷⁴ As a result of 1956, Hyman Levy was forced to leave the party, others like Abramsky resigned, and the majority of those who stayed on did so with the innocence of their beliefs shattered.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. 2, 4.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² *Jewish Clarion* (September 1956), 3.

³⁷³ CPGB, Joint Conference of NJC and International Affairs Committee, Minutes, ZC 9-f, Kushner, 'Zaidman', 71–2.

³⁷⁴ *Daily Worker*, 3 August 1956; *The Times*, 22 April 1957; Hyman Levy, *Jews and the National Question* (London, 1958).

Several reasons have been offered for the decline of Jewish Communism in the 1950s: Jewish social upward mobility, the Hitler–Stalin pact, the shattering of Jewish idealistic hopes for cooperation with non-Jews through the *shoah*, revelations about Stalinist terror, Cold War hostility towards Communism, Communist hostility towards the Zionist project and endorsement of Arab nationalism.³⁷⁵ It appears that two reasons were decisive for the waning popularity of Communism among British Jews. First, as a result of the upward social mobility of British Jews the Communist vision of a classless society became less attractive. Second, the evidence of officially sanctioned anti-Semitism in Communist countries during the 1950s and eventually the revelations at the XXth Congress of the CPSU cut the ground from under the feet of Jewish Communists. The disillusionment with the USSR as the model society, a society free from anti-Semitism, and the CPGB's collusion in the suppression of the truth were the primary reasons why Jews parted with the CPGB. They had been disappointed in the expectation of Communism providing a general answer to the human condition including the specifically Jewish predicament. The acknowledgement of the universal appeal of Communism and the USSR is essential for the understanding of Jewish attraction to the CPGB. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain why Jewish Communists who held specific views on Jewish issues were prepared to subordinate them to the party line in case of collision. The relative weight of the general appeal of Communism is highlighted by those controversies in which Jewish Communists did not make Communist opposition to matters of Jewish interest the touchstone for their Communist commitment. A case in point was the dissident voices on the Zionist project who eventually conformed to the party line.

For his disregard of the universal dimension of Jewish Communism it is difficult to accept Srebrnik's argument, who, siding with the primordialist interpretation of nationalism, sees Jewish Communism, at least for the London East End, as the result of a direct translation of Jewish ethnic concerns into politics and, thus, equates Jewish Communists with 'leftwing Jewish nationalists', in contrast to left-wing internationalists.³⁷⁶ While he convincingly demonstrates that in the period from 1935 to 1945 Jewish concerns were a main factor in determining political choice and were decisive for the election victories of Phil Piratin at the national level and a

³⁷⁵ Mendelssohn, *Politics*, 88–9, 142.

³⁷⁶ Srebrnik, *London Jews*, 131; in his subsequent essay 'Sidestepping the Contradictions', in Geoff Andrews, Nina Fishman, and Kevin Morgan (eds.), *Opening the Books: Essays on the Social and Cultural History of the Communist Party* (London, 1995), 124–41, here 136–7, he has accorded the universalist dimension of Jewish Communism far greater weight.

number of councillors at the local level in the second half of the 1940s, his argument is overstretched as a general explanation of Jewish Communism. He has little to say about Jewish Communists for whom immediate Jewish concerns were either not decisive in their identification with the Communist platform, or who after balancing their priorities subordinated their views to those of the party, or who saw Communism as an avenue to a world transcending ethnic and religious divisions, where being Jewish or non-Jewish would be irrelevant. Only by restricting the chronological scope of enquiry to a period when a relatively broadly defined Communist platform overlapped with the interests of a large proportion of East End Jews is it possible to present Jewish Communism in terms of a one-way relationship.

To Jewish Communists who stood by the orthodoxies of the party programme and were universalist in orientation Zionist designs aiming at the transformation of the Jews into a political nation and the establishment of a Jewish nation state remained anathema during the period under scrutiny. To the inhabitants of the many formal and informal 'halfway houses, positioned between the ultimately doomed ghetto and a future of universal brotherhood',³⁷⁷ by contrast, the Zionist project appeared compatible with those parts of the Communist platform they chose to adopt. The relative lengths to which the CPGB was temporarily prepared to go in accommodating particular Jewish concerns culminating in the establishment of the National Jewish Committee gave one of those halfway houses the semblance of a secure foundation.

Between time and timelessness: the Zionist politics of the radical Orthodox

The clashes of the Zionists with the radical or ultra-Orthodox as they are usually referred to were played out both in the British-Jewish communal arena and that of transnational Jewish politics. Taking into account radical Orthodoxy provides both a more complete picture of the spectrum of modern Jewish identities and a backdrop against which the rise of modern Jewish nationalism may be depicted. The re-consolidation of a social group whose defining element was the observance of a specific set of religious precepts demonstrates that the transformation of traditional, sacred communities by modern, secular, and national ones was no unilinear, universal process and that social groups whose focus of identity was religious rather than national were viable under the conditions of moder-

³⁷⁷ Mendelssohn, *Politics*, 28.

nity. And as an alternative answer to the question of what it meant to be a modern Jew, radical Orthodoxy throws into relief the characteristics of Jewish national identification whether of the British or the Zionist variant. It is in this sense, as an ideal type that Elie Kedourie has employed a British exposition of the case of the Neturei Karta, the extreme wing of the radical Orthodox, as a paradigmatic contrast to the rise of nationalism.³⁷⁸

After an introductory excursion into the world of the ultra-Orthodox, its British segment, and the varieties of Orthodox approaches to the Zionist project, the following questions are explored: What stance did the British radical Orthodox adopt on Zionist state- and nation-building? How did they translate them into politics? And what place did its political wing, the British Agudath Israel, occupy within the Agudist world movement?

Of the Jewish identities that developed in response to modernity—assimilationism, Jewish nationalism, and post-emancipationist Orthodoxy—the last has long been dismissed as a residual, anachronistic phenomenon, irreconcilable with the challenges of modern state and society. Contrary to the prevalent image of passivity, Orthodox Jewry underwent major innovations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, designed to reassert the centrality of Orthodox tenets in Jewish life. The terms radical or ultra-Orthodox are used to describe those segments of the Orthodox world actively engaged in creating the preconditions for leading such a life through the establishment of a distinct public and social sphere comprising a network of synagogues, schools, media, and the Agudath Israel World Organization (AIWO) as its political platform.

The British variant of radical Orthodoxy, as opposed both to the Anglicized Orthodoxy of the United Synagogue and the Federation of Synagogues which catered for the more traditional, but not necessarily more rigorous, tastes of Eastern European immigrants and their descendants, had its origins in concerns about the increasing assimilation of the communal organizations under the purview of the officially Orthodox United Synagogue with the Chief Rabbi, the very office being considered a deviation from strict Orthodoxy, as its head.³⁷⁹ The organizational focus of the British radical Orthodox was the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations (UOHC).³⁸⁰ Its members created a distinct religious and

³⁷⁸ Domb, *The Transformation*; Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 70–1.

³⁷⁹ On the expectation that the United Synagogue type of Orthodoxy would be hardly distinguishable from the Reform movement in some fifty years, see Leftwich Papers, 10 August 1932, 8, CZA 330/68.

³⁸⁰ For the emergence of British radical Orthodoxy: Isidor Grunfeld, *Three Generations* (London, 1958); Bernard Homa, *A Fortress in Anglo-Jewry: The Story of the Machzike Hadath* (London, rd).

cultural sphere, influenced by the tradition of German neo-Orthodoxy,³⁸¹ comprising synagogues, schools, and publications: the *Jewish Weekly*, the bilingual *Jewish Post-Yidishe Post*, the *Jewish Tribune*, the fundraising body *Keren HaTorah* which supported the kibbutz *Chofetz Chaim* and the *Beth Jacob* schools in Palestine, and the Agudath Israel Organization of Great Britain (AIGB) as its political mouthpiece. The radical Orthodox cooperated only partly with the Orthodox communal mainstream organizations.

Jewish Orthodoxy knows only two stages in history: exile and redemption. On the theoretical level the different Orthodox responses to Zionism were determined by the respective placement of the Zionist project within this view of history.³⁸² The Zionist movement, the establishment of the JNH, and finally the State of Israel could be seen as approximating redemption, though occurring in an unexpected way: Jews were returning to *Eretz Israel*, but not in their entirety, and not on account of obvious divine intervention. Jews possessed sovereignty, but the law of the land was not the Torah. The answers to the problem of what place Zionist state- and nation-building was to be accorded in the Orthodox world view ranged from the conviction of parts of the Religious Zionists, for whom the establishment of the JNH and the State of Israel signified the beginning of the era of redemption, to the reserved pragmatism of the AI and the demonization of the Zionist enterprise by the *Neturei Karta*. At the one end of the Orthodox spectrum, the Mizrachi propounded a perception of the course of history which, by working elements of nineteenth-century faith in progress into the Orthodox metaphysical doctrine, replaced the either-or of exile and redemption by an interpretation of history as a process, the course of which could be influenced by human actions, if not in pure theory, than at least in practice. Redemption could be achieved gradually, with the single steps leading to the final goal being seen as an expression of the divine will. Although Religious Zionists were not blind to the fact that the Zionist movement as well as later government and society in Israel were far from being conducted on the basis of the Torah, they thought that these shortcomings could eventually be redressed and considered active participation in the Zionist enterprise as imperative.

The Orthodox who opposed Zionism were more reluctant than the Mizrachi to diverge from the traditional view of the Jewish condition—that from the destruction of the Second Temple until the coming of the

³⁸¹ Isidor Grunfeld (ed.), *Judaism Eternal: Selected Essays from the Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch*, trans. Dayan Dr Isidor Grunfeld, vols. i–ii (London, 1956); T. Preschel (ed.), *Nathan Birnbaum: Selections from his Writings* (London, 1946).

³⁸² For an introduction to Orthodox responses to Jewish statehood: Immanuel Jakobovits, 'Religious Responses to Jewish Statehood', in idem, *If Only my People...: Zionism in my Life*, with a foreword by Sir Isaiah Berlin (London, 1984), 243–60.

Messiah Judaism existed beyond history—and put greater emphasis on the dangers which Zionism posed to Torah-true Judaism. In their eyes, modern Jewish nationalism, holding that Jews were to be a nation like all others and aiming at the correction of what Jewish nationalists regarded as the anomalous minority status of Jews in the diaspora through the creation of a Jewish nation-state, threatened the continuity of Jewish uniqueness.

From the moment Britain was officially entrusted with the Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations the attitude of the AI was ambivalent, characterized by continuing support for the Old Yishuv which in 1922 had opted to remain outside the Zionist organizational infrastructure³⁸³ and opposition to the dominant position which the WZO enjoyed under the constitution of the Mandate. The British AI was connected with the Orthodox sector in the Mandate through the visits of rabbis, fundraising for Orthodox institutions such as the *Beth Jacob* schools or the Orthodox kibbutz *Chofetz Chaim*, and through lobbying the British government and public.³⁸⁴

In 1936/7 the investigations and findings of the Peel Commission forced the radical Orthodox to take up a concrete position vis-à-vis the prospect of Jewish statehood. Their concerns differed from those which divided assimilationists from Zionists and maximalists from minimalists in the Zionist camp. While the main bone of contention between Jewish nationalists and assimilationists was the desirability of Jewish sovereignty, and between Zionist maximalists, including the Religious Zionists, and minimalists the acceptability of the British partition plan, for the AI the debate focused on the administration of the Mandate and the implications of a secular Jewish state.

At a meeting at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London in December 1936 at which Rabbi Jacob Rosenheim, President of the AIWO, and Rabbi Dr Salomon Schonfeld, presiding rabbi of the UOHC and pioneer of Orthodox education, also spoke, Harry Goodman, political secretary of the AI, reported on the grievances which the AI would ask the Peel Commission to rectify: the lack of official recognition of the Orthodox communities in Palestine, the lack of government funding for their educational institutions, the discrimination of the AI in the distribution of immigration certificates by the JA, and the obligation of every person wishing to enter public employment to express his readiness to work on the Shabbat.³⁸⁵ When the Peel Report recommended the partition of

³⁸³ Israel Kollat, 'Religion, Society and State during the Period of the National Home', in Shmuel Almog, Jehuda Reinharz, and Anita Shapira (eds.), *Zionism and Religion* (Hanover, NH, 1998), 286.

³⁸⁴ *JC*, 11 October 1935, 21.

³⁸⁵ *JC*, 18 December 1936, 21; 25 December 1936, 24–5.

Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, the Executive of the AIWO at a meeting in London in July 1937 decided to wait with a definite response until the Third *Knesio Gedolo*, the Agudist World Congress, and the meeting of the Rabbinical Council in Marienbad in August.³⁸⁶ After harsh criticism of the Zionist monopolization of the JA the Third Knesio Gedolo declared itself against partition and came down in favour of the continuation of the Mandate.³⁸⁷ The proposed division of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state did not meet with the AI's approval as it would have resulted in a Zionist-controlled, secular Jewish state. The Agudists condemned the Zionist movement that would shape the state according to its designs as a secular enterprise, pretending to represent Jewry and aspiring to change it. They were afraid that a secular state would distort the image of Judaism, as they saw it, and discriminate against or even persecute observant Jews. In their eyes the British Mandatory authorities served as a barrier against the anticipated dangers for Orthodox Judaism, in case secular Jews gained control over public life. In a memorandum the Great Rabbinical Council laid down authoritatively the views of the AI on the nature of the Jewish claim to the Holy Land and on the conditions of legitimate Jewish statehood:

- a) Our holy land has been granted to us from the master of the world by a sworn eternal covenant, in order to observe in this land laws and prescriptions of the Torah
- b) Having been expelled on account of our sins, from our country, G-d has promised us by our holy prophets that He will release us again through the Messias. The belief in this promise is one of the fundamental principles of the Jewish religion, obligatory for every Jewish person.
- c) The right of the Jewish nation to our holy land has therefore its basis in our holy Torah and in the guarantees given by the prophets as the envoys of G-d.
- d) The existence of a Jewish state is possible only if the law of the Torah is acknowledged as the constitutional basis of the state . . .
- e) A Jewish state that is not based on the foundation of the Torah would mean a denial of Jewish history and the true essence of Jewish nationality and would destroy the basis of national life.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ *JC*, 16 July 1937, 24.

³⁸⁷ *JC*, 20 August 1937, 17; 27 August 1937, 19.

³⁸⁸ *Memorandum Submitted by the Agudas Israel World Organisation (London Executive) to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, January 1946*, Annexe, Decision Concerning Palestine of the Great Rabbinical Council of Agudas Israel World Organization, of Elul 16, 5697, September 1937, translated from the Hebrew, AIWO, folder 19.

From the late 1930s until the late 1940s the British branch of the AI assumed a position of pivotal importance for the Agudist world movement. The isolation and subsequent destruction of continental Jewry during the 1940s had turned the periphery of the Agudist movement in the USA, Britain, and Mandatory Palestine into its centres. An internal estimate put the number of Agudist activists at 1,000 for Britain, 4,000 for the USA, and 6,000 for Palestine in 1947.³⁸⁹ Although the Executive Committees of the branches in New York, London, and Jerusalem were technically of equal weight, the London Advisory Executive Committee functioned as the coordinating executive throughout the Second World War. It derived its formal legitimacy from its recognition as the central AI Executive by the Great Rabbinical Council in Marienbad in 1937 and by Rosenheim, who, when leaving London for New York, confirmed the London Advisory Executive as the political decision-making centre of the Agudist world movement. During the war the dominant figure in Agudist politics was Harry Goodman, who combined the office of political secretary of the AIWO, the chairmanship of the British AI, membership in the council of the Anglo-Jewish Association (AJA) and the Joint Foreign Committee (JFC), and a position in the British Ministry of Information.

When in 1942 the Zionists put forward their claims in the Biltmore Resolution, Harry Goodman, in response to Joseph Heller, outlined the position of the British AI. While he emphasized the 'inseparable association of the Jewish people with Palestine' he remained silent on the issue of Jewish sovereignty:

We orthodox Jews base our relations to Palestine on Biblical writ; The words spoken to Abraham: 'go and inherit the land, for I will give it thee and thy seed' have never ceased to be part of Jewish life and law. We accept the Balfour Declaration and reject the White Paper. We have always contended that mutual Arab-Jewish understanding is essential for the upbuilding of Palestine. It would be fantastic to suggest that Jews demand equal rights in Europe, and would refuse to give them in Palestine.³⁹⁰

Apart from rejecting the Zionists' approach to the Arab question, the British AI's main grievance against the Zionists was their monopolization of the JA and their resulting privileged position in the *yishuv*. Goodman accused the Zionists of abusing their monopoly by discriminating against the Orthodox when it came to the distribution of immigration certificates. Since the official Jewish community in the Mandate, which was spurned

³⁸⁹ Schenkolewski to Rosenheim, 17 February 1947, AIWO, folder 26.

³⁹⁰ Harry Goodman to Isaac Meir Lewin, 28 June 1943, AIWO, folder 2; *Great Britain and the East*, 31 October 1942; 5 December 1942.

by the Orthodox, enjoyed public status, he demanded that instead of being allowed to opt out of the official community, their community be granted the same public status and complained that 'in Palestine religious Jewry should be treated as second-class citizens, that their Rabbinate should not have official recognition, that their educational system should not receive the subventions granted to the Zionist and socialist schools'.³⁹¹ The Palestine AI, which appeared to agree 'to a Zionist state and the Jewish Agency control of the immigration', was suspected of pro-Zionist leanings. Alarmed by an article in the *Jewish Chronicle* reporting on a kibbutz of the Poalei Agudath Israel (PAI), which had settled on JNF land, and emphasizing that the refutation of the Biltmore Programme by the British AI had not been endorsed by AIWO, Goodman pleaded for the adoption of an uncompromising stance vis-à-vis Jewish sovereignty and for a campaign for the thorough reconstruction of the JA.³⁹² The vehemence of the anti-Zionism of the British AI was echoed in neither the American nor the Palestine AI. In contrast to Goodman and the British AI, Rosenheim did not want to commit the AIWO publicly against a secular Jewish state, which might eventually prove a useful, if irritating instrument for alleviating the suffering of European Jews. Rosenheim's preferred option was for the Zionists to restrict their demands to mass immigration and to leave the constitutional arrangements of the Mandate to future negotiations. When it became impossible to keep the constitutional question open, the AI, bound by the rulings of the Rabbinical Council of 1937, had to demand a Jewish Commonwealth on the basis of the Torah. As its realization was unlikely, Rosenheim argued that the AI concentrate on the maximum autonomy for observant Jews.³⁹³ In case of the termination of the Mandate Rosenheim saw the political interests of the Orthodox best safeguarded in a Jewish Commonwealth within an Arab-Jewish Federation under international trusteeship. He thought it imperative that the Jewish Commonwealth be part of a larger Arab-Jewish Federation, 'weil ein den Arabern mit Gewalt aufgezwungenes Juedisches Gemeinwesen, das zum Untergang verurteilt waere, eine geradezu verbrecherische Forderung sein wuerde'.³⁹⁴ Whereas his demand for a negotiated agreement with the Arabs had been motivated by political considerations, his demand for the international control of Palestine resulted from the conviction that

³⁹¹ *Great Britain and the East*, 5 December 1942, 29.

³⁹² Harry Goodman to Rosenheim, 24 December 1943, AIWO, folder 5; *JC*, 24 December 1943.

³⁹³ Rosenheim to Lewin, 14 April 1943; 4 January 1944, AIWO, folder 5.

³⁹⁴ Rosenheim to Lewin, 14 April 1943, AIWO, folder 5.

observant Jews would be treated better under an international regime than under a secular Jewish one:

fuer uns [ist] die 'International Trusteeship' nicht *nur* aus Gruenden der *physischen* und *politischen* Sicherheit noetig, sondern auch aus *religioesen* Gruenden. Leider haben wir von nicht-juedischen Instanzen immer *mehr* Gewissensfreiheit zu erwarten als von sogenannten Juedischen.³⁹⁵

As long as partition and Jewish statehood were not on the agenda, Rosenheim advocated the AI's participation in the establishment of an '*arabisch-juedischen Golus-Staates in Erez Israel* in Geiste von Dr. Magnes... In einem solchen arabisch-juedischen Golus-Staat wuerde wenigstens unter den Juden das Bewusstsein lebendig bleiben, dass die Erloesung noch NICHT gekommen ist und dass diese Erloesung nicht durch Waffen-Gewalt oder Politik sondern nur durch Teshuvo herbeigefuehrt werden koenne. Das waere schon ein ungeheurer Gewinn fuer das religioese Bewusstsein.³⁹⁶

While Rosenheim saw the AI as under an obligation to tone down Orthodox reservations about secular Jewish statehood as long as the Zionist project was the last lifeline for Jews, he was not prepared to waive them in principle. Referring to the precedent of 1920 when, in order not to jeopardize the whole Mandate, the AI withdrew its protests against the preferential treatment of the Zionists in its constitution, Rosenheim advised against a confrontational course vis-à-vis the Zionists:

Faktisch bin ich der Meinung, dass wir vorerst nichts tun duerfen, um das zionistische Verlangen nach einem juedischen Staate... zu bekaempfen. So wenig erwuenscht uns von unserem Standpunkte aus ein zionistischer Staat sein kann, so haben wir doch nicht in die Karten geguckt und wir koennten die Verantwortung nicht dafuer tragen, diesen Versuch, dem armen juedische Volke zu helfen, eventuell vereitelt zu haben. ... Vielleicht ist es uns bestimmt, innerhalb dieses Staates und nicht auerhalb desselben fuer die Herrschaft der Torah zu kaempfen.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ 'The "International Trusteeship" is essential for us not *only* for reasons of *physical* and *political* security, but also for *religious* reasons. Unfortunately we can always expect *more* freedom of conscience from non-Jewish bodies than from so-called Jewish ones.' Rosenheim to Lewin, 14 April 1943, AIWO, folder 5.

³⁹⁶ Rosenheim to Lewin, 4 January 1944, AIWO, folder 5.

³⁹⁷ 'In practical terms, I am of the opinion that for the time being we are not allowed to do anything in order to combat the Zionist drive for a Jewish state... As undesirable as a Zionist state could be from our point of view, we cannot read God's will in the cards and we could not carry the responsibility for having frustrated this attempt to help the poor Jewish people... Perhaps it is our destiny to fight for the rule of the Torah within and not outside this state.' Rosenheim to Lewin, 22 December 1942, AIWO, folder 5.

If, however, it was impossible to remain silent on the issue of Jewish sovereignty, he was likewise convinced that they were obliged 'die Wahrheit zu bekennen, und zu erklæren, dass wir ein Jewish Commonwealth, das die Herrschaft der Tauroh nicht bedingungslos anerkennt, verwerfen'.³⁹⁸

In contrast to the Zionists, Rosenheim did not link the constitutional future of the Mandate with the future of the remnant of European Jewry:

The question of *emigration* and of *free immigration* to all the countries of Western Europe, the Americas, Australia, Asia and Africa is therefore of decisive importance for Jewish future. . . . The Zionist party with her prevalent influence on political Jewish opinion in England and America, is obviously not very much interested in this point. The Zionists . . . cling to their ideal, to establish a real Jewish State in Palestine after the war and in their wishful thinking believe that as soon as such a state with a lot of ministries and Army, Navy and Air Power, has been erected the Jewish nation will be 'normalized' and the whole Jewish problem definitely be solved. That this conception is totally erroneous and cannot stand up to critical and realistic scrutiny is obvious.³⁹⁹

Disillusioned by the failure of the Evian Conference and of his own rescue efforts, he delivered a radical critique of the political system of the nation-state: 'Was die U.S.A. betrifft, so muss leider gesagt werden, dass jeder Versuch des Praesidenten, die Einwanderung hierher zu erleichtern von einer uebermaechtigen einwanderungsfeindlichen Stimmung in der Oeffentlichkeit im Congress und im Senat bekaempft wird.'⁴⁰⁰ His own attempts to have the US Immigration Department clear the way for the evacuation of 50,000 Jews from Vichy France had failed: 'Es war alles umsonst und wir standen vor einer eisernen Mauer. Die Ursache ist nicht ein Mangel an Menschenfreundlichkeit, sondern, wie oben erwæhnt, die Furcht vor der sogenannten oeffentlichen Meinung, die stark von Anti-Semitismus beeinflusst ist.'⁴⁰¹ In a letter, the content of which was to be communicated to the JFC, Rosenheim identified state sovereignty as the cardinal cause of the failure to cope with the Jewish refugee crisis: 'The sovereignty of the single states . . . must not be allowed to exclude human

³⁹⁸ 'to confess the truth and to declare that we dismiss a Jewish Commonwealth which does not unconditionally recognize the rule of the Torah.' Rosenheim to I. M. Lewin, 30 November 1943, AIWOA, folder 8.

³⁹⁹ Rosenheim to Harry Goodman, 3 November 1942, AIWO, folder 5.

⁴⁰⁰ 'As to the USA, one has unfortunately to admit that any attempt of the President to ease immigration to this country is resisted by an overwhelmingly anti-immigration public in Congress and Senate.' Rosenheim to Lewin, 2 December 1942, AIWO, folder 8.

⁴⁰¹ 'It was all in vain and we stood before an iron wall. The reason is not a lack of humanity, but . . . the fear of the so-called public opinion which is heavily influenced by anti-Semitism.' Ibid.

beings from their own territories under the pretext that there is no living-space for the immigrants or that they will exert, by pressing on the wages, a damaging influence on the living standard of the country.⁴⁰² Not satisfied with mere resettlement, Rosenheim wanted to see the postulates of the Atlantic Charter supplemented by a third one, the right of free migration. Immigration ‘as a natural human right’ was to be enforced by an ‘international “Court of Migration” composed of representatives of the leading immigration states and of racial and religious minorities, which are prevalently in need of emigration’, against whose vote ‘no national state would be allowed to bar immigration’.⁴⁰³

The British Agudists Harry Goodman and Rabbi Schonfeld were more successful in rescue work than their American counterparts.⁴⁰⁴ However, a parliamentary motion asking the British dominions and dependencies to take in Jewish refugees, which Schonfeld had initiated following the news of the Final Solution, came to nothing. In order to obtain maximum parliamentary support for the motion, Schonfeld had not included Palestine in the list of territories called upon to take in Jewish refugees. Because of this omission and his independent action challenging the prerogative of the now Zionist-dominated Board of Deputies to represent British Jewry vis-à-vis the government, both Zionists and the BoD launched a campaign against Schonfeld’s initiative.⁴⁰⁵

While Goodman and Rosenheim differed in the intensity of their opposition to Zionism and in their willingness to translate it into political action, they shared fundamental religious and practical reservations about the Zionist project. In the Palestine AI, by contrast, there were indications of an accommodation to Zionism, with a growing faction rejecting the spirit of the *Austrittsgemeinde*.⁴⁰⁶ In the Palestine AI, pro-Zionist tendencies were concentrated in the PAI around Isaac Breuer which sought to subordinate the *merkaz* group around Isaac Meir Lewin.⁴⁰⁷ In a double effort to reassert the authority of the Advisory Executive Committee and to lay down the Agudist policy for the post-war years, Harry Goodman convened a conference in London at the end of December 1945.⁴⁰⁸ The

⁴⁰² Rosenheim to Harry Goodman, 3 November 1942, AIWOA, folder 5.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 303–5.

⁴⁰⁵ For the clash between Brodetsky and Schonfeld see: *JC*, 29 January 1943, 5; 5 February 1943, 6; 9 April 1943, 11.

⁴⁰⁶ See Isaac Breuer, *Mein Weg*, ed. Mordechai Breuer (Zurich, 1988); idem, *Das Nationalheim und das Judentum*, trans. Jacob Breuer: *Judaism and the National Home* (Jerusalem, 1946); Isaac Breuer, *Concepts of Judaism*, ed. Jacob S. Levinger (Jerusalem, 1973).

⁴⁰⁷ For the non-Zionist Orthodox in the Mandate: Marmorstein, *Kulturkampf*, 76–90.

⁴⁰⁸ AIWO, Executive, London, Minutes, 2 January 1946, AIWO, folder 8.

resolutions passed by the conference, which was boycotted by the PAI, concentrated on immigration, maintained a conspicuous silence on Jewish statehood, and demanded the reconstruction of the JA, thus betraying unrelenting hostility towards the Zionists.⁴⁰⁹

The semblance of Agudist unanimity proved short-lived, with Breuer renewing his public attacks on Goodman and the PAI press airing support for cooperation with the JA and acquiescence in Jewish sovereignty.⁴¹⁰ The demands to be put forward to UNSCOP by Goodman, whom Rosenheim had requested to give evidence before that body, were hotly debated, in particular within the Eretz Israel AI, where the main line of dissension was between those who favoured the maintenance of the Mandate plus unlimited immigration and those who wanted to ask for a Torah-state. It was with a majority of nine—including the votes of Rosenheim and Goodman—to six that the Agudist Vaad Hapoel in Jerusalem decided in favour of a watered-down version of the resolution passed by the Executive Advisory Committee against the alternative proposal demanding a Torah-state. The Agudist delegation before UNSCOP was to adhere to the following guidelines:

den Anspruch des juedischen Volkes auf Eretz Israel zu betonen, zu verlangen die Annulierung des Weissbuches, unbeschränkte Einwanderung und Regelung der Einwanderung durch eine juedische Instanz. Es soll jetzt keine ENDGÜLTIGE, sondern nur eine PROVISORISCHE politische Ordnung eingeführt werden, das heisst: Die U.N. soll eine politische Ordnung schaffen, welche das Weissbuch aufhebt, die Tore des Landes zu starker Einwanderung öffnet. Gegen den juedischen Staat soll nicht ausdruecklich Stellung genommen werden. Wenn man in dieser Hinsicht einen Druck auf uns ausueben wollte, soll erklart werden, dass der Staat fuer uns kein politisches Ziel ist, dass wir aber einem solchen Staat zustimmen wuerden, um eine juedische Einwanderung unter juedischer Leitung zu sichern.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ 'Memorandum submitted by the Agudas Israel World Organisation (London Executive) to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry', London, January 1946, Annexe, Resolutions adopted at the World Conference of Agudas Israel World Organisation, London, 2–10 December 1945, AIWO, folder 19.

⁴¹⁰ Goodman to Lewin, 21 March, 14 April 1946; Goodman to Rosenheim, 14 May 1946, AIWO, folder 19; AIWO, Advisory Executive, New York, Minutes, 21 May 1946, AIWO, folder 8.

⁴¹¹ 'to emphasize the title of the Jewish people to *Eretz Israel*, to demand the abrogation of the White Paper, unrestricted immigration and its administration through a Jewish body. For the time being not a PERMANENT, but only a PROVISIONAL political settlement ought to be introduced, i.e.: the UN should create a political settlement, abrogating the White Paper and opening the gates of the country for substantial immigration. They should not commit themselves explicitly against the Jewish State. If they were exposed to pressure in this respect, they should declare that the State was no political objective for us, but that we would agree to such a State, in order to secure Jewish immigration under Jewish direction.' AIWO, Political Commission, Minutes, 1 July 1947, AIWO, folder 8.

When a number of Palestinian Agudists refused to participate in the delegation to UNSCOP, Rosenheim left its composition to the PAI in Jerusalem but sought to commit its members to the political line laid down by himself and the Advisory Executive. In case the Palestine AI deviated from the line taken by New York and London, eventual clarification was to be brought about by the Central Council scheduled to meet in August 1947 in Marienbad. The internal controversies intensified when the PAI kibbutz *Chofetz Chaim* presented a separate memorandum to UNSCOP, containing a de facto acceptance of the Zionist demand for a Jewish state, although the Advisory Executive Committee had already decided on its memorandum, affirming its 'opposition against any request for the establishment of a Jewish State' and intended to be the only Agudist representation.⁴¹² The reservations of the British Agudists regarding Jewish sovereignty were both practical and ideological in nature, the latter being summed up by Schonfeld when he expressed 'his firm conviction that a Jewish State without being based on the Thora would not be able to exist'.⁴¹³ When British Agudists suggested bringing the PAI to heel by summoning them before the Beth Din, they were reminded by visitors from Palestine that there was no point in trying to enforce internal discipline, as the Eretz Israel AI was dependent on the financial resources of the JA for their work.

During the months preceding the establishment of the State of Israel a de facto accommodation of the AI towards Zionism took place. The faction around Isaac Breuer, M. Blau, and Isaac Meir Lewin, who saw in Zionism an instrument for the survival of Judaism after the Holocaust and who were prepared to cooperate with the Zionists, gained the upper hand. For displays of solidarity with the Zionists they extracted maximum advantages for the Torah-true Orthodox.⁴¹⁴ On the basis of the so-called status quo agreement, which designated the Shabbat as the official day of rest in the prospective state, laid down minimum standards for halachic observance in the public sector, precluded the creation of a non-halachic alternative for regulating the personal status of Jews, and guaranteed the continuity of the separate ultra-Orthodox sector in education and settlement on the model of the autonomy already enjoyed by the Mizrachi, the AI entered the Provisional Government of the State of Israel.

The establishment of the State of Israel marked a shift in the relations between the AI and the Zionist project. Although their participation was qualified by the far-reaching autonomy they enjoyed under the status quo

⁴¹² AIWO, Advisory Executive Committee, Minutes, 9 July 1947, AIWO, folder 26.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Marmorstein, *Kulturkampf*, 85.

agreement and their fundamental reservations about a Jewish state not based on the Torah, the radical Orthodox, who had maintained a separate infrastructure outside the Zionist *yishuv* on the model of the *Austrittsgemeinde* until 1948, became participants in the new nation-state. The new involvement with Zionist state- and nation-building, characterized by a pragmatic attitude, opened new opportunities for cooperation, but also new areas of conflict.

This shift was reflected in the attitude of the British AI to Zionist state- and nation-building. On the one hand British Agudists continued to support the ultra-Orthodox in the Holy Land in the fashion they had done before 1948. At a meeting in Manchester, for example, Agudists raised funds in support of the Keren Israel to help the Noar Agudati Children's Homes for War Orphans and watched a 16 mm sound film depicting a new Agudist kibbutz.⁴¹⁵ But on the other hand, Torah-true Jews saw themselves as having a stake in the Jewish state as a whole, with Dayan Abramsky, for example, calling on the Jews 'who conceive of the Torah as representing the life-purpose of Israel and cannot reconcile themselves to a secular, Torah-less State' to rally together and shape the new state according to their designs.⁴¹⁶ Agudist audiences listened to Orthodox emissaries from Israel who stressed the Agudist part in the building up of the country or to the *menahel* of *Noar Agudati* who highlighted the participation of Orthodox soldiers in the Israeli War of Independence; the National Council of the British AI expressed satisfaction with the supply of kosher food in the Israeli army and Goodman, at a conference of the British AI in June 1949, spoke of the complete harmony on foreign policy between the AI and the Israeli government, in particular concerning relief work for the 700,000 Jews behind the Iron Curtain.⁴¹⁷ Yet when the policies of the Israeli government were at loggerheads with Orthodox precepts, as for example over the supply of the Jewish population with non-kosher meat, conscription of women into the army, educational policy, and Israeli citizenship law, the interest British Agudists took in the Jewish state resulted in harsh criticism.⁴¹⁸ During the 1950s the London Embassy of the State of Israel was the destination of several protest rallies staged by the more Orthodox quarters of British Jewry giving vent to their frustration over the violation of Orthodox precepts in Israel. A reflection of the continuing divisions between Zionists and Agudists was the competition for funds in Britain.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁵ *JC*, 19 August 1949, 14.

⁴¹⁶ *JC*, 18 February 1949, 9.

⁴¹⁷ *JC*, 14 May 1948, 8; 7 January 1949, 10; 10 June 1949, 15; 19 August 1949, 14.

⁴¹⁸ *JC*, 7 January 1949, 10.

⁴¹⁹ Levenberg to E. Dobkin, 28 August 1952, CZA S41/144 VI.

During the period under consideration the attitude of the radical Orthodox represented by the AI towards Zionist state- and nation-building had changed considerably. The AI had travelled a long way from its uncompromising opposition to Zionism as laid down in the rulings of the Great Rabbinical Council in 1937 to its entry into the political arena of the Jewish nation-state in 1948. This shift was the result of a combination of several factors: the development of the JNH as a centre of Jewish life, the increase of the relative weight of the Orthodox periphery, in particular, in Palestine after the destruction of the great centres of Torah-true Orthodoxy in Eastern Europe, the pressing need to find a solution to the Jewish DP problem, the concessions of the Zionist side in the status quo agreement and the anticipated difficulties involved in the continuation of a separate existence on the model of the *Austrittsgemeinde*, which was a feasible option under the British Mandatory government, but no longer once the JNH had turned into a Jewish nation state.

Although an accommodation of the AI with Zionist state- and nation-building had taken place in the late 1940s, it remained a pragmatic *modus vivendi* and was qualified in several, in part fundamental, respects. While the State of Israel enjoyed Orthodox support as a centre of Jewish life, a Jewish state not based on the Torah was ultimately not acceptable. In the absence of a constitution and with the status quo agreement containing no definite regulation of the relation between Orthodoxy and the public sphere, the delimitation of its role in the public domain remained a permanent source of friction. The AI continued to have strong reservations not only about the Zionist state, but in particular about Zionist nation-building involving the replacement of the religious character of the Jewish people by a secular nationalism.

A set of common fundamental tenets notwithstanding the different sections of the AI differed in their assessment of the Zionist project, as did their respective weight within the Agudist world movement. From the late 1930s until 1947 the Advisory Executive Committee of the AI, which was de facto identical with the leadership of the British AI, and, in particular, Harry Goodman, the political secretary of the AI, had been pivotal in Agudist political decision-making. Within the triangle New York, London, and Jerusalem, the London branch, due to its close relationship with Rosenheim and its location at the political centre of the Mandatory power, had exerted the greatest influence on the formulation and presentation of general Agudist policy in the diplomatic arena. Apart from the specific constellation of the 1940s the relative freedom from the pressures and attractions exerted by a dominant Zionist Jewish surrounding in Mandatory Palestine, and later Israel, may explain the comparatively intransigent position which the British AI adopted towards the Zionist project. This

attitude determined to a large extent the Zionist policy of the Agudist world movement until the swift change to a more accommodating policy in 1947.

British Jews who saw themselves primarily as members of a community whose defining element was the observance of the Torah and British Jews who identified themselves primarily in national terms, whether as British or as British and Zionist or as Zionist, differed in their response to Zionist state- and nation-building. To the ultra-Orthodox, Jewish nationhood was defined and legitimized through the divine Covenant. Criticizing the separation of national and religious components in Judaism as essentially un-Jewish, the Orthodox complained that the 'Jewish assimilationists of the Emancipation epoch dropped the *national* element in the term "Jew" . . . whereas the Jewish national assimilationists of the present Government of Israel seek to drop the *religious* element in defining the "Jew"'.⁴²⁰ The Zionist secularization of Jewishness, the Orthodox argued, struck both at the *raison d'être* of the Jews and their civic position in the diaspora: Jewishness emptied of its Orthodox religious meaning 'would reflect upon the status of the Jew in the world . . . The boggy of dual loyalty is nothing more than a boggy—as long as the Jewish nation is a nation *sui generis*, the people of God, the people of the Bible.'⁴²¹ Orthodox Jews who were not prepared to follow the Agudist line of practical compromise coupled with religious reservation, but compromise nonetheless, organized themselves in the Neturei Karta. The Neturei Karta, in Britain a post-war phenomenon, arose, in large part, in reaction to the ascendancy of Zionism, its inroads into Orthodoxy, and the implications of secular Jewish sovereignty for the Orthodox.⁴²² It exemplifies religious radicalization in the face of modern secularism and nationalism.⁴²³

The conflicts between Zionists and the radical Orthodox about the merits of the Zionist project had repercussions in several areas of practical politics. The challenges posed by the Jewish refugees during and the DPs after the Second World War and the controversies surrounding the constitutional regime of Mandatory Palestine vividly illustrate deep-seated

⁴²⁰ Isidor Grunfeld, *What is a Jew?* (London, 1958), 12.

⁴²¹ Ibid. 17.

⁴²² Domb, *The Transformation*, esp. 31–56; Emile Marmorstein, *Heaven at Bay: The Jewish Kulturkampf in the Holy Land* (Oxford, 1969).

⁴²³ With his grandparents combining Hungarian nationalism, Orthodox attachment, appreciation of secular learning in the neo-Orthodox tradition, his father being a lecturer at Jews' College, London, and Emile Marmorstein an advocate of the Neturei Karta, the Marmorsteins provide an example for the increasing radicalization of the Orthodox with each generational change: Emile Marmorstein, 'My Father: A Memoir', in A[rthur] Marmorstein, *Studies in Jewish Theology*, ed. J. Rabinowitz and M. S. Lew (Oxford, 1950), pp. xv–xxvi.

differences concerning the implications of a sovereign Jewish nation state and the question of where Jews were supposed to settle. With regard to the constitution of the Mandate the British radical Orthodox clashed with the Zionists over their monopolization of the JA and their demand for a Jewish state. Rejecting the principle of the sovereign modern state as secular and lawless, the radical Orthodox saw no aim in statehood itself. If there was to be a Jewish state, it had to be based on the Torah. The fear of the secular ambitions of the majority of the Zionists explains why the British radical Orthodox supported Jewish immigration into Palestine, but not the demand for a sovereign Jewish state.

In order to meet the demands of the DP crisis, the British AI had accorded Palestine the central place in Jewish post-war reconstruction. Although it had thereby travelled a considerable distance towards the Zionist position, it continued to distinguish between Zionist state- and nation-building and the task of finding a solution to the Jewish refugee problem. Even though settlement in the Holy Land was desirable from the Orthodox point of view, British Agudists demanded unrestricted immigration into Palestine primarily on practical grounds. To them the primary purpose of Jewish life was observance of the Torah and not, as the Zionists had it, the normalization of the Jewish condition through the formation of a national polity in Palestine. As a consequence they had lobbied the British government for immigration not only into the Mandate, but into alternative places of refuge and categorically rejected the idea of the liquidation of the *galuth*.⁴²⁴ The rejection of the Zionists' insistence on Palestine as the only legitimate recipient of Jewish refugees by the radical Orthodox and their demand for effectively free migration was a function of their critique of the modern nation-state. This fundamental critique set them apart from assimilationists and Zionists who both insisted on the Jews' identification with the nation-state, whether it was the nation-state in which they resided in the case of the former or the Jewish nation-state to which the latter aspired.

⁴²⁴ JC, 10 June 1949, 15.

3

Zionist Attractions

The Analysis, the Programme, the Movement, the Implementation

If the disintegration of the social and religious certainties of the Anglo-Jewish as well as of the immigrants' milieu, and antagonistic factors differentiating Jews as Jews from the majority society in restricted but crucial respects, provided the necessary preconditions for the rise of Jewish nationalism, it is not yet clear why it was its Zionist variant which capitalized on them. In order to explain why it made sense, and since the 1930s increasingly so, for British Jews to become Zionists, a third factor had to come into play: the appeal of Zionism to British Jews.

Zionism could mean different things to different British Jews. British Jews, whether Anglo-Jewish or second-generation immigrants, whether religious or secular, Orthodox, Reform, or Liberal, whether voting Conservative or Labour, staying in Britain or making *aliyah*, could derive satisfactions from identifying with different aspects of Zionism. The attractions Zionism held out to British Jews will be investigated in three respects: its analysis of the Jewish condition, its programme for the future, and its practical realization.

Zionism or specific aspects of it provided an answer to the predicament of the modern Jew in general, of persecuted Jews, of foreign Jews, or of British Jews themselves. This would ideally require the investigation of an equivalent number of British Zionisms. The degree of identification of British Jews with any of the many forms of Zionism varied considerably, to the extent that it could be restricted to a single one to the exclusion of all others. The satisfactions which British Zionists derived from their identification with Zionism could result from answers which Zionism provided to their needs as Jews in Britain, but also from answers which Zionism provided for the needs of Jews abroad. Conversely, British Zionists gave practical expression to their Zionist commitment through activities relating not only to British Jewry, but also to the transnational Jewish sphere of interaction. The variegated, imaginary, and practical

forms of British-Jewish interaction with non-British Jews through avenues provided by Zionism is essential for the understanding of British Zionism. In order to demonstrate that British Zionism formed part of a wider transnational, Palestinocentric Jewish national sphere, and that there was more to it than providing an answer to the predicament of modern Jewish life in Britain, one does not have to rely on the limited number of British Jews who went on *aliyah*, or the even more limited number of British Jews who fought and died in the Israeli War of Independence. Significant as is the existence of British Jews who opted for such a radical, if temporary, form of identification with Zionism as fighting in the Israeli War of Independence, or for a less dramatic, but permanent change of residence, the Palestinocentric Jewish nationalism of British Zionists is not restricted to such extreme cases. A standard joke which Zionists and assimilationists told with equal fervour about what was, according to their respective points of view, either the deplorable lack of Zionist commitment of diaspora Zionists or the unobjectionable harmlessness of their diluted nationalism, illustrates what diaspora Zionism largely was about, neither more nor less: A Zionist, variously living in the USA, Britain, or any other Western country, the joke ran, was a Jew who gave money to a second Jew to help a third Jew to go on *aliyah*.

Even if a British Jew was a Zionist only to the degree that he made a donation to a Zionist fund to enable a third Jew to go on *aliyah*, his donation is nevertheless significant as a sign of Zionist identification in three respects. First, the British Jew concerned gave his money to a Zionist fund perhaps instead of, perhaps in addition to, a donation to for instance the Jewish Society for the Blind or the Imperial Cancer Fund. Second, he was more likely than his non-Jewish neighbour to be approached by a Zionist collector for a donation. And third, in times of national crisis such as 1947, 1948, or 1956, he was likely to give generously. Looked at in this way, the detachment of the diaspora Zionist from the Zionist cause which the joke intends to prove turns into attachment. Although the joke does at first highlight the lack of the diaspora Zionist's total, personal identification which would involve *aliyah*, it is misleading in its implication that no real relationship exists between the giver and the destination of the eventual recipient. Upon closer reading the joke describes a relationship, though a mediated one. While the giver lives, works, earns his money, and votes in Britain, communicates with the Zionist collector in his home town, and writes out his cheque drawn on a high-street bank, the purpose and direction of his action, as well as the imagination and motivation that made him act this way in the first place, are derived from Zionism. Added to the examples of British Jews who went on *aliyah* and fought in the War of Independence, the donation of money to a national purpose enables a

case to be made for the Zionism of British Zionists by pointing to their participation in a wider Zionist public and social sphere transgressing state boundaries. In contrast to Anderson's imagined communities whose yardsticks for inclusion and exclusion coincide with territorial political boundaries, Zionism as an imagined and practised national community cut across state boundaries, the criterion for inclusion being Jewish. The activities of British non-Jewish Zionist sympathizers, for example, were, therefore, channelled into an organizational framework which was separate from the Zionist organizations and parties. Gentile sympathizers who applied for membership of Zionist organizations were turned down. On the other hand, British Zionists went on *aliyah*, while Palestinian Jews and Israelis, from Lavy Bakstansky, secretary of the ZF, to the multitude of *shlichim* who stayed on a temporary basis, played important roles in the British Zionist movement.

ANALYSIS AND PROGRAMME: THINKING THE JEWISH NATION IN ZIONIST KEYS

In a nutshell, the Zionist analysis of the modern Jewish condition consisted in the acknowledgement of the post-emancipationist persistence of an ethno-cultural Jewish collective distinctiveness beyond the conventional liberal-cum-assimilationist religious classification of Jewishness, the demand for its continuation, and its refashioning in national, Palestino-centric terms.⁴²⁵ With Zionism having emerged in response to the Jewish predicament in Central and Eastern Europe the overwhelming majority of the canonical Zionist texts as well as of the contemporary programmatic pronouncements by Zionist thinkers and politicians were primarily concerned with the Jewish condition in these areas. One therefore wonders whether the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition meant anything to British Zionists. To clarify which parts, if any, of the Zionist ideology mattered to British Zionists, as a first step, the theoretical expositions of British Zionists on the Jewish condition will be scrutinized. In a second step the relevance of the Zionist analysis to British Zionists will be investigated on the basis of memoirs, biographies, and interviews.

With regard to the theoretical presentation of the Zionist case in Britain one may distinguish between two different types. First, the translations of Zionist classics and the speeches of prominent Zionist politicians, extracts from which were distributed in pamphlet form by the thousand by British

⁴²⁵ For an exhaustive survey of Zionist thought see Shimoni, *Ideology*, 85–388.

Zionist organizations, foremost by the ZF's Education Committee.⁴²⁶ And second, the writings, speeches, and resolutions of British Zionists themselves, including the Zionist writings of refugees from the Continent published in Britain.⁴²⁷ Restricted to the latter category, which is the more relevant for the purposes of assessing the significance of the Zionist analysis for British Zionists, the following questions will be asked. Did British Zionists develop a British variant of Zionist thought in contradistinction to the Zionist mainstream that was adapted to their specific situation? Did they apply the general Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition, or parts of it, to that of British Jewry? Or did they combine paying lip-service to Zionist standard formulae with remaining silent on whether the Zionist analysis had any meaning for them as British Jews?

British Zionists argued that, first, in the post-emancipationist era, Jews had remained distinct from the larger society in a sense not covered by the confessional definition of Jewishness.⁴²⁸ If religion was referred to by British Zionists, the Religious Zionists excepted, it was neither in the Orthodox (or Liberal Jewish) sense as the key concept of Jewish collectivity, nor as a practical device to rationalize their post-emancipationist status, but as an expression of the Jews' national history: 'our religion is essentially national in character; and the core of both our religion and our nationalism has always been the return to the land which the Lord has given to us and to our fathers, from old and even for evermore.'⁴²⁹ Second, they had remained distinct from the surrounding society as a collectivity. And, third, if they wanted to remain Jewish in any meaningful sense, they always would and, in fact, should continue to be distinct from their Gentile neighbours. British Zionists rationalized the survival of Jewish ethnic distinctiveness by defining Jewish existence in national terms. By stating that to 'the Zionist, Jews are a people' they asserted what to them was 'an obvious historical fact, namely that Jewry does not consist of a group of stray individuals'.⁴³⁰ On the occasion of his election as Grand President of the Bnei Brith District Grand Lodge, Brodetsky said: 'Whereas assimilation was the basis of the nineteenth-century Jewish outlook,

⁴²⁶ Achad ha-Am, *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, trans. from the Hebrew by Leon Simon (London, 1922); pamphlets published by ZF included Hayim Nahman Bialik, *Halachah and Aggadah*, trans. from the Hebrew by Leon Simon (London, 1944); Ephraim Broido, *Saul Tshernichowsky* (London, 1944); A. L. Patkin, *Zionism: Present Tasks and Post-War Aims* (London, 1943); Leon Simon, *Forerunners of Zionism* (London, 1944).

⁴²⁷ Ernst Frankenstein, *Justice for my People: The Jewish Case* (London, 1943); Joseph Heller, *The Zionist Idea* (London, 1947).

⁴²⁸ P[hineas] Horowitz, *The Jewish Question and Zionism* (London, 1927), 51–2; 'Marks "Family"', ch. i, 10.

⁴²⁹ Lewis Namier, *15 Conflicts: Studies in Contemporary History* (London, 1942), 156.

⁴³⁰ Brodetsky, 'Balfour', 262.

Jewish nationalism was that of the twentieth century. The time had come when Jewish life must assume a positive attitude . . . not to apologise for its existence: If, in their earlier history, Jews had a mission to the world, they must now have a mission for themselves. Real stability could be given to the Jewish people only through the national idea . . .⁴³¹

The Zionists' redefinition of the Jews as a nation, their call for the reassessment of Jewish relations with the larger society, and their demand for a new rationale for the Jewish future set them on a collision course with the assimilationists. The Zionists' acknowledgement of Jewish ethno-cultural distinctiveness and their consequent determination to base the future of the Jews on it, the very notion whose abolition the assimilationists regarded as a condition for the functioning of their vision of Jewishness, challenged the latter's programme which was characterized by the belief in the unqualified desirability and attainability of complete Jewish integration and assimilation, with the sole exception of a confessionally defined form of Jewish religion. Provided the Jews discarded their particular characteristics, there would be no obstacle to their acceptance by liberal society. This was the view held by assimilationists, if not as a description of the actual presence then as a programme for the future. The Zionists, on the contrary, refusing to see the continuation of a degree of Jewish ethno-cultural distinctiveness as a transitional phenomenon, held that integration beyond a certain point was neither possible nor desirable. Zionists criticized assimilationists for their willingness to refashion Jewish collectivity in religious terms. Not only had their strategy failed to deliver the desired result, it had instead created a situation which was unsatisfactory, both from the point of view of Jewish relations with the wider society, and of Jewish self-perception. While Jews continued to be regarded as a group apart, the individual Jew had lost the self-assurance, the Zionists thought, which a human being derived from belonging to a national collective.⁴³² The anonymous author of a manuscript on Zionist connections of the Marks family, probably Harry Sacher, expressed the Zionist charge against assimilationism in the following way: "Emancipation" consisted of denationalising the Jew within the framework of Gentile political democracy and de-hydrating Judaism into a peculiar Jewish religion from being as by tradition the way of life of the Commonwealth of Israel.⁴³³ By attempting to shed their national characteristics, the Jews had manoeuvred themselves into a limbo replete with ambiguities and open questions, generating

⁴³¹ *JC*, 10 January 1937, 33.

⁴³² Namier, *Conflicts*, 132–3.

⁴³³ Marks "Family", ch. i, 10–11.

feelings of insecurity and self-hatred, which in turn attracted the disrespect and the hostility of the non-Jews:

those who long to be joined to their neighbours closer than they are, are the most unhappy among the Jews. For the desire to be 'assimilated' is a confession of inferiority, an attempt to divest oneself of one's own inheritance in order to share in that of others. He who does that submits without the will or means to stand up for himself, to the scrutiny of and judgement of people for whom he feels attachment and an often uncritical admiration, but who do not necessarily feel any for him... What a life to be continually on trial and under examination! Uncertainty breeds anxiety, and anxiety provokes critical attention... Even in the most ordinary intercourse uncertainty is apt to react unfavourably on his bearing. He is too eager to please, too affable, perhaps too intimate; too intent and emphatic; he shows off and talks too much—in short he is self-conscious and embarrassed, and his company becomes exhausting. In public life he is too patriotic and public-spirited (for he continually pays entrance fees and ransom).⁴³⁴

In the eyes of British Zionists, the concept of the Englishman of the Jewish faith was an illusion. The assimilationists' hopes for complete equality had not materialized, nor was there anything British Jews themselves could change about it, as the unwillingness of non-Jews to distinguish between assimilated and unassimilated Jews demonstrated:

No doubt the fact that many of us are newcomers or children of immigrants, have foreign names and foreign accents, adds to the difficulties, dislikes and friction, but the 'native-born' Jews of so-called 'old lineage' grossly deceive themselves if they think that were it not for those 'strangers' they would be looked upon as indistinguishable from other Englishmen. Every Jew must have come here at one time or another and even in America the Jews are the only ones who cannot claim to have come over on the *Mayflower*—we miss every boat, and all the waters are to us 'rivers of Babylon'.⁴³⁵

Zionists were quick to point out the self-deception of the assimilationists in trying to reconcile their idealistic picture of Jewish–Gentile relations with the actual conditions prevailing in British society. They loathed them for the air of humility with which they tended to face the larger society, blacking out unpleasant incidents and registering anything positive they experienced as a special favour and not as the reward for a corresponding performance, naturally expected by meritocratic standards:

While suffering slurs, often hard to define but always implying inferiority, they try to make themselves and others believe that relations are satisfactory, indeed normal. Such a Jew will tell you that he for one has never experienced any

⁴³⁴ Namier, *Conflicts*, 127–8.

⁴³⁵ Ibid. 124–5.

'discrimination', that he is treated by the Gentiles exactly as if he was one of them; he seems to take pride in it, and receives as a boon what normal people assume as their birthright.⁴³⁶

When, on the occasion of being awarded a scholarship at Cambridge, he was tiring of being asked by reporters 'if England wasn't a wonderful country, where a young foreign Jew could get the chance to study, and become Senior Wrangler', Brodetsky replied that this was a sign of justice, not of generosity.⁴³⁷ Next to the rationalization of Jewish collective distinctiveness in national terms, the nature of anti-Semitism was a further source of dissent between assimilationists and Zionists. Anti-Semitism, according to the assimilationists' view, was a transient aberration from universal values, which had been accepted in principle and would prove to be decisive in the long run. Zionists were as worried by anti-Semitism as assimilationists, yet departed from the latter's analysis in regarding it not as a temporary, but as an ineradicable condition of Jewish life in the diaspora.⁴³⁸ Although far removed from the excesses of anti-Semitism rampant in Eastern Europe and the horrors perpetrated on the German-dominated Continent, British Zionists did not regard the Anglo-American countries as free from anti-Semitism.⁴³⁹ Namier, while happy to acknowledge the relatively fair treatment that Jews received in Britain, formulated what in Zionist eyes constituted the Jewish question in Britain: 'Still in every one of us there is, deep down, the consciousness that we cannot afford to slip: a fall for us is harder and more irretrievable than for a non-Jew. Not even in this country does the Jew enjoy the same moral freedom to express his views, especially in politics, as the non-Jew.' And a few lines further on: 'there is seldom a cloudless sky over the Jew—as he speaks shadows pass across, and feelings are aroused which, though rarely fixed in words, are present and real.'⁴⁴⁰ In Britain Jews had a chance, as the Zionists would readily concede, but not an equal chance.

Acknowledging a degree of Jewish collective ethno-cultural distinctiveness and rationalizing it by redefining the Jews in national terms, Zionists arrived at the conclusion that the life of an emancipated Jew was defective in the sense that it was the life of a member of a minority. To lead a complete Jewish life, understood as a national Jewish life, under the conditions of the *galuth* was impossible according to the Zionist analysis: 'The game of musical chairs goes on, the pace quickens till it becomes

⁴³⁶ Ibid. 125.

⁴³⁷ Selig Brodetsky, *Memoirs: From Ghetto to Israel* (London, 1977), 305.

⁴³⁸ Eban, 'Afterword', 70; Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 53–4.

⁴³⁹ Eban, 'Afterword', 77; Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 32.

⁴⁴⁰ Namier, *Conflicts*, 123–4.

breathless... Polish Jews in Germany, German Jews in England, every kind of Jew in America—this merry-go-round of would-be-redeeming migrations change in time into a wheel on which we are broken.⁴⁴¹ If only a minority of British Zionists shared Namier's belief in the imminent doom of diaspora Jews, they were agreed that the continuation of a collective Jewish existence in the diaspora was structurally under threat. Set against the ideal of national self-determination, the post-emancipationist Jewish existence looked untenable, bound to founder on the twin rocks of anti-Semitism and the pressures for conformity exerted by the liberal nation-state:

It came to be recognized by ever-growing numbers that however desirable political emancipation had been at one time, this had not, and could not, achieve the object that formed the *raison d'être* of the Jewish people, viz., the full and unfettered development of its own innate forces, and that a purely legal enfranchisement could afford no solution of the Jewish social and economic problems *so long as the Jews were subject to the will and power of a necessarily dominant majority of the non-Jewish population*. It was found... that even in free countries the Jews are subjected to intellectual and moral pressure ultimately entailing the loss of many valuable members; that the very Liberalism that stands up valiantly for the rights of the Jews hopes for the dissolution of Judaism; that this dissolution, forced by the identification of the Jewish citizens with all the aspects of the national life surrounding them, is in actual progress and a serious menace to the perpetuation of the Jewish people.⁴⁴²

It was not only the pressures for conformity exerted by the majority society which British Zionists regarded as a threat to Jewish continuity and collectivity. They were no less anxious about the attractions of the majority society and the consequent identification of British Jews with it, a tendency which, given the structural defects of Jewish life in the diaspora, British Zionists considered as natural, however undesirable. During the Second World War, for example, Brodetsky expected assimilationism to score additional points in the case of British, American, and Soviet Jews who, 'joining their fellow-citizens in a common struggle against the common disease of Nazism, cannot but find in this experience something which unites them with their non-Jewish fellow-citizens more strongly than ever before'.⁴⁴³

Which conclusions can be drawn from the above excerpts? The key elements of Zionist ideology: the acknowledgement of a degree of Jewish collective distinctiveness, its rationalization in national terms, the critique

⁴⁴¹ Namier, *Conflicts*, 125.

⁴⁴² Paul Goodman, *History of the Jews*, 204; emphasis in the original.

⁴⁴³ Brodetsky, 'Balfour', 257.

of assimilationism, the belief in the ineradicability of anti-Semitism and the defectiveness of the diaspora Jewish existence were reflected in the theoretical expositions of the Jewish condition by British Zionists. Except for the references to the place of Zionism in British history⁴⁴⁴ and the British administration of the Palestine Mandate,⁴⁴⁵ there is no evidence for a British variant of Zionist thought that differed in principle from the mainstream. If the majority of the attempts to integrate the condition of British Jews into Zionist thought came from Eastern European immigrants like Brodetsky, Goodman, and Namier or refugees like Koestler, it is nevertheless significant that other British Zionists made no explicit case for the exemption of British Jewry from all or parts of the Zionist analysis. If one searches in vain for overt ideological deviation in order to determine what was specifically British about the theoretical exposition of the Zionist case by British Zionists, one has to look elsewhere. First, at the perception of the immediacy of some of its elements and the comparative emphasis accorded to them, and second, at the undisturbed simultaneous existence of contradictions coupled with the absence of attempts to resolve them. British Zionists had shifted the emphasis from anti-Semitism to the limits of social acceptance, the pressures for conformity, and the attractions of the surrounding society as the principal threats to Jewish existence in Britain. While this line of argument left the central Zionist tenet of the structural defectiveness of Jewish life in the diaspora intact, it amounted to an accommodation of the Zionist analysis to the Jewish situation under the conditions of liberal government and society. A further characteristic of Zionism in Britain was that there seems to have been neither compulsion nor particular interest in engaging in a zero-sum game of deciding categorically whether Jewish existence in the British diaspora was viable or

⁴⁴⁴ Leon Simon listed the British Gentile supporters of the Jewish return to the Holy Land, Lord Shaftesbury, George Eliot, Edward Cazalet, Laurence Oliphant, and the proto-Zionist Sir Moses Montefiore alongside Mordechai Manuel Noah, Charles Netter, Moses Hess, Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, and Peretz Smolenskin in *Forerunners of Zionism* (London, 1944), 5; In a similar vein *The Early Phase, 1860–1895*, Lecture I of Israel Cohen's *A Short History of Zionism, 1860–1944* (London, 1945), 5, features in addition to Rabbi Hirsch Kalischer, Moses Hess, David Gordon, Peretz Smolenskin, Moses Leib Lilienblum, Ben Yehuda, and Pinsker the evangelical politician Lord Shaftesbury, the writers Laurence Oliphant, Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, and Moses Montefiore as early supporters of the Zionist cause. Lecture III of the same series, *The Balfour Declaration and the National Home, 1914–1921*, celebrates the coincidence between British and Zionist interests in the foundation of the JNH.

⁴⁴⁵ Sacher, *The Mandate and the Building of a New Zionism*; Israel Cohen's Lecture IV, *Palestine under the Mandatory Regime, 1921–1928* (London, 1945) features the internal development of the JNH; Lecture VI, *The Second World War, 1939–1945* explores Jewish participation in the war in spite of British Palestine policy addressing the tragedies of the refugee boats, Britain's reluctance to set up a Jewish army, the White Paper restrictions, and the growing tensions between the Palestine administration and the *yishuv*.

not. Instead, the application of the Zionist analysis to British Jewry in speech and in writing by several prominent British Zionists existed side by side with the conviction that Britain, while remaining a country in which Jews were a minority, was one of the best possible Gentile worlds in which to live, widespread silence and, with the exception of the *chalutzic* youth movements and the Mizrachi, the non-committal attitude of the organized Zionist movement in Britain. In view of the adaptability of the Zionist analysis and the lack of practical consequences its espousal by British Zionists was neither inconsistent with their appreciation of the comparatively fair treatment Jews received in Britain, enthusiastic gratitude for the Balfour Declaration, or a simultaneous identification with British nationalism, nor was it perceived by the majority of British Zionists themselves to be incompatible.⁴⁴⁶

In order to determine in what respects the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition formed part of the motivation of British Jews to become Zionists, personal comments, memoirs, and interviews promise to reveal more insights than theoretical writings. During the 1930s and 1940s the Zionist belief in a national Jewish collective gained plausibility in the eyes of British Jews. If only in a negative sense, the Nazi persecution directed specifically against the Jews emphasized their collective character, as British Zionists were quick to point out in their debates with liberal and Communist assimilationists who sought to classify the Jewish victims of Nazi terror together with the oppressed in general: 'Whatever we Jews are, a nation or not, nothing can alter the fact that we have been slaughtered throughout the centuries as Jews, and that six million Jews, men, women and babies were exterminated, not as Marxists, not as exploiters, not as workers, but as Jews.'⁴⁴⁷ If the debate about a positive definition of Jewish collectivity remained unresolved, the state-sponsored persecution of the Jews in Germany since 1933, culminating in the *shoah*, made it difficult to ignore that the Jews' worst enemies defined, persecuted, and exterminated the Jews as a collective. And if the Jews were assaulted as Jews, it appeared to be sensible to assist them as Jews. As can be seen from individual cases, the impact of the Jewish plight under Nazi rule served as a catalyst of British Zionism. Walter Eytan (Ettinghausen), an Israeli Civil Servant and founder of PATWA, became a convert to Zionism the day Hitler became Chancellor of the *Reich*.⁴⁴⁸ Henry and Eva Mond, who had both already been involved

⁴⁴⁶ Goodman, *History of the Jews*; Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*; idem, *Short History of Zionism*; Levenberg, 'The Tercentenary Period: Retrospect and Prospect', 3–8.

⁴⁴⁷ Litvin, 'Gaster and Marx', *Gates* (October 1947), 39.

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with Walter Eytan (Ettinghausen), HU, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division Tape 2354, 2.

in Zionist matters, converted to Liberal Judaism in 1933.⁴⁴⁹ Harold Laski's support of the Zionist cause intensified under the impact of the *shoah*.⁴⁵⁰

In a different category from the British Zionists whose Zionism derived from their approval of the Zionist analysis of the condition of Jews abroad, fell those who applied the Zionist case to the British-Jewish condition. The conversion of Wellesley Aron to Zionism after the discovery of his Jewishness as a liability in British society exemplifies post-assimilationist Zionism effected by the personal experience of domestic anti-Semitism.⁴⁵¹ Israel Sieff became a Zionist when he witnessed Jewish children being chased and abused in Manchester. He is an example of a British Jew from the immigrants' milieu who embraced the Zionist cause as a result of the abstract experience of domestic anti-Semitism.

If not necessarily decisive in the adoption of Zionism, the experience of anti-Semitism or of the limits of social acceptance could reinforce the Zionist commitment of British Jews. In November 1941 Sir George Broadbridge and his Conservative fellow MP Sir Waldron Smithers raised questions in the Commons about the parties for serving soldiers at Folyjon Park, the country home of Simon Marks, chairman of Marks & Spencer as well as Zionist fundraiser and chief donor, enquiring whether there was 'no leakage of information to the enemy as the result of these parties'.⁴⁵² Although cleared by the Secretary of War of all allegations Simon Marks felt hurt by this slander which had also been covered by the press.⁴⁵³ In 1943 the work of Israel Sieff, who had been invited by the American Office of Price Administration to advise American businessmen on war-time economy became the subject of hostile comment in the Commons, the tenor of which was summed up by one MP asking: 'Would this Question have been asked about Mr Sieff if his name was Smith or Smithers?'⁴⁵⁴ The adoption of Zionism by British Zionists did not necessarily result from the analysis of Jewish-Gentile relations, but could also provide an answer to the de-Judaization of Jewishness in the wake of secularization. To Herbert Samuel, for example, Zionism was an attempt

⁴⁴⁹ Eva, Marchioness of Reading, *For the Record* (London, 1972), 88–168; *Monthly Pioneer* (January 1933), 6.

⁴⁵⁰ ZR, 11 May 1945; Isaac Kramnick and Barry Sherman, *Harold Laski: A Life on the Left* (London, 1993), 263–87, 544–79.

⁴⁵¹ Wellesley Aron, *Rebel with a Cause*, ed. Helen Silman-Cheong (London, 1992), 16–23, 188.

⁴⁵² *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, vol. 374, 11 November 1941, c. 2025–6.

⁴⁵³ *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, vol. 376, 19 November 1941, c. 316–18; *Daily Telegraph*, 12 November 1941, 3; *Manchester Guardian*, 12 November 1941, 5; Paul Bookbinder, *Simon Marks* (London, 1993), 126.

⁴⁵⁴ *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, vol. 391, 21 July 1943, c. 865–6; *Daily Telegraph*, 22 July 1943, 3.

to come to terms on a secular plane with his Jewish heritage, belief in the religious content of which he had lost during his student years.⁴⁵⁵ For many British Jews Zionism provided a civic religion, a secular Jewish identity. More often than taking the form of a self-reflective conversion involving a clear break with a past identity, the substitution of Zionism for Orthodoxy took the form of a gradual process which, if it was consciously realized by those who underwent it, was often regarded as natural. This trend could be observed both among Jews who had grown up in the United Synagogue tradition of Anglicized Orthodoxy and among second-generation immigrants who had been brought up on a dose of traditional, Eastern European-style Orthodoxy, but were even less inclined than their parents to succumb to the rigours of an Orthodox life. 'I sometimes think as a Zionist I have forgotten how to be a Jew,'⁴⁵⁶ as Simon Marks, who rarely attended synagogue even at the high holidays and denigrated observant members of his staff, summarized the shift from the traditional, Eastern European-style Orthodoxy of his youth to Zionism as the key to his Jewishness.

Returning to the question, posed at the beginning of this chapter, whether the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition had any meaning for those British Jews who became Zionists, one can offer the answer that, to the extent that it was decisive for the adoption of Zionism, different elements of the Zionist analysis mattered to different British Jews, sometimes in tandem, sometimes independently of each other. British Jews could arrive at Zionism as the result of a sense of outraged human dignity deriving from the personal or abstract experience of anti-Semitism, both at home and abroad. The adoption of Zionism by British Zionists did not necessarily result from the analysis of Jewish–Gentile relations, but could also provide an answer to the search for a new secular Jewish identity, irrespective of any non-Jewish attitudes.

Closely connected with the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition the Zionist programme for the Jewish future held out attractions for British Jews. The success of nationalisms was predicated on an ultimate purpose from which nationalists could derive their inspiration, around which they could rally, and according to which they could fashion their collective life.⁴⁵⁷ What was the programme which British Zionists had for the Jewish future and what was specifically British about it?

⁴⁵⁵ Norman Bentwich, *Herbert Samuel's Religious Beliefs* (London, 1966); Wasserstein, *Herbert Samuel*, 200–1.

⁴⁵⁶ Bookbinder, *Simon Marks*, 144–5.

⁴⁵⁷ Berlin, 'Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power', in idem, *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas* (London, 1979), 349; Colley, *Britons*, 10–58.

The Zionists' objective was a national solution to the 'Jewish problem' or the 'Jewish question'. Firmly entrenched in the discourse of the time, including the Zionist one, these terms are also used in this study, although they are in fact misnomers, which has been ironically expressed by Namier's turning the tables:

If only the Jews could for once grow so big... feel so perfectly at ease, and the non-Jews find themselves, by some miracle, circumstanced as the Jews are at present! The decent Jews would then befriend them, and occasionally lecture them in a kindly manner; and the nasty ones would indulge in spiteful criticism; and together they would, having become 'Gentile-conscious', analyse 'Gentile peculiarities' and discuss 'the Gentile problem'.⁴⁵⁸

To make sense of the demand for a national revival, one has to assume both the existence of a nation and its disintegration, calling for its restoration. This is what the Zionist analysis of the Jewish condition had provided by fashioning the Jews as a nation, and the 'Jewish question' as a national question. The Zionists' answer to the predicament of the modern Jew whom they considered, as Namier put it, 'if not a "refugee", then a perpetual evacuee from a non-existing home',⁴⁵⁹ was the national renaissance in Palestine: 'National emancipation is the meaning, and essence of Zionism.'⁴⁶⁰ The normalization of the Jewish condition through a national revival centring on the establishment of an autonomous national Jewish life in Palestine was, *in nuce*, the Zionist goal: 'The Jews must be a people like all other people... with its own land, its own Government, its own Cabinet.'⁴⁶¹

The desire for the normalization of the Jewish condition was a notion which united Zionists and assimilationists, while setting them both apart from the radical Orthodox. But whereas the assimilationists had sought to liberate the Jews as individuals from the constraints of the past, the Zionists were striving for the emancipation of the Jews as a collectivity, aiming at the equality of the Jews as a nation among the other nations of the world: 'Those who treat the Jewish problem as the sum-total of innumerable individual problems, render it insoluble... A nation is not a mere sum-total of the individuals who compose it; it transcends them all, and possesses weight and values which none of them can claim individually.'⁴⁶² The kind of normalization which the Zionists sought to achieve not only differed from what the assimilationists had in mind, but amounted to nothing less than the repudiation of the premiss on which

⁴⁵⁸ Namier, *Conflicts*, 129–30.

⁴⁵⁹ Namier, *Conflicts*, 129.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. 136.

⁴⁶¹ Leeds Zionist Council, 5 September 1943, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁴⁶² Namier, *Conflicts*, 133.

the emancipationist-cum-assimilationist position rested: the congruence of Jewishness with Jewish religion. The Zionists considered this narrow confessional definition of Jewishness to be neither a realistic account of the actual state of affairs, nor a desirable goal.

While the designs of British Zionists for the national society differed considerably in ideological and religious respects, they shared the assumption that the existence of a national Jewish polity was preferable to the lack of it:

Whereas since the days of Moses Mendelssohn it had become the aim of the Jews to achieve political and social equality by assimilation short of religious dissolution... Zionism... declared the inadequacy of the old ideal for the preservation of the Jewish individuality, and raised the necessity for the national rebirth of the Jewish people as a self-governing body into an object and ideal...⁴⁶³

For a Jew to live an authentic Jewish life as part of a national Jewish collective and free from outside threats, British Zionists argued in committee meetings and in their writings, was possible only under the conditions of an autonomous Jewish polity.⁴⁶⁴ According to Brodetsky 'Jews as a people constitute a group which can only live its life as a group, free from the curses of minority status and the dangers of discrimination and extermination, in a land which, by its daily life and by its continual development, represents the essence of their common Jewish life.'⁴⁶⁵ Shifting the emphasis from the freedom from threats to the potential for authentic development which was entailed in the establishment of an autonomous Jewish polity, the Revd Abraham Cohen, Brodetsky's successor as the BoD's president, pondered that 'in Israel will probably develop a form of Judaism which is the effect of natural evolution, instead of one which is moulded by alien influences'.⁴⁶⁶

The designs of British Zionists for the future national society differed in correlation to ideological leanings, the belief in the perfectibility of society, the role of religion, and the relations with non-Jews. They ranged from Herbert Samuel's liberal-plus-welfare-state vision, anticipated in the fictitious, predominantly non-Jewish Bensalem, the result of the application of scientific method to social organization by intellectually and morally emancipated individuals, where 'Christianity and Judaism are approximating... to a single fundamental faith',⁴⁶⁷ to various

⁴⁶³ Goodman, *History of the Jews*, 206.

⁴⁶⁴ Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 65; ZF, Political Committee, 5 December 1940, CZA F13/798.

⁴⁶⁵ Brodetsky, 'Balfour', 262.

⁴⁶⁶ Abraham Cohen, 'Israel and the Diaspora', in idem (ed.), *Rebirth*, 331.

⁴⁶⁷ Samuel, *An Unknown Land* (London, 1942), 128: modelled after Francis Bacon's *Nova Atlantis*, 1627.

socialist-cum-nationalist, middle-of-the-road liberal-cum-nationalist, revisionist and religious-cum-nationalist utopias.

Whereas the majority envisaged the Zionist project as both a socially, intellectually, and morally progressive, and a national enterprise, Namier, more to the right of the general political spectrum, professed indifference as to whether it would happen to be particularly advanced or not:

Hitler will be defeated: and yet, unless the Jewish problem is faced... it will continue to poison our lives and the minds of non-Jews. Normality must be our aim: To be no longer either 'prodigies' or outcasts or both... There must be a country where Jews can live, work and amuse themselves as they please; be good, bad, great, or ridiculous: but like all nations, among themselves, not under the eyes of strangers... Some Zionists occasionally engage in high-minded... discourses about the 'magnificent contribution which we should then be enabled to make to the common stock of mankind'—and demonstrate therefore once more the Galuth mentality of men who feel beholden to pay tribute, for which they seek compensation in high-brow superiorities. If, having concluded the Great Journey, we should become altogether humdrum and mediocre, that too, will be our own affair...⁴⁶⁸

Far more widespread among British Zionists than Namier's attitude was the conviction that the Jewish polity would be a shining example of progress in every field of social, scientific, and moral endeavour. The following extracts from a speech by Sieff are characteristic: 'We Zionists in this country are convinced in our belief that Israel will ultimately establish a new civilisation, a new kind of freedom and of life, using the skills and knowledge of cultural and scientific attainment, bringing about a dignified and fruitful leisure, and providing the means for ameliorating sickness and suffering.'⁴⁶⁹ Sieff extolled the State of Israel as a model society, carrying significance not only for Jews, but human society as a whole by providing a morally and socially superior counter-model to a world rife with materialism and anti-Semitism.⁴⁷⁰

If British Zionists were agreed on the desirability of a national Jewish future, its realization revealed and exacerbated latent fundamental lines of division within the British Zionist movement. Deeper than the rift between the progressive and the conservative about the perfectibility of the Jewish polity was the one between the secular and the Orthodox about the place of religion in it. For secular British Zionists the Jewish national renaissance was not only a means of revolutionizing the relations between

⁴⁶⁸ Namier, *Conflicts*, 135.

⁴⁶⁹ Israel Sieff, 'Zionism and the Diaspora: Address delivered to the 55th Annual Conference of the Zionist Federation, 14 April 1956', *Gates of Zion* (July 1956), 4.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

Jews and non-Jews, but also of substituting progress, culture, and morality for Orthodoxy which they regarded as the product of the ghetto, as a defence mechanism of diaspora Jews which had no value by itself. The following extract from Goodman about the role of religion in the future Jewish state exemplifies the goal of secular Zionism to provide a Jewish identity transcending and rendering obsolete the Orthodox concept of Jewishness:

Jewish education did not mean in Palestine religious education, but it meant the whole of Jewish life irrespective of party affiliations and nothing would be worse for them as a cultural people than if they were to create the illusion that there was something which was secular and something which was holy. We want to be a holy people, all of us and no differentiation.⁴⁷¹

Sieff's impromptu remarks after a clash with Dayan Lew, one of the judges of the London Beth Din, at a synagogue conference echoed the conviction that in the Jewish nation-state the division between the sacred and the secular had lost its meaning, that its Jewish inhabitants had found religious fulfilment in their collective, Jewish life, and that, therefore, Orthodox charges against their secularism were groundless:

The people of Israel are not irreligious, that is nonsense; the people of Israel are religious in the sense that they have a profound feeling for Jewish tradition and Jewish law. There may be differences in the approach to the problem of what is orthodox and what is unorthodox, but somehow or other . . . I personally do not get the feeling, when I am in Israel, that there can be anybody there who is not a Jew!⁴⁷²

To illustrate his ideal of Jewish religion Sieff had described the Shevuot celebrations in Beth-Alfa, one of the collective settlements:

seeing men, women and children emerge from their houses, dressed in their best clothes . . . with flowers round their necks, going out of their village into their fields, in order to celebrate the festival. They did not have a Sefer Torah with them, which may have been wrong, but they sang songs . . . but what pleased me more than anything they danced. They danced for the joy that on the soil of Israel they were able to see a good harvest.⁴⁷³

After depicting a segment of Israeli society which was characterized by the absence of religious observance as his ideal of Jewish life, he went on to say that he had asked himself 'questions about the pre-exilic Judaism as compared with the Judaism which we know today and which is the product of

⁴⁷¹ Goodman, ZF, 47th Annual Conference, 1 February 1948, 10, CZA F13/1004/I.

⁴⁷² Israel Sieff, 'The Miracle of Israel', *Gates of Zion* (January 1956), 2.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

Jewish thought and idealism having to operate behind a fence, the fence having been created to protect Judaism from the onslaughts and the evils which the outside world have in store for it'.⁴⁷⁴ During the period of exile, the argument of non-Orthodox Zionists ran, the Law had served the practical purpose of preserving the cohesion of the Jews by providing both a straitjacket and a protective shell. With the establishment of the Jewish polity it had become obsolete. Sieff's Jewish social utopia, for the functioning of which the precepts of the *halachah* were no longer relevant, together with his assumptions about their origin and temporary validity were not designed to evoke the approval of the Orthodox. For Orthodox British Zionists the establishment of a Jewish state and society opened the possibility of re-establishing the hegemony of the Law over Jewish life on a national level.

THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT

If, due to the weight of cross-party Zionist agencies like the principal Zionist funds—the KH and KKL—and the FWZ, and due to the dual character of the ZF forming the backbone of a quasi-territorial organization and simultaneously being a General Zionist Party, British Zionism resembled a general Zionist movement (with a small 'g'), ideological divisions were not absent. It is the specific programmatic attractions held out to British Jews by Socialist, Marxist, Religious, and Revisionist Zionist parties, irrespective of their quantitative weight that the following pages will focus on. The party political strands that existed in part outside the General and general Zionist mainstream respectively are indicative of several characteristics: the broad ideological spectrum catered for within Zionism; the different ways of realizing one's life as a Jew, including exit strategies derived from the *chalutzic* radicalism of HH and BACHAD; the differences not only between but within the Zionist parties (e.g. the Revisionist platform standing for the tradition of Herzlian political Zionism and an uncompromising stance towards the British government); its use as a barometer for both transient and structural internal shifts within the Zionist movement (e.g. the success of the Revisionists at the 1946 Zionist congress elections or the more permanent ascent of the Religious Zionists).

Poale Zion

The first groups championing both Zionism and socialism appeared in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁴⁷⁵ By the late 1930s the PZ, the Zionist Jewish Socialist Party, had established itself as the second largest Zionist party after the General Zionist ZF, with branches in all the major Jewish population centres. In 1943 it claimed a membership of 1,300, in 1946 of 2,000.⁴⁷⁶ The membership was drawn from the immigrants' milieu, consisting primarily of second-generation immigrants like the party activists Maurice Rosette, Nathan Jackson, Maurice Pearlman, and Sydney Silverman, and also of immigrants from Eastern Europe like Schneider Levenberg, who arrived in Britain in 1936. Despite its working-class ideology, the membership of the British PZ was primarily middle class. During the 1930s and 1940s representatives of the World Confederation of PZ and emissaries from the Zionist Labour movement in Palestine who stayed in London, either on a permanent basis like Shlomo Kaplansky, Dov Hos, and Berl Locker, or on a temporary basis like Moshe Shertok, Berl Katznelson, and David Ben Gurion, functioned as integral members of the British Zionist socialist scene. Berl Locker, a leading functionary of the World Confederation of PZ, who arrived in London in 1938, acted both as the head of the Political Department of the London Executive of the JA and as the London representative of the Zionist labour movement in Palestine. From 1920 the PZ was affiliated to the Labour Party. From 1942 it was affiliated to the ZF while retaining its independence in party-political questions.

During the 1930 and 1940s PZ concentrated on lobbying the British Labour and trade union movements for Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East.⁴⁷⁷ The lobbying efforts were facilitated by the membership of the PZ in the Labour Party, by overlapping individual membership in the PZ and the Labour Party, and by the presence in London of representatives of the Zionist Labour movement in the Mandate. The party activists Maurice Rosette and Nathan Jackson and the five Jewish Labour MPs who were simultaneously members of PZ, S. Silverman, I. Mikardo, M. Orbach, H. Lever, and J. Mack, exemplify the considerable overlap of Labour Party and PZ membership. As a constituent part of

⁴⁷⁵ Shimoni, 'Poale Zion', 227–9.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. 254.

⁴⁷⁷ The Zionist politics of the Labour Party have been thoroughly explored by Joseph Gorny in *The British Labour Movement and Zionism 1917–1948* (London, 1983); see also C. J. Morris, 'The Labour Government's Policy and Publicity over Palestine, 1945–47', in Anthony Gorst and Lewis Johnman (eds.), *Contemporary British History, 1931–1961: Politics and the Limits of Policy* (London, 1991); Paul Kelemen, 'Zionism and the British Labour Party: 1917–39', *Social History*, 21/1 (January 1996), 71–87.

the Labour Party, PZ could claim credit for the pro-Zionist resolutions passed at consecutive Labour Party conferences until the Labour Party came into power in 1945. Apart from expounding the Zionist case at Labour Party conferences, the PZ sought to promote the Zionist cause among the Labour Party by establishing closer links between the British and the Jewish Labour movement in Palestine through arranged visits of British Labour politicians and trade unionists to Palestine. Towards the end of the 1930s the PZ increased its propaganda. The PZ-inspired Palestine Labour Studies Group issued several pamphlets on various aspects of Labour Zionism and on the positive attitude of the British Labour movement towards the Zionist project in the Middle East.⁴⁷⁸ Since 1938 the Palestine Labour Political Committee, comprising Locker as chairman, Levenberg, Joseph Cohen, Rosette, Maurice Pearlman, and Nathan Jackson, coordinated the PZ lobbying activities among the British Labour and trade union movements. During the 1940s a weekly bulletin, *Jewish Labour News*, served to promote the aims of Zionist socialism among the British-Jewish and the larger public. While the PZ had been instrumental in securing the pro-Zionist attitude of the British Labour Party until 1945, neither the presence of PZ inside the Labour Party nor the record of pro-Zionist pronouncements by the Labour Party was able to reverse the post-war Labour government's decision to adhere to the 1939 White Paper.

Although the efforts of the British PZ to reverse the Palestine policy of the post-war Labour government proved futile, political lobbying for Zionist state- and nation-building constituted the major part of its activities. One could argue that during the 1940s the British PZ owed its existence in large part to the task of convincing the British Labour and trade union movement of the merits of Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East. This was the cause for the considerable weight which PZ possessed in the British Zionist movement during the 1940s. The British PZ played a considerable, if ultimately unsuccessful, role in the overall efforts of British Zionists to lobby the British public on behalf of the Zionist project in the Middle East.

If the British PZ could claim a significant share in the campaign of the British Zionist movement for Jewish statehood, its role in Zionist nation-building in Britain was limited. The prominent place which PZ occupied on the British Zionist scene during the 1940s was only partly reflected in its strength at the grassroots level of British Zionism. The attempts of the PZ during the 1930s and 1940s to increase its basis among the Jewish

⁴⁷⁸ S. Levenberg and J. Podro (eds.), *The British Labour Policy on Palestine* (London, 1938).

working-class population, who saw their interests better served by Communism, Bundism, or the Workers' Circle rather than by Zionist socialism, remained largely unsuccessful.⁴⁷⁹ Shimoni ascribes the failure of PZ to establish a mass following among the Jewish working class to the middle-class composition of its membership and its therefore vicarious advocacy of working-class ideology.⁴⁸⁰ Within the Workers' Circle, PZ gained a commanding position only in the branches 15 and 19 in London, branch 12 in Leeds, and branch 18 in Glasgow.

By the 1950s the PZ was removed to the backstage of the British Zionist scene. Already from the 1940s the PZ had had to compete with the Mizrahi for second place behind the ZF in the British Zionist party spectrum. Judged by the standards of shekel sales, the results of the elections to the Zionist Congresses, and the strength of its youth movement, it was supplanted by the Religious Zionists as the second largest component of British Zionism during the 1950s.

Between promised land and land of promise: the radical socialist Zionism of Hashomer Hatzair (HH)

'Zion or Moscow?' ran the provocative title of an article published in 1955 in the newsletter of the senior age group of the HH youth movement, whose author complained that the *chaverim* who had emigrated to *Eretz Israel* from Britain were well versed in Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, less happy when it came to Ber Borochov, and at a loss when it came to the Torah.⁴⁸¹ It was this question, an intellectual one as much as one of *realpolitik*, which revealed the basic tension, the solution of which the existence of HH was all about. With the capitalist make-up of British society having little appeal to the Jewish radical Left, the issue of divided loyalties was primarily defined not in terms of Englishness versus Jewishness, but in terms of national versus class interests. While Jewish Communists placed class allegiance above national solidarity, the nationalist Jewish socialists had to balance national and class interests, if they were to justify the *raison d'être* of a specifically Jewish socialism as distinct from the general Labour movement.⁴⁸²

Arriving only with the refugees from the Continent in the 1930s, HH, understanding itself as an educational socialist Zionist youth movement,

⁴⁷⁹ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 315.

⁴⁸⁰ Shimoni, 'Poale Zion', 260.

⁴⁸¹ *Iton Bogrim Kinus* (June 1955), GH 2-16.1 (6).

⁴⁸² The ideology of British Hashomer Hatzair followed the larger trend: Shimoni, *Ideology*, 166-70, 179-89, 223-6; Stephan Wendehorst, 'Between Promised Land and Land of Promise', *Jewish Culture and History*, 2/1 (1999), 44-57.

was the most recent addition to the Zionist scene in Britain. Its *Weltanschauung* comprised elements of *chalutzic* Zionism, Marxist socialism, and the German youth movement. The legacy of the youth movement was apparent in the notion of independence, the revolt against the philistine and materialist lifestyle of the older generation—more often than not the members' own middle-class parents—the exalted status of the young, a romantic understanding of emotion and intellect, the idea of the individual's self-realization in the group, and above all in the intensive educational approach and introspective discourse. The revolt of the younger generation against bourgeois complacency and the call for an unconditional, all-encompassing lifestyle, notions common to youth movements throughout Central Europe, had been translated by HH into the demand for the complete national, economic and social metamorphosis of Jewish life, paradigmatically brought about by *hagshamah*, the self-realization of the individual in the kibbutz.⁴⁸³

As Zionists the adherents of HH regarded the Jewish question not only as a social, but also as a national problem. It had its origin in the combined impact of the capitalist economic system and the lack of a Jewish homeland. On the Zionist spectrum, HH was to be found at the radical end, committing its members to an uncompromising, *chalutzic* version of Zionism.

HH's essentially materialist approach differed from that of orthodox Marxism in only one, albeit significant respect, the—temporary—substitution of the Jewish people for mankind as its object. This deviation from the *reine Lehre* called for a specifically national solution to the Jewish problem as a transitional stage on the way to the millennium. Once the Jewish masses were transferred to *Eretz Israel* and transformed into a class-conscious proletariat, the Jews would re-enter the mainstream of history and take up the class struggle together with the Arab working class.

The refusal to reduce the Jewish question to a social issue separated Socialist Zionism from classical Marxism.⁴⁸⁴ Borochoy had set out to harmonize Jewish nationalism with dialectical materialism by showing that nationalism had a materialist basis in the conditions of production which, in his thinking, assumed an importance for the development of society equal to that of the relations of production stressed by Marx.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸³ *Haschomer-Hatzair*, *Choser III*, 20 January 1940, 7, GH 2–16.1 (1).

⁴⁸⁴ Yaakov Morris, 'On Proletarian Nationalism', *Iton Ha-Tsofim*. *Hashomer Hatzair* (February 1943), 14, GH 2–16.3.

⁴⁸⁵ Ber Borochoy, *The National Question and the Class Struggle* (1905); idem, *Nationalism and the Class Struggle: A Marxian Approach to the Jewish Problem. Selected Writings*, introd. Abraham Duker (Westport, Conn., 1972); Sanford Ragins, 'The Disturbing of Karl Marx: Ber Borochoy's Achievement', in Frances Malino and Phyllis Cohen (eds.), *Essays in Modern Jewish History* (London, 1982), 240–53.

For HH nationalism was not a transitional phenomenon, bound to vanish with the disappearance of capitalism: 'As long as such features as geography, land, climate, etc. exist so, too, will exist specific national characteristics and the development of national culture. *The socialist revolution does not alter this fact nor will all the condemnation by "socialists" of the manifestations of nationalism among the masses.*'⁴⁸⁶

As Marxists in a country where there was no Marxism, as *chalutzic* Zionists bent on *aliyah* in a Jewish community whose Zionism approved of the *galuth*, and as heirs of the German youth movement stranded in a youth culture that was given neither to intellectual soul searching nor to sylvan hiking, HH was not likely to attract a mass following.⁴⁸⁷ In the 1946 Zionist Congress election, the first contested by the British HH, it failed to secure a seat, scoring between 480 and 600 votes.⁴⁸⁸ Taking HH's performance in the Zionist Congress elections as an indicator, radical socialist Zionism did not overcome its original marginal position in British-Jewish and Zionist life. HH owed its existence in Britain to émigré members of the German and Austrian branches of HH and the closely related *Werkleute*.⁴⁸⁹ A first *hachshara* centre with eighteen members had been established in London Colney, in October 1939.⁴⁹⁰ The first *moetzah* of the refugee HH in Britain was held in December 1939.⁴⁹¹ In May 1940 the first *moetzah* of the English Hashomer Hatzair took place in Liverpool.⁴⁹² Until their departure for Palestine the continentals formed the backbone of the movement, providing, together with the *shlichim*, almost the entire leadership. Although united under the roof of a single national leadership, the English and continental divisions remained to a large degree separate, organizationally, as the latter were almost identical with Kibbutz Bamifal, as well as in sentiment, with the refugees boasting of their more intensive *Jugendbewegtheit*.⁴⁹³

By the end of 1943, four years after its official foundation, HH had established itself in the major centres of Jewish life in Britain, with the exception of Glasgow. Apart from Kibbutz Hakorim, a mining kibbutz

⁴⁸⁶ *Iton Ha-Tsofim. Hashomer Hatzair* (February 1943), 16, GH 2–16.3.

⁴⁸⁷ Ross McKibbin, 'Why was there no Marxism in Great Britain?', in idem, *The Ideologies of Class* (Oxford, 1990), 1–41; *On Guard*, 1/2 (July/August 1946), 13–15.

⁴⁸⁸ *Michtav Keshet* (October 1946), GH 2–16.1 (2).

⁴⁸⁹ Jehuda Reinhartz, 'Hashomer Hazair in Germany (I) 1928–1933', *LBIYB* 31 (1986), 173–208; idem, 'Hashomer Hazair in Germany (II) Under the Shadow of the Swastika, 1933–1938', *LBIYB* 32 (1987), 183–229.

⁴⁹⁰ *Hashomer Hatzair Werkleute* Mazkiruth Rashit, Bulletin No. 5, 4 November 1939, GH 2–16.1 (1).

⁴⁹¹ *Hashomer-Hatzair. Choser III*, 20 January 1940, 1–2, GH 2–16.1 (1).

⁴⁹² *On Guard* (December 1956), 17.

⁴⁹³ *Michtav Keshet*, No. 14, 8 February 1944, GH 2–16.1 (1).

in Stalybridge near Manchester, the majority of the members of HH underwent agricultural *hachshara*.⁴⁹⁴ In October 1947 HH established itself as a party: the Socialist Zionist Party Hashomer Hatzair of Great Britain and Ireland was founded.⁴⁹⁵ By taking this step HH could also provide a home to those who believed in its ideological platform save for the imperative of their own *aliyah*.

To serve its intensive educational ambitions and to propagate its political views HH issued a variety of newspapers, newsletters, discussion material, and pamphlets, the multitude of which is striking given the movement's small size. The profusion of publications intended for consumption by its own members, and their format with frequent contributions from ordinary members, reflected the movement's discursive culture involving the rank and file to a degree which was without parallel in British Zionism. There HH acquired a reputation for a doctrinaire and discussion-prone state of mind, usually ascribed to its continental origin. In addition to the publications for the various age groups, *Iton Ha-Tsofim*, *Hakovesesh*, *Hatsofeh*, *Atidenu*, *Hadi*, *Hashomer*, and *HaAvuka*, Hashomer Hatzair produced extensive discussion material for its conventions and partly successive, partly overlapping newsletters. After the war, HH sought to impress its views on a wider audience, both Zionist and left-wing, through its first professionally produced publications, the bi-monthly *On Guard* and *Labour Israel*, the monthly newspaper of Mapam.

The equal commitment to *chalutzic* Zionism and Marxist socialism determined HH's analysis of, and solution to, the Jewish question. It was the refusal to trade off against one another either of the constituent elements of this ideology of revolutionary socialist Zionism which shaped HH's response to and role in the Zionist enterprise. The controversy over the Biltmore Programme was the first occasion on which the British HH expounded its perception of the Zionist project in greater detail, registering its protest against the demand for a Jewish state on Zionist and left-wing platforms.⁴⁹⁶ In a speech delivered at the 4th Annual Conference of Hashomer Hatzair, Asher Ben-Israel was anxious to dispel 'the impression that the Judenstaat is *organically linked to our Zionist objectives and that they cannot be realized without it*'.⁴⁹⁷ HH regarded the Jewish state ideology not only as an illegitimate offspring of Zionist thought, but as

⁴⁹⁴ *Annual Report of the Hanbagah Harashith of Hashomer Hatzair Great Britain to the Fifth Veidiah* (December 1944); *Michtav Keshet*, No. 12, 13 January 1944, GH 2-16.1 (1).

⁴⁹⁵ *On Guard*, 2/1 (October/November 1947), 5, GH 2-16.3.

⁴⁹⁶ *Annual Report of the Hanbaga Harashit of Hashomer Hatzair Great Britain to the Moetzah* (November 1943), GH 2-16.1 (1).

⁴⁹⁷ Asher Ben-Israel, *Whither Zionism? The Case Against the Jewish Commonwealth—For a Bi-National Solution* (London, 1942), 6.

detrimental to the Zionist cause, on both theoretical and practical grounds. Its implementation would question the progressive character of the Zionist project and unnecessarily provoke the Arabs, corroborating their fears and suspicions. The demand for a Jewish state, involving the admission that Jewish political dominance was a necessary condition for the success of the Zionist cause, 'would not only place the realization of Zionism into contradiction to the reactionary demands of Arab nationalism but also to the permanent progressive forces of today and tomorrow. Moreover, we are depriving ourselves of the most important political asset—namely—that *in reality* there is no *contradiction between the demands of the Zionists and the progressive interests of the Arab people*.'⁴⁹⁸ The establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth would produce an irreconcilable clash between Jewish and Arab interests, transforming their previously artificial conflict into a real one. Until then, HH had discounted Zionism as a factor contributing to Arab–Jewish frictions, instead blaming the Palestine conflict almost exclusively on the reactionary character of the Arab national movement and British imperialism. Now, by officially discarding the principle of national equality, the Zionist movement was about to make a first entry on the debit side of the Palestine conflict's balance-sheet. Politically, the creation of a Jewish state would perpetuate the antagonism between Jewish majority and Arab minority; economically, it was supposed to lead to an artificial maintenance of two different economies; socially, by increasing the chauvinism of both peoples, it would drive the Arab worker into the arms of reactionary nationalists rather than those of the international working class; culturally the Arab minority would depend ultimately on the goodwill of the Jewish majority: 'The means necessary for all this will have to be sought from the national power which holds the political majority of the country. We know that we Jews consider ourselves to be a *most fair-minded* people—perhaps this is so—yet the fact remains that the Arabs would have to ask us for the means by which they could practice their cultural autonomy.'⁴⁹⁹

If the Jewish state was not only incompatible with '*the true and just aspirations of the Arab masses*', but also unlikely to '*create the conditions necessary for the solution of the Jewish problem, as a whole, in Palestine and the surrounding countries*',⁵⁰⁰ what, then, was the alternative offered by Hashomer Hatzair? In common with the whole Zionist movement, Hashomer Hatzair wanted to solve the Jewish problem by concentrating the Jews in Palestine and turning them into a Jewish polity. On the issue

⁴⁹⁸ Asher Ben-Israel, *Whither Zionism? The Case Against the Jewish Commonwealth—For a Bi-National Solution* (London, 1942), 6.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. 8. ⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

of immigration there was no room for compromise. While admitting that Jewish immigration limited only by economic considerations placed a great demand on the Arab national movement, Hashomer Hatzair saw no reason to call into question its fundamental legitimacy, derived from the following argument: the Jewish question had worldwide implications; since the Zionist project offered a solution to a problem of general concern, large-scale immigration, which was a *sine qua non* for its success, was a justified demand, taking precedence over Arab objections.

In a world, where the fate of many nationalities is linked together, the solution of particular questions are not the concern of only this or that particular national group but a business of general consideration. A general solution must be found even if one or the other group is not willing to understand and agree to the needs of others. Our fate is historically linked up with Palestine—whether the Arabs like this or not...⁵⁰¹

Concomitant with the right of immigration was the common Zionist goal of a numerical Jewish majority. Hashomer Hatzair insisted, however, that the Zionist movement was prepared to balance the intention of a numerical majority with the creation of a political system that guaranteed the Arabs national equality. The political framework of Palestine was to be designed in such a way as to safeguard both: the highest Jewish immigration and the realization of Arab aspirations. This double task could be accomplished only in a bi-national state. HH differed fundamentally from the rest of the Zionist movement in recognizing the existence of an Arab people in Palestine whose rights and national aspirations were in principle equal to those of the Jews. Convinced that anything short of the recognition of the Palestinian Arabs as a national group, such as the concession of minority and civil rights, which every section of the Zionist movement was prepared to grant, would fail to bring about a permanent solution to the Arab problem, HH had adopted national parity as the key formula for relations with the Arabs in Palestine. For the immediate future, HH anticipated frequent national clashes. In the long run, however, social differentiation was bound to supersede the national conflict as the key determinant of Palestine politics. Anticipating a dynamic development of Palestinian society and the attendant emergence of a dominant antagonism along class lines, HH was prepared to risk the dangers involved in the implementation of national parity, which only in a static society would result in a permanent deadlock between the Arab and the Jewish populations.

The impact of the extermination of continental Jewry on Hashomer Hatzair's perception of the *galuth* was twofold. On the one hand it

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. 8.

reinforced its fundamental belief in the non-viability of Jewish life in the diaspora; on the other, it called for the Zionist movement to take on the task of rebuilding the destroyed communities. Hashomer Hatzair advocated the temporary preservation of the *galuth* against evacuation schemes for practical reasons—there was no infrastructure for mass immigration immediately after the war—and on ideological grounds, for ‘Zionism is not merely the transfer of millions of Jews to Palestine but pre-supposes a mental and physical transformation of our people. Such a transformation . . . is a gradual process which can only be realized by a limited number at a time. Therefore, more than has been done in the past, the Zionist movement will have to fight for the establishment of all the civil rights of the Jews.’⁵⁰² HH opposed mass evacuation not only out of consideration for the regeneration of the remainder of the *galuth* and the insistence on a gradual implementation of *aliyah*, but also on the grounds that it might deflect the stream of potential immigrants to destinations other than Palestine, thus perpetuating the dispersal of the Jews. ‘From the Zionist viewpoint the danger lies in the fact that once one agrees in principle to evacuation then one is following the slippery path which, although its proposers did not intend this, may well end in Madagascar or Kimberley!’⁵⁰³ In the debate over the Biltmore Programme, HH’s specific agenda had become apparent; it was to resurface on every further occasion, when the Zionist project was at issue.

In its choice of allies for the national emancipation movement of the Jewish people HH was restricted by the conflicting exigencies of *realpolitik* and the imperatives of ideology. The dichotomous Marxist world view, which neatly separated forces of progress from reaction, left HH little choice in looking for friends and foes. HH’s unequivocal ideological predilections, however, were not matched by correspondingly close alliances, either in terms of working-class solidarity, or on the plane of international politics, or within the Zionist movement. Although regarding itself as part of the international working class, HH had joined neither the 2nd nor the 3rd International. Within the general Labour movement it came down on the side of the Communist as opposed to the social-democratic trend, within the British Left on the side of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League against the Labour Party.⁵⁰⁴ While HH encouraged its members to read the *Daily Worker*⁵⁰⁵ and

⁵⁰² Asher Ben-Israel, *Whither Zionism? The Case Against the Jewish Commonwealth—For a Bi-National Solution* (London, 1942), 14.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ *Iton Ha-Tsofim. Hashomer Hatzair* (November 1942), 4–5, GH 2–16.3.

⁵⁰⁵ Yaakov Morris, ‘Gallacher’s New Pamphlet: “Anti-Semitism What It Means To You”’, *Iton Ha-Tsofim. Hashomer Hatzair* (June 1943), 27–9, GH 2–16.3.

allowed them to take part in Communist-sponsored demonstrations as individuals, as a movement it would not ally itself with the YCL and the CP. HH justified its policy of non-participation in the activities of the Left, which was not uncontested within the movement,⁵⁰⁶ on three grounds: (a) the anti-Zionism of the Communists, (b) the imminent loss of the support of the Zionist Federation at the first sign of official support for a Communist-sponsored enterprise, and (c) the negligible impact of its participation on the success of the British radical Left.⁵⁰⁷ Far from deserting the cause of the working class, as their Communist opponents claimed, HH saw their limited resources better employed by concentrating on their specific sector of the class struggle, the vanguard role in the proletarianization of the Jews in their historic homeland.⁵⁰⁸ Jewish Communists might

‘do’ their politics earnestly: canvassing, paper selling, political meetings and all the basic and important jobs in party life. To what end?—Five or ten M.P.s perhaps in the next five years? We just sing, dance, learn odd things, go camping and so train chaverim to become pioneers in the desert, normalising a people . . . This is a historic task of interest not only to us but to millions; colonisation without whips or bibles; modern life without imperialist domination. *No one can or will do this except us.* For this end we have to ensure our place inside the Jewish community because this is our only field of work.⁵⁰⁹

On the plane of international relations, HH’s sympathies lay with the Soviet Union and the progressive national liberation movements of the colonial peoples. As their outlook was persistently anti-Zionist, however, HH was engaged in an unrelenting, if unrequited endeavour to enlist them as allies not only in the realm of Marxist logical necessity, but also in practical politics. As to cooperation between Britain and the Zionist movement HH entertained few illusions. It was only when the Soviet Union entered the war and the enormity of the *shoah* began to be known that HH would modify its anti-British attitude and ask its members to enlist in the British forces. Until then HH had belonged to the most outspoken critics of British government policy in the Zionist movement and the Jewish community at large. The 1939 White Paper had proven to HH beyond doubt that the Zionist movement had nothing to gain from cooperation with Britain, but

⁵⁰⁶ Hashomer Hatzair (Great Britain) *Ideological Discussion Material: For the 9th National Veida*. April 1952-Nissan 5712, 17, GH 2–16.1 (5).

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid. 6–7.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid. 7.

⁵⁰⁹ Hashomer Hatzair (Great Britain) *Ideological Discussion Material: For 9th National Veida*. April 1952-Nissan 5712, 36, GH 2–16.1 (5).

should rather free itself 'von der politischen Romantik der ewigen Verbundenheit mit England'.⁵¹⁰

On the question of what shape the Jewish polity in Palestine was eventually to take, HH's primary concern was the national and social renaissance of the whole Jewish people and the corresponding transformation of the Jewish individual. As a result Hashomer Hatzair was flexible on the question of statehood, which it regarded as an outdated nineteenth-century formula,⁵¹¹ but uncompromising on what it considered to be illegitimate dilutions of Zionism's essentials. HH was opposed to refugee Zionism; first, as it appeared to give credence to the idea that Zionism was merely the product of anti-Semitism, the Jewish nation a creation of Hitler, and not the 'positive reflection of the deep-rooted urge of the Jewish people for its own life',⁵¹² and, second, as it would not allow sufficient training as a precondition for *aliyah*. For HH the Zionist programme entailed the 'need to revolutionize Anglo-Jewish life no less than that of other sections of our people. It must be clear that the Jewish problem in England must be approached from the same angle as the whole Jewish problem—one of transforming the Jewish economy and dispersion into one of productivization through territorial concentration in Eretz Israel.'⁵¹³ The vicarious Zionism prevalent in the United States, combining hostility to the *chalutzic* brand of Zionism with radical declamatory political Zionism, aroused the particular anger of HH, which asked whether it would not have been more courageous to demand greater action from the American government at the Bermuda conference rather than giving a maximalist formula to Jews thousands of miles away.⁵¹⁴

When partition became a reality in 1948, HH would regard Jewish statehood as a transitional phase towards a bi-national Socialist society. The establishment of the State of Israel as such had no positive impact on what HH saw as the fundamentals of its politics: the demand for Jewish self-emancipation through *chalutzic* Zionism, an Arab-Jewish settlement based on conciliation and an alliance of the Jewish polity with the Soviet Union and the forces of progress.

Not until the 1950s did HH eventually become disillusioned with the Soviet Union. Until the doctors' plot and the attendant trials in Eastern Europe, the relationship of HH and the USSR is best described as a unilateral, unconsummated love affair, which kept going for what to HH appeared to be the certain prospect of a prearranged marriage with

⁵¹⁰ M.J., 'Tage der Prüfung', London (July 1939), GH 2–16.3.

⁵¹¹ *Veidiah Bulletin*, No. 2 (February 1944), GH 2–16.3.

⁵¹² *On Guard*, 1/6 (July/August 1947), 27, GH 2–16.3.

⁵¹³ *Iton Ha-Tsofim. Hashomer Hatzair* (February 1943), 7, GH 2–16.3.

⁵¹⁴ *Veidiah Bulletin*, No. 2 (February 1944), 18, GH 2. 16.3.

ideology as the infallible matchmaker. Save for the Jewish question and its Zionist answer, the adherents of HH were loyal followers of Marxist socialism and its main exponent, the Soviet Union. In its assessment of the Soviet Union HH's emphasis was always on the potential, on the future, not on present-day reality.⁵¹⁵ Yet the lady was coy and HH's dream of seeing the Zionist movement and the Soviet Union march together as allies in the struggle for the redemption of mankind proved a bitter illusion.

HH's relationship with the Zionist enterprise was determined by the constant effort to meet the demands of *chalutzic* Zionism and Marxist Socialism. If HH was equally committed to both, it was nevertheless for different areas and chronologies that the respective elements of its ideology served as the standard of reference. As far as HH's assessment of the Jewish condition was concerned, Zionism provided the main focus of orientation. When it came to questions of general concern viewed in long-term perspective the standard was set by historical materialism. The result of the inevitable tension, which posed problems, both intellectually and in terms of practical politics, was a powerful drive to universalize the Jewish question and to link Zionism to contemporary progressive trends. What to the rest of the Zionist movement, as well as to the anti-Zionist Left, was a contradiction in terms, the simultaneous espousal of socialist and Zionist world views in most extreme forms, Hashomer Hatzair claimed to reconcile (a) by declaring the Jewish question a universal issue and the Zionist answer a progressive solution, not only by Jewish, but also by general standards, and (b) by defending those aspects of the Zionist enterprise which were incompatible with orthodox Marxism as temporary, bound to be rendered obsolete in future society.

While Marxism remained in force as the key to an ideological understanding of society, HH's translation of its ideological programme into *realpolitik* saw a dramatic change in the 1950s. The uncritical equation of the Soviet Union with the forces of progress fell victim to the persistent anti-Zionism, the rising tide of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the support of the Arab enemies of the State of Israel through the Communist bloc, and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. By the late 1950s, HH had come to answer the question 'Zion or Moscow?' by divorcing the pure body of Marxist doctrine from the Soviet Union.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ Simcha Flapan, *Why Has Zionist Policy Failed?* (London, 1946), 4.

⁵¹⁶ *Moetsa Chinuchit*, 28–30 December 1956, 1–5, GH 2–16.2 (2); *HaAvuka* (1958), 3, GH 2–16.4.

Religious Zionism

In Britain, the attempt to marry modern nationalism with Orthodoxy was expressed in two different organizational forms. On the one hand, the Mizrahi Federation of Great Britain and Ireland provided a home for British Jews espousing both Orthodoxy and Zionism. On the other hand the ZF catered not only for the secular but also for part of the observant segment of British Zionists. A striking feature of the ZF, which was a branch of the General Zionists 'A', was its low-key secularism in comparison with its continental counterparts. Refugee Zionists from the Continent were regularly surprised by the comparative deference British Zionists showed towards Orthodoxy. While the provisions for kosher cooking at mainstream Zionist youth camps, for example, might not have been up to the standards of the devout, there were few calculated attempts to remove religion altogether from the Zionist scene. Brodetsky's regular presence at the Friday synagogue service, as well as the presence of several rabbis in the ZF, epitomized the accommodating attitude of British mainstream Zionism towards Orthodoxy. The structural reason for this was that, as in other Anglo-American countries and in contrast to continental Europe, the basic unit of Jewish organizational life in Britain was the synagogue and not the *Gemeinde*, the community to which every Jew belonged by law unless he declared otherwise. Although organized on a voluntary basis and therefore not including all Jews, the synagogue had remained the most important avenue to reach British Jews, hence its importance in Zionist eyes. A uniquely British feature of British mainstream Zionism was the ZF's Synagogue Council which coordinated Zionist propaganda in the synagogues.

The Mizrahi movement in Britain dates back to the First World War. An umbrella organization was established at the first conference of the British Mizrahi in December 1918.⁵¹⁷ The conference decided to follow the model of the American Mizrahi, to preserve its independence and establish a federation outside the ZF.⁵¹⁸ With regard to Palestine, the conference demanded the creation of a JNH on a national and religious basis. An amendment passed at the conference required that members of the British Mizrahi settle in *Eretz Israel*, 'if possible'.⁵¹⁹ Apart from the *chalutzic* youth movements, the Mizrahi was thus the only part of the

⁵¹⁷ *Fifty Years of Mizrahi HaPoel HaMizrachi Federation of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1968).

⁵¹⁸ *Report of The First Mizrahi Conference in the United Kingdom. Held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Manchester on 28th and 29, 1918* (London, 1920), 9–16.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.* 18.

British Zionist movement which had incorporated the demand for *aliyah* into its official programme. For the greater part of the inter-war period the British Mizrahi led an inconspicuous existence. The initial impulse for its expansion came from the arrival of Orthodox Zionist refugees from Germany, in particular the religious *chalutzic* youth movement Brith Cholutzim Datiim (BACHAD). But it did not remain confined to the refugee population.⁵²⁰ In 1937 the Mizrahi Federation included the Mizrahi Organization, the Women's Mizrahi, Torah v'Avodah (TvA), Young Mizrahi, and BACHAD. In 1940 the Mizrahi Federation comprised 13 societies of the Mizrahi Organization, 4 societies of the Women's Mizrahi, including the luncheon fund, 12 societies of Torah v'Avodah, 6 BACHAD groups, and a Mizrahi ministers group.⁵²¹ As the impact of the refugees was particularly strong in the younger age bracket, during the 1940s the British Mizrahi was effectively synonymous with the activities of its youth components, BACHAD and its non-*chalutzic* counterpart, the Torah Va'Avodah Organization of Great Britain & Ireland, founded in 1937. In 1940 the TvA boycotted the conference of the Mizrahi Federation, as it was not prepared to forgo its organizational independence and content itself with a subordinated status vis-à-vis the weaker 'parent' Mizrahi Organization.⁵²² The Mizrahi Organization agreed to the demands of the TvA. As a result the Mizrahi Federation was re-structured as an umbrella organization in which the Mizrahi Organization, including the Women's Mizrahi, and the TvA, including BACHAD, were equal partners. The principle of equality extended to office, representation on other bodies, and responsibility for political action.⁵²³ In 1948 the youth components of the British Mizrahi separated from the Mizrahi Federation and formed the nucleus of HaPoel HaMizrachi, the party of the Socialist Religious Zionists. This party was effectively the roof organization of BACHAD, TvA, and Bnei Akiva. Between the three components there was a division of labour. BACHAD catered for the *chalutzim*, TvA for the older, and Bnei Akiva for the younger age bracket of non-*chalutzic* Religious Zionist youth.⁵²⁴

The attitude of the British Mizrahi towards Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East was determined by its simultaneous

⁵²⁰ See for example 'Kibbutz and Cocoa', an unpublished manuscript by Shula Jacobs, the first British-born female member of BACHAD.

⁵²¹ MF, Annual Conference 1940, Report, ARJ folder 1940.

⁵²² Myer Silverstone to E. Sklan, 20 March 1940, ARJ folder 1940.

⁵²³ William Frankel to Rabbi Meyer Berlin, 10 June 1940, ARJ folder 1940.

⁵²⁴ *Hadoar*, 13 January 1950, 1, ARJ folder 1950; HaPoel HaMizrachi Organization of Great Britain and Ireland, 1st Annual Conference, Report, 11–12 December 1948, ARJ 40/vav/15/20.

commitment to Zionism and Orthodoxy and, in the cases of BACHAD, TvA, and HaPoel HaMizrachi, also to socialism. The British Mizrahi demanded the establishment of a Jewish state which in the long run was to be based on the Torah. As long as this was no practical proposition, their ambitions were restricted to strengthening the Orthodox position in the Jewish polity. British Mizrachists gave practical expression to their Religious Zionist commitment by raising funds for Orthodox schools and settlements, by going on *aliyah*, and by protesting against discrimination against and neglect of Orthodox interests by the secular majority of the *yishuv* and the State of Israel. Issues which concerned the place of Orthodoxy in Israeli public life mobilized the protests of British Mizrachists, for example the public observance of the Shabbat or the predominantly secular education in immigrant camps.⁵²⁵

If the safeguarding of Orthodoxy in Israel was a common concern of the British Mizrahi, the simultaneous espousal of socialism was restricted to the adherents of HaPoel HaMizrachi, TvA, and BACHAD. In the case of the *chalutzic* wing of the Mizrahi, the combination of Zionism, Orthodoxy, and socialism was coupled with a pessimistic assessment of the Jewish condition in the diaspora. A complete Jewish life, Religious Zionists argued, was possible only in a Jewish state. *Hadoar*, the organ of the TvA, saw liberal societies as a threat to Jewish continuity: 'the greater the emancipation, the greater the spiritual danger.'⁵²⁶ The condition of Jews living in liberal countries was per se unsatisfactory:

Naturally the freer the contact with the alien world the greater its corrosive effects, the greater the efforts needed to overcome those effects, the less energy for creative activity. On the other hand experience has also shown that in the modern world the ghetto existence is not only impossible but undesirable. The greater the conglomeration of Jews, the greater the problem, the greater the suffering, even though the ghetto system does provide an effective barrier against spiritual assimilation. Hence the vicious circle. A free physical existence means spiritual suicide. Spiritual freedom is possible only where there is no physical freedom. To us, therefore, there is only one way of breaking the vicious circle—a Jewish state—where both physical and spiritual freedom can be combined...⁵²⁷

The *shoah* gave the critical assessment of the Jewish condition in the diaspora added force:

⁵²⁵ *Hadoar*, 13 January 1950, 4–5, ARJ 40/gimel; HaPoel HaMizrachi Organization of Great Britain and Ireland, 2nd Annual Conference, 22 January 1950; Bulletin No. 6, ARJ 40/vav/15/20.

⁵²⁶ *Hadoar*, 3 December 1942, 3, ARJ 40/gimel.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

after the terrible nightmare which our kith and kin have gone through these last 6 years, freedom from the bondage of their oppressors has become the life and death issue for our people. We have learnt again and again by bitter experience that so long as we are in the Galuth of whichever land, we shall never enjoy 'Freedom from Fear'. For us Eretz Israel is the only hope and security...⁵²⁸

Apart from guaranteeing physical security and acting as barrier against assimilation, Religious Zionists expected a Jewish state to provide an opportunity to create a society based on the Torah: 'The Torah is a civilisation operative in toto only by a people, with complete autonomy, living on its own soil.'⁵²⁹ In the diaspora it was impossible to follow the precepts of Jewish religion in their entirety:

Practically the entire body of Torah legislation with regard to social system, to business, to constitution has been in abeyance for 2000 years. We wish to *live by* the Torah, not only to *die for* it. In the Galut we have no control over our physical conditions. Like the socialist-Zionists we can agree that the economic distribution of the Jewish people is all wrong and needs correcting. But to *us* it is wrong because the *Torah* teaches us so not because Karl Marx said so... we can only remedy it if we are masters of our own destiny. Hence, therefore, our second principle is, a Jewish State is necessary to us because we desire to live a life of Torah.⁵³⁰

Operating largely outside the organizational framework of the London JA and the ZF the role of the British Mizrahi in the British Zionist political campaign in support of Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East was primarily of a declaratory character. In terms of *aliyah* its members made a contribution by founding Kibbutz Lavi.

If the contribution of the British Mizrahi to the Zionist project in the Middle East was, apart from *aliyah*, not spectacular, it played a significant role in Zionist nation-building in Britain, in particular through its increasingly popular youth organizations the TvA and Bnei Akiva. The absence of the British Mizrahi from the organizational structure of the ZF should not obscure the role which it played in the British Zionist movement. The Mizrahi Federation of Great Britain and Ireland remained independent of the ZF. From its foundation in 1918 the Mizrahi was in permanent conflict with the ZF over the formation of a territorial union, the control of the KH, and religious issues.⁵³¹ Although the British Mizrahi was on the margins of the British Zionist movement in the 1930s, it expanded

⁵²⁸ *Hadoar*, 12 April 1946, 1, ARJ 40/gimel.

⁵²⁹ *Hadoar*, 3 December 1948, 3, ARJ 40/gimel.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵³¹ The exclusion of the Mizrahi from mainstream British Zionism organized around the ZF and questions of Zionist religious politics dominated the correspondence between

rapidly from the 1940s.⁵³² The Religious Zionist activist Arie Handler gave two reasons for his positive assessment of the prospects for the formation of a strong Religious Zionist movement in Britain: the traditionalism of British Jews and the organizational weakness of the existing Zionist parties:

We have here a better chance than in other countries because in other countries the Mizrahi, like religious Jewry, always come late, after the other organisations, the left groups and the general Zionists have built a strong party. Here in England, neither left groups nor the Zionist Movement are strong... They have offices, and what is very important, personalities who come from society, but there is not an organised following—the yiddish 'bren' also is lacking. This depends a little on the whole mentality of the English people which is not so enthusiastic for revolutionary movements. On the other hand, the English Jewry has a strong national feeling, more than the Jews in other central and western European countries...⁵³³

Judged by the shekels sold by, the votes cast for, and the seats allotted to the British Mizrahi at Zionist congresses, the Mizrahi could count on strong sympathy among British Jewry. During the late 1940s the British Mizrahi replaced PZ as the second largest Zionist party in Britain behind the General Zionist ZF. A yardstick for the growing importance of Religious Zionism in British Jewry was the increasing popularity of its youth organizations, the TvA and Bnei Akiva. By the 1950s the membership of the Religious Zionist youth organizations was stronger than that of its secular Zionist competitors, Habonim and HH.⁵³⁴

Revisionist Zionism

What were the views of British Revisionist Zionists on Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East? What attitudes did they hold on the Jewish condition in Britain? Which parts of their programme did they translate into practical politics and by what means? What was specifically British about British Revisionist Zionism? To what extent and when did Revisionist Zionism enjoy popularity among British Jews? These questions will be pursued in the following section.

the Jerusalem World Centre of the Mizrahi and its British branch, ARJ, folders 1936–1956.

⁵³² *Fifty Years of Mizrahi HaPoel HaMizrahi Federation of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1968), 7.

⁵³³ Haendler to Berlin, 6 January 1940, ARJ folder 1940.

⁵³⁴ Interview with Arie Handler, London, 11 May 1993.

Revisionists had taken the Zionist analysis of the Jewish question, anti-Semitism, Jewish collectivity, and Jewish nationalism to an extreme. Where left-wing and middle-of-the road Zionists saw room for compromise and accommodation, if not in theory, then in practice, Revisionist Zionists favoured radical, final answers.⁵³⁵ At a Revisionist function in Hendon on 31 January 1937, Jabotinsky, the founder and leader of Revisionist Zionsm, rejected Jewish assimilation on the grounds that it led to greater anti-Jewish ferocity than separateness: 'assimilation was tried to the very limit in Germany and the assimilated and the non-assimilated were buried under a common avalanche of hate-inspired decrees.'⁵³⁶ Rather than in assimilation, he saw the future of the Jews in national regeneration, in 'creating a new type of Jewish race. A certain gentleman . . . in Berlin had made the use of the word "race" something so dirty, that one felt reluctant to employ it'; he, by contrast, 'employed the word in a moral sense. A new Jewish race meant Jews a little further from the ghetto and a little bit nearer to the ancient times and perhaps to future times.'⁵³⁷ Apart from its radicalism, the Revisionist platform differed from that of general and left-wing Zionism in its hostility to the Jews' social transformation entailed in the Zionist project and a preference for its political side. The emphasis was on state-, not on nation-building. It was this insistence on the primacy of political Zionism in the tradition of Herzl which explains the Revisionists' preference for high politics and their willingness to cooperate with the powers that be, despite the radicalism of their rhetoric.

The history of Revisionist Zionism in Britain dates back to the mid-1920s when Jabotinsky and his followers split from the WZO.⁵³⁸ The original nucleus included Meir Grossmann, the founder of the Jewish State Party (JSP), and the journalist and writer Abraham Abrahams. With the transfer of the Revisionist World Headquarters from Paris to London in 1930 Revisionist activity in Britain saw an upsurge which, however, was not reflected in a strong organizational infrastructure. The schism in the Revisionist movement at large between the followers of Jabotinsky who left the WZO and founded the New Zionist Organisation (NZO) in 1935 and those Revisionists who stayed within the WZO and organized themselves in the JSP was replicated in the British Revisionist movement. While the NZO had branches, including *Betar* youth groups in the Jewish

⁵³⁵ Shimoni, *Ideology*, 236–66.

⁵³⁶ *JC*, 5 February 1937, 34.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁸ 'England', fragment written by Yehuda Benari, JI G20/12; Cesarani, 'Zionism', 313–17.

population centres, its activities were effectively directed by the World Executive, to be precise, by Abraham Abrahams.⁵³⁹

As the organizational infrastructure of the two Revisionist parties was barely sufficient for a letterhead during the 1930s and 1940s, Revisionist policy in Britain made itself felt not primarily through the party organization, which, though lingering on, was small in quantitative terms and riven by internal strife, nor by means of the New Zionist party organ, the *Jewish Standard*, but through three other channels. First the *JC*, the most widely read British-Jewish newspaper, whose editor, Greenberg, was a dedicated admirer of Jabotinsky's variant of Zionism, provided a platform for the ample presentation of Revisionist views beyond the confines of the Revisionist clientele. In addition, the driving spirits behind the Committee for a Jewish Army as well as the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League shared a Revisionist background. While the *JC* served as a transmission belt for Revisionist thought within British Jewry, the Committee for a Jewish Army and the Jewish Dominion League also provided meeting points between Revisionists and non-Jewish politicians.

The radicalization of the Revisionists' analysis of the Jewish 'question', and the fact that, in contrast to the Zionists represented by the JA, they did not have to consider the repercussions of their pronouncements on the British public, led them to stress the distinct fate of the Jews during the war and their distinct expectations after the war. This discourse contrasted with that of the mainstream Zionists who put more emphasis on common concerns, to be addressed by joint Jewish and non-Jewish initiatives.

Illustrative of the Revisionist school of thought is the case which Abraham Abrahams presented for a distinctly Jewish contribution to the Allied war effort which was necessary as

it was not sufficient for the Jew to realise the single truth that the Allies stand with him against the threat of Nazi domination. The Jew must also realise that the Nazi programme also includes something which is directed specifically against him...one could imagine circumstances in which a negotiated peace would include certain conditions regarding the fate of the Jewish people, conditions which would affect us alone, and which the others would accept and fulfil, however unwillingly. It is this fact of the existence of a specific Jewish interest in the war which must provide the main impetus for the formation of a separate Jewish Army...something which will fight side by side with them, but will at the same time, represent a specific point of view, a specific demand...⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁹ *JC*, 29 July 1938, 27; 30 June 1939, 21; 7 July, 20.

⁵⁴⁰ Abrahams, 'Jewish Army—Not Legion: The Vital Difference', 1942, JI F2-4/3.

Abrahams opposed the idea of Jewish battalions forming part of several Allied armies for three reasons. First, a separate Jewish army would reflect the specific Jewish plight: 'we wish to give point and force to the fact of our existence as a people threatened in a specific way by the Nazi programme'; second, it would help in the 'readjustment of our national position as an outcome of the war'; and third, it would prevent the 'scattering of our effort and the comparative suppression of our identity in three or four different armies'.⁵⁴¹

British Revisionists assumed a greater divide between Jews and non-Jews than mainstream Zionists. They sought to achieve their objectives by according the Jews a distinct military and political role. Rather than promoting their goals with reference to common interests and ideals as did mainstream Zionists, they sought to advance their plans through international cooperation with the participating nations pursuing their respective national interests. It was on the basis of Jewish national needs, distinct from but not incompatible with those of Britain, that British Revisionists advanced their plans for a Jewish army, a Jewish polity, and other schemes. In many of their projects Britain was expected to occupy the place of a senior partner. In this respect British Revisionists continued Jabotinsky's and Herzl's politics. It was, for example, only when Jabotinsky's request to have the officers of the prospective Jewish fleet trained in Britain was rejected that he turned to Mussolini. In 1934, the Marine Department of Brit Trumpeldor, an affiliated body of the New Zionist Organization, established a Jewish Naval Training College at Civitavecchia.⁵⁴² By 1937 almost 100 cadets had passed the examinations set by the Italian Admiralty, an achievement hailed by the *JC* as a contribution to occupational readjustment and promotion of seafaring and fishing among the Jews.⁵⁴³

During the war the Committee for a Jewish Army served as the main organizational focus of British Revisionist Zionism. After the war the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League fulfilled this purpose. The majority of the Jewish members of the Committee for a Jewish Army, Captain Halpern, Ivan Greenberg, Samuel Landman, and Oskar Rabinowitz, shared a Revisionist background. The same was true of the Jewish Dominion League.

British Revisionist interest in cooperation with Britain was most pronounced in the designs for the political future of the Mandate. Assuming that 'without British goodwill and co-operation the work of building the Jewish State could not go forward', Abrahams criticized the JA for

⁵⁴¹ Ibid. 2.

⁵⁴² Daniel Carpi (ed.), *Scritti in memoria di Leone Carpi* (Jerusalem, 1967), 43–5.

⁵⁴³ *JC*, 5 February 1937, 28.

'conceiving it as their duty to wage an incessant quarrel with the Colonial Office on the day-to-day details of Palestine administration', for bombarding the Colonial Office and the government *ad nauseam* with protests over details, 'instead of conducting a long-range and consistent political campaign for principles' which he thought would meet with a better response from the British side than petty complaints.⁵⁴⁴ British Revisionist preference for Britain as the sponsor of the Zionist project found a practical expression in the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League. The Jewish Dominion of Palestine League, a revival of the Seventh Dominion League, was formed in 1944 and worked for the acceptance of Palestine as a Jewish Dominion in the British Commonwealth. The Seventh Dominion League had been formed in 1927 by Lord Wedgwood, Sir Martin Conway, Sir Robert Hamilton, Lord Hartington, Major Hills, Commander Kenworthy, later Lord Strabolgi, Drummond Shiels, and Sir Leslie Scott.⁵⁴⁵ In the Mandate, the Palestine Crown Colony Association had been set up in 1937 with essentially the same objective.⁵⁴⁶

Apart from throwing light on its views on the Jewish 'question' and the Palestine problem, the memorandum which the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League submitted to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry in January 1946 revealed a mixture of Revisionist thought, British imperialism, and anti-Jewish prejudice of its non-Jewish supporters. The League presented its suggestion to turn Palestine into a Jewish Dominion of the British Commonwealth as a concept which enjoyed the support of Jews and non-Jews sharing the conviction that the Jewish question involved is a menace to the peace and security of the world, as the machinations of Hitler and his imitators have clearly demonstrated:

... throughout the world men and women are acutely alive to the demoralising and disturbing qualities of the Jewish refugee problem which is, for a number of reasons, both more stubborn and, from absolutely no fault or failing of the material itself, more pernicious in certain respects than when its subjects are non-Jewish.⁵⁴⁷

In its analysis of the Jewish 'question' the memorandum betrays its Revisionist background, representing the Jewish condition outside the *yishuv* as 'a most potent factor in the rise and spread of antisemitism'.⁵⁴⁸ The memorandum saw anti-Semitism being continually exacerbated by

⁵⁴⁴ *JC*, 12 February 1943.

⁵⁴⁵ Josiah Wedgwood, *The Seventh Dominion* (London, 1927).

⁵⁴⁶ Joshua Stein, *Our Great Solicitor: Josiah C. Wedgwood and the Jews* (Toronto, 1992), 41–66.

⁵⁴⁷ 'Memorandum, Jewish Dominion of Palestine League', January 1946, JI P265/12.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

floating refugees and thought that 'two thousand years of almost unvaried repetition of cycles of dispersion and antisemitism are unlikely to be arrested except a permanent home is provided for the homeless Jew, and homeless Jewry is given a choice of a peaceful and permanent home'.⁵⁴⁹

The memorandum did not stop at praising a Jewish Dominion as a solution to Jewish homelessness and a cure for anti-Semitism. The particular appeal of the Jewish Dominion, its adherents believed, derived from four aspects of their scheme: the solution to the political and economic instability of Palestine; the transcending of the Arab-Jewish conflict; the removal of Jewish national aspirations as an irritant in British-American relations; and the satisfaction of the strategic interests of Britain without its incurring the odium of imperialist expansionism.

Dominion status would guarantee progressive internal development and external security. A territory indissolubly associated with the British Commonwealth would not be challenged from outside: 'The status of a Dominion of the British Commonwealth of Nations provides the maximum of internal independence with, at the same time, a sturdy because absolutely free link of voluntary allegiance to the British Crown which would guarantee at once its security and that of its neighbours.'⁵⁵⁰ The moment the uncertainty over Palestine's political future came to an end, there would be no more obstacles to the economic and political progress of the country.

In a Jewish Dominion the position of the Arab minority would be safeguarded by imperial guarantee. The Arab population would enjoy equality of rights as citizens of Palestine and the Commonwealth. The creation of a Jewish Dominion would cut short the period of conflict and unsettlement 'which was bound to continue so long as those opposed to the Balfour Declaration have reason to hope that their opposition is likely to compel the crystallisation of the Jewish Home at its present stage'.⁵⁵¹

The establishment of a Jewish Dominion would put an end to 'the constant expression of dissatisfaction with the British Government emanating from American Jews' and 'deny to the circles purposefully interested in British-American estrangement one of their most potent instruments of propaganda'.⁵⁵² Hinting that the 'strategic importance of Palestine has not escaped the attention of other Powers' and that Britain's link with Palestine was not permanently fixed, the creation of a Jewish Dominion would secure Britain vital strategic communications. The possible objection 'that a Jewish Dominion composed wholly of a non-English speaking and of non-British stock would be without precedent' and that 'such a connection would not provide sufficiently powerful bonds

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Ibid.

to ensure reliable association under the Statute of Westminster' was dismissed with reference to the debate over granting Dominion status to India, Ceylon, and Burma.

The League's memorandum ended with three demands: Britain, together with the USA, should confirm the Balfour Declaration, declare its intention to encourage Palestine to become a self-governing Jewish Dominion of the British Commonwealth, and designate as the boundaries of the Jewish Dominion the area on both banks of the Jordan.

In the summer of 1946 Greenberg visited Palestine on behalf of the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League to ascertain the prospects of extending the League's work among the Arab, British, and Jewish inhabitants of the Mandate and to set up an organization to promote the work of the League in the Mandate. In view of the anti-British atmosphere prevailing in the *yishuv* it was decided to carry out the mission without publicity.⁵⁵³ While Greenberg was aware of the 'violent hatred which the Jewish people in Palestine justifiably feel for the present British policy of smashing the Yishuv' he discovered 'little irreconcilable bitterness... against Great Britain and the British people' and 'a reasoned willingness to consider the Dominion League solution for long-term policy'.⁵⁵⁴

The League's proposals were a tailor-made programme for the particular British brand of Revisionism. It combined the Revisionist analysis of the Jewish condition, Jabotinsky's political Zionism, and the demand for a Palestine in the pre-1922 borders with what its adherents considered to be British imperial interests. What was made-to-measure for the wishes of British Revisionists and their non-Jewish supporters was based on two miscalculations, the belief that Britain was not prepared to abandon the Mandate and the alleged pro-British sympathies of the *yishuv*. As Greenberg painfully realized, when he toured Palestine on behalf of the League in the summer of 1946, although he would not admit it, there was no sign of a Jewish wish to maintain a link with Britain.⁵⁵⁵

While Greenberg was working for the transformation of the Mandate into a Dominion of the British Empire, he was simultaneously getting more supportive of the militantly anti-British stance of the *yishuv*, an attitude which cost him his position as editor of the *JC*.⁵⁵⁶ In May

⁵⁵³ 'Prospects in Palestine', A Report by Ivan Greenberg, Jewish Dominion of Palestine League, 12 September 1946, JI P265/12.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ For Greenberg's evidence before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry: Transcripts of hearings in London, 25 and 28–31 January 1946; for the *JC*'s drift towards Revisionist Zionism and Greenberg's sacking: David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry, 1841–1941* (Cambridge, 1994), 189–202.

1947 Greenberg wrote a letter to the editor, 'British Jews and Palestine Violence',⁵⁵⁷ in reply to an article by the Liberal Rabbi Reinhart.⁵⁵⁸ Greenberg criticized Reinhart for evoking the impression

that only a small proportion of the Jews either of this country or of the world at large sympathise with the Jews in Palestine who have adopted methods of violence in their struggle against the British Government. I happen to be one of those Jews who sympathises with the Jews in Palestine who are fighting for their national liberation. . . . I believe that the Jews of Palestine are as right to fight as were all the other peoples in history, ancient and modern—including the British in 1914 and 1939—who have found themselves faced with the alternatives of fighting or submitting to national subjugation and destruction. . . . I would however ask your readers to use their Christian imagination before judging those many Jews, including some in prominent positions, who while loudly denouncing the so-called 'terrorists' in Palestine have told me they think the Jews in Palestine are right to fight but that their own positions in this country makes it extremely difficult for them to refrain from denouncing the men and women over there. Your readers should try to understand the profound subconscious group-terror which has sunk into the hearts of so many of a people six million of whose kith and kin in Europe were scientifically murdered only a year or two ago. . . . It is . . . unfortunate that the views of the Jews who fight in Palestine—backed as the military rightly contend, by the majority of the Jewish population there—should have been so far largely withheld from the British public.⁵⁵⁹

Whereas the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League and the writing of Greenberg demonstrate the British Revisionist attitude towards Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East, the unpublished novel 'Jeshua of Whitechapel' by Rachel Beth-Zion, the daughter of Joseph Cohen-Lask, one of the earliest British-born supporters of Jabotinsky, exemplifies a radical British Revisionist view both of the internal workings of the community and of British-Jewish relations with British society at large. The novel presents a picture of a post-war Britain in which Jews were relegated to second-class citizenship.⁵⁶⁰ By presenting a fictional worst-case scenario of British-Jewish relations with the larger society immediately after the Second World War as well as of the inadequacy of the communal leadership to deal with the crisis, the novel 'Jeshua of Whitechapel' brings out the pessimistic assessment of the British-Jewish diaspora existence and the radical critique of the communal status quo which could be found in British Revisionist circles during the 1940s.

⁵⁵⁷ Ivan Greenberg, letter to the editor of *The Times*, 23 May 1947, JI F265/1.

⁵⁵⁸ *The Times*, 23 May 1947.

⁵⁵⁹ Ivan Greenberg, letter to the editor of *The Times*, 23 May 1947, JI F265/1.

⁵⁶⁰ Rachel Beth-Zion, 'Jeshua of Whitechapel', unpublished manuscript, n.d., JI 2P.

Having identified the main strands of Revisionist thought in Britain and the platforms in which they found expression, what is one supposed to make of a movement which adopted a bewildering, and at first sight conflicting, variety of attitudes on the British role in Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East and British-Jewish communal affairs? I would argue that three factors explain the politics of British Revisionist Zionism with regard to Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East, British Jewry, and British society at large: first, the radicalization of Revisionist Zionism in general; second, the uniquely British survival into the 1940s of a traditional strand of Revisionist politics which staked its hopes on Britain;⁵⁶¹ and third, the competition with the WZO for the loyalties of British Jews.

The militantly anti-British tenor which characterized British Revisionist Zionist criticism of British Palestine policy during the 1940s developed in tune with the radicalization of Revisionist Zionism in the USA and the Mandate. The demand for the creation of a Jewish army during the Second World War was likewise a common Revisionist Zionist policy. The Jewish Committee for a Jewish Army had originated in the USA and an American, Captain Halpern, coordinated its activities in Britain. By contrast, the continued insistence of British Revisionist Zionists on cooperation with Britain in their designs for the future of Mandatory Palestine had no parallels elsewhere in the Revisionist Zionist movement. This trend found practical expression in the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League.

The importance which British Zionist Revisionists attached to Britain's support of the Zionist project in the Middle East, coupled with the competition between Revisionists and the WZO, explains why they supported the assimilationists against the Zionist bid for the takeover of the BoD. The stance which the *JC* adopted on this question of communal politics was a function of the British Revisionist Zionists' Palestine policy which was based on the expectation of a continuing link of the Jewish polity with, not its dissociation from, the Empire. What from a purely communal perspective appears to be the idiosyncratic editorial policy⁵⁶² makes sense against the background of a Palestine policy predicated on British sympathy, of which Greenberg thought the assimilationists likelier supporters than the mainstream Zionists.

If the picture of Jewish isolation and defencelessness in the British diaspora, British anti-Semitism, and treachery to the Zionist movement

⁵⁶¹ For the two alternative Revisionist strategies of either going with or against Britain: Shimoni, *Ideology*, 264–5.

⁵⁶² Shimoni, 'Brodetsky', 139; Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 186.

painted in 'Jeshua of Whitechapel' was characteristic only of the mental landscape of extremists, the views of Greenberg or Abrahams can be taken as representative of British Revisionist Zionists. By regarding the policies of all nations as primarily determined by their national interests and defining the Jews as a nation, they emphasized the structural marginality of British Jews as a minority in the British nation-state.

While the failure of British Zionist Revisionists to set up a viable infrastructure points to their weakness, it would be wrong to conclude that they were an altogether marginal phenomenon. The Revisionist-sponsored Committee for a Jewish Army and the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League enjoyed considerable popularity at the grassroots level of British Jewry. So great was the concern about the Jewish Dominion League's success at recruiting Jews and non-Jews that 77 Great Russell Street sought to discredit it in the eyes of its foremost non-Jewish supporters, Strabolgi, Hammersley, Mander, and Creech-Jones, by informing them about its Revisionist background of which they had been apparently unaware, and instructing local Zionist societies not to participate in the activities of the Dominion League.⁵⁶³ The ZF sought to neutralize the impact of the Jewish Dominion League by avoiding giving it added publicity through open confrontation, instead discreetly dissuading potential followers from supporting it.⁵⁶⁴ Mainstream Zionist activists had to intervene repeatedly in order to prevent Revisionist-sponsored functions from turning into a success. When it became known, for example, that Lord Strabolgi was to deliver an address in Leeds on 20 December on behalf of the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League, the announcement of which had already, according to the local Zionist strongman David Fox, caused 'tremendous local excitement', he was concerned enough about the prospect of a Revisionist success that he dissuaded Jewish and non-Jewish notabilities from presiding over the meeting and asked for a prominent speaker 'to offset some of the N.Z.O. "thunder"'.⁵⁶⁵ Although he reported that any participation 'by members of the Representative Council, the Zionist Council, any leading Jew or non-Jew has been successfully frustrated',⁵⁶⁶ he repeated his demand for a counterweight: 'If you can arrange for Sir Wyndham Deedes or some other notability (what an attraction a title has for most people) to put *our* policy before the Leeds public, you will do a good day's work.'⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶³ JA (London Executive), 23, 29 November 1944, CZA Z4/302/29.

⁵⁶⁴ ZF, Political Committee, 8 November 1944, CZA Z4/10.299-III.

⁵⁶⁵ David Fox to Bakstansky, 7 December 1944, CZA F13/44-II.

⁵⁶⁶ Circular letter by Fox, 8 December 1944; Fox to Bakstansky, 12 December 1944, CZA F13/44-II.

⁵⁶⁷ Fox to Bakstansky, 12 December 1944, CZA F13/44-II.

During the last years of the Mandate, with Britain's relationship with the Zionist movement strained to breaking point, the radical critique of British Zionist Revisionists of British Palestine policy appears to have struck a temporary chord with wider parts of the British-Jewish public. In the 1946 Congress elections which the JSP and the NZO contested with a common list, the Revisionists polled 10,294 out of 67,200 votes, coming second after the General Zionists. In the 1952 Congress elections the Revisionists were down to 141 votes.⁵⁶⁸ Although British Revisionist Zionism remained organizationally weak during the period under consideration, British Revisionist Zionists enjoyed a considerable measure of popularity among British Jews during the 1940s for their demands for a Jewish army and a Jewish Dominion comprising Palestine on both sides of the Jordan as well as their radical criticism of British Palestine policy during the final years of the Mandate.

IMPLEMENTATION: ZIONIST STATE- AND NATION-BUILDING

Apart from its abstract analysis of the Jewish condition, its design for a national future, and its quality as a movement, it was its realization which made Zionism attractive to British Jews. To envisage a Zionist renaissance of the Jews complete with a national society, a national state, a national territory, and a national culture was one thing, to put it into practice another. What challenges did British Zionists face in the realization of Zionist state- and nation-building during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s? Which of them were problems shared by other national movements, which were specific to Zionism in general, and which were specific to British Zionism?

The two Zionist key objectives, the transformation of the Jews into a nation and the establishment of a national polity in Palestine, resembled those of other nineteenth- and twentieth-century state- and nation-building projects that aimed at turning a population into a nation and at either creating a nation-state or nationalizing existing state structures.⁵⁶⁹

If there were parallels between the goals of the Zionist and other national movements the combination of the starting position and the conditions under which Zionism operated were distinctive in at least

⁵⁶⁸ Central Election Board for Great Britain and Ireland, 21 October 1946; General Election Board, 14 November 1952, CZA F13/1011-I.

⁵⁶⁹ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford, Calif., 1976).

three significant respects. First, if the relationship with a specific territory, population, and culture was far from unambiguous for most nationalisms, preconditions which could be appropriated by the Zionist movement were particularly thin on the ground. In the Zionist case the realization of the national project had to start virtually from scratch, requiring the relocation of a considerable part of the nation-to-be to begin with.⁵⁷⁰ Second, since the Zionist movement possessed no coercive state powers until 1948 and also thereafter as far as its diaspora component was concerned, Zionist nation-building had to be organized on a voluntary basis. Third, while competition for national loyalties was a frequent phenomenon in border and multi-ethnic areas, it had a specific quality in the case of Western Zionists. While in tune with the spread of nationalism as a form of identity, the Zionist commitment of Western Jews ran against the current of their social, economic, and political development, set on integration, and had to compete with their national identification with their countries of citizenship. No one else was more conscious of the fact that the Jews were not yet a nation than Zionists in Western countries.⁵⁷¹

A set of specifically British conditions of British Zionism was the result of Britain's assumption of the Mandate for Palestine. As inhabitants of the country which had been entrusted with the Mandate, British Jews were confronted with a unique combination of problems and opportunities.

To show why meeting the challenges involved in the realization of the Zionist state- and nation-building appealed to British Jews, one needs to examine how British Zionists related to its key elements: the Palestino-centric Jewish nation, the Jewish state, the Hebrew cultural community, and the national territory. Which were the means which British Zionists devised to share in and support the realization of the Zionist project?

The importance of distant cousins, the power of forgetting, and the Zionist making of the national community

How did British Zionists refashion the Jews of the twentieth century living in a multitude of nation-states and divided by numerous internal rifts into a nation? According to Brodetsky, vision, historical insight, and mental flexibility were required to envisage the Jews as a nation: 'Zionism is quite different from the national movements of other peoples. We are not in Palestine but dispersed all over the world. We know of our ancient connection with Palestine and it requires people of vision, of historical

⁵⁷⁰ Nipperdey has spoken of a pure form of nationalism.

⁵⁷¹ Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, 5–6.

insight and of a generous mind, to understand Zionism before Zionism can be achieved.⁵⁷² Since there was, with the partial exception of the *yishuv* and later the State of Israel, no politically, territorially, or linguistically defined Zionist nation, which did approximate congruence with the Jewish people, Zionist nation-building had to proceed first and foremost on the plane of identity. As British Zionists were acutely aware, the majority of British Jews lacked a national Jewish consciousness, a situation they tried to remedy by different strategies. If they did not promote a future-oriented identification with Zionism focusing on the model society of the JNH, they postulated the recovery of a lost national identity. Assuming that the 'first step towards a solution of the Jewish problem is for us to recover our historic national consciousness',⁵⁷³ British Zionists credited themselves with already having 'brought about a Jewish re-evaluation of assimilationist values, a revival of ancient Jewish aspirations that had once disappeared from the Jewish horizon'.⁵⁷⁴

The promotion of a national consciousness on the basis of a national historical continuum faced difficulties, whenever fractures made it impossible to place the prospective bearers of the novel identity within this continuum or when there were historical periods which could not be retrospectively conceptualized in terms of national unity. The first dilemma could be circumvented by casting such intervals of discontinuity in the metaphor of the dormant nation or by referring to a vicarious reservoir of an authentic national identity, the second by playing down dissensions within the putative nation.

British Zionists sought to meet the first problem by casting their version of a national Jewish consciousness in two frequently overlapping patterns. They defined national Jewish identity with reference to Jewish survival, evidence of 'the vitality, the resourcefulness, and the creative vigour of the forces within the Jew, which have enabled him to maintain his separateness',⁵⁷⁵ or with reference to Jews living in different places or a different time. Preferred locations of 'the national sentiment which had slumbered but had not died'⁵⁷⁶ were the Jewish population of Eastern Europe and the immigrant community, the proverbial East End Jews, supposedly having 'maintained their Jewish heritage', 'still' possessing 'their Jewish

⁵⁷² Brodetsky, JA (London Executive), Information Department, Central Committee, Minutes, 25 November 1941, CZA A341/I.

⁵⁷³ Namier, *Conflicts*, 133.

⁵⁷⁴ Goodman, ZF, 40th Annual Conference, CZA F13/39/I.

⁵⁷⁵ Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 59.

⁵⁷⁶ Leon Simon, 'Translator's Introduction', in Achad Ha-Am, *Ten Essays on Zionism and Judaism*, trans. Leon Simon (London, 1922), p. viii; also: Goodman, ZF, 40th Annual Conference, CZA F13/39/I.

soul'⁵⁷⁷ and 'imbued with an elemental Jewish consciousness that has preserved its pristine virtue'.⁵⁷⁸

Although Eastern European Jews personified to many British Zionists a measure of Jewish authenticity which they themselves had lost, they were neither objects of unqualified admiration nor regarded as models for emulation.⁵⁷⁹ Although ostensibly casting their image of the authentic Jew in the form of the Eastern European Jew, Zionists were among the sternest critics of the conditions of Eastern European Jewish life.⁵⁸⁰ While traditionalist Eastern European Jews were celebrated for their cohesion, solidarity, and non-material qualities⁵⁸¹ they were no less pitied, denigrated, and perceived as in need of thorough reform according to Western, progressive standards, entailing their political, social, and mental transformation. It was the abstract Eastern European Jew which British Zionists were enthusiastic about and whom they referred to as the model for the future national Jew. Zionists carefully distinguished between outward habits and customs on the one hand, which, regarded as the products of the ghetto, were to be discarded, and the true Jewish self on the other hand, which was to be liberated from the distortions of diaspora existence.⁵⁸² Both the views of Brodetsky and the perception of him in British Zionist circles are symptomatic of the ambivalent relationship between Zionism and the Eastern European Jew. Brodetsky, who had come to epitomize the ideal of the British Zionist, enjoyed enormous popularity, because he combined success in the modern, non-Jewish world of British academia with an attachment to Jews, whose world he had left behind.⁵⁸³ The extent to which Brodetsky attached value to Western academic education, and prided himself on his success in it, is vividly recorded in his memoirs. When he met his future wife, he was anxious to be introduced as a lecturer at a British university and not to be mistaken for a *melamad*.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁷⁷ Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 21.

⁵⁷⁸ Goodman, *History of the Jews*, 240; for a similar assessment of the preservation of authentic Jewishness by immigrant Jews: 'Marks "Family"', ch. i, 6.

⁵⁷⁹ For the ambivalent relationship between Zionists and *Ostjuden* in Germany see Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers* (Oxford, 1987); Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers* (Madison, 1982), 80–120.

⁵⁸⁰ Paul Goodman, 'Introduction', in Pinsker, *Auto-Emancipation*, 3, 9–10.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid. 4.

⁵⁸² Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 92–4.

⁵⁸³ Brodetsky, *Memoirs*, 49–50.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid. 80; a variation on this theme was Brodetsky's disappointment with the Hebrew University, which he thought did not keep up with British standards, ibid. 305; *Hebrew University Garland* (London, 1952). For his belief in the superiority of Western over traditional Jewish learning: Isaiah Berlin, n.d. ISA FO 331/14.

To create a semblance of national communion in the face of internal rifts, the selective memory of British Zionists operated on similar lines to the eclipse practised by other nationalisms over incidents of national dissension. When demanding that 'tout citoyen français doit avoir oublié la Saint-Barthélemy' Ernest Renan made the point that the success of nationalism was predicated as much on common oblivion as on common memory.⁵⁸⁵ What the religious war of the sixteenth century was to the French, the multifarious divisions within Jewry were to Jewish nationalists. In order to paint a picture of national unity Zionists had to bridge, defuse, or ignore the divides between British, French, or German Jews, between Orthodox and secular Jews, between members of the *yishuv* and subsequently citizens of the State of Israel on the one hand and Jews in the diaspora on the other, and between Zionists and non-Zionists. If it was not possible to forget national dissension, nationalists were intent on moving it into the background by excluding controversial issues from the agenda or by questioning the morality of those held responsible for it. German Jewry, widely taken to have drifted furthest from what Zionists considered Jewishness, was the favourite object of castigation: 'It may be that the verdict of Jewish history... will record as the besetting sin of German Jewry that it was, almost to the very last, much more Teutonic than Hebraic. It is the dramatic irony of events that, with hardly any exception, the German Jews were the most chauvinistic group of their race, not in pursuit of Jewish ideals but in their pride of German achievement.'⁵⁸⁶ Writing in 1956, Sieff described Jewish emancipation in nineteenth-century Germany as a pyrrhic victory, achieved at the cost of Jewish self-effacement: 'True the Jews had contributed much to the development of the country... true, the German Jews had ceased isolating themselves, were inter-marrying and plunging headlong into apostasy. But weren't they going too far?'⁵⁸⁷

With national Jewish unity being more a programmatic demand than reality, British Zionists were engaged in a permanent uphill battle against the national, religious, social, and historical divisions and animosities between Jews. Regular eruptions of the internal Jewish rifts acted as reminders that such dissensions had to be contained if the Zionist notion of Jewish national unity was to survive.⁵⁸⁸ When, at a meeting with Jewish

⁵⁸⁵ Ernest Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. i (Paris, 1947), 892; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

⁵⁸⁶ Goodman, *History of the Jews*, 220.

⁵⁸⁷ Levenberg, 'The Tercentenary Period: Retrospect and Prospect', 6.

⁵⁸⁸ JA (London Executive), Information Department, Central Committee, Minutes, 23 November 1942, CZA A341/I; Goodman, ZF, 47th Annual Conference, 1 February 1948, 10, CZA F13/1004/I.

students from the Mandate in London in 1935, 'one of the audience said that when he saw Whitechapel Jews he had a feeling of disgust', Brodetsky denounced it as foolish to despise Jews because they had not substituted life in the *yishuv* for the old ways of the ghetto.⁵⁸⁹ He likewise condemned the criticism of Jews for their national background, social position, and religious orientation as incompatible with the Zionist notion of a national Jewish community:

That terrible expression 'Ostjude' which some German Jews used to speak disrespectfully about the poor Jews of Russia and Poland must be banished from our conversation. We must forget that Polish Jews are not as fine as Russian Jews, that Galician Jews are people with whom no relationship must be confessed, and so on. . . . We must rid ourselves of the danger in rich despising poor or poor condemning rich; of western benefactors refusing to sit at the same table to discuss Jewish problems with eastern beneficiaries. We must drop the absurd description 'Jaেকে' for a German Jew . . . In fact we must drop the notion that Jewry consists of as many 'races' as there are states in the world . . . Religious Jews must tolerate irreligious Jews, and conversely.⁵⁹⁰

If the Jews were a nation as the Zionists had it, how did British Zionists relate to it? Were they required to live in the JNH and subsequently the State of Israel? As in the Zionist movement at large, British Zionist opinion on the possibility and desirability of a continued Jewish presence in the diaspora was divided. A minority of British Zionists called for the dissolution of diaspora Jewry. If Jews were not prepared to liquidate the *galuth*, the *galuth* would liquidate them, argued Litvin in *The Gates of Zion* on the grounds that '[m]odern economy and social organisation do not permit minorities to remain separate from the general population. The school, the university, the factory and the shop, all impel the Jew into the arms of his neighbours.'⁵⁹¹ According to Namier there were only two options open to the Jew in the diaspora: fusion with the larger society or personal participation in national renaissance in the Holy Land:

Except for the Return Jewish survival would be a tragic absurdity. . . . The creation of a Jewish state would leave two alternatives to the Jew in the diaspora, to return or to merge honourably with Gentile society. The ghetto must disappear, the Galuth (Exile) must end. This can be achieved in two ways: through national reintegration in Palestine, and through deliberate dissolution, or ultimate dissolution, in the Diaspora. The two methods are mutually complementary; both

⁵⁸⁹ Brodetsky, 'The Unity of the Jewish People', CZA A82/4, 14.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Litvin, 'The Galuth is Drawing Painfully to its Close', *Gates of Zion* (July 1948), 10–16.

achieve normality and put an end to the Jew of 'the Jewish Question' . . . We shall be a nation, like unto all nations, a nation and not a problem.⁵⁹²

Namier carried this line of thought to the extreme by defending his baptism, which had cost him Weizmann's friendship, as compatible with his Zionist interpretation of the Jewish diaspora, which he thought dovetailed with that of Ben Gurion.⁵⁹³ Koestler put forward the same view, arguing that since 15 May 1948 Jews could 'no longer refer to themselves with the ritual stock-phrase of living in the Diaspora, or in Exile—unless they mean a self-imposed exile', declaring the concept of the "Englishman of Jewish faith" a contradiction in terms, and demanding of every Jew in the diaspora to make a 'choice between becoming a citizen of the Hebrew nation and renouncing any conscious or implicit claim to separate nationhood'.⁵⁹⁴ Anti-Semitism, Koestler argued,

can only be brought to an end by Jewry itself. Before the prayer was fulfilled by the rebirth of Israel this was difficult, if not impossible. To renounce being a Jew meant in most cases to deny solidarity with the persecuted and seemed a cowardly capitulation. Apart from pride, there was the consciousness of an old heritage, which one had no right to discard, of a mission uncompleted, a promise unfulfilled. Jewry could not vanish from the scene of history in an anti-climax. Now the climax is reached, the circle closed. It is no longer a question of capitulation but of a free choice.⁵⁹⁵

The majority of British Zionists rejected the either/or of emigration and absorption and assumed that the majority of British Jews would remain in Britain.⁵⁹⁶ The urgent appeals of emissaries from the *yishuv*, 'to realize that the galuth is a lost cause, and to prepare for life in Aretz' were as duly received with a note of thanks as they were quickly forgotten by Zionist audiences in Britain.⁵⁹⁷ Brodetsky criticized both the non-Jews wondering 'how it is possible for a Jew to be completely loyal to the ethos of any state, and at the same time ask for the re-establishment of a state with the Jewish ethos' and those Zionists who, looking 'with an air of detachment upon the problems of Jews outside Palestine' and not believing in the possibility of their equality, 'refuse to allow the Jew to combine devotion to the

⁵⁹² Namier, *Manchester Guardian*, 8 March 1946; Namier, *Conflicts*, 156.

⁵⁹³ Weizmann to Dugdale, 8 June 1947, WA; Namier to Ben Gurion, 29 July 1957, CZA A 312/43.

⁵⁹⁴ 'The End of a Mission: The Jewish Future', *Manchester Guardian*, 23 December 1948, 4, 6.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Brodetsky, 'Balfour', 257–8; idem, 'The Jews in the Post-War Settlement', 11; Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 74; Locker, *Palestine and the Jewish Future*, 15.

⁵⁹⁷ Leeds Zionist Council, 16 October 1947, Leeds JNF Commission.

Zionist ideal with equal devotion to the equality of Jews in all civilized lands'.⁵⁹⁸ In reply to the question whether Zionists should take part in the struggle for equality for Jews in the diaspora: 'Shall we give up Europe? That is to say give up our rights? Some people definitely say that Europe from the Jewish point of view is not important, or that our position is hopeless,' Brodetsky rejected [a]ny such renunciation' as 'inconsistent with Zionism'.⁵⁹⁹ In a similar vein Locker stated that 'Emigration is a right, not a duty; it must be free and not compulsory'.⁶⁰⁰

To the majority of British Zionists their remaining in Britain was not incompatible with their simultaneous belonging to the Jewish nation. They substituted the 'doctrine that Jews, wherever they reside, form one people and are members of one family' for their objective lack of personal participation in the Zionist enterprise in the Middle East.⁶⁰¹ Neither was their de facto affirmation of the *galuth* to be mistaken for an unqualified approval of the Jewish condition in Britain:

It is best to return to the truth about Jews . . . and to declare that a Jew who wishes to be free to live as a Jew without special obstacles and sacrifices shall have a special land for this purpose. The Jews who wish to stay elsewhere may do so in a civilised world where such freedom will exist. No special difficulties will exist so long as we do not try to conceive a peculiar hybrid Jew who tries to be both at the same time.⁶⁰²

On a different occasion Brodetsky had excluded the Jews in the Soviet Union and in Western countries only from immediate practical considerations: 'We do not believe in the Galuth theory, or the Mission theory of the Jewish people. We would prefer if the whole Jewish people could be transferred to Palestine, but that is not practicable in the immediate future'.⁶⁰³ In a similar fashion other representatives of British Zionism dismissed significant emigration from Britain as a realistic option for the present, but saw it as a possibility for the future.⁶⁰⁴ The demand for *aliyah* was included into the official platform only of parts of the organized Zionist movement in Britain: the Mizrachi and the *chalutzic* youth movements. While the ZF had not gone as far as the *Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland* in demanding that every member incorporate *aliyah* into his life plan—a resolution to that effect had been passed at Posen in 1912, but

⁵⁹⁸ Brodetsky, 'Declaration', 257.

⁵⁹⁹ ZF, Political Committee, 5 December 1940, CZA F13/798.

⁶⁰⁰ Locker, *Palestine and the Jewish Future*, 15.

⁶⁰¹ Abraham Cohen, 'Israel and the Diaspora', in idem (ed.), *Rebirth*, 324.

⁶⁰² Brodetsky, 'The Jews in the Post-War Settlement', 8.

⁶⁰³ ZF, Political Committee, 5 December 1940, CZA F13/798.

⁶⁰⁴ Kopul Rosen, Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry.

rarely put into practice until 1933—it did not display the principled hostility of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) towards *aliyah* of its members either. From the late 1920s the ZF encouraged the training of British-Jewish youth for *aliyah* on a limited scale.

From nation to nation-state

Not only Zionist nation-building but also state-building presented British Jews with challenges, opportunities for participation, and corresponding satisfaction. As in the Zionist movement at large, the majority of British Zionists, after a period of internal controversy,⁶⁰⁵ had come to regard de facto sovereignty as indispensable for the realization of their objectives by the 1930s.⁶⁰⁶ British Zionists advanced the demand for Jewish statehood on three grounds, as a practical precondition for nation-building, as an indispensable part of a national Jewish existence, and as a guarantee of Jewish physical survival.

Only a Jewish state could put an end to British interference with Jewish immigration into Palestine and remove the spectre of the eventual subordination of the *yishuv* to the domination of a hostile Arab majority raised by the plan to set up a legislative council. The White Paper policy was a painful reminder that freedom of Jewish immigration into Palestine was ultimately predicated on Jewish control of the Mandate's state machinery:

A national home to which admission is by the goodwill of some other body than the nation itself . . . in which the possibilities of remaining a minority are continually threatening, can mean little to a people seeking its national freedom. . . . if we want Jewish immigration into Palestine, then only a Jewish body, believing in a Jewish home, aiming at setting up Jewish life, will do it successfully . . .⁶⁰⁷

Practical considerations apart, the demand for a Jewish state followed from the ambition to give the Jewish people the opportunity 'to determine its own life and destiny'.⁶⁰⁸ Political self-determination came to be seen as an indispensable component of a complete national Jewish life. As Brodetsky put it: 'Jewish life is not possible without the political foundations upon which the life of a nation must be based.'⁶⁰⁹ When British Zionists debated the formulation of peace aims, it became apparent that their

⁶⁰⁵ Cesarani, 'Zionism', 427–9.

⁶⁰⁶ Eban, 'Afterword', 84; Horowitz, *Jewish Question*, 71; *Nationalism: A Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (Oxford, 1939).

⁶⁰⁷ Brodetsky, 'Balfour', 270.

⁶⁰⁸ Lucien Harris, letter to the editor, *MG* 1 December 1938, MCL M350/1/1/1–9.

⁶⁰⁹ Brodetsky, 'Balfour', 268.

post-war ambitions went beyond a return to the *status quo ante bellum*: 'it is necessary to understand that our problem need not necessarily be solved by an Allied victory alone, to that extent they differed from Assimilationist Jews and also from Communists. . . . The problem was no longer only that of civil rights, but how to make it possible for the Jew to exist and live.'⁶¹⁰

A further motive for the demand for a Jewish state was its promise to guarantee the physical survival of the Jews. The extermination of 6 million Jews proved in the eyes of many British Jews the precariousness of Jewish existence without sovereignty: 'A disaster on this scale could only befall a people without a Homeland.'⁶¹¹

How did British Zionists relate to Zionist state-building? If a Jewish state was a necessary condition for Zionist nation-building, an indispensable part of a complete Jewish life, and a guarantee of Jewish physical survival, playing an active part in its establishment could be attractive to British Jews. The meaning of Zionist state-building for British Jews was not restricted to providing an avenue for identification with the distant Jewish state-in-the-making in return for rendering practical support. British Zionists could see themselves as the beneficiaries of the establishment of a Jewish state. For, as A. Krausz, the Zionist strongman in Sheffield, pointed out at the Zionist Yorkshire Regional Conference in December 1943: 'We do not demand Palestine for the 500,000 Jews that are already there, but for the millions of Jews that live in the world.'⁶¹² British Zionists saw themselves as forming part of a national community with its focus in the Jewish polity.⁶¹³

In two respects there was a specifically British dimension to the demand of British Zionists for Jewish sovereignty. First, whereas the demand for a Jewish state had been put forward formally by the WZO only with the endorsement of the Biltmore Declaration in 1942, it had formed part of the ZF's platform from the publication of the Peel Report. Second, from 1937 until Britain's abandonment of the Mandate in 1947, the ZF passed resolutions at its annual conferences demanding a Jewish state within the framework of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

⁶¹⁰ ZF, Political Committee, 5 December 1940, CZA F13/798.

⁶¹¹ ZF, Draft resolution for the 45th Annual Conference by Ephraim Broido, CZA F13/534.

⁶¹² Zionist Yorkshire Regional Conference, 5 December 1943, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁶¹³ Brodetsky, 'The Unity of the Jewish People', 1, CZA A82/4.

Turning historical memory into national territory

The Zionist relationship with the national territory differed from that of other nationalisms in two respects. First, for the Zionist movement the national territory was no mere technical prerequisite for nation status, but an instrument for the achievement of an array of variegated, sometimes mutually exclusive, social, political, cultural, and religious goals. If nineteenth- and twentieth-century nationalisms in general had travelled a long way from the matter of fact relationship between nation and territory that was characteristic of the French Revolution and had taken on board all sorts of fantasies and projects predicated on the relationship with a specific territory, the Zionist case was particular for the emphasis that was placed not only on spiritual, but on concrete social, economic, and political improvements that were expected from the association of the Jews with their national territory.⁶¹⁴ Second, if the precise demarcation of the national territory was often a source of internal debate and external conflict, it was a characteristic aspect of the Zionist movement that it had to create a territorial basis almost *ex nihilo*.

What did British Zionists make of the national territory in Palestine? Judging by their writings the national territory did not just denote the geographical area of the future polity, but was seen as a decisive factor for the transformation of the Jews into a normal nation, politically, economically, and psychologically: 'The special significance of that colonization lay in the fact that it was built on the soil of Palestine, nationally owned by the Jewish people and inalienable, and tilled by Jewish hands only.'⁶¹⁵ The rural settlements had given the lie to the charge that Jews were 'incapable of tilling the soil, that they are essentially and irremediably townsmen and tradesmen'.⁶¹⁶ In the ideology of Labour Zionism the national recovery of the soil was seen as instrumental in the transformation of the Jew from urban capitalist to worker.⁶¹⁷ For the Orthodox among the Zionists settling in the Holy Land possessed religious significance. Namier's insistence on the necessity of the Jews' national possession of a territory derived from his belief that the ownership of land was the matrix of personal and political liberty. Land provided the basis for individual self-assurance no less than for the development of a liberal political system:

The relations of groups of men to plots of land, of organised communities to units of territory, form the basic content of political history... There is some well-nigh

⁶¹⁴ Jean-Christophe Attias and Esther Benbassa, *Israël, la terre et le sacré* (Paris, 2001).

⁶¹⁵ Goodman, *History of the Jews*, 226–7.

⁶¹⁶ *Palestine*, 14 June 1939.

⁶¹⁷ Locker, *Palestine and the Jewish Future*, 16–20.

mystical power in the ownership of spaces—for it is not the command of resources alone which makes the strength of the landowner, but that he has a place in the world which he can call his own . . . Only one nation has survived for 2,000 years, though an orphan—my own people, the Jews. But then in the God-given Law we have enshrined the authority of a state, in the God-Promised Land the idea of a Mother-Country; through the centuries from Mount Sinai we have faced Eretz Israel, our Land. Take away either, and we cease to be a nation; let both live again, and we shall be ourselves once more.⁶¹⁸

English political liberty, he argued, had not arisen from a rebellion of the dispossessed but from the extension of aristocratic privileges rooted in the land. The national territory was attractive to British Jews not only for its respective role in the projects of various Zionist ideological shades, but also for giving them access to the imagined Palestinocentric national Jewish community. By visualizing the landscape of the national territory with Jews tilling the soil, the ubiquitous orange pickers, the towns of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and the collective settlements depicted in illustrated pamphlet literature and propaganda films British Jews could identify with the Zionist community.

That the Jewish presence on the territory of what was to become the State of Israel had not been formidable after the crushing of the Bar Kochba revolt caused British Zionists little concern. A spiritual link was substituted for the original lack of a significant physical presence.⁶¹⁹ In 1949 Israel Sieff argued: 'And, exiled though we have been, the land of Israel has never been yielded up by the Jews; . . . Jews looked on that land as their homeland, to which they would one day return in freedom and independence. The Zionist movement was the outward expression of this undying determination.'⁶²⁰ On the practical plane the national territory could not be that easily appropriated but posed a formidable problem. Considerable sums had to be raised for the acquisition and development of the national territory and its infrastructure. Given the need for financial support both before and after the establishment of the Jewish state, fundraising through the KKL and the KH, the two principal Zionist funds, provided British Jews with a continual opportunity of participation in the Zionist project in the Middle East. With every donation counting as a direct contribution to the territorial expansion and consolidation of the JNH, fundraising established a personal link between the individual British Jew and the wider national enterprise. Fundraising did not only provide British Jews with countless opportunities of identification with

⁶¹⁸ Lewis Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (London, 1930), 18.

⁶¹⁹ Eban, 'Introduction', 10; Goodman, *History of the Jews*, 224.

⁶²⁰ Sieff, 'Anniversary Address', 5.

the Zionist project in the Middle East but also served as a vehicle for the Zionization of British Jewry. The two directions of Zionist nation-building through fundraising are summed up in the appeal of the 13th Annual Conference of the JNF for Great Britain and Ireland to inscribe the names of children, at the minimum cost of two guineas, in the *Sefer Hayerled*, the Children's Book of Honour that had been opened by the KKL headquarters in Jerusalem, 'thus ensuring their life-long association with the redemption of Eretz Yisral and providing the means whereby that redemption will be hastened'.⁶²¹

In terms of the numbers involved fundraising became the most important avenue for the Zionization of British Jewry, in particular after 1948. Marks claimed that fundraising encapsulated the democratic appeal of Zionism. He made this point by contrasting Zionist fundraising with the way the financial needs of the British Jewry had traditionally been taken care of:

We Zionists revolutionised the mentality of Anglo-Jewry in regard to public service. For generations Anglo-Jewry had been content with the leadership of a few Anglo-Jewish families . . . They controlled and largely financed its institutions, and persons outside their circle were inclined to think that they had fulfilled their communal duties by a very modest contribution. . . . Zionists enlarged mightily the circle of givers, and Jews discovered that giving on a scale that would have shocked them before was within their means and added zest to their lives.⁶²²

Whereas Zionists depended no less than assimilationists on a limited number of individuals for the bulk of their finances, in particular, the donations of the so-called Family, Marks, Sieff, Sacher, and their wives, the mechanisms of Zionist fundraising involved a far greater number of individual donors, thereby giving a broader stratum of British Jewry the public recognition for their financial contributions.

The national territory provided various means of British-Jewish participation in Zionist nation-building. The visualization of the national territory in Zionist propaganda established it as a focus of national imagination. Its significance in Zionist socio-economic planning and practice provided a source of national satisfaction. And as a national territory which, until 1948, had to be acquired, and which, when acquired, had to be developed, it acted as a constant impulse for British Jews to identify with the Zionist project.

⁶²¹ *JC*, 30 October 1936, 41.

⁶²² Marks, *ZR*, 1949.

**On the creation of a national culture, or: 'to be intelligible
to my own people in a maternal tongue I neither
speak nor understand'**

An element which one strand of Zionism shared with Central and Eastern European nationalism was the conviction that a people needed a linguistically defined culture of its own in order to qualify as nation and that the national language was the authentic medium for the expression of its creativity.⁶²³ Hence the obsession of cultural Zionists with the diffusion of modern Hebrew as the language reflecting the national character of the Jews. Although Leon Simon, the chairman of the ZF's Education Department, admitted that in the *yishuv* there was 'not that homogeneity of type and broad uniformity of outlook which is presupposed in a truly national literature', he expected 'that in course of time the Jewish people, once more firmly rooted in Palestine, will give true expression to its individuality in all the fields of cultural activity'.⁶²⁴ In the tradition of the *haskalah* and of Achad ha-Am, cultural Zionists advocated the necessity of fashioning Zionism not only as an instrument for the relief from anti-Semitism, but also as a means to give a new national and cultural meaning to Jewishness. The rise of Hebraism had been instrumental in shifting the meaning of Jewishness from religion to culture.

What did British Zionists make of the emergent national Hebrew culture? If they were not indifferent to cultural nationalism or rejected it altogether like Namier,⁶²⁵ Hebrew culture provided them with two possible avenues of participation and identification. They could support the emergence of a national culture in the *yishuv* or they could take part in the Hebraization of the *galuth*.

The emergence of a national culture in the *yishuv*, complete with its own language, literature, schools, and university, reflecting on the drawbacks of Jewish life in the *galuth*, was hailed as an almost miraculous achievement. The personal encounter of British Jews with the Hebrew revival in the *yishuv* could be instrumental in converting them to Zionism or in reinforcing their Zionist commitment. On the return journey from his trip to Palestine in 1934 to inaugurate the Daniel Sieff Research Institute, the nucleus of the Weizmann Institute of Science, Marks was convinced he had found his true self. Marvelling at the renaissance of

⁶²³ Leon Simon, 'The Rebirth of Hebrew', in Paul Goodman (ed.), *The Jewish National Home* (London, 1943), 154–9; idem, 'Introduction' to Achad Ha-Am, *Ten Essays*, p. x; 'Marks "Family"', ch. 2, 6.

⁶²⁴ Simon, 'Rebirth', 157.

⁶²⁵ Talmon, *Myth of the Nation*, 306–7; L. Namier, 'Nationality and Liberty', in idem, *Avenues of History* (London, 1952), 20–44.

Hebrew, he wrote to Sieff: 'Will I ever be able to understand or express the simplest of my views in my own maternal tongue? Can I still make the effort to be intelligible to my own people?'⁶²⁶ Although, like most second-generation immigrants, Marks was conversant in English and Yiddish but possessed only a very limited command of Hebrew, he denoted modern Hebrew as his authentic language and as the privileged medium for communication with other members of the national community. His example is significant in two respects. It demonstrates, first, how a British Zionist, even though he was ignorant of Modern Hebrew, could come to regard it as his national language and, second, how, having been established as the national language, Modern Hebrew served to delimit the boundaries of national belonging, including the Jews of the *yishuv* as well as of the diaspora, actual Hebrew speakers and potential ones.

Apart from providing an avenue for the identification of British Jews with the Palestinocentric Jewish national community, modern Hebrew culture served as a vehicle of Zionist nation-building in the British diaspora. The following quotation from Leon Simon illustrates what cultural Zionists in Britain stood for:

I do not believe that it is ultimately worth while to set up a Jewish National Home, or even a Jewish State, in Palestine if at the same time the millions of Jews outside Palestine are not encouraged and helped—I wish I could say compelled—to earn the right to call themselves Jews by acquiring a knowledge of the language and the literature and the thought which belong to them and to their descendants as Jews. . . . I do not believe that enthusiasm for Zionism will be maintained . . . unless Zionism in the diaspora has some more solid and positive basis than can be provided by anti-Semitism. The argument from Hitler is all very well in its way, but it is not at bottom an argument for Zionism. The real argument for Zionism is that without it the Jewish people would go to pieces through internal decay . . . it is precisely by stressing the cultural aspect of Zionism . . . that we can hope to make Zionists of Jews who do not themselves feel the pinch of persecution or anti-Semitism, and for that reason are likely to drift away from contact with their people and its problems.⁶²⁷

With British Zionists concentrating on political lobbying in support of the establishment of the Jewish state and fundraising until 1948, *Gegenwartsarbeit* had made next to no progress in Britain by the end of the first half of the twentieth century.⁶²⁸ The study of Modern Hebrew was confined to a small group of enthusiasts meeting in a fluctuating number

⁶²⁶ Marks to Sieff, 7 April 1934, Marks Papers, quoted from Bookbinder, *Marks*.

⁶²⁷ ZF, 38th Annual Conference, Opening Speech for Tarbuth Session, 14 May 1939, CZA F13/39-I.

⁶²⁸ *JC*, 30 September 1949, 8.

of Hebrew-speaking circles or attending courses supported by the Tarbuth Association and the ZF's Education Department. In Leeds, a Jewish community of c.15,000 in the 1940s, the Hebrew-speaking circle comprised fewer than 35 members.⁶²⁹ Not until the 1950s did the scope of Hebrew education in Britain expand on a substantial scale. Following the example of the Orthodox Secondary School movement several new Jewish day schools had been set up since the 1950s in collaboration with the ZF's Education Department. The demand for Jewish day schools with a Zionist-inspired Jewish curriculum had been on the ZF's agenda since the 1940s: 'Only by giving Jewish children in a Jewish day school education which will combine the traditional spirit with knowledge of spoken Hebrew in the sephardi pronunciation, the history of the Jewish people, the history of Zionism, and the progress of modern Palestine, can they properly be prepared for their future lives as full Jews in any country.'⁶³⁰

If the *yishuv* and the State of Israel were the centre of Hebrew culture, its impact was not restricted to the Jews living there. Under the impact of modern Hebrew culture the goalposts of what it meant to be a Jew changed in favour of a cultural, more secular and national pattern of identification rather than a religious, Orthodox one. Already in the 1930s and 1940s, when few British Jews could claim an actual knowledge of Modern Hebrew, let alone Hebrew literature, the emergent national Hebrew culture provided them with opportunities of feeling part of a national community whose boundaries were delimited by language. The establishment of Jewish day schools with a Zionist-inspired Jewish curriculum since the 1950s reinforced this trend.

⁶²⁹ 'Hebrew Speaking People in Leeds', CZA F13/221-I; for a brief survey of the development of Hebrew learning in Britain and the ZF's role in it: Joseph Heller, 'Hebrew and Yiddish Literature since the Re-settlement', in *Aspects of Anglo-Jewish Life, 1656-1956* (London, 1956), 28-35.

⁶³⁰ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, 1947, Education, 4, CZA Z4/20161.

II

BRITISH JEWRY AND ZIONIST STATE- AND NATION-BUILDING

The purpose of Part II is to examine how British Jews related to Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East as participants in the transnational Jewish sphere of interaction. While it focuses on the principal channels through which British Zionists participated in Zionist state- and nation-building it also traces how competing liberal assimilationist, Communist, and radical Orthodox British Jews reacted to the Zionist project. Part II investigates, first, how British Jews responded as politicians, diplomats, and lobbyists to the challenges posed by the Peel Commission, the White Paper, rescue, post-war reconstruction, the Displaced Persons (DPs) problem, the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, the birth of the State of Israel, and the Suez crisis, second, fundraising, third *aliyah*, and fourth military participation.

4

British Jews as Politicians and Lobbyists

It was both on an immediate and an indirect level that British Jews played a role in transnational Jewish politics. They participated directly in the JA, the Zionist congresses, the world congresses of the Mizrahi, the PZ and WIZO, the WJC, and the AI World Organization which were transnational per se, but also lobbied Whitehall, Westminster, and the wider British public in support of or against the respective policies pursued by these bodies regarding the Zionist project.

What will be explored is not the influence, or rather lack of it, that British Jewry as a whole or its various segments exerted on events, but Jewish motivation, the internal workings of British-Jewish politics, and the ways—speeches in Parliament, lobbying, public demonstrations—in which British Jews sought to promote their aims with the wider public and the British government.

THE PEEL REPORT: THE PROSPECT OF JEWISH STATEHOOD

If the British initiative for the establishment of a Palestine Legislative Council was opposed by the entire Zionist spectrum, there was no unequivocal response to the prospect of Jewish sovereignty raised by the Peel Report. In Britain, the plan to introduce a representative body in Palestine before there was a Jewish majority provoked protest meetings of the JA on 19 January 1936, presided over by Lord Melchett, and of the Revisionists at Kingsway Hall, addressed by Jabotinsky.¹ Melchett also spoke out against the government in the Lords.² At the hearings of the Royal Commission a letter from Lady Reading, representing the JA, was read out by Colonel Wedgwood. The Revisionist point of view was represented by Jabotinsky who gave evidence on behalf of the NZO and by the Crown Colony Association.³

¹ *JC*, 19 January 1936, 17–19.

² *JC*, 6 March 1936, 27; 13 March 1936, 21–2.

³ *JC*, 22 January 1937, 36; 19 February 1937, 30–2.

Yet the accommodation of the Zionist leadership to partition remained contentious among the British rank and file. More serious than letters to the editor or individual defections like those of Dr I. Harris, JP, and J. Norton, who resigned as President and Vice-President of the Liverpool CZC to join the NZO, was the formation of a Zionist Anti-Partition Group on 8 May.⁴ At the ZF's 38th Annual Conference from 21 to 22 May 1937 an open clash was prevented at the last minute, when Rabbi Rabinowitz withdrew a resolution amendment, which would have categorically ruled out partition, in return for his election to the ZF's Executive Council.⁵ With only Samson Wright, Leon Simon, and the Marchioness of Reading coming out explicitly in favour of partition, the political session of the conference revolved around issues on which all shades of Zionist opinion were united, in particular opposition to minority status, of which Paul Goodman gave the following summary:

if there should be any difference between the Jewish status in Eretz Yisrael and that in the Galuth it is that in the Jewish National Home the Jews will not be subjected to the rule of a majority and remain subject to its goodwill or mercy. 'Tolerance' and 'Minority Status' which became current terms during the era in which Jews were undergoing the struggle for political and civil emancipation in the lands of their dispersion cannot apply to Palestine; the Jews in Palestine must feel at home and become masters of their own destiny.⁶

Despite this move the opposition to partition within Zionist ranks remained active, with Rabbi Rabinowitz accusing the ZF of muzzling dissident voices by refusing to publish a manifesto of the Zionist anti-partition group in the *ZR* and Sidney Silverman delivering a talk on the group at the Anglo-Palestinian Club.⁷

The Peel Report, released on 7 July 1937, declared the Mandate unworkable and suggested partition as a solution to the Palestine problem.⁸ Its recommendations sparked off a heated controversy between the uncompromising opponents of partition and those who regarded it as first tangible steps in the direction of a viable Jewish state. In the discussions of the JA the British participants supported Weizmann, who insisted on keeping the door open for further negotiations with the British government, against Ben Gurion.⁹ To Namier, whilst the Mandate was dead beyond hope of

⁴ Rabbi L. Rabinowitz, letter to editor, *JC*, 6 May 1938, 25–6; *JC*, 20 May 1938, 25; *JC*, 13 May 1938.

⁵ *JC*, 27 May 1938, 22, 24.

⁶ *JC*, 27 May 1938, 23.

⁷ *JC*, 1 July 1938, 22; 29 July 1938, 27.

⁸ *The Report of the Palestine Royal Committee*, Cmd. 5479 (London, 1937); *Palestine Statement of Policy*, Cmd. 5513.

⁹ JA (London Executive), 7 July 1937, WA 1997.

revival, Britain was still the preferable partner for the Zionists. Arguing that 'Undoubtedly our future will be difficult even under the partition scheme; it will be impossible without it',¹⁰ he wanted the Weizmannites to communicate to the government their acceptance of the principle of partition.

Outside 77 Great Russell Street, home to the JA, the immediate reaction of British Zionists, from the ZF to the PZ, the Mizrahi, and the NZO, to the proposal of a Jewish state in only a small part of Palestine was predominantly hostile, though not uniform.¹¹ The discussion at a special session of the ZF's 3rd Annual Conference on 18 July oscillated between uncompromising rejection, conditional acceptance, and Bentwich's warning not to rule out cantonization, which implied a unitary state of some kind. The session ended with the endorsement of a resolution of the ZF's Executive Council, rejecting the Commission's conclusion that the Mandate was unworkable and dismissing partition in its suggested form as stifling the JNH's prospects for development.¹² The following day the rank and file aired their discontent in a public demonstration at Shoreditch Town Hall and a deputation of Manchester Jews, led by Nathan Laski, discussed the Peel Report with MPs.¹³ While the leadership of the ZF had thus succeeded in deflecting grassroots anger and backing Weizmann in his attempt to improve the recommendations of the Peel Report through negotiations, maximalist Zionists remained uncompromising in their opposition. Protest mass meetings were organized by the Mizrahi on 22 July in Whitechapel and also by the NZO.¹⁴ The *JC* described the Royal Commission's plan as a 'Nightmare Scheme' and asked Weizmann to step down.¹⁵

Of the three Jewish peers who took part in the debate on the Peel Report in the Lords, Viscount Samuel was alone in sharing the view of the Peel Commission that the Mandate was unworkable, but opposed partition and suggested a federal solution instead.¹⁶ Whereas Samuel had discussed the merits of the Peel Report from the perspective of the Arab-Jewish conflict, Reading's and Melchett's yardsticks were its compatibility with the development of the JNH and its potential for alleviating the fate of persecuted Jews. As the Marquess of Reading put it: 'while there were among Jews Zionists and anti-Zionists, there are now only Zionists

¹⁰ Namier to Shertok, 9 July 1937, A312/21.

¹¹ *JC*, 16 July 1937, 27–9; 23 July 1937, 25.

¹² Special Meeting, 37th Annual Conference, ZF, 18 July 1937, CZA F13/1001.

¹³ *JC*, 23 July 1937, 24.

¹⁴ *JC*, 16 July 1937, 27–9.

¹⁵ *JC*, 9 July 1937.

¹⁶ *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, vol. cvi, 20 July 1937, c. 628–45; *JC*, 23 July 1937, 27–8.

and non-Zionists—a material distinction, because we have all . . . come to realise that in Palestine lies the only hope for the future of a great many suffering Jews to whose fate we cannot be indifferent without earning the obloquy not only of our own people but of the whole of civilised mankind.¹⁷ After criticizing the report for failing to take into account the motives that actuated the Zionist cause—‘Ambitions to relieve the suffering of and the distress of millions of our people in Eastern Europe; ambitions to be able to bring into the light and sunshine of Palestine young men and young women who have no hope but starvation or suicide in Germany or Poland or Rumania’—Melchett lauded the *yishuv* for self-restraint in the face of Arab terrorism, recounted the whittling down of the Mandate, rejected a sovereign Jewish state within the proposed boundaries as insufficient, but concluded by conveying the JA’s interest in further negotiations with the government.¹⁸ Whereas Samuel had parted on the issue of partition from the position of the JA,¹⁹ Reading and Melchett, the latter explicitly so, had presented the Weizmannite case in the Lords. Accordingly Weizmann singled out Melchett for praise and attacked Samuel in his speech on 4 August at the XXth Zionist Congress: ‘It hurts me to the core’, he said, ‘that Viscount Samuel, who spoke as an English Lord, and not as a Jew, did not utter a single word describing the Jewish tragedy, although he is Chairman of the British Section of Council for German Jewry.’²⁰ In the Commons James de Rothschild declared that the Peel Report had not convinced him that it had been impossible to implement the Balfour Declaration. If there had been failure, he felt ‘very deeply that the responsibility is not with the Jewish people’, but rested with the maladministration of the country, the lack of a firm British policy, and leniency towards Arab terrorism. He denounced the equation of Arab violence and of Jewish persuasion by a member of the government as ‘an outrage on the Jews and to Jewish feelings’ and rejected the proposed Jewish state as insufficient.²¹

At the XXth Zionist Congress Weizmann had to work hard to prevent the complete breakdown of relations with the British government. Yet even among the British delegates of his own party his position was not uncontested. When the General Zionists ‘A’ took a vote on whether to empower the Executive to enter into negotiations with the government

¹⁷ *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, vol. cvi, 21 July, c. 797–801; *JC*, 23 July 1937, 28.

¹⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*, Lords, vol. cvi, 20 July, c. 653–64; *JC*, 23 July 1937, 28.

¹⁹ Samuel to Ormsby-Gore, 15 June 1937, WA 1990; *Lords*, vol. 106, 20 July 1937, c. 629–45; ‘Alternatives to Partition’, *Foreign Affairs*, 16 (October 1937), 143–55.

²⁰ *JC*, 6 August 1937, 25–6.

²¹ *Parliamentary Debates*, Commons, vol. cccxxvi, 21 July 1937, c. 2311–22; *JC*, 23 July 1937, 31.

a dozen delegates, including Goodman and Perlzweig, abstained. In the debate on 8 August Weizmann was backed by Brodetsky and Melchett who doubted that the fulfilment of the Mandate still stood a realistic chance, pleaded for cooperation with Britain, and stressed the need for a sufficient state to relieve the intense pressure on the masses of European Jews.²² In the end the moderates carried the day. While Congress did not give the green light to Britain's partition proposals, Weizmann was entrusted with entering into formal negotiations with the British government with a view to negotiating better terms. In this task he was to be assisted by a political advisory committee, including Blanche Dugdale, Melchett, and Namier.

After Congress the Executive's retreat from uncompromising insistence on the fulfilment of the Mandate was put across to the British audience by Lady Reading in a semi-official article 'How I Regard Partition: Reviewing the Favourable Factors' and by Brodetsky in an address before the Anglo-Palestinian Club.²³ As the guest of honour at the concluding supper of the FWZ's 18th Annual Conference on 31 October 1937 Harry Sacher summarized the reasons why, 'for practical purposes, they must come face to face with Partition', which would at least free them from the 'haemorrhaging effect of the Administration': first, the disintegration of the system of Versailles: 'They might deplore the fact that the British Government should be unfaithful to its pledges. But how much of the entire complex of the settlement of the world made at Versailles had survived unimpaired?'; second, the weakness of the Jews as a political actor: 'The events in Germany had clearly demonstrated the impotence of Jewry in a political sense'; third, the hostility of the Mandatory: 'Certain things had remained constant during the twenty years under review. The first of these was the distaste of the British official in Palestine and of the British Colonial Office for Zionism'; fourth, the futility of the legal, theological, and historical arguments: 'Legal documents were only useful in a court, where judgement could be enforced. There was, in fact, no such court. . . . Nor was the theological argument of much use. You might believe that God promised Palestine to the Jews . . . but this belief had interest only for the believers . . . The historical argument, mentioned in the Balfour Declaration, should not be strained too far'; and fifth, the change of government policy: 'The Mandate was dead. The British Government was determined to put through a scheme of partition and the Jewish people had not sufficient force . . . to bring the British Government back to its old desirable course.'²⁴ Whereas within the Zionist camp it was

²² *JC*, 13 August 1937, 26.

²³ *JC*, 8 October 1937, 24–6.

²⁴ *JC*, 5 November 1937, 18.

the size of the Jewish state envisaged by the Peel Report that was at issue, in the assimilationist quarters the very idea of a state was rejected. Mattuck, who had made the Report the topic of his Sunday morning service on 3 October, opined that both Arabs and Jews were right. While he acknowledged that 'in the case of the Jews there was something added to right. There was the need . . .', he was careful to emphasize that it was 'the need not of a people, but of individuals'.²⁵ Instead of a state he advocated Samuel's scheme.

While the Peel Report had come to be accepted by 77 Great Russell Street as a basis for negotiations, it had been met with persistent opposition from assimilationist as well as maximalist Zionist quarters. For different reasons assimilationists and maximalist Zionists, in particular Mizrachists and Revisionists, above all the *JC*'s editor Ivan Greenberg, were united in their rejection of the partition of the Mandate into Jewish and Arab states. While the former abhorred the idea of a Jewish state as such, the latter regarded the recommendations of the Peel Commission as a betrayal of their goal of a Jewish state in all of Palestine.

Neither government nor Parliament had, however, endorsed the Peel Report. Playing for time, the government appointed a Commission to draw up specific recommendations for partition. By the beginning of December 1937, Weizmann was still confident that partition would be carried to a successful end.²⁶ The British government, however, was far from living up to Weizmann's expectations. On 20 December 1937, Melchett wrote to Weizmann that over the past six weeks the situation had drastically deteriorated. The General Staff had abandoned Haifa in favour of Cyprus; the India Office had declared it impossible to secure Muslim support for constitutional reforms in India if the government adhered to a pro-Zionist policy; the new Commission would be given a free hand to devise any settlement they saw fit; Eden and Ormsby-Gore, who were still favouring partition, were entirely isolated in their respective departments; and finally powerful British Jews were bringing considerable pressure against the Zionists. He urged Weizmann to return to Britain and take immediate action: 'unless we can rally a strong popular movement, beginning in Palestine and followed up in this country, in favour of a Jewish State in the British Empire . . . we shall have to kiss the Jewish State goodbye.'²⁷ Brodetsky also pressed for immediate action to end the dangerous vacuum which the lack of definite Zionist policy-making had created and to counter the offensive of 'minority scheme mongers'.²⁸

²⁵ *JC*, 8 October 1937, 26.

²⁶ Weizmann to Lipsky, 5 December 1937, WA 2026.

²⁷ Lord Melchett to Weizmann, 20 December 1937, WA 2029.

²⁸ Brodetsky to Ben Gurion, 11 January 1938, WA 2036.

With Weizmann leaving the field to his opponents, the latter had been ever more successful in producing the impression in the press as well as in public platforms and the Cabinet that minority status schemes might receive consideration by the Jewish side as being less objectionable than partition. Although originating from a different direction, the *JC*'s continued attacks on partition also caused embarrassment to the JA's policy and its supporters in government quarters and served as a welcome justification for the opponents of partition.²⁹

Spurred into action by an article in the *Daily Herald*³⁰ revealing the imminent Cabinet volte-face on partition, Zionist societies throughout Britain, independently of Great Russell Street, wired their MPs, the Prime Minister, and the Colonial Secretary, expressing their consternation and stating that they would regard the terms of reference of the new commission as a test case on whether this allegation was well founded. The ZF reacted to the deteriorating situation with a resolution which expressed first, objection to any solution involving the imposition of permanent minority status; second, affirmation of the right to a Jewish state; and third, the hope for close links of the Jewish state with Britain: 'In the belief that British and Jewish ideals and interests march together in Palestine, the Zionist Federation of Great Britain would welcome a solution which would ultimately give the Jewish State a place within the framework of the British Commonwealth.'³¹ While the resolution did not rule out partition, it was unequivocal in its demand for Jewish sovereignty, which, as Brodetsky put it, was nothing but the logical result of the Balfour Declaration: 'A Jewish State meant that the Jewish people in Palestine was to be sovereign . . . and that it would decide for itself how it wished to develop, how many Jews it wished to bring in, and the kind of activities it was to engage in. It meant that they should live in Palestine as a normal people. Zionists had never thought of anything but a State. Herzl spoke clearly about a Jewish State, and the Balfour Declaration was understood by everybody as being something leading to a Jewish State.'³² This resolution was forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Colonial Secretary, and members of Parliament, and brought to the notice of the public at a demonstration in London where Goldbloom, Brodetsky, Goldmann, and Perlzweig came out strongly for Jewish statehood. While Perlzweig also stressed the inclusion in the Empire, Brodetsky and Goldmann skated

²⁹ Arthur Lourie to Leo Kohn, 31 December 1937, WA 2031; *Daily Telegraph*, 31 December 1937; Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 161.

³⁰ *Daily Herald*, 30 December 1937.

³¹ Bakstansky to Weizmann, 30 December 1937, WA 2031; *JC*, 7 January 1938, 28.

³² *JC*, 7 January 1938, 28.

over the issue as it lacked the sanction of the JA Executive. At the Palestine Committee and the Assembly of the BoD the Zionists forced parallel declarations.³³ With the BoD passing the resolution by a majority of 200 to 10 the assimilationists suffered a crushing defeat. Whereas Laski had assumed a neutral position in the debate, Lionel Cohen, Sir Robert Waley Cohen, and Sir Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid had tried to block the resolution on the grounds that it would exacerbate Arab hostility and be illogical to reject minority status for the Jews, but to accept it for the Arabs. As a result of the vote Lionel Cohen resigned as Vice-President and was replaced by the Zionist candidate Israel Feldman, the Chairman of the BoD's Palestine Committee, who had scored a victory over his competitor Schiff.³⁴

While the responses of the various agents of the British Zionist movement to the government's imminent retreat from the recommendations of the Peel Report were motivated by a common feeling of dissatisfaction, they differed in their origins, audiences, means of expression, and also in their aims. The JA Executive, relying on the intimate contacts Melchett and Dugdale maintained in the corridors of power at Whitehall as their sources of information, were active on two fronts, the government and the British-Jewish opponents of partition: 'There is little doubt that the relative quiescence of the *jasagers*, and on the other hand the vigorous activities of the Assimilationists, *Peace-at-any-Priceites*, *New-Planners*, *Zionist-die-hard-Revisionists* etc. have contributed materially to the doubts and difficulties of the friends of the Royal Commission scheme in the Cabinet.'³⁵ Given the low profile of the pro-partitionists and the opposition from '*Neinsagers*', assimilationists, and competing Zionist currents the JA Executive was anxious to convey to the government the impression that there was a strong body of British-Jewish opinion in favour of a Jewish state. As demonstrations of strength and unity, the ZF rally in January 1938 and the BoD's parallel resolution, hailed as a '*victory of democratic Zionism over assimilationist "Gvirocracy"*' were most welcome.³⁶ For their profession of loyalty to the Empire, the resolutions adopted by the ZF and the BoD were, however, also received with mixed feelings at 77 Great Russell Street: 'Reactions to the Imperial business . . . are not yet clear. We all know that ultimately Jewish Palestine must rely on Britain; and we feel ourselves bound up with her psychologi-

³³ BoD, Palestine Committee, minutes, 10 January 1938, BoD; ZR, January 1938, 6–9; JC, 28 January 1938, 30.

³⁴ Cesarani, *Jewish Chronicle*, 211–34, 276–83.

³⁵ Arthur Lourie to Weizmann, 4 January 1938, WA 2034.

³⁶ Shertok to Brodetsky, 24 January 1938, WA 2039.

cally as well as materially. But the British as a whole do not know how we feel about it, and I am a little afraid that this sudden trumpet blast may be regarded with some suspicion.³⁷ Shertok wondered whether the British public would not conclude that British Jews had only taken up the imperial slogan since they were anxious to cement their own position as loyal citizens. This suspicion was bound to be reinforced by the conspicuous silence of the Jews in the United States and Palestine on the imperial connection. On the other hand, there was no doubt that it was precisely 'this part... which has struck the imagination of the newspapers and which has been prominently featured'.³⁸

While the JA was reluctant to commit itself officially to a continuous link with Britain, the formula of the imperial connection of the envisaged Jewish polity was of crucial importance for British Zionists, as, for very different reasons, it bridged the rift between maximalist and minimalist Zionists—which had brought the ZF to the verge of break-up³⁹—couched a potentially explosive topic for Jewish relations with the larger society in pro-British terms, and held out a hand to assimilationists.

On 30 June 1938 Weizmann reported on his talks with the Partition Commission to the members of the Political Advisory Committee.⁴⁰ He replied to the members of the Commission, who showed concern about the position of the Arab minority in the prospective Jewish state, that 'if the Commission did not credit the Jews with a very high standard of ethics, it would still realise that, if only because the Jews were not unintelligent, they would see that it was essential that the position of the Arab minority should give no cause for complaint'. Also non-Zionists, such as Lionel Cohen, were favourably impressed with the memorandum the JA submitted to the Commission.

Mounting international tensions throughout 1938 and growing British anxiety not to antagonize the Arab world left Zionists with no illusions about the prospects of Jewish sovereignty. While remaining publicly committed to partition, Zionists of various shades drew up contingency plans. Ben Gurion was prepared to accept a Jewish polity within a federal Palestine and a limitation of Jewish immigration. Lord Samuel and Norman Bentwich thought it possible to arrive at an agreement with the Arabs on the basis that the Jews should not exceed an agreed percentage of the total population within a prescribed period.⁴¹

³⁷ Shertok to Brodetsky, 24 January 1938, WA 2039.

³⁸ Moshe Shertok to Selig Brodetsky, 24 January 1938, WA 2039.

³⁹ *39th Annual Report*, ZF, 14.

⁴⁰ Political Advisory Committee, 30 June 1938, WA 2075.

⁴¹ Ben Gurion to Namier, 8 December 1937, CZA A 312/22; Lourie to Weizmann, 3 April 1938, WA 2057.

The Zionist response to the government's retreat from the Peel Report reveals a pattern of British Zionist politics which was to continue until the establishment of the State of Israel. Rather than presenting a united Zionist front, the aims, strategies, and tactics of the JA's London Executive, of the ZF, and of the Zionist societies throughout the country, not to speak of the *JC*'s Revisionist stance or the heterodox Zionism of such figures as Herbert Samuel and Norman Bentwich, overlapped only in parts. Differences (a) between the ideological currents and (b) between the top echelon and the grassroots support of British Zionism militated against Zionist unity. As the capacity of the various components of the British Zionist movement to translate their views into political action or to bring their views to the attention of the Jewish and general public differed considerably and not necessarily in proportion to their numerical strength, the extent of internal dissension remained invisible to the larger part of the general as well as Jewish public.

Two factors guaranteed that on major issues deviations between the JA and the British Zionist movement were kept to a minimum or at least outside the attention of the Jewish and general public: First, the general recognition of the ZF as the representative of the British Zionist movement, although it was in fact also a branch of the General Zionists 'A', to which in the course of the 1940s, the Poale Zion, the Jewish State Party, and Hashomer Hatzair, but neither the Mizrahi nor the NZO, affiliated; second, the de facto control exercised by the JA over the ZF in all matters relating to the JNH, through the close cooperation between the ZF's top echelon and the JA's London Executive which was secured by the formal personal union of office or the informal participation of key figures in the deliberations of both organizations. On the ideological plane, the most conspicuous case of the Zionists' lack of ability to rally their constituency behind a single line was the *JC*, which under the editorship of Ivan Greenberg from 1937 to 1946 provided Revisionist Zionism with a prominent voice outside the control of and to the permanent embarrassment of official Zionist policy. Of the Zionist parties which were either not represented or marginalized by the ZF, the Mizrahi, Hashomer Hatzair, and the Revisionists, only the last, with some effect, challenged official Zionist policy as represented by the JA and the ZF. Having seceded from the WZO and without a strong basis in Britain, the Revisionists contested the official Zionist position through the *JC* and through members of Parliament supportive of the Revisionist-inspired Committee for a Jewish Army and the Seventh Dominion League, such as Strabolgi.

Apart from ideological frictions in the Zionist camp, the different requirements and possibilities of Zionist high and grassroots politics were responsible for the diversity of perception and for the clashes within the British Zionist movement. During the late 1930s and 1940s, the Zionist movement's main goal was the establishment of a sovereign or quasi-sovereign Jewish polity in Palestine, and the creation of conditions conducive to this goal, such as the strengthening of its position as a player in the international arena or the establishment of Jewish military forces. One of the premisses for the success of such a policy vis-à-vis the government was the effective presentation of Jewish unity on these matters. With regard to the Jewish opponents of Zionism the JA pursued a dual strategy. On the one hand it was anxious to involve Jewish non-Zionists on a practical basis without sacrificing any substantial planks of the Zionist platform, whilst on the other it exposed them to a remorseless campaign as traitors to the Jewish cause. To the makers of Zionist high politics in the JA the British Zionist movement was of interest in two respects, as a sounding board for its views in order to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the government and, for the same purpose, as an instrument to check the non-Zionist camp in British Jewry. While the JA Executive conducted its politics within a triangle involving also non-Zionists and government quarters, British Zionism on a grassroots level, free from the constraints imposed by such considerations, was both more militant in its criticism of British policy as well as more supportive of Britain's presence in Palestine than those responsible for Zionist high politics. On the level of Zionist grassroots support the assimilationists entered the equation only as the *bête noire*. The debates in the Zionist societies and at the ZF's annual conferences reflect a refreshing degree of diversity. Only when the ZF passed resolutions for government attention or when individual Zionist societies threatened to challenge official Zionist policy on such sensitive issues as the Arab question did the ZF's leadership impose its heavy hand to ensure unanimity with the JA's line. Different arenas of politics and different rules of the game set the pattern for the partially divergent, partially overlapping policies of the different agencies of British Zionism. The main differences between Zionist high and grassroots politics was that only the former entered into negotiations with the British government. By contrast, the politics of grassroots British Zionism vis-à-vis the British government, MPs, and public opinion was declaratory in character and to a far larger extent directed at British Jewry. The decisive link between the two arenas was the JA's interest in British Zionism and British Jewry at large as a sounding board for its deliberations with the government.

THE WHITE PAPER

In November 1938 the government officially abandoned partition and announced its intention to bring Jews, Palestinian Arabs, and the Arab states into direct negotiations. Although the St James' Palace Conference had failed as a round-table forum from the start because of Arab refusal to sit at one table with the Jewish representatives, informal meetings between members of the Jewish delegation and the government lasted from the JA's decision to take part in the conference in December 1938 until early March 1939.⁴² The membership of the Jewish Conference Discussion Committee was not restricted to the JA, but included also assimilationists and Agudists. Throughout the conference, the Jewish side was on the defensive and debated almost from the start whether or not to leave the conference. Reading and James de Rothschild warned against a break with the government. Reading's insistence that every effort should be made to arrive at an agreed settlement was motivated by changes in the attitude of the British public, which in the earlier stages had welcomed the Balfour Declaration and watched with great appreciation the experiment of developing Palestine. Since then a very large body of opinion had come to the conclusion that the time had come for the British government to extricate itself from its obligations in Palestine, and that feeling had been increased by the need to send troops there and the casualties they suffered. He conceded that this argument could be invalidated by pointing out that the troops were there owing to the Arabs, 'but it was difficult to get that into the head of the ordinary Englishman who thought that it was a question of a dog fight between Jews and Arabs'.⁴³ Reading stressed the importance of retaining the sympathies of the public and of keeping the negotiations going even at the price of the JNH's crystallization and the abandonment of the Mandate. Weizmann agreed to the extent that they were not in a position to compel the government to continue with the Mandate, adding 'that they were always in a somewhat awkward, not to say ridiculous, position when they insisted on that'.⁴⁴ With the Jewish delegation nevertheless demanding substantially new proposals for discussion and, on the other hand, the government willing to contemplate only minor changes and making it clear that in the event of a breakdown of the talks it would announce its policy of turning the Mandate into an independent state, the conference ran aground.

⁴² JA (London Executive), 16 December 1938, CZA A312/23.

⁴³ Palestine Discussions Conference Committee, 7 March 1939, WA 2135.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

At the ZF's 39th Annual Conference the government was heavily criticized by Brodetsky for its persistent attempts at the St James' Palace Conference to set limits to the JNH. He condemned the imminent White Paper as a capitulation to Arab terrorism, suggested an appeal to 'the far greater Britain of eternal moral principle' rather than that of 'temporary expediency', and protested that 'as British citizens it was their duty to warn the Government that their present policy would be a disaster to the Jewish people and to the prestige and perhaps also the strength of Britain in the future'.⁴⁵ The contributions to the ensuing debate ranged from pleas to 'appreciate the difficulties under which the British Government was labouring in the present international situation' to demands to 'give up a policy which was based upon co-operation with Great Britain'.⁴⁶ The resolutions passed by the ZF's 39th Annual Conference condemned any legislation restricting the purchase by Jews of land as racial discrimination calculated to crystallize the JNH numerically and territorially and declared that at a time when in country after country Jews were being deprived of their citizen rights 'the right of Jewish entry into Palestine is one which admits of no compromise'.⁴⁷

On 15 March 1939 Makolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, informed the Jewish delegation that the Cabinet had decided to impose a settlement on both sides. At the official conference, which was boycotted by the Zionists, the government announced its final proposals covering constitutional development, immigration, and land. After a transitional period of ten years, Palestine was to be granted independence, the Jews were not to exceed one third of the population, and over a period of five years 75,000 Jews were to be allowed into the country; thereafter Jewish immigration would be subject to Arab approval. Palestine was to be divided into three zones, in which land transfers would be respectively prohibited, restricted, or left free.

Namier gave a lucid analysis of the situation. The government regarded the Arabs as indispensable, the Jews not. 'They must realize that in the present circumstances they were only a small problem, and that the most important thing was the action to be taken vis-à-vis the totalitarian states'.⁴⁸

After the break-up of the Conference the JA's only hope was that the League of Nations might declare the government's proposals to be incompatible with the Mandate. Leonard Stein, legal adviser to the JA, had been

⁴⁵ ZF, 39th Annual Conference, Political Session, 14 May 1939, Minutes, 12–13, CZA F13/1003.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 13–16.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Political Resolutions, 15–16.

⁴⁸ Namier, 13 April 1939, CZA A 312/29.

asked to produce a memorandum on the proposed land regulation, which from a legal perspective was the most questionable of the government proposals. After an analysis of the articles of the Mandate dealing with non-discrimination (Art. 2: 'irrespective of race and religion' and Art. 15: 'no discrimination of any kind shall be made between the inhabitants of Palestine on the ground of race, religion or language') and those referring to Jewish National Home (Arts. 2, 6, and 7), Stein came to the conclusion that while the administration was entitled to decline to cooperate with the JA in carrying out any scheme of land settlement which was prejudicial to the rights of other sections of the population, 'it was a long way from this to the proposition that the Administration can, without violating the non-discrimination provisions, enact legislation which simply deprives Jews, as such, of the right to buy land in certain areas'.⁴⁹

Without substantial alterations, the proposals which the government had come up with during the St James's conference were published as the May White Paper on 17 May 1939.⁵⁰ On 15 May 1939 the JA discussed possible methods of political and legal action. Bakstansky, Brodetsky, and the Palestinian Labour Zionist Dov Hos briefed several Labour MPs for the imminent parliamentary debate on Palestine.

Stein had been asked by the Executive to investigate whether the Mandatory had acted in conformity with international obligations. His assessment of the likelihood of success if The Hague was asked for an advisory opinion on the legality of the White Paper gives a brief overview of the issues at stake. 'The Mandate is so loosely phrased—perhaps deliberately so—and contains such unusual expressions (e.g. in particular, 'Jewish National Home') that it is very difficult to be sure what a court would make of it... I am inclined to think that the strongest case which could be made out against the new policy would be with regard to land transfers.' He thought that it would be difficult to reconcile with the non-discrimination clauses if the High Commissioner was empowered to impose restrictions on transfers by Arabs as such to Jews as such. As to immigration, Stein doubted whether the fixed quota was a breach of the Mandate. As to the stoppage of immigration after five years, he thought that the JA was on stronger ground. As to the constitutional proposals the JA would also have a good case against the government's contention that the Mandate required it to give Palestine independence. As to whether the constitutional proposals were inconsistent with the JNH obligations, the difficulty was that 'the expression "Jewish National Home" can hardly

⁴⁹ Leonard Stein, *Note on Proposed Land Regulation in Relation to Non-Discrimination Provisions of the Mandate*, 17 April 1939, WA 2144.

⁵⁰ *Palestine: A Statement of Policy*, Cmd. 6079.

be said as a matter of law, to have a clear and definite meaning, and the Mandate makes no attempt to define it'. In the final analysis, Stein regarded the Mandate as a political rather than as a legal document and predicted that a court of law would have considerable difficulty in forming an opinion as to whether a particular course of political action was inconsistent with it. The result would depend largely on whether the court 'looked strictly at the actual text of the Mandate, or whether it was prepared to consider what the Mandate was *meant* to mean'. Stein concluded that while the JA had a reasonable case, it had to face the possibility of 'failing to satisfy the Court that, on a matter of law, the new policy involved a violation of the Mandate'.⁵¹

Reading, although disappointed with the result of the Conference and having condemned the White Paper as 'both a violation of the terms of the Mandate and unjust in itself', urged Weizmann to accept that there was no alternative to the White Paper as the basis for future negotiations with the government. He warned Weizmann that a policy of violent opposition against the Mandatory 'would not only be foredoomed to failure, but would involve the gravest consequences for Jews everywhere, for I firmly believe that the goodwill of the British Government and of the British people is still incomparably the greatest asset that Jewry as a whole possesses in these distressful times'.⁵² As a solution out of the deadlock Reading favoured a federal constitutional arrangement, with the central government controlled by the Mandatory power and immigration into their own area by the Jews.

While the White Paper came under heavy fire at the ZF's Annual Conference, there was disagreement about the line to be adopted vis-à-vis the government. In the general debate diverse voices could be heard. Irate statements of the majority, 'that it was not illegal for a Jew to go to his own land', that Palestinian Jewry had 'to prove their loyalty to Britain, i.e. not to the present British Government but to the British nation as a whole', that 'we too must have the power of resistance if they have the power of aggression and that power must be used firmly and clearly', and that '[t]hey were making a mistake to angle for the support of Gt. Britain . . . The only ones we could trust were the Jewish nation' contrasted with demands for sympathy with the British government and the rejection of the White Paper 'in a most dignified way, as Britishers and as Jew'.⁵³ At the ZF's annual conference, Neville Laski also came under heavy criticism for the publication of *Jewish Rights and Wrongs*. At an adjourned session of the Conference,

⁵¹ JA (London Executive), 13 June 1939, WA 2156; Stein to Linton, 11 August 1939, WA 2164.

⁵² Reading to Weizmann, 10 August 1939, WA 2164.

⁵³ 39th Annual Conference, ZF, 14 May 1939, Minutes, CZA F13 1003.

after addresses by Weizmann and Brodetsky, the ZF carried unanimously a resolution endorsing the JA's rejection of the White Paper.⁵⁴ Distinguishing between the 'British people which understands that the greatness of Britain depends on its moral standards of life' and 'the particular Government which is in office at this particular moment'⁵⁵ Brodetsky was both anxious to draw attention to the controversy over the White Paper in Parliament and to avoid the impression that the Zionists' struggle was with Britain as such. In the same vein Weizmann stressed that the Zionists 'were in company with a great many English citizens who were equally . . . distressed that by some sort of mental and moral aberration the British Government finds itself in the position of having to commit a grave injustice to a people who have made the British cause their own'.⁵⁶ He went on to 'remind Great Britain that its moral right to be in Palestine was conferred upon it by the civilised nations for the explicit purpose of helping to re-establish the Jewish National Home'.

In the last months preceding the outbreak of war the JA did indeed try to revive the federal option as the least evil. As far as public opinion was concerned official Zionist policy stuck to its uncompromising opposition to the White Paper: 'The Jews do not, and never will, acknowledge the legal validity of Mr. MacDonald's White Paper . . .'⁵⁷

At the 21st Zionist Congress in Geneva, which was overshadowed by the imminent outbreak of the Second World War, disappointment with the White Paper was checked by the inevitable insight that there was little alternative to cooperation with Britain.

At a joint meeting of General Zionists 'A' and 'B' on 16 August 1939 Brodetsky argued that 'the maintenance of what was known technically in Zionism as the British connection was an absolutely indispensable part of their policy in the future (Loud applause greeted this statement). He felt that they could adopt a policy of active opposition and active rejection in such a way as to maintain the alliance with those sections of British public opinion who had supported, and were still supporting them.'⁵⁸ On 20 August he warned Congress not to break with Britain.⁵⁹ In the closing session Weizmann summed up the situation by declaring that 'they had their differences with the Government. But the fight of the Western democracies is our fight, their cares our cares.'⁶⁰

⁵⁴ ZF, 39th Annual Conference, Adjourned Session, 18 May 1939, 26, CZA F13/1003.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 24.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 25.

⁵⁷ Namier, *The Times*, 28 July 1939.

⁵⁸ *JC*, 18 August 1939, 18.

⁵⁹ *JC*, 25 August 1939, 22.

⁶⁰ *JC*, 1 September 1939, 17.

FIGHTING AS JEWS AGAINST NAZI GERMANY: THE CAMPAIGN FOR A NATIONAL JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE WAR EFFORT

With the outbreak of hostilities imminent Weizmann had pledged Jewish support for the democracies in a letter to the Prime Minister:

the Jews 'stand by Great Britain and will fight on the side of the democracies.'... We wish to do so in a way entirely consonant with the general scheme of British action, and therefore would place ourselves, in matters big and small, under the co-ordinating direction of His Majesty's Government. The Jewish Agency is ready to enter into immediate arrangements for utilising Jewish man-power, technical ability, resources etc.⁶¹

While this offer had no conditions attached, the JA also lobbied the government for the creation of Jewish military units. There had been the First World War precedent of the four battalions of Jewish volunteers which took part in Lord Allenby's campaigns in 1917/18. These units, the 38th, 39th, 40th, and 41st Royal Fusiliers, were recruited from the USA, Canada, Argentina, and Britain. The majority of the combatants from Britain had not been naturalized. With most of the officers and two battalion commanders Jewish and with the Menorah as a special badge, these battalions bore a distinctly Jewish mark. The idea of creating separate Jewish military units in Britain had been entertained by Namier again in 1936: 'I also think the question of some Jewish regiment of territorials in this country should be seriously considered... if the Scots, Welsh or any country group within this island has its territorials, why should we fight shy of having Jewish territorials.'⁶² If Britain failed to agree, 'a Jewish regiment in the French Foreign Legion' would also do.⁶³ With the beginning of the Second World War the idea that a Jewish military force could be a valuable instrument of Zionist state- and nation-building gained wider currency.⁶⁴ 'JEWS MUST FIGHT QUA JEWS' was the key demand of a JA memorandum which insisted that the Jews 'be treated as a people with a national consciousness of their own' and concluded that it was 'only in a distinctive Jewish force... that a proper esprit de corps and a sense of national responsibility and discipline can be evolved'.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Weizmann to Chamberlain, 29 August 1939, WA; JC, 8 September 1939, 29.

⁶² Namier to Dugdale, 23 August 1936, CZA A312/44.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ 'Palestine and the British Empire', CZA A312/17; Lewis Namier, *In the Margin of History* (London, 1939), 84–93.

⁶⁵ JA, Memorandum, 23 October 1939, WA 2176.

It followed from these basic premisses that plans for raising mixed Palestinian units consisting of Jews and Arabs, or of relegating the Jews in Palestine or elsewhere to non-combat units, were not welcome to the JA.⁶⁶ Not only did the JA lobby for Jewish military units, it also wanted to turn the JNH into a power house of the British war effort in the Middle East.

In their campaign for the recognition of a national Jewish role in the war effort the JA was anxious to enlist the support of the assimilationist quarters of British Jewry, where, for different reasons, as a proof of loyalty, a specific contribution of the Jewish population, for example the donation of a squadron of Spitfires, was also contemplated. On the understanding that the foreign character of the Jewish unit should be signified by its name and that no British Jews were to be recruited, Lionel Cohen was prepared to go along with the JA's proposal. With regard to the involvement of British Jews, he admitted to the exception of British officers and of Jews from British dominions and colonies who would not introduce conscription or send expeditionary forces of their own.⁶⁷ In order to turn the Mandate into a British supply base the JA discussed various schemes: setting up a munitions industry in Palestine or having Waley Cohen chair a Middle East Supply Board.⁶⁸

Unwilling to endorse the logic behind Ben Gurion's answer, who had replied to Lloyd George's question why the Jews, with many people attributing political motives to the JA's proposals, did not join the British army if their only desire was to help to obtain victory, that neither the Czechs nor the Poles had been asked such a question, the British government remained unimpressed with the JA's overtures during the early stages of the war. What the government was prepared to offer was to recruit Jewish units outside Palestine, to train cadres, and to make use of Jewish manpower in Palestine on a basis of parity with the Arabs, or, alternatively, to introduce conscription there. The latter proposal, involving the renunciation of national Jewish units and the arming of Palestinian Arabs, did not meet with the approval of 77 Great Russell Street, where resistance to its own ideas was attributed to the War Office, and in turn to the machinations of such assimilationists as Anthony de Rothschild and Bearsted.⁶⁹ Nor was it clear to what extent the JA was able to mobilize volunteers for the British armed forces without obtaining corresponding safeguards for Zionist objectives. When the government gave refugees the opportunity to

⁶⁶ Weizmann to Hore-Belisha, 11 September 1939, WA 2168.

⁶⁷ Namier to Weizmann, 25 September 1939, WA 2170.

⁶⁸ Note of Conversation between Waley Cohen and Weizmann, 24 October 1939, WA 2175.

⁶⁹ JA (London Executive), 25 July 1940, WA 2235; 2 August 1940, WA 2237; 9 August 1940, WA 2238; 23 August 1940, WA 2240; 27 August 1940, WA 2241.

enlist in the Pioneer Corps, it transpired at a meeting of representatives from the JA's Political Department and HeChalutz that only a minority of the *chalutzim* was willing to serve: 'the fundamental point was the Jewish and Zionist aim for which the Corps would work. Owing to the lack of such a clear aim the response of the refugees had been very half-hearted.'⁷⁰ Despite all manners of pressure, Reading had so far only been able to induce 945 out of 3,500 potential candidates to join the Corps.

Lobbying for a Jewish fighting force occupied centre stage at 77 Great Russell Street until Zionist propaganda concentrated on the demand for the establishment of a Jewish state. The JA accorded the campaign for the Jewish fighting force such high priority that it did not want the intransigence of the *yishuv* on the *Patria*, a refugee ship that had arrived in Haifa, to jeopardize the negotiations about the Jewish army project. Ben Gurion, who concurred with Weizmann in avoiding further embarrassment for the government, recommended interception of ships already near the straits.⁷¹ Only when the crisis escalated with the sinking of the *Patria* did the JA adopt a harsher tone towards the British government.⁷² The JA regarded the practical demonstration of the existence of the Zionist movement as a national and political factor through the establishment of a Jewish fighting force as a part of the Allied armies as an indispensable precondition for the successful bid for sovereign status after the war: 'The Jewish Agency should secure recognition from the War Office . . . in all work connected with the mobilising of a Jewish Army in Palestine and abroad, i.e. for all purposes of enlistment, selection, propaganda, and permanent liaison between the Jewish forces and the British military authorities. While it would at present be premature to put forward a claim for recognition as a quasi-sovereign government (as Benes and his Czech Committee are recognised) our ultimate aim should be to bring the Jewish Agency by stages to a status that will ensure that when peace comes, the Agency shall represent the Jewish people at the Conference Table of free peoples.'⁷³ Apart from demanding a Jewish fighting force for its symbolic value as an attribute of nationhood coupled with the hope for the improvement of the Zionist bargaining position at the prospective Peace Conference,⁷⁴ British Zionists saw the demand that Jews fight back as a national collectivity also vindicated as being the adequate answer to the German onslaught that was being directed specifically against them.

⁷⁰ JA (London Executive), 16 July 1940, WA 2234.

⁷¹ WA 2256.

⁷² Executive, 30 December 1940, WA 2263.

⁷³ Ben Gurion, 'Our War Programme', 12 September 1940, WA 2244.

⁷⁴ Brodetsky to Churt, 16 September 1942, WA 2398.

Rejecting an 'attitude of abstraction from the general political problems of humanity', Brodetsky demanded a specifically Jewish contribution to the war effort:

It is . . . essential for the Jewish people to obtain recognition for what is in fact their rightful status, that of an ally fighting the forces of darkness. This means that the Jews of Palestine must be allowed to protect themselves against attack as a national unit, and that the Jewish people outside Palestine, in the Empire and in neutral countries, must as a people, and as the race which is being attacked by Hitler, be given the opportunity of fighting side-by-side with the anti-Nazi forces.⁷⁵

While demands that the government should accord the JA a position of authority vis-à-vis the Jewish military units and that Weizmann should urge the Prime Minister to give a definite order for their formation to reduce the room for obstruction enjoyed unanimous support at 77 Great Russell Street, the theatre of war where these units were to come into action was controversial.⁷⁶ The majority of the JA's Executive was prepared to leave the question of where the Jewish units were to fight open. Weizmann was confident that although they had agreed that a Jewish army should be formed to fight wherever required, it was obvious that it was going to be sent to the Middle East. They had to decide whether to accept what was offered and ask for more afterwards, or to turn down the offer. Although Weizmann reckoned that the Jewish fighting force would be sent to the Middle East, he was not intransigent on the point: 'Even if their men were to fight in France, as a Jewish Army, they would be fighting for Palestine.' Ben Gurion, by contrast, advocating the recruitment of as many Jews as possible from the Mandate for service in Palestine and Egypt, was prepared to send the units recruited outside Palestine wherever they were required, but would not advise Palestinian Jews to join up if they could not pin down the government to send the troops to the Middle East. In October 1940 the plan for a Jewish fighting force was approved by the Cabinet.⁷⁷ Weizmann was authorized to recruit 10,000 men to serve in Jewish units incorporated into the British army. Not more than 3,000 should be raised in Palestine, the remainder in the USA and elsewhere. While no official guarantee was given for the theatre of war in which the Jewish fighting force was to be employed, Weizmann had been given an informal assurance to the effect that it was to go to Palestine. The officers would be selected by Weizmann subject to the War

⁷⁵ Brodetsky, ZF, 40th Annual Conference, 20 October 1940, 13–14, CZA F13/1003.

⁷⁶ JA (London Executive), 3 September 1940, WA 2242; 5 September 1940, WA 2243; 18 September 1940, CZA Z4/302/24.

⁷⁷ JA (London Executive), 16 October 1940, WA 2249; 4 January 1941, WA 2266.

Office's approval. When discussing the insignia and the number of recruits available in Britain for the Jewish fighting force, 77 Great Russell Street came down in favour of the Union Jack with the Magen David quartered as a flag, Hebrew as language of command, and the Hatikvah as the anthem.⁷⁸ In August 1941, however, the government withdrew its agreement to the formation of a Jewish division. Decisive for this decision were political considerations that a Jewish force once in existence could be used to solve the Palestine question along Zionist lines after the end of the war, rather than scarcity of equipment. Why, the rationale went, should Britain train and equip a Jewish military force which ultimately might be turned against British interests or at least would be outside British control? Instead of creating an autonomous Jewish fighting force subordinated to the JA, the British government opted for the alternative of enrolling additional Palestinian Jews into a variety of British units, which satisfied the increasing demands for manpower without the political implications of a distinct Jewish contribution to the war effort. From the Zionist perspective this could at best be counted as a partial success. When, in late 1941, the rule of strict parity for enlisting Jews and Arabs was dropped⁷⁹ and when separate Jewish battalions were formed within a Palestine regiment, these steps were welcomed by British Zionists.⁸⁰ Yet as Locker remarked, 'a Jewish Battalion in a mixed Palestine Regiment is not a Jewish Fighting Force'.⁸¹

Although proposals for a national Jewish contribution to the war effort, starting with Weizmann's original offer of 29 August 1939, elicited little enthusiasm until 1944, when the British government satisfied the minimum Zionist demands with the formation of the Jewish Brigade, 77 Great Russell Street kept on lobbying Whitehall, Westminster, and the British public for a Jewish fighting force. Protests over the Government's refusal to permit their formation were partly echoed by the British press.⁸² *The New Statesman and Nation*, while opposed to a Jewish Brigade being sent to any part of the Middle East, wrote: 'As we understand the Jewish case, it is that as the race which has more at stake than any other in this war, they wish to fight under their own name and their own emblems for survival, as Czechs, Poles and the Free French do. That strikes us as a reasonable and honourable ambition; it is not met by recruiting men as "Palestinians"

⁷⁸ 30 October, WA 2252.

⁷⁹ 6 May 1941, WA; JA (British Section), 5 May 1942, CZA Z4/10299 I.

⁸⁰ Melchett to Namier, 12 August 1942, WA 2393; Brodetsky to Nathan of Churt, 16 September 1942, WA 2398.

⁸¹ Executive Council, ZF, 10 August 1942, CZA Z4/10.209 I.

⁸² *Yorkshire Post*, 11 November 1941; *New Statesman and Nation*, 15 November 1941.

in nameless units under officers of another race.⁸³ During January 1942 the JA's Information Department had been in weekly communication with over 200 key men throughout the country, supplying them with copies of articles and pamphlets supportive of the Jewish fighting force, appreciative of the Jewish contribution to the war effort, for example a photo of Jewish soldiers marching through Tel Aviv published in *The Times*, detailing the obstacles to Jewish recruitment in Palestine, criticizing Arab nationalism and the censorship exercised by the Mandatory.⁸⁴ In addition, it distributed several thousand copies of printed material in circles that were politically active or close to the churches.⁸⁵ Government policy, however, remained unchanged. When Melchett sought to convince Lord Croft and Lord Cranborne of the desirability of a Jewish Brigade, the latter replied that the government 'would take no steps to divide the two sections of the population, who might fight each other instead of the common enemy'.⁸⁶ Locker was no more successful. When on 5 May 1942 he raised the issues of the Jewish fighting force and of self-defence in Palestine against the threatening German invasion with Cranborne, he was told that no equipment was available.

When direct negotiations with the government yielded no results, 77 Great Russell Street took the initiative to set up the inter-party Committee for a Jewish Fighting Force comprising members of both Houses of Parliament as well as prominent Zionists from outside. On 19 May 1942, at a meeting of the Executive of the Parliamentary Palestine Committee (PCC), the Committee was launched with Wedgwood and Cazalet as joint chairmen and Melchett, Davies, Strabolgi, Rathbone, Mander, Creech-Jones, Derman, Ridley, Janner, Marks, Sacher, and Gestetner among its executive members.⁸⁷ Apart from giving an account of the 14,500 Palestinian Jews who were already serving in the British army and the RAF, the Committee's 'Aims and Objects' demanded the creation of a Jewish fighting force, distinguished by a Jewish name, flag, and badge, and of a Jewish Home Guard for

⁸³ *New Statesman and Nation*, 15 November 1941.

⁸⁴ Information Department, JA, 28 January 1942, CZA A341/Box I; *News Chronicle*, 29 December 1941; followed by letters to the editor: M. Makin, *Liverpool Daily Post* and Vivian Herzog, *Cambridge Daily News*; Waters, *Mufti over the Middle East* (New York, 1942), favourably reviewed in *Reynolds News*, 25 January 1942 and *Bristol Evening News*, 25 January 1942; Editorial, *MG*, 2 January 1942; 'Christmas in Palestine', *Time and Tide*, 10 January 1942; A. J. Cummings, *News Chronicle*, 23 January 1942; *The Times*, 27 January 1942.

⁸⁵ Chaim Weizmann and Ben Gurion, *Jewish Fighting Force* (London, 1941); General Smuts, *Balfour Declaration Day, 1941*, reprint of broadcast (London, 1942); *Messages and Speeches at U.P.A. Conference, Cleveland by Col. Knox, Henry Morgenthau, Jr.* (London, 1942); reprint of *Time and Tide* article from 10 January 1942.

⁸⁶ Linton to Weizmann, 25 June 1942, 6, WA 2386.

⁸⁷ J. Linton to Political Committee, 21 May 1942, WA 2377; Linton to Weizmann, 25 June 1942, 6-7, WA 2386.

Palestine on the grounds that the Jews had been the first victims of Hitler's aggression and that it was as a nation that the Jews wished to fight back.⁸⁸

The JA's lobbying efforts for a Jewish fighting force had to compete with a parallel campaign conducted by the Committee for a Jewish Army, a body that had been founded in the United States by Revisionists from Palestine. Already in January 1941 the JA had urged the formation of an inter-party committee for the promotion of the Jewish Fighting Force, not only to muster parliamentary support, but also to pre-empt a similar move by the Revisionists. At 77 Great Russell Street there was growing and, as it turned out, justified suspicion that Captain Joshua Halpern had come from the United States to establish a British branch of the Committee for a Jewish Army. Although Dugdale apprised Wedgwood, the person most likely to be approached by the Revisionists, that the JA was already working on the formation of a pro-Jewish Fighting Force Committee, Halpern succeeded in enlisting his as well as Strabolgi's, Joseph Leftwich's, and Greenberg's support.⁸⁹ The latter's backing proved particularly valuable as from April 1942 the *JC* reported enthusiastically on the Committee's work.⁹⁰ The Committee for a Jewish Army turned out repeatedly to be a source of embarrassment for 77 Great Russell Street, because it undermined the JA's monopoly vis-à-vis government and Parliament, caused unwanted publicity, and claimed credit for any progress with regard to a national Jewish contribution to the war effort: 'What has already been achieved is not the result of stunt publicity, but of quiet work on the part of the Jewish Agency... and the Committee for the Jewish Fighting Force.'⁹¹ Namier insisted that '[w]e have to stand firm on the fact that the Jewish Agency for Palestine is to-day internationally recognised as representative of the Jewish people with whom His Majesty's Government carries on official discussions.'⁹² As the Revisionists did not carry any official responsibility, 'it is as easy for them as for Kipling's "Bander Log" to chatter in the tree-tops and scream "We did it" if anything is achieved by others who keep their feet on the ground. But, like the Monkey People, they can do real mischief at times.'⁹³

In 1944, when Weizmann and Shertok were conducting negotiations with the War Office over at least a token Jewish contingent, a bitter clash

⁸⁸ 10 June 1942, WA 2382.

⁸⁹ Linton to Brodetsky, 30 April 1942, WA 2372.

⁹⁰ *JC* 3, 24 April 1942.

⁹¹ Brodetsky to Nathan, 16 September 1942, WA 2398.

⁹² Lewis Namier to Lord Melchett, 20 May 1941, WA 2296.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

erupted over a motion calling for a Jewish military force on a grand scale which Lord Strabolgi had tabled in the Lords.⁹⁴ For his ample coverage of the Revisionist proposal in the *JC* Greenberg came under heavy criticism from 77 Great Russell Street.⁹⁵ In close cooperation with the JA, Melchett intervened with the alternative idea of joining together the three existing Jewish infantry battalions and adding some artillery and technical units in order to enable the thus created brigade to take to the field as a self-contained Jewish formation. '[A]t the time when Strabolgi and Co. are asking for the moon (30 divisions!)', Melchett's plan closely reflected the JA's goal, a Jewish military unit of symbolic military value, but carrying considerable psychological weight; for, as Shertok remarked, although only a fifth of the 20,000 Palestinian Jews who had volunteered for service in the British army and who were 'all smarting under the sense of the disability imposed on them in that none of their units has been deemed worthy of forming part of front line troops', would get a chance of real fighting, if Melchett's proposal was accepted, this would nevertheless be 'a source of satisfaction to all'.⁹⁶

The JA's lobbying for the Jewish Fighting Force was echoed by the ZF, which, starting in 1940, passed resolutions that emphasized the Jewish contribution to the Allied, and in particular British, war effort and demanded recognition of the national Jewish dimension of this contribution to the Allied cause. At its 40th Annual Conference the ZF pledged its support for the British war effort, stressed its determination 'to take its full part in this struggle for the liberation of humanity', associated itself with the JA's offer 'to raise a Jewish Army under the British Flag', expressed its confidence that 'in addition to the War service... rendered by Palestinian Jewish volunteers, and which Jews in the Allied countries are giving in common with all their fellow-citizens, the Jewish people can, as a national entity, provide significant assistance for the common cause'.⁹⁷ Paul Goodman's reasoning that 'no less than 60,000 Jews of various nationalities served in the defence of France, but fought and died as Unknown Soldiers of Israel'⁹⁸ illustrates the Zionist objective of having the participation of Jews in the Allied war effort recognized also as a national Jewish contribution.

⁹⁴ Melchett to Weizmann, 17 May 1944, WA 2504; Shertok, WA 2529.

⁹⁵ Rosette to Greenberg, 10 July 1944, private and confidential, AJ/110/2; *JC*, 5 June 1942.

⁹⁶ Shertok to Melchett, 29 June 1944, CZA Z4/14772.

⁹⁷ 40th Annual Conference, ZF, 20 October 1940, 11, CZA F13/1003.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* 10.

POST-WAR PLANNING

The twin objectives of Zionist lobbying during the war years were, as Brodetsky put it, 'a Jewish Army now and a Jewish State after the War'.⁹⁹ Which means did British Zionists employ in order to prepare the ground for the establishment of a Jewish state at Whitehall, Westminster, and with the British public on the one hand and the Jewish public on the other? And how did they confront—internally, in the British-Jewish public and in the general public—corollary challenges that were thrown into focus by the campaign for Jewish sovereignty: the future of the diaspora, the relationship of the prospective Jewish polity with Britain, and the Arab question?

The prospect of redrawing the map of the Middle East at the conclusion of the war gave a new lease of life to the plan for a Jewish state put on the table by the Peel Report. In January 1941, in an article in *Foreign Affairs* which had been drafted in part by Namier, Weizmann staked the Zionist claim to de facto Jewish sovereignty, in particular to control over immigration, before the general public.¹⁰⁰ If, within the British Zionist movement, it had always been beyond doubt that the Balfour Declaration was meant to lead ultimately to a Jewish polity, the resumption of the debate on Jewish statehood in the public eye intensified the internal discussion about the precise meaning of a Jewish state and the means of how to attain it. It also triggered off anew the controversy between Zionists and their Jewish opponents.

According to the post-war plans which Brodetsky circulated in September 1940 at 77 Great Russell Street among the members of the Political Department the Zionist programme was to make Palestine the answer to the problem of the Jews in Europe on the basis of the following points: (1) the creation of a Jewish state, possibly as part of a Federation, (2) the recognition of the Jewish people as an ally in the prosecution of the war, (3) internationally guaranteed equal rights for Jews in Europe, and (4) the establishment of an internationally recognized Jewish organization facilitating the emigration of Jews from Europe unable to rebuild their homes there.¹⁰¹ In contrast to Brodetsky, who despite his demand that Jewish emigration be directed primarily to Palestine, also insisted on safeguards for the diaspora, Namier was altogether sceptical

⁹⁹ Brodetsky to Weizmann, 8 September 1940, WA2243.

¹⁰⁰ Norman Rose, *Lewis Namier and Zionism* (Oxford, 1980), 123.

¹⁰¹ Brodetsky to Weizmann, 8 September 1940, WA2243.

‘about the possibility of a Jewish revival in the Galuth, and was all for a revival in Palestine’.¹⁰² Locker, even more so than Brodetsky, was opposed to Namier’s line of thought which came close to propagating evacuation, which he thought the Zionist movement was in no position to undertake. Having ‘always appreciated that point in the Balfour Declaration which dealt with the rights of Jews in other countries’,¹⁰³ he warned not to write off Jewish rights in the *galuth* in the formulation of the Zionist peace aims. While at 77 Great Russell Street opinion was divided on what weight the fight for equal rights for Jews in the diaspora was to be accorded in the Zionist post-war programme, any practical steps designed to ‘encourage the idea that any other country could replace Palestine, even temporarily’ were unanimously rejected and government officials informed accordingly that ‘They were not prepared to put money into colonisation schemes outside Palestine’.¹⁰⁴

Opinion on whether the establishment of a Jewish state was to carry any meaning beyond the attainment of political sovereignty was divided between idealists and pragmatists. While confident that ‘They would probably get a Jewish State—large or small’, Weizmann saw the real challenge in ‘how to make the State into a great force—not of course into a Power in the sense of England or even Italy, but still a force. He believed that they could only acquire international weight by concentrating in Palestine the only force they could muster—namely intellectual force’.¹⁰⁵ As the university had not lived up to his expectations, he hoped that a prospective Academy of Science would attract Jewish intellectuals from all over the world. The difficulties inherent in the realization of such a vision were immediately brought home to Weizmann when he intimated to Namier that he should write his books in Palestine, but got a rebuff. Namier, although belonging to the British Zionists who in theoretical terms were most critical of the continuation of the Jewish diaspora, replied that as a historian he was ‘prepared to go to Palestine for a few weeks each year, but his work had to be done in England, because all the material for it was in England’.¹⁰⁶ Locker expressed his scepticism in a more general fashion, commenting on Weizmann’s vision that ‘the idea was a good one, but would be very difficult to achieve: many scientists were not Jews, and many Jews were not scientists’.¹⁰⁷

The centrality which Zionists accorded to Palestine in their post-war designs did not receive a corresponding echo from government quarters.

¹⁰² JA (London Executive), 4 December 1940, WA 2259.

¹⁰⁴ JA (London Executive), 9 December 1940, WA 2260.

¹⁰⁵ JA (London Executive), 4 January 1941, WA 2266.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

When Eden outlined British post-war Middle East policy in the Mansion House speech on 27 May 1941, pledging British support for Arab unity and independence without even mentioning the JNH, 77 Great Russell Street was alarmed. Namier wrote to Moyne asking for 'a sufficient area to receive great numbers of Jewish immigrants after the war', conceding 'some kind of connection with the neighbouring Arab states' yet insisting on full sovereignty, contemplating also a connection with the British Empire, yet 'on the basis of mutual convenience', and protesting against government suggestions to seek a solution of the Jewish question outside Palestine.¹⁰⁸

The repeated setbacks which the Zionists suffered—neither had the campaign for a Jewish fighting force yielded any results, nor had the Atlantic Charter or Eden's statement on British Middle East policy at all addressed the Jewish problem—also overshadowed the atmosphere at 75 Great Russell Street. British Zionists found it increasingly difficult to get a hearing for their case not only with politicians, but also with the press, a situation which Easternman described at the ZF's 41st Annual Conference in January 1942 as: 'The attitude of mind is roughly that of silence with regard to the Jew.'¹⁰⁹ Because of the many imponderables—which of the Allies would give the final blow to Nazism? Would Palestine be invaded? What would the post-war framework of the international order look like and would it be favourable to Jewish demands?—Levenberg warned the ZF's leadership against a detailed public exposition of Zionist aims.¹¹⁰ He cautioned that the 'post-war world will not be a new "Wonderland", something completely different from present conditions' and argued that it was a mistake to assume that immediately when hostilities end, 'the "White Paper" will disappear and the country will be proclaimed a Jewish State'.¹¹¹ With regard to the Zionists' relations with Britain he criticized the 'tendency in some circles to consider the Mandate as a document without any value' and to regard the Mandate as 'a complete failure'.¹¹² Partition should only be contemplated if it was forced upon them by external forces. Their failure in 1937 was for him a painful reminder not to give up the Mandate before they had secured anything better: 'A great deal of what we have achieved in Palestine has been due to the international character of our status in Palestine and the respect for international obligations which has been a feature of British policy, particularly of the

¹⁰⁸ Namier to Moyne, 10 June 1941, CZA A 312/16.

¹⁰⁹ Easternman, ZF, 41st Annual Conference, 25 January 1942, 46–7, CZA F13/42/II.

¹¹⁰ *Notes on the Future of Palestine*, 31 July 1942, memorandum by Schneier Levenberg.

¹¹¹ ZF, Political Committee, 6 August 1942, CZA Z4/10.299 I.

¹¹² Ibid.

House of Commons, for a number of years.¹¹³ While, in the long run, he preferred international control over the affairs of Palestine to an exclusively British regime, the Mandate would have a role to play, at least until there was a Jewish majority. Levenberg anticipated a transitional period after the war, within which the Allies' consent 'to the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth, a new Balfour Declaration' had to be secured.¹¹⁴

There were two options open to British Zionists in order to create the impression in the eyes of the general public that Jewish opinion was united behind the Zionist platform. They could seek an arrangement with their assimilationist opponents. It was this course which Brodetsky advocated, when in September 1941 he urged Weizmann to come to terms with the non-Zionists over the Jewish Fighting Force in order to prevent their interference at the War Office and suggested that a small group of Zionists and non-Zionists be brought together under Weizmann's chairmanship to formulate a skeleton Jewish programme dealing with Palestine and with the Jewish position in Europe.¹¹⁵ Alternatively British Zionists could try to rally mass support behind their position, a course which Levenberg pleaded for in August 1942. Arguing that a '*Jewish or pro-Palestine Congress in Great Britain will be an urgent necessity*',¹¹⁶ he demanded the launching of a mass petition, rather than a mere resolution by the BoD, for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine.

Independent of the deliberations of the British Zionists the Biltmore Programme, demanding that 'Palestine be established as a Jewish Commonwealth integrated in the structure of the new democratic world', adopted by an extraordinary conference of American Zionists in May 1942 had become the WZO's official policy.¹¹⁷ While the demand for Jewish sovereignty as such was far less controversial in Britain than in the United States the Biltmore Programme gave additional momentum also to the British campaign. The prospect of the establishment of a Jewish state after the war forced British Zionists to take account of the Arab presence in Palestine and to rethink the relationship with Britain.

At 77 Great Russell Street there was no disagreement from Sacher who 'thought that they ought to go all out for a Jewish State at once, and use the machinery to turn the present minority into a majority',¹¹⁸ but acute awareness that the demand for a state rather than for the fulfilment of the

¹¹³ ZF, Political Committee, 6 August 1942, CZA Z4/10.299 I.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Brodetsky to Weizmann, 8 September 1940, WA2243.

¹¹⁶ ZF, Political Committee, 6 August 1942, CZA Z4/10.299 I.

¹¹⁷ Brodetsky, 'Memorandum on Policy and Programme', 15 November 1942, WA 2409; Melchett to Weizmann, 2 December 1942, WA 2413; JA (London Executive), Minutes, 23 November 1942, WA 2410.

¹¹⁸ JA (London Executive), 23 November 1942, 2, WA 2410.

Mandate highlighted the issue of the legitimacy of Jewish national aspirations in Mandatory Palestine where Jews constituted only a minority of the population. Pointing out the 'transition from the present position in Palestine to that which we call a State' as the most difficult period Zionists were facing Brodetsky asked, 'Can we ask for State powers while we are only just over one third of the population?'¹¹⁹ In order to check the argument that it was undemocratic to give the Jews a state two counter-arguments were advanced: first, not the Jewish population of Mandatory Palestine, admittedly in a minority, but the whole Jewish people represented by the JA was to be the recipient of the Jewish state and second, part of the Palestinian Arab population was to be transferred to Arab countries. While 77 Great Russell Street was agreed about the necessity of a population transfer and the need of securing international support for it, opinion was divided on whether Arab agreement was necessary or not. Sacher, Namier, and Locker thought it neither possible nor necessary to arrive at an agreed solution with the Arabs. Decisive, as Namier put it, was alone the assent of the Great Powers. Namier and Sacher, both anticipating a solution of the Arab question within the context of the expected post-war minorities policy, expected the facilitation of the transfer of Palestinian Arabs on the model of the compulsory transfer of European minority populations.¹²⁰ In contrast to Sacher, who 'was prepared to proceed on the basis of compulsory transfer of—say—half a million people', Brodetsky struck a more cautious note, thinking it unlikely to get Arab consent if they went 'against general liberal principles' and warning that 'they could not go on as if the Arabs did not exist'.¹²¹ Melchett spoke out against compulsory transfer and thought Arab consent, that of Palestinian Arabs as well as of the Arab states, indispensable for the success of Zionist ambitions, in particular with regard to Britain.

The Jerusalem initiative reinvigorated the debate on the relationship of the prospective Jewish polity with Britain, the Arab problem, and the precise meaning of Jewish sovereignty also outside 77 Great Russell Street. When, on 19 November 1942 the ZF's political committee debated how to respond to the Jerusalem initiative, Morris Meyer and A. Krausz, Sheffield's leading Zionist, urged a close alliance of the Jewish Commonwealth with Britain, whereas Nettler, the Glaswegian Zionist strongman, demanded a break with Britain, declaring that 'they should realise that the Mandate regime has proved a failure'.¹²² In contrast to the internal

¹¹⁹ Brodetsky, 'Memorandum on Policy and Programme', 15 November 1942, WA 2409.

¹²⁰ JA (London Executive), 23 November 1942, 3–4, WA 2410.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Political Committee, ZF, 19 November 1942, CZA Z4/10299 I.

discussions at 77 Great Russell Street which demonstrated that leading British Zionists regarded the JA's traditional Arab policy characterized by the combination of repeated offers for cooperation and studied silence towards the national aspirations of the Palestinian Arabs as outdated, at the grassroots there was little sign of awareness of the seriousness of the Arab question, let alone of open opposition towards the Arab policy proclaimed by successive Zionist congresses. It was for internal consumption when Levenberg criticized the demand for a compulsory transfer of Palestinian Arabs or contemplated links between the Jewish Commonwealth and Transjordan or an Arab Federation provided such an arrangement did not infringe 'the right of the Jews to Palestine'.¹²³ The only segment of the British Zionist movement to voice its opposition in public was Hashomer Hatzair. When the ZF passed a resolution in support of the Biltmore Programme at its 42nd Annual Conference, it simultaneously expressed its conviction that the future Jewish Commonwealth would be based on the principles of equality and justice for all its inhabitants and that Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine would be a constructive factor in the revival of the Middle East, thereby assimilating the demand for Jewish sovereignty into the traditional rhetoric of cooperation with the Arabs proclaimed by successive Zionist congresses. The resolution which Hashomer Hatzair submitted to the conference rejected 'the establishment of the Jewish Commonwealth which it regards as another term for a Jewish State and, therefore, a distortion of the progressive character of Zionism'.¹²⁴

In order to bring the new policy to the notice of the Jewish and non-Jewish public the JA's Information Department and the ZF embarked on a propaganda drive, arranged a series of conferences in Zionist centres, and supplied Zionist key men throughout the country with the text of the resolution and some notes, emphasizing that after its endorsement by the Small Actions Committee of the WZO in Jerusalem the Biltmore Resolution had to be regarded as 'the authoritative pronouncement of the Zionist movement as to the principles of its post-war policy', laying down certain principles, while leaving open 'the details of a Zionist post-war policy (such as our relation with the Arab world and the British Commonwealth of Nations, our Diaspora policy, etc.)'.¹²⁵ The Zionist key men were advised not to miss the sympathy created for Jews because of the persecution on the Continent to bolster the Zionist cause: 'clearly, in addition to the efforts we are making to secure a temporary mitigation of

¹²³ ZF, Political Committee, 6 August 1942, CZA Z4/10.299 I.

¹²⁴ ZF, Resolutions for the 42nd Annual Conference, 8 January 1943, CZA Z4/10.346/I.

¹²⁵ Circular by Rosette, Information Department, JA, 3 March 1943, CZA A341/Box I.

Jewish misery, it is our duty to see that this sympathy is directed into constructive channels and that non-Jews understand that there is a wider problem of Jewish homelessness, the solution of which lies in the establishment of the Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine.¹²⁶ During 1942 the Information Department supplied several thousand copies of propaganda pamphlets, 15,000 of *Britain's Nameless Ally*, 8,000 of Locker's *Palestine and the Jewish Future*, and—for distribution among clergy of the Church of Scotland—200 of Norman Maclean's *His Terrible Swift Sword* as well as several films.¹²⁷

The resolutions dealing with the Mandate passed at the ZF's 43rd Annual Conference reiterated the demands for the 'creation of Palestine as the Jewish Commonwealth'; the opening of the Mandate to Jewish immigration under the JA's direction; repudiated the moral and legal validity of the White Paper; condemned the conduct of the Mandatory administration; and reaffirmed the resolution adopted in January 1938 which stated that 'in the belief that British and Jewish ideals and interests march together in Palestine, the Zionist Federation would welcome a solution which would ultimately give the Jewish state a place within the framework of the British Commonwealth of Nations'.¹²⁸ The ZF's campaign for the prospective Jewish Commonwealth to be linked to Britain was approved by the JA's London Executive.¹²⁹ This proposal, specific to British Zionists, was reaffirmed by successive annual conferences of the ZF and remained part of its official agenda until 1947.¹³⁰

RESCUE THROUGH STATE- AND NATION-BUILDING?

During the war British Zionists did not only campaign for the creation of a Jewish fighting force and a Jewish state, but were also concerned with initiatives intent on alleviating the plight of Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. These initiatives fell into three categories: first, those dealing with Jewish refugees who had reached Britain, second, those concerning Jews who were fleeing from the German-controlled Continent and were looking for a place of refuge, and third, rescue plans for Jews still in the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ JA (London Executive), Information Department, Central Committee, Minutes, 8 July 1942; 13 August 1942, CZA A341 I.

¹²⁸ 43rd Annual Conference, ZF, 29, 30, and 31 January 1944, Political Resolutions, CZA S25/1925.

¹²⁹ JA (London Executive), 2 February 1944, WA 2488.

¹³⁰ ZF, 44th Annual Conference, 1945, 3, CZA Z4/10.346/II.

hands of the Germans and their satellite regimes in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia. How did British Zionists relate to these initiatives? It is in two areas, lobbying and fundraising, that the relation between their involvement in Zionist state- and nation-building in Mandatory Palestine and their response to the predicament of continental Jews will be explored. Lobbying for a safe haven concerned primarily the general, raising funds primarily the Jewish public.

To Zionists Mandatory Palestine was the obvious destination for refugees. During the Second World War the Jewish Agency was locked in permanent conflict with the British government over the latter's refusal to admit refugees to Palestine under the White Paper.¹³¹ Lobbying Whitehall officials, private questions asked by MPs and publicity in the press were the means by which the JA's London Executive sought to put pressure on the government. Lewis Namier played the pivotal role in conveying the protests of 77 Great Russell Street against the government's policy on refugee boats, deportation of illegal immigrants, and internment to the British public.¹³²

The efforts on behalf of the Jewish refugees fleeing on board the *Mihai* from Romania were symptomatic of how 77 and 75 Great Russell Street responded to the refugee crisis and how they put their case as well as of the difficulties they encountered in the corridors of Whitehall. For negotiations with the government concerning the *Mihai* 77 Great Russell Street relied in particular on Lord Melchett. In his appeal to Lord Cranborne, Secretary of State for the Colonies, Melchett hinted at the small number involved, thirteen or fourteen refugees, instead of an anticipated 1,400, which, he intimated, should render the problem easy to solve:

the attitude of mind disclosed in refusing refuge to escaping refugees from Hitler terror, merely because they are Jews, is one that can only do most terrible harm to the British cause, and is capable of being quoted against us for years by the enemies of Britain. It can only be engendering the bitterest possible feelings, not only in the Near East, but elsewhere where knowledge of these tragedies is spread. We welcome Norwegians, Danes, Frenchmen, and others who escape from Hitler and come here.

¹³¹ Bernard Wasserstein, *Britain and the Jews of Europe 1939–1945* (Oxford, 1979); Dina Porat, *The Blue and the Yellow Stars of David: The Zionist Leadership and the Holocaust 1939–1945* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990); William Rubinstein, *The Myth of Rescue: Why the Democracies could not have Saved more Jews from the Nazis* (London, 1997); London, Whitehall.

¹³² Central Committee, Information Department, JA, 23 February 1942, CZA A341/Box I; Namier, letter to the editor, *The Times*, 27 April 1939, WA 2147; *Time and Tide*, 14 March 1942; interview between Namier and Moyne, 21 March 1941, WA; Zionist meeting 8 January 1941, CZA A 312/34.

All the forces of propaganda, press, cinema, etc. are used to show how wonderful it is that these people do escape and get across. Two thousand miles away in Rumania everything is done to discourage escape and to make it impossible for those who have got away to land.¹³³

Melchett added that if the government felt the refugees' arrival in Palestine to be contradictory to its obligations under the Mandate, it 'must act accordingly', yet made it equally clear that this could be no excuse for 'a bar to their being allowed to land anywhere without incurring the charge of being utterly heartless in regard to this matter when it is administratively or politically inconvenient . . . to save these few lives'.¹³⁴ Compared with the diplomatic language used by the intermediary of the Jewish Agency the Zionist Federation adopted a harsher tone, expressing in unmistakable terms that it 'feels that the Palestine Administration by its action in refusing to admit into Palestine those victims of Nazi and Rumanian persecution, is directly responsible for this tragedy which could and should have been averted'.¹³⁵ While Melchett's letter and the Zionist Federation's resolution both expressed the anger felt at the British government's reluctance to help the refugees on the *Mihai* and considered Palestine the best solution to their plight, they differed in several other respects. While the former argued that the government's failure to provide assistance would damage Britain's reputation, left the door open for solutions other than Palestine, and was intended neither for the Jewish nor the general public, the latter argued on national Jewish lines and saw no alternative to Palestine.

The news of the systematic extermination of the Jews on the Continent that reached Britain gave rescue plans a new sense of emergency. On the initiative of Gollancz and Eleanor Rathbone the Emergency Committee was formed, on which the Jewish Agency was represented alongside the Board of Deputies, the World Jewish Congress, and the Agudath Israel.¹³⁶ Lobbying the British government to rescue Jews threatened by death if they were not removed from the German sphere of influence was far more problematic than the interventions on behalf of refugees who continued to escape in small numbers. In January 1943 at the Zionist Federation's 42nd Annual Conference Brodetsky suggested that the German government be approached with a view of exchanging Jews, denouncing the counterargument 'what were they to do with the Jews once they got them

¹³³ Melchett to Cranborne, 11 May 1942, CZA Z4/14772.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Executive Council, ZF, 5 March 1942, CZA Z4/10299 I.

¹³⁶ 'Points for Joint Meeting at Woburn House', 3 December 1942, WA 2413; 'Suggestions for Action', 7 December 1942, WA 2415.

out' as 'shameful', adding that 'If humanity could not provide a place for 4–5 million people then there was no point in pretending to fight for the salvation of humanity.'¹³⁷ In June 1944 representatives of the Jewish Agency discussed with the government how to respond to German offers to barter goods for Jewish lives on a quid pro quo basis. Government officials declared that they could not contemplate meeting Germans without the knowledge of the Soviet Union and speculated what would happen if such talks were successful, asking where the Zionists would be 'if the Germans were to offer to dump a million Jews on them'.¹³⁸

Melchett's letter to Weizman from 29 June 1944 is indicative of the faint possibilities for rescue which British Zionists saw, the reasons why they did not press for action, and the frustration they felt facing a situation impossible to disentangle. When Melchett told Weizmann that he was convinced that the proposals emanating from Germany 'were some form of trick or deceit which the Germans hope will turn out favourable to themselves or to some sections of themselves, and to the disadvantage of the Allied Nations', it was neither the truism that the Germans made these proposals for their own benefit nor the possibility that they were not really meant he appeared to be mainly worried about, but the possible repercussions in case they materialized. The following sentence also betrays a certain unresolved tension: 'All proposals of this kind whatever form they take merely lead us into greater and greater difficulties and more parlous situations, and I am convinced will not save a single life.'¹³⁹ If Melchett had been convinced of the total futility of such proposals he would not have hinted at the feasibility of negotiations provided they came about on the joint initiative of the Allies: 'I am sure we ought not exercise pressure on the Allied Governments, and any question as to whether a meeting is arranged or not must be, and can only be, settled by the Prime Minister, the President and Premier Stalin.'¹⁴⁰ Such a development being unlikely he saw no point in the Jewish Agency risking a controversy with the Allied governments over rescue and resigned himself to the following conclusion: 'The quickest way—and indeed, as I believe, the only way—of saving the remnant of European Jewry is the rapid advance of the Allied troops. All other schemes will prove a deception and a chimera.'¹⁴¹ Under the conditions of war Melchett saw no possibility for the rescue of Jews by reaching an agreement with sections of

¹³⁷ Brodetsky, ZF, 42nd Annual Conference, 16 January 1943, *Palcor Bulletin*, 19 January 1943.

¹³⁸ JA (London Executive), 28 June 1944, WA 2508.

¹³⁹ Melchett to Weizmann (most secret), 29 June 1944, CZA Z4/14772.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Melchett to Weizmann, 29 June 1944, CZA Z4/14772.

the German leadership. Weizmann, having apparently also briefly entertained thoughts on such lines, came to the same conclusion.¹⁴²

Melchett's letter may be taken as symptomatic of the place which the response to proposals from Germans, whatever weight they carried within the Nazi hierarchy, occupied in the British Zionist leadership's discussion of rescue in 1944 pushing other controversies into the background. Linking the Zionist project with rescue had been highly controversial, drawing criticism for practical and ideological reasons, not only from without, but also from within the Zionist movement. At a mass meeting at Friends House, Euston Road in London, on 25 October 1938 during the Zionist Federation's Palestine Week Lord Rothschild, the only non-Zionist speaker, put on record the assimilationists' reservations about the Zionists' reduction of refugee work to nation-building on three grounds: first, the Mandate's limited absorptive capacity, second, an undue concentration on the young and the promising at the expense of the older generation, and third, the conviction that it was primarily the task of Britain and the USA to find a solution.¹⁴³

If on a very general plane no conflict of interest existed for British Zionists between lobbying for refugees, rescue, and post-war reconstruction on the one hand and working for the Zionist project on the other, since they considered the latter as providing the obvious remedy for the former, any linking of the two areas of activity that went beyond mere rhetoric revealed considerable internal strife concerning ideological and practical priorities. When, in July 1941, Weizmann speculated that after the war one million European Jews would have been destroyed by the Nazis and that of the seven million left half would opt for Palestine, this prospect of mass migration was not welcomed unanimously.¹⁴⁴ Leon Simon thought the emigration of millions of destitute European Jews to Palestine at a rate of 100,000 per year both unrealistic and detrimental to the national cause: 'It seems to me that our claim to a high degree of autonomy in regard to Palestine . . . will be weakened rather than strengthened if it is based even in part on a promise to solve through Palestine a particular facet of the Jewish economic problem . . .'¹⁴⁵ Ben Gurion provoked his particular anger for ignoring the time factor in relation to absorptive capacity: 'if you tell me that ten million, or even five million, can emigrate from Europe to Palestine in the first five years after the end of the present war, then I shall be compelled to say, with all possible respect,

¹⁴² Eva Reading, *For the Record* (London, 1972), 177.

¹⁴³ *JC*, 28 October 1938, 17–18.

¹⁴⁴ *JA* (London Executive), 30 July 1941, WA 2312.

¹⁴⁵ Leon Simon to Weizmann, 7 September 1941, WA 2321.

that you are talking nonsense.¹⁴⁶ Referring to the definition of Zionism in the Basle programme—‘to create for the Jewish people a home in Palestine secured by public Law’—Simon emphasized that the Basle programme did not promise to provide a refuge for millions of homeless Jews: ‘In other words the fundamental object of Zionism, as laid down in its official programme, is nation-building, not salvage.’¹⁴⁷ It was thus not only non-Zionist quarters that challenged the equation of lobbying for refugees, rescue, and post-war reconstruction with the Zionist state- and nation-building. For different reasons an elitist current of Zionist thought rejected the indiscriminate admission of refugees to the Jewish National Home until knowledge of the enormity of the destruction of Jewish life silenced or toned down such argumentation.

Fundraising provides a barometer for testing the dynamics of the intersection of the British Zionists’ involvement in the Zionist project and their response to the predicament of continental Jews.

In order to meet the material demands of the refugee crisis British Zionists worked together with the assimilationist quarters of British Jewry. Their cooperation found its practical expression in the British KH placing its fundraising machinery at the disposal of the Central British Fund (CBF) and the Council for German Jewry from 1933 until 1941 in return for a share of the collected money to be spent on the settlement of German Jews in the JNH. On the basis of this arrangement the Zionist side received £90,000 in 1933, £50,000 in 1934, £30,000 in 1935, £385,000 in 1936 and 1937, £50,000 in 1938, and more than £140,000 in 1939.¹⁴⁸ In his report to the ZF Executive in January 1940 Simon Marks gave a retrospective account of the agreements which he had negotiated with Anthony de Rothschild: ‘it was seven years ago when the two sides came together to meet Hitler’s challenge, since when a harmonious partnership ensued.’¹⁴⁹ On the allocations committee Zionists and non-Zionists were represented in equal numbers. Since 1933 more than £2,250,000 had been collected, of which over £900,000 had been spent in one way or another in Palestine. Before the 1938 pogroms most of the money of the Council was devoted to training and emigration. Of the refugees who had entered Britain about 70,000 remained. After the first joint appeal had been renewed once it was relaunched a second time in 1939, but only for the duration of one year. The target for 1940 was £400,000, of which £275,000 was destined for refugees resident in England and £75,000 for the KH and refugees in Palestine with

¹⁴⁶ Leon Simon to Ben Gurion, 9 November 1941, WA 2336.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ *JC*, 19 May 1939, 36.

¹⁴⁹ ZF Executive, 29 January 1940, WA 2196.

the balance at the free disposal of the Council. The Zionist side was to obtain its full share only if the sum of £350,000 was reached, but could take comfort in the fact that despite the joint appeal the KKL, the FWZ, and Youth Aliyah were free to make separate appeals and that, therefore, Britain could be expected to provide the JNH in 1940 with about £250,000. Contrary to the roseate picture Marks conjured up in his speech before the ZF Executive, already during the late 1930s British Zionists had been far from unanimously supporting cooperation with the Central British Fund.¹⁵⁰ On 26 November Paul Goodman inveighed against the Rothschilds' campaign for £2,000,000 to assist refugees from Germany at the Mizrahi Federation's annual conference, which he attended as the ZF's representative:

But if this very large fund was going to be used for refugees who were admitted to this country on the understanding that they would not be a public charge, and also to help Jewish emigration to Brazil and other far-off countries, the history would tell the story that another great effort was made and that it had failed. . . . this new fund would not succeed unless it is realised . . . that there was only one place in the world where . . . the Jews were by right and not of sufferance.¹⁵¹

In 1940 Marks came under heavy criticism from radical Zionists because of the terms of the renewed joint appeal which he had negotiated. Presenting his own calculation which looked less favourable to the Zionist side than Marks's, Bakstansky doubted justification of 'using the Keren Hayesod machinery for the purposes of a Refugee Appeal, vitally important as that is, which ignores almost completely the crisis through which Palestine is passing at the moment' and predicted that 'our Zionist constituency will . . . repudiate this arrangement' and throw in their forces in support of the KKL, which was outside the agreement.¹⁵² Marks defended his policy of not breaking with the assimilationist side on four grounds: first, the *yishuv* had gained from the joint appeal over the past seven years; second, unity ought to be maintained for its own sake; third, Jewish unity was essential for the peace negotiations; and fourth Brodetsky should be given the opportunity to carry a united community with him.¹⁵³ Marks rejected the idea of considering 'the claims of Palestine as having priority over the claims of the Refugees on our doorsteps' as 'not practical', 'shortsighted', and 'dangerous to Zionism' as well as the line of

¹⁵⁰ JC, 2 December 1938, 26; Bakstansky to Leo Hermann, 29 December 1938, CZA Z4/10503.

¹⁵¹ JC, 2 December 1938, 26.

¹⁵² Bakstansky to Marks, 7 January 1940, CZA A173/10.

¹⁵³ Zionist Group, 9 January 1940, CZA A 173/10.

reasoning that it was 'the duty of the non-Zionists to carry the burden of the local refugees and the Zionists to carry the burden of the refugees in Palestine'.¹⁵⁴

By threatening to resign as chairman of the British KH Marks succeeded in defending the renewal of the joint appeal in January 1940 against internal opponents. During the course of the 1940 campaign, however, criticism of the cooperation with the Refugee Council was mounting. When the merits of an independent Zionist campaign were discussed by Bakstansky, Brodetsky, Locker, Temkin, and several emissaries from the *yishuv* at an informal meeting, the demand for severing the link with the Refugee Committee was unanimously put forward. At the grassroots the dissatisfaction of radical Zionists had resulted in a virtual boycott of the joint campaign. Meetings were poorly attended. When in one case only 100 out of the 1,400 invited actually turned up, and Anthony de Rothschild and Sieff suspected bad preparation to be the cause for indifference, Bakstansky and Leib Jaffe, one of the fundraisers from the *yishuv*, made out the real cause to be elsewhere. The latter mentioned several factors for the unpopularity of the campaign: exhaustion, dislike of refugees from Germany, and economic depression. 'People are tired of campaigns which have been going on for so many years. Many people do not like the German refugees... Some groups excepted, the economical position of all people is affected'.¹⁵⁵ What the fundraisers from the *yishuv* identified as the underlying reason of the unpopularity of the appeal, however, was the defensive, apologetic manner in which the campaign was conducted,

the complete lack of spirit in this campaign. What can be the spirit of a campaign for refugees who are already in England? What can our partners say in their speeches? ... if the English Jews will not help—anti-Semitism will grow. It is a work of self-protection. We cannot let down the British Government who give £1.- for £1.- and it will be discrediting for us all, if we will not do our part. If our Partners mentioned Palestine at all, it was on the lines of being an outlet for Refugees.¹⁵⁶

As an antidote to the harm caused by the absence of the KH for so many years Jaffe considered it imperative 'to come back to a pure campaign for Palestine'.¹⁵⁷ This happened in 1941, when the Zionist side severed relations with the Refugee Committee to run an independent campaign, the United Palestine Appeal (UPA).

The controversies surrounding the cooperation between the KH and the CBF during the late 1930s and the eventual failure to renew the

¹⁵⁴ Zionist Group, 9 January 1940, CZA A 173/10.

¹⁵⁵ Leib Jaffe to KH, Jerusalem, 23 March 1940, CZA S53/303 2.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. ¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

agreement between the two bodies in 1941 revealed deep-seated differences between British Zionists and assimilationists. Whereas the former regarded the Zionist project as the logic solution for the refugee problem, for their assimilationist opponents there was no such obvious connection. This had important practical consequences. Since the CBF did not act on a general imperative making the distribution of relief funds contingent on the needs of the *yishuv*, it was reluctant to invest in the Zionist project above the sums that could be justified as immediately alleviating the refugee problem. To the extent that they saw the refugee problem as a national problem it was a British and British-Jewish problem. British Zionists, by contrast, were not prepared to spend any money on refugee work outside the framework of the JNH. Not content with the relief of Jewish misery on the spot, with dispensing 'charity' as they saw it, they insisted on giving refugee work a purpose beyond immediate relief and commensurate with their state- and nation-building ambitions. Marks summed up the Zionists' reasoning behind their insistence on linking up refugee work with the JNH: 'Palestine is not simply an asylum, but a home where the refugee becomes a citizen, where there are no restrictions upon his freedom to work and pursue happiness, and where he shares in the noble adventure of national re-creation. What is spent upon the refugee there is constructive, its foundations are on a rock and it will endure.'¹⁵⁸ The British Zionists' break with efforts to assist refugees in the traditional manner reflects a shift from that stage when Jewish solidarity operated through the channels of organizations like the Alliance Israélite Universelle or the AJA that were firmly entrenched in the fabric of a nation-state to an trans-state national Jewish infrastructure.¹⁵⁹

A comparable competition between the Zionist United Palestine Appeal (UPA) and the non-Zionist Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) evolved in the USA in the 1930s. Although causing similar controversy the dispute developed in the opposite direction and was resolved precisely when the alliance between assimilationists and Zionists in Britain foundered. In late 1941 the UPA and the JDC reached an agreement on the joint UJA campaign of 1942.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Simon Marks to Anthony de Rothschild, 18 January 1940, WA 2193.

¹⁵⁹ Selwyn Ilan Troen and Benjamin Pinkus (eds.), *Organizing Rescue: National Jewish Solidarity in the Modern Period* (London, 1992).

¹⁶⁰ Yehuda Bauer, *My Brother's Keeper: A History of the American Joint Distribution Committee, 1929–1939* (Philadelphia, 1974), 166–8; Mark Raider, 'Where American Zionism Differed: Abba Hillel Silver Reconsidered', *Journal of Israeli History*, 17/1 (1996), 102–4; Ernest Stock, 'The United Jewish Appeal and the Joint Distribution Committee', in Haim Avni and Gideon Shimoni (eds.), *Zionism and its Jewish Opponents* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1990), 401–8.

THE ROAD TO JEWISH STATEHOOD

The year 1945 changed the conditions under which British Zionists lobbied for the establishment of a Jewish state. It did not only mean the end of the Second World War, but also a Labour government, revealed the unmistakable decline of Britain as an actor in the international arena, brought about the public realization of the enormity of the *shoah*, and put the DPs and Palestine crises on the agenda of international politics.

Against the background of the Labour Party's prior pronouncements on Palestine, British Zionists had staked high hopes in the new government. When, contrary to their expectations, the new Labour government continued its predecessor's Palestine policy, 77 Great Russell Street intervened through direct *démarches* to the government as well as through sympathetic members of the Labour Party Executive and Labour MPs.¹⁶¹ At the meeting of the Labour Party Executive on 26 September the Cabinet came under heavy criticism. Although Shinwell, Dalton, Greenwood, Aneurin Bevan, and Tom Williams had taken up the Zionist cause inside the Cabinet, Michael Foot remained doubtful whether Labour MPs would rise against the government in case it deviated from what was still Labour's official position on Palestine.

Vis-à-vis the Labour Party Zionist propaganda had always placed particular emphasis on the progressive character of Zionist state- and nation-building. The trend to present the Zionist project not only as morally justified, sanctioned by the promise of a British government, and identical with British strategic interests, but also as part of the progressive new world order, contrasting with Arab political reaction and socio-economic backwardness, intensified after Labour had come to power. It is brought out paradigmatically in the aide-mémoire which Arthur Koestler provided for a meeting of Lord Rothschild and Weizmann with Labour politicians on 9 October 1945, which 77 Great Russell Street had arranged. Koestler saw the Labour audience's mentality as being governed by three factors: (a) the emotional conflict between the will to help the Jews and the fear of doing injustice to the Arabs; (b) the Left's reluctance to support the creation of 'a new ethnic dwarf State'; and (c) the fear of a Labour government of being associated with the dissolution of the Empire.¹⁶² With regards to the difficulties in reconciling Arab and Jewish interests Koestler stressed that 'the undeniable injustice inflicted upon the Arabs by accepting our solution is very small compared with the injustice

¹⁶¹ JA (London Executive), 28 September 1945, CZA Z4/302/30.

¹⁶² Koestler to Lord Rothschild, 3 October 1945, WA 2606.

of any alternative'.¹⁶³ In order to alleviate left-wing reservations about ethnic Jewish nationalism Koestler advanced several arguments: first, it was external circumstances which had turned the Jews into an ethnic entity. Since the Jews had been persecuted for twenty centuries and since, referring to America and Eastern Europe, he saw no reasonable hope that anti-Semitism would stop in the twenty-first century, Koestler opined that 'It is not a question of whether the Jews want to be a separate race or not, but the fact is that the pressure of the social environment forces them to be one.'¹⁶⁴ Second, to counter the permanent reproach that the Jews had antagonized the Arabs by their chauvinism, Koestler suggested identifying the conflict between reaction and progress as the root cause of the Arab-Jewish imbroglio: 'even the most perfect policy could not have bridged the chasm between two peoples rooted respectively in the XIVth Century and the XXth. This is at the same time an answer to all projects of a bi-national state put forward by Magnes and other cranks.'¹⁶⁵ Third, the difference between Zionism and Arab nationalism had to be driven home to the audience: 'Arab nationalism means something completely different from the idea of nationalism and patriotism as known in Europe. In the countries of the West, the concept of the sovereign nation was a revolutionary concept, carried to triumph by the ascent of the professional middle classes, following upon the break-up of Feudalism.'¹⁶⁶ In the Arab world, by contrast, irrespective of the rise of nationalism, the social structure had remained unchanged: 'To a Socialist audience this point has to be strongly pressed. A pro-native Left Attitude is not to back Indian Princes or Palestine Muftis, but to liberate the fellahin . . . Zionism has, by god, done infinitely more than the feudal gang who pretend to talk in their name.'¹⁶⁷ In terms of tax revenue and social services the *yishuv* had contributed disproportionately to the welfare of Palestine as a whole. Zionism, Koestler argued, was, therefore, not a case of taking the house away from the Arabs, but of building storeys onto it. According to him, Zionist state- and nation-building was not in need of being legitimized with reference to the *shoah* or the theological argument, which were far outweighed by its social achievements which gave Zionism 'such an overwhelming case that it is idiotic to base our claims on Bergen Belsen or Abraham's interview with God, alone'.¹⁶⁸ Attempting to dispel the fears of pro-Zionist Labour politicians of being identified in the public mind with the dismemberment of the Empire, Koestler suggested presenting support for the establishment of a Jewish state to be in the interest of Britain, which sooner or later would have to evacuate Egypt: 'Zionist

¹⁶³ Ibid.¹⁶⁶ Ibid.¹⁶⁴ Ibid.¹⁶⁷ Ibid.¹⁶⁵ Ibid.¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

propaganda always uses the sentimental arguments and neglects the “real-political” ones—that is the emphasis on the strategic importance to the British Empire of having a beach-head of a compact, European, highly-industrialised population at the focal point of their communications.¹⁶⁹ Koestler ruled out appeasing the Arabs as a viable alternative. As the pro-Nazi sympathies of the Mufti and Rashid Ali in particular, and of Arab nationalists in general, had demonstrated, the White Paper had not placated the Arabs. ‘How on earth can any fool expect to buy the goodwill of these Arab fascists by sacrificing us? They will disgrace themselves once more, without profiting a jot. The one long-term policy to serve the cause of Britain, of Socialism and of the Arabs themselves, is to get rid of the Arab gauleiters and to “re-educate the masses”.’¹⁷⁰ A few words about the true proportions of the Lawrence campaign should help to replace British romantic infatuation with the Arabs by a more rational analysis. As an urgent, immediate measure Koestler insisted on the purge of the Palestine administration and police, who apart from comprising former Black-and-Tans and being ridden with Mosleyites possessed adequate training neither to deal with a white subject population nor to handle traumatized refugees from and survivors of the *shoah*: ‘These psychological factors have to be touched upon in a few words. It is no good just going on raving against the crimes of the Palestine Administration, as our propaganda keeps on doing, without adequate analysis of the reasons.’ For Koestler the Palestine administration consisted of people ‘trained to deal with natives’ and unable to fit the Jews, exasperating ‘white natives’, into any of their conceptions: ‘A Jewish housemaid is organised in her trade union, sticks to the 8-hour day, and answers back if snubbed—the Arab man-servant will work 20 hours with a gracious smile. All this—i.e. the insistence on being treated as equals and not as natives,—is completely un stomachable for the average Colonial Administrator . . . Besides, refugees from Eastern Europe are of course neurotic and exasperating.’¹⁷¹ The presentation of the Zionist case by Weizmann and Lord Rothschild on 9 October was met with sympathy by many Labour leaders, but had no effect on the government’s decision to stand by the 1939 White Paper. Also without success was Harold Laski’s protest at the last meeting of the Labour Executive Committee before the government made public its policy on Palestine. Explicitly declaring that he ‘was a Jew’, he made it clear that although he was ‘not interested in religion, he did not like Jews being killed just because they were Jews. If the policy which was rumoured were to be put into practice, the Government would have to kill Jews because every

¹⁶⁹ Koestler to Lord Rothschild, 3 October 1945, WA 2606.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. ¹⁷¹ Ibid.

Jew would do everything in his power to bring as many Jews as possible illegally into Palestine and it would be the Government's responsibility to have them shot at.'¹⁷² Attlee was reported to have been 'aloof and cold', when Laski explained his position.

Within the ranks of the PZ there was particular disappointment with the continuation of the White Paper under the Labour government.¹⁷³ Yet disappointment was not restricted to Zionist circles. After the war the AJA persisted in demanding the revocation of the 1939 White Paper and advocating the development of the JNH within a unitary Palestine.¹⁷⁴ In his address to the AJA's annual general meeting on 28 November 1945 Leonard Stein pointed to the tragedy generated by the National Socialist extermination policy; the, for the time being, rhetorical rather than practical character of human rights and the hostile attitude of most governments towards Jewish immigration into their own countries and the Jewish consensus on Palestine as the most suitable place of refuge.

Some six million Jews have perished. . . . Will the new world now in the making be a world in which a Jew will be able to retain his identity as a Jew and yet breathe freely in the knowledge that his rights and status are as unchallengeable. . . . his opportunities as ample as those of another member of the society to which he belongs? . . . is it any wonder that, remembering the grim realities they have experienced, large numbers of Jews . . . despair of a tolerable future unless they can find new homes? Is it any wonder that many among them, not desiring to be hawked about like so much unwanted merchandise until someone can be coaxed into accepting them, have set their hearts on Palestine, where Jews—it has been said—may live as of right and not on sufferance?¹⁷⁵

The whole gamut of British-Jewish opinion on the DPs and the Palestine crises is reflected in the testimonies presented to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry. It was in different capacities, as representatives of Jewish organizations (and in one case of a political party) and as individuals, who gave oral evidence, or as the authors of memoranda and as advisers, that British Jews, mainly during its London hearings, presented their views on the DPs, Jewish statehood, the concept of a Jewish nation, the significance of Zionist state- and nation-building for the diaspora in general and for British Jews in particular, and relations

¹⁷² JA (London Executive), 23 October 1945, CZA Z4/302/30.

¹⁷³ 'Statement by *National Executive of Poale Zion—Jewish Socialist Labour Party*', *Jewish Labour News*, 27 September 1945, LILA IV-208-1-3311 D.

¹⁷⁴ AJA, Minutes, 24 July 1945.

¹⁷⁵ AJA, Minutes, Presidential Address, Annual General Meeting, 28 November 1945, AJ37/1/5.

between Britain and the emerging Jewish polity to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry. Suggestions of Namier, Stein, and Koestler had found their way into Weizmann's evidence.¹⁷⁶ For the latter's use Koestler had couched some of the most controversial issues in appealing, if polemical phrases. He dismissed the need for the "protection of the Arabs" against us' as being synonymous with the 'protection of the wooden plough against the tractor, protection of trachoma and syphilis against medication, and the right of self-determination for the mosquito to breed in undrained swamps'; justified Jewish national aspirations on two grounds, the specific character of Jewish nationalism: 'Our Nationalism is something different from the Chauvinism of small nations... *Our Nationalism is the homesickness for normality*', and the collective extermination of the Jews: 'And if anybody challenges our right to be called a distinct nation, the proof is in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Do they want to condemn us in perpetuity to the double-function of being killed qua nation but not having the right to live qua nation?'; argued that to accuse Jews who were running the British blockade of an anti-British attitude was 'a venomous distortion'; with regard to the long-term political allegiance of the majority of Palestine Jewry he dismissed the allegations of its pro-Communist leanings: 'If the Russians got Palestine, the whole Jewish population would be packed into sealed trains and evacuated to Birobidjan: Our people know this. But ill-meaning reports depict every Mapai-Jew as a "Bolshie."'¹⁷⁷

Although the JA's London Executive had tried to coordinate the evidence of British-Jewish organizations, dissident Jewish voices made themselves heard as well. Whereas the testimonies of the ZF, the BoD, the Council of Continental Zionists, the PZ, the FWZ, as well as of Sir Wyndham Deeds had been explicitly sanctioned by the Zionist leadership, the Revisionists and the Mizrahi insisted on independent action. Outside Zionist ranks the JA's position received support from the WJC and was met with opposition by liberal assimilationists, Communists, and the radical Orthodox.

The memoranda of the ZF, the BoD, and the PZ as well as the oral evidence of their representatives, Marks, Brodetsky, and Jackson, can be taken as representative of that part of the British Zionist movement which acted in close liaison with 77 Great Russell Street. In order to solve the DP's tragedy these bodies unanimously called for unrestricted Jewish immigration into the Mandate. They were also unanimous in their

¹⁷⁶ MG, 8 March 1946; *Facing East*, Namier to Weizmann, 20 February 1946, CZA A 312/47; Namier to Weizmann, 17 February 1946, WA 2629.

¹⁷⁷ Koestler to Weizmann, 6 February 1946, WA 2628.

demand for the establishment of a Jewish state. What was meant by a state and on what grounds was it justified? By the establishment of a Jewish state, Marks argued, 'we mean essentially the creation of such political conditions' as would, first, 'make it possible for all Jews who wish to do so, to settle in Palestine and second enable the Jews of Palestine 'to feel that they are masters in their own home' and to develop their economic and cultural life freely and to its fullest possible extent.¹⁷⁸ A Jewish state, he went on, was essential not only from the perspective of potential immigrants and the *yishuv* but also from that of Jewish needs in general, 'because there are certain vital and practical problems of Jewish life with which only a Jewish State can deal', for which he gave three examples, first '[d]uring the period of the policy of persecution and later of extermination pursued by Hitler, the problem of Jewish victims was not met by a commensurate attempt at rescue: Had there been a state dedicated to the natural task of rescue, hundreds of thousands of Jews might have survived'; second, during the last decade, a number of international conferences had been convened 'to deal with problems primarily affecting Jews, the most important one of which was the Evian Conference. Any State which desired to participate in such Conferences was duly invited. The Jews, however, who were most concerned, enjoyed no status . . .'; and third, whereas a number of the states represented at the United Nations General Assembly had played 'little part in the war' and whereas 'five of the participating states have declared an economic boycott of Jewish Palestine . . . the Jewish people is not represented'.¹⁷⁹ It was on three grounds that Marks demanded a Jewish state: first, on a pragmatic level, as a prerequisite for coping with immigrants; second, as an indispensable requirement for national fulfilment, and third, as a precondition for the Jews to be accepted as equal partners in a world compartmentalized in states. Marks reinforced his third point with reference to the *shoah* and the current Middle East crisis which, he argued, demonstrated the political impotence of the Jews without a sovereign state of their own. The argument that any effective policy to solve the DP's problem required quasi-state powers, which would amount to sovereignty, whether explicitly called for or not, is brought out in Jackson's evidence: 'Jewish immigration, free Jewish colonization and land settlement, some control by the Jews of fiscal policy . . . if you grant them these things, they have certain

¹⁷⁸ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', Sir Simon Marks, representing the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, 87–8, PRO 30/78/9.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 88.

state functions, state powers, governmental powers. That automatically becomes a Jewish state, whether you call it that or not.¹⁸⁰

It was not only for pragmatic reasons, in order to cope with the influx of DPs, that Marks, Jackson, and Brodetsky pleaded for a Jewish state, but also for national reasons, as a precondition for the collective emancipation of the Jews. To Manningham-Buller's question whether the 'Jewish state is to be a national state, not just a home for refugees', Jackson replied affirmatively: 'As Britain is a British state, as France is a French state.'¹⁸¹ When Judge Hutcheson, not satisfied with this answer, wanted to know, 'Why then in Palestine should we have a Jewish State? Why don't you have a Palestinian state?', Jackson answered that the establishment of a Jewish state was imperative to give the Jews control of their collective destiny: 'They are a people wanting to be themselves, that is all . . . the Jew has nowhere where he has control of his own identity as a group—nowhere in the world.'¹⁸² The admittedly very satisfactory position of the Jew as an individual in liberal countries, he argued, 'has not prevented the vast misery which has been the result of a lack of group statehood over the last 50 or 60 years'.¹⁸³ Brodetsky, like Jackson, justified the demand for a Jewish state both on grounds of pragmatic expediency and as an indispensable prerequisite for the Jews' national emancipation. He was careful to distinguish Zionist state- and nation-building from chauvinistic nationalism:

the word 'state' has unfortunately in the last few generations achieved a certain connotation which implies rather a wild form of nationalism. I would like to say our conception of a state is not that the Jews want to become a power. What we want is to have the opportunity for those Jews who wish it to live freely without being subjected to the status of a minority and to be able to build up their lives on their own traditions and in accordance with their own thoughts and their own views.¹⁸⁴

Brodetsky appealed to the Committee members: 'Please remember that the Jews are in this position: Wherever a Jew may be, his situation is determined by others . . . The Jews would like to have the possibility of such a life in a country in which the civilization would be largely determined

¹⁸⁰ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', Mr Nathan Jackson, representing Poale Zion, 23, PRO 30/78/9.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 21.

¹⁸² Ibid. 23, 25.

¹⁸³ Ibid. 25.

¹⁸⁴ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, Friday, 25 January 1946, Morning Session', Professor Brodetsky, representing the Board of Deputies of British Jews, 13, PRO 30/78/8.

by themselves.¹⁸⁵ For him the justification for Jewish statehood was not limited to providing a refuge for the persecuted, but consisted primarily in curing 'the homelessness of the Jewish people, the fact that the Jew never knows where he is'.¹⁸⁶ Brodetsky warned his audience that 'in approaching the problem of the Jews of the present moment in Europe one has to look upon it not as a phenomenon with which we have to deal, because it has arisen in our time, but as an indication of a great difficulty under which the Jews have been suffering for many centuries'.¹⁸⁷ If the Nazi regime was 'unique in human history... as far as the Jews were concerned', he argued, 'it represents what I might call the climax of a long historical development'.¹⁸⁸

While Brodetsky, Jackson, and Marks justified a Jewish state on pragmatic and national grounds, they were hesitant to resort to the religious argument. When Crossman asked Marks, 'I take it the major claim of Jewry is a spiritual claim to return to Zion, and the political instrument for obtaining that religious right is, I suppose, the Zionist movement?' and wanted to know from him whether there was 'anything peculiar about Zionism', or whether it was 'like any other nation? ... a purely mundane affair. One nation wants to get its rights, or is there anything other than that which makes Jewry unique?', the immediate answer was: 'I think it is mundane just as England is mundane'.¹⁸⁹ But when Crossman remained insistent and asked Marks directly whether 'Zionism definitely renounces the religious view and says we are a mundane movement?', Marks backtracked, responding evasively that Palestine was part of the spiritual heritage of the Jews.¹⁹⁰

The demand for a Jewish state raised the question of what significance it was to have for Jews living in Western countries. To Crick's question whether he 'had in mind particularly the dispossessed, displaced, stateless Jews, or all Jews', Jackson replied making the following distinction: 'Particularly, as a matter of urgency, these people ought to go first, but any Jew wherever he may be'.¹⁹¹ Brodetsky also differentiated between the immediate importance of Jewish sovereignty for the refugees and its general, long-term significance for Jews the world over:

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. 28.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. 7.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. 6.

¹⁸⁹ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', Sir Simon Marks, representing the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, 94-5, PRO 30/78/9.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. 95-6.

¹⁹¹ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', Mr Nathan Jackson, representing Poale Zion, 27, PRO 30/78/9.

Roughly speaking, I would say that the position of the Jews in United States or Britain, as far as Palestine is concerned, is, so to speak, outside the main consideration. The main consideration is to get a home for those Jews who haven't got a home. But we do believe that one of the great difficulties that Jews have, even in civilized countries, is that they are looked upon as a sort of mysterious group of people—somehow a people who have nowhere to rest.¹⁹²

A Jewish state, Brodetsky argued, meant a qualitative change in the Jewish condition, because it offered all Jews the option of a different life, even though this option might be taken advantage of by larger numbers only at a later stage: 'in fact, quite a number of Jews from the United States and from this country and other free countries have gone to Palestine and settled there . . . I believe that Palestine should be the home of any Jew who wishes to have this possibility of living a full Jewish life.'¹⁹³ Asked how many of the 2,000 British members of his party were likely to emigrate, Jackson made a distinction between the immediate future, when few of those who enjoyed 'for the time being the full and equal rights of British subjects in this country' were likely to leave, and long-term prospects: 'The need, the compulsion isn't there, but who is to say when and where the compulsion may come.'¹⁹⁴ The two propositions, first that the complete emancipation of the Jews was predicated on their autonomous national development, which under the conditions of the twentieth century only a nation-state could guarantee, and second, that a Jewish nation-state was to concern all Jews, irrespective of whether they possessed their citizenship, proved irritating to several members of the Anglo-American Committee. In particular to Judge Hutcheson it was incomprehensible why an American Jew should wish for a Jewish state to be erected in Palestine and in what sense any Jew who was not a citizen of that state should relate to it. By drawing parallels between the Jewish diaspora on the one hand and the condition of the Scottish within the United Kingdom or the Irish in the USA on the other Jackson sought to demonstrate that being the citizen of a state and belonging to a nation were neither identical nor necessarily coextensive: 'there is a difference between state and nation, judge. He [the American Jew, S.W.] is a citizen of an American state. He may consider himself a member of the Jewish nation. He has to obey all the laws as a full citizen of the American state, but he has a certain

¹⁹² 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, Friday, 25 January 1946, Morning Session', Professor Brodetsky, representing the Board of Deputies of British Jews, 29, PRO 30/78/8.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', Mr Nathan Jackson, representing Poale Zion, 22, PRO 30/78/9.

satisfaction and pride in what is happening in another part of the world where people of some identity with himself are building up a form of life.¹⁹⁵ As incomprehensible as the distinction between state and nation was the Zionists' insistence on a dynamic link between them, that belonging to the Jewish nation automatically entailed an option for becoming a citizen of the Jewish state: Jackson's reply to the question whether Jewish citizens of Britain or the USA including himself would be eligible for citizenship in the Jewish state was: 'All Jews who want to are prospective Palestine Jews.'¹⁹⁶ Jackson sought to dispel the Committee members' reservations about the compatibility of different loyalties by presenting himself as an example of the multitude of obligations human beings were bound by:

I'm a citizen of Great Britain. I am born a Jew. I feel an identity with Jews in other parts of the world. There is no conflict between my identity with these people and my membership and citizenship of this country. It is just as illogical to say that I, being a Socialist, owe an obligation, say, to a world international socialist movement and am thereby not loyal in any sense at all to this State. Every man has a number of obligations and duties—the duty to his family, the duty to community, the duty to religion, the duty to State, the duty to Nation. In some cases State and Nation combine into one. Sometimes they are separate.¹⁹⁷

Yet Jackson's efforts to demonstrate that there need not be a conflict of obligations between the duties to state and nation cut little ground with Crick, Sir Frederick Leggett, and Hutcheson, who continued to be troubled by the prospect of what they saw as Jews having the choice between more than one country, with Hutcheson going as far as accusing Jackson of 'denying the philosophy of national citizenship . . . if a man can have two loyalties, that is not consistent with American citizenship as defined in the Constitution and Laws of the United States.'¹⁹⁸

Although deeply disappointed with the British government neither Brodetsky nor Marks wanted the future Jewish state to be completely separated from Britain. Marks who presented the ZF's memorandum prefaced his accompanying statement by declaring: 'We British Zionists deplore the present state of affairs in Palestine and in particular the deterioration of relations which has set in between the British Administration in Palestine and the Jews', by putting on record the 'heartfelt gratitude of the Jewish people to Great Britain for issuing the Balfour Declaration and 'our appreciation of such positive and constructive steps as have been taken by various administrations to help us in Palestine

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 23, 25.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. 26.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 28–9.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. 29.

during the last 25 years', and by making it clear that, 'in paying this tribute, it would not be right to withhold our sense of deep disappointment at the serious changes which have taken place in the execution of the Mandate . . . When the testing time came during the war, many Jews were turned away although in sight of the shores of Palestine; many were deported to Mauritius and many lost their lives in disasters such as happened to the ships "Patria" and "Struma". They were escaping torture and death, but sanctuary was denied them. This shocked and created great bitterness of spirit among Jews the world over.'¹⁹⁹ Despite the current clash between the Zionist movement and Britain, Brodetsky and Marks expressed the wish to see the Jewish state associated with the British Commonwealth.

The evidence presented by N. Barou, A. Easterman, and Sidney Silverman on behalf of the WJC and by Wellesley Aron, who appeared in a private capacity, as a British Jew who had emigrated to Palestine, at the Jerusalem hearings of the Anglo-American Committee did not deviate from the testimonies of the BoD, the PZ, and the ZF that were prepared under the guidance of 77 Great Russell Street. Aron gave an account of the war effort of the *yishuv* and the part he played in it, his command of the first Jewish Palestinian RASC unit during the first siege of Tobruk, the enlistment of altogether 26,000 Palestinian Jews in the British forces, the ban on all news concerning the existence of Jewish units, the denial of Jewish emblems, which was only gradually lifted—in 1942 the Jewish RASC units were permitted the shoulder-title Palestine, after El-Alamein they were allowed to put the 'Shield of David' on their vehicles and to employ it as a unit sign—the refusal to give Palestinian Jews any fighting role, despite the desire for transfer, the 'result of a feeling of lack of status and an almost missionary zeal to deal personally with the enemy, who had so ruthlessly dealt with our own people in Europe', and the incorporation of his unit into the Jewish Brigade group on its formation in September 1944.²⁰⁰ For him the defamation of the Jewish Brigade Group by General Spears, the difficulties that were placed in their way before a Jewish combatant force was eventually formed, and the efforts to play down the Jewish war effort seemed 'to indicate the sort of thing we are trying to put an end to by Zionism'.²⁰¹ The Zionist project was justified in Aron's eyes because the Jews 'are a landless people and very hungry for a place in the

¹⁹⁹ The ZF's memorandum was prepared by Baum and Linton, Honorary Officers, ZF, 20 January 1946, CZA Z4/10.346 IV; 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', PRO 30/78/9, 85–102.

²⁰⁰ 'Public Hearings before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, Jerusalem, 25 March 1946', 28, PRO 30/78/25.

²⁰¹ Ibid. 32.

world which we can call our own, and where we can be masters of our own destiny to the extent of not having to suffer the sort of discrimination which we do...'.²⁰² With the call for 'a fully self-governing Jewish homeland', the demand for the settlement of the survivors in Palestine in order to bring to an end 'the basic Jewish disease, the disease of permanent and ubiquitous minority', and the claim that 'Only in Palestine will they and their fellow Jews be able to live a normal life as a people', the testimony of the WJC echoed key elements of the Zionist platform.²⁰³ In his oral evidence Silverman fortified the demand that Jewish survivors emigrate to Palestine with the argument that integration into non-Jewish society was only possible at the 'expense of survival'.²⁰⁴ By this he did not mean their physical survival as individuals, although he pointed out that 'of all the Jewish communities in Europe, the one that was most integrated, most assimilated, and felt itself most secure, was precisely the Jewish community in Germany which no longer exists', but the survival of the Jews as a creative community, claiming that 'insofar as a specifically Jewish spiritual or cultural contribution to civilisation has been maintained... it has been maintained only in places like Poland and one or two other Eastern countries, where there were in fact local conditions of a majority'.²⁰⁵ The relations of British Jews with the Jewish state would, Silvermann thought, resemble those of the Irish Americans with the Free State who were American citizens, but retained an emotional loyalty to the country of their origin.

The British Religious Zionists and the Revisionist Jewish Dominion of Palestine League presented their evidence independently of 77 Great Russell Street. Despite the Mizrahi World Organization's decision, in accordance with the JA's directives, not to appear before the Anglo-American Committee, Rabbi Unterman, representing the Mizrahi Federation of Great Britain and Ireland, and Rabbi Dr Kopul Rosen, as representative of the Federation of Synagogues, gave evidence. In contradistinction to the testimonies that had been prepared in liaison with the JA, which demanded unlimited immigration and a Jewish state with unspecified boundaries, the memorandum of the British Mizrahi insisted on an 'undivided Palestine' and emphasized the religious dimension of the Zionist project: 'the realization of Zionism will bring a solution not only to... the homelessness of the Jews, but will also prove a great factor in

²⁰² Ibid. 33–4.

²⁰³ *JC*, 8 February 1946, 6, 17; 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England. Thursday, 31 January 1946, Morning Session', N. Barou, Ph.D., S. Silverman, MP, A. Easterman, MA, representing the WJC, 58–9, 64, PRO 30/78/12.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 63.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

reviving the Jewish religious enthusiasm.²⁰⁶ It was not the presentation of the Zionist project in national religious, rather than in secular national terms which irritated the Committee members, but the British Mizra-chists' criticism of the deficiencies of the Jewish condition in Western countries. Quoting from Emma Lazarus' poem 'The New Colossus' inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, 'Give me your tired, give me your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free', Rosen argued that 'the only land that cries for it is the land of Israel. In any other country they are merely tolerated and even if a warm hand of toleration is extended to them, what guarantee is there if any difficulty arises in that land that the warm hand of tolerance will not become a closed fist of resentment. It has happened in every country of the world.'²⁰⁷ This provoked Hutcheson to ask him 'whether he did not think that the US had lived up to the words of the poetess Emma Lazarus' and what he thought of the PZ's representative whom he quoted as having said: 'The Jew in America is a half person . . . and cannot be happy until he is in a majority.'²⁰⁸ While conceding that the USA had 'lived up to that declaration', Rosen nevertheless emphasized that

when a Jew goes to America there is still anti-Semitism to be contended with. You will be amazed . . . to learn how much money Jewish organisations have to spend in America on anti-defamation campaigns. . . . There are hotels Jews cannot enter; there are golf clubs which will not admit Jews. The Jews are thrown back on themselves because of this social ostracism. It may not touch their legal rights. A Jew has an equal opportunity to go to University, but when the Jewish boy gets there he finds the Fraternities do not admit Jewish boys. When we say we want the Jews to be in a majority, it is because we do not want them to live this abnormal existence because of the differences that are thrown back at us; all this frustration is most harmful. In a land of our own with a religion and a State, that difference would be healthy because we would develop it.²⁰⁹

Rosen's objection to what Hutcheson excused as 'some individual discrimination which under our Constitution we have a right to make in the election of our friends and our associates' only provoked the latter's polemical question whether after the establishment of a Jewish state he expected 'a general exodus of the Jews from Britain and America to Palestine or will they just have to be miserable living in the state in which they are in those countries?'²¹⁰ Rosen replied that he was likely to get a different picture if he approached the question from a different angle and asked 'the Jews of America and Britain not whether they will go to

²⁰⁶ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', 34-5, PRO 30/78/9.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. 43.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. 50.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. 50-1.

²¹⁰ Ibid. 51-2.

Palestine', but whether they 'want their grandchildren to grow up as healthy members of the Jewish State in Palestine'.²¹¹ The British NZO made no appearance before the Anglo-American Committee, sending only a communication. The twin demand for an undivided Jewish Palestine and Dominion status, however, which the British NZO had put forward in 1945, was taken up by Greenberg, who gave evidence on behalf of the Jewish Dominion of Palestine League.²¹²

Not only British Zionists, but also various shades of British liberal assimilationist, Communist, and radical Orthodox Jewish opinion made themselves heard before the Anglo-American Committee. The liberal assimilationist position was represented, in gradations, by the AJA, the Jewish Fellowship, ICA, the AJR, as well as by Herbert Samuel who appeared in an individual capacity. In the memorandum submitted to the Anglo-American Committee the AJA argued that immigration into Palestine was the only solution to the 'large numbers of Jews who can see no tolerable future in their present or former homes and, on realistic view of the existing situation, have ample reason for desiring to re-start their lives elsewhere'.²¹³ In his oral evidence Stein, referring to a Gallup poll in the USA according to which only 5 per cent of Americans were in favour of increasing immigration, admitted that there were no realistic hopes that countries other than Palestine would take in considerable numbers of Jewish refugees.²¹⁴ Sounding a note of resignation the memorandum read: 'If, then, the necessities of the situation are to be met, it seems clear that attention must be concentrated upon Palestine, and that there is no genuine alternative.'²¹⁵ If the AJA supported large-scale Jewish immigration into Palestine, this did not amount to support for a Jewish state.²¹⁶ The ICA, like the AJA, had become resigned to the view that, *faute de mieux*, the 'main stream of Jewish emigration from Europe must go to Palestine, because that seems to be the only country that both can and will receive them'.²¹⁷ With the ICA's own means of settling some 150 or 200 families per year in various places being obviously inadequate, with the USA and the

²¹¹ Ibid. 52.

²¹² 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', 78–84, PRO 30/78/9.

²¹³ Draft Memorandum for Submission to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, on Behalf of the Anglo-Jewish Association, 16 January 1946, AJ 37/1/6.

²¹⁴ JC, 25 January 1946; 1 February 1946; 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England, Wednesday, 30 January 1946', 75–6, PRO 30/78/11.

²¹⁵ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England, Wednesday, 30 January 1946', 66, 82–3, PRO 30/78/11.

²¹⁶ Ibid. 92–4.

²¹⁷ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England, Friday, 25 January 1946', 55–6, 64–5, PRO 30/78/8.

British Empire unwilling to absorb large numbers of refugees despite their capacity to do so, and with the majority of DPs opting for Palestine, Leonard Montefiore, who represented the ICA before the Anglo-American Committee, had come to regard Palestine as the only realistic alternative. In contrast to the representatives of the AJA and ICA Herbert Samuel did not only plead for the reopening of large-scale Jewish immigration but put forward also a proposal for the constitutional future of the Mandate. He suggested that it be linked to the Arab League and, referring to his speech in the House of Lords on 10 December 1945 in which he had rejected majority rule in a particular geographical area and come down in favour of a solution comparable to the millet system instead, advocated a form of government which granted substantial communal autonomy in religious and educational matters to the Arab and Jewish communities, restricted central government to issues that were of interest to all inhabitants, and prevented one side becoming a permanent minority.²¹⁸ As representative of the AJR Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck demanded the liberal administration of the immigration laws of any country including Palestine to meet the plight of the Jewish survivors. Although he spoke enthusiastically about the *yishuv* and was in favour of Jewish immigration into the Mandate, he did not demand a Jewish state, arguing that the sovereign state in its traditional sense would become obsolete at any rate.²¹⁹

In contrast to the AJA, ICA, AJR, and Herbert Samuel, the Jewish Fellowship, which was represented by a formidable deputation consisting of Gluckstein, Brunel Cohen, Montagu, Henriques, and Mrs Henriques—the latter the only British-Jewish woman to give evidence—Lipson, Reinhart, Mattuck, and Edgar, maintained an almost uniform hostility against the Zionist platform.²²⁰ Not even with respect to the White Paper did the Jewish Fellowship come down unanimously on the Zionist side. As Henriques admitted, 99 per cent, but not all of its members wished to see it scrapped. Gluckstein, who had voted for the White Paper in 1939, doubted whether in their present condition the DPs were in a fit state to determine rationally where they wanted to go. First they had to be rehabilitated and then the United Nations was to offer them more choices than the alternative 'Belsen or Palestine'.²²¹ While prepared to

²¹⁸ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Tuesday, 29 January 1946', PRO 30/78/10, 68–96.

²¹⁹ *JC*, 8 February 1946, 7; 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England, 31 January 1946', Rabbi Dr Leo Baeck, representing the Association of Refugees, 51–7, PRO 30/78/12.

²²⁰ *JC*, 1 February 1946, 14; 8 February 1946, 6–7.

²²¹ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England. Tuesday, 29 January 1946', Major Sir Brunel Cohen, Col. L. H. Gluckstein, KC, Mr Basil L. Q. Henriques, JP;

give lukewarm support to the settlement of refugees in Palestine, as long as they were not motivated by 'political Jewish nationalism', the Fellowship was diametrically opposed to the Zionists' redefinition of the Jews as a nation and the corresponding demand for a nation-state. Quoting from the Jewish Fellowship's memorandum, Gluckstein emphasized that in accordance with their principle that the Jews were a religious community 'we reject the claim . . . that the Jews are a politico-national group . . . The Jews are citizens of the various countries in which they live. They form an integral part of and they are nationally people who owe allegiance to those countries, and only to those countries . . . It follows as a corollary that we reject the idea of a Jewish State.'²²² It was on three grounds that the Jewish Fellowship opposed a Jewish state, first, because of the insistence on the exclusive allegiance to the countries of which Jews were citizens and the corresponding definition of the Jews as a religious group, according to which Gluckstein argued that 'Even if 99 per cent of the inhabitants of Palestine were Jews that would not be the justification for making it a Jewish State. They would be citizens of Palestine',²²³ second, the fear of playing into the hands of anti-Semites, who, the moment the Jews had a state of their own, would demand they should go there, and third, that it did not represent the only possible solution for the DPs. Asking the Committee members: 'Does anybody really believe that if Hitlerism had not appeared, if six million Jews had not been slaughtered, you would today be sitting here faced with the question of the creation of a Jewish State and all that goes with it?',²²⁴ Gluckstein was convinced that the Zionist project would lose its appeal if the refugee problem could be separated from it by finding alternatives to settlement in Palestine.²²⁵ When MacDonald questioned the assimilationist argument that Zionism jeopardized the Jewish position by driving a wedge between Jews and non-Jews with reference to 'the most violent anti-Semitism the world has ever seen' having erupted, although, prior to 1933 there had been a trend among German Jews 'to diminish the differences between themselves and their fellow Germans', Gluckstein denied the validity of that argument, putting on record that to take it as a 'justification for Jewish separatism and Jewish nationalism' seemed to him to amount to 'an adoption of the Hitler doctrine'.²²⁶ Henriques seconded by expressing his belief in the possibility to combine 'religious distinctiveness' and 'complete social assimilation' and opined that 'in Germany

Mr Daniel L. Lipson, MA, MP, Rabbi Dr Harold Reinhart, AB, Lt. Cmdr. the Hon. Ewen Montagu, OBE, KC, BA, LL.B, representing the Jewish Fellowship, 43-4, PRO 30/78/11.

²²² Ibid. 40.

²²³

Ibid. 45.

²²⁴

Ibid. 42.

²²⁵ Ibid. 5-55, 6-62.

²²⁶

Ibid. 60.

this religious distinction has been rather lost sight of by those who want to be identified as Germans'.²²⁷

Whereas the liberal assimilationist organizations, with the exception of the Jewish Fellowship, came to support significant parts of the Zionist platform, the radical assimilationist CPGP persisted in uncompromising opposition. Dismissing the current attacks on Jews in Poland as attempts to destabilize the Polish government and convinced that those who had an occupation would stay on as would those 'who believe they have a purpose in life which naturally would include the socialist minded and democratically minded people who feel that they are going to build up the country which they did not have an opportunity of doing before', Piratin and Gaster, who gave evidence on behalf of the CPGP, favoured Jewish reconstruction *in situ* over emigration.²²⁸ They demanded that after their rehabilitation the refugees be encouraged to return to their country of origin backed by definite guarantees of the United Nations. 'As for the remainder', point 7 of the CPGP's memorandum read, 'those who are unwilling under any circumstances to return to their homes... we consider it to be a moral responsibility of the United Nations to allow them entry, not under sufferance but as honoured guests with full and equal liberties, to all the *free* countries of the world.'²²⁹ To Crossman's question whether that meant 'to be given citizenship, to be naturalised?... That the American Immigration Law should be changed?', Piratin gave an affirmative answer, merely adding: 'And our British arrangements.'²³⁰ Whereas Piratin was confident that the United Nations would replace the paper guarantees of the inter-war period by effective instruments for the protection of minorities, Crossman cautioned that even if that was the case, 'it would take some years to make a Polish Jew have confidence that a United Nations guarantee means much in the sense of his defence in a small village in his local area.'²³¹

In the memorandum submitted to the Anglo-American Committee, as already at its congress in November 1945, the CPGP bemoaned the lack

²²⁷ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England. Tuesday, 29 January 1946', Major Sir Brunel Cohen, Col. L. H. Gluckstein, KC, Mr Basil L. Q. Henriques, JP; Mr Daniel L. Lipson, MA, MP, Rabbi Dr Harold Reinhart, AB, Lt. Cmdr. the Hon. Ewen Montagu, OBE, KC, BA, LL.B, representing the Jewish Fellowship, 43-4, PRO 30/78/11.

²²⁸ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England, Friday, 1 February 1946, Morning Session', Mr P. Piratin, MP, and Mr J. Gaster, representing the Communist Party, 25-42, PRO 30/78/13.

²²⁹ *European Jewry and the Palestine Problem. Statement. Submitted to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry by the Communist Party* (London, 1946), Spears Papers, St Antony's College, Oxford; *Jewish Clarion*, 20 February 1946, 3.

²³⁰ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England, Friday, 1 February 1946, Morning Session', Mr P. Piratin, MP, and Mr J. Gaster, representing the Communist Party, 34, PRO 30/78/13.

²³¹ *Ibid.* 35.

of democratic institutions in Mandatory Palestine. Opposed to a Jewish state it demanded instead the establishment of an independent Palestinian state at the earliest possible moment.²³² While the CPGB had accepted neither the justification of placing Palestine within the control of the British Empire nor of the deliberate creation of a Jewish majority, it acknowledged that over the past twenty-five years the Mandate had developed into a major centre of Jewish population, a development that was not to be reversed. In his oral evidence Piratin went as far as saying: 'We agree that a Jewish national home in Palestine is required, especially now with a population of 600,000.'²³³

If the CPGB's policies concerning the DPs and Jewish statehood were clear-cut, it was not clear to what extent they were representative of the views of its Jewish members and supporters. Aware that the American Communist Party had adopted an independent position on the future of the DPs and the Mandate, members of the Anglo-American Committee wanted to know whether there had been any protests from Jewish members of the CPGB against the party's official position. Gaster's evasive reply ('I can only say this . . . the substance of this policy was incorporated in a fairly lengthy resolution that was after discussion unanimously adopted at our last Congress in November [1945, S.W.] which was attended by over five hundred delegates from all over the country'²³⁴) amounted to an admission that although a semblance of unity was eventually achieved the subject had stirred up controversy. Morrison, who had asked Piratin about his Jewish constituents' response to the CPGB's Palestine policy, received no straightforward, but a nevertheless revealing answer. Piratin presented his victory, in a constituency where a third of the electorate was Jewish, as clear proof for his support by the majority of Jews, but conceded that if on balance he enjoyed their backing, he did so for other aspects of his policy than for his views on Palestine. After this admission Piratin returned to the Communist standard argumentation that 'working class Jews have mainly the outlook of the working class of other denominations' and that '[a]s regards the question of the outlook of Jewry, they have in the main the opinion that is linked with the particular democratic forces in the respective countries. They have a socialist conception in the main and they believe that Jewry should line up with the democratic forces in their respective countries to solve their problem.'²³⁵ When asked whether it was fair to assume, if one was 'taking Stepney as a typical example of a constituency with a considerable number of working class Jews, they are not wildly excited one way or

²³² Ibid. 28, 41–2.

²³³ Ibid. 36.

²³⁴ Ibid. 29.

²³⁵ Ibid. 29–30.

the other over the question of Palestine', Piratin agreed. Apparently the CPGB's Palestine policy had only been a marginal factor in determining the voting behaviour of his Jewish constituents.

While the verbatim records of the oral evidence which Piratin and Gaster presented to the Anglo-American Committee on behalf of the CPGB allow some insights into the controversies which the Zionist project had stirred up among its Jewish supporters, the summary of their evidence which appeared in the *Jewish Clarion* was a mere exposition of the traditional Communist dogmas on the Jewish condition, anti-Semitism, and Zionism: anti-Semitism was explained as a result of class warfare. To use Jews as scapegoats to divert the masses from their real problems was endemic to class society: 'Fascism had perfected this technique and exterminated over six million Jews in Europe.'²³⁶ The *Jewish Clarion* advanced four reasons why Zionism aggravated the sufferings of the Jews:

- (a) Because Zionist policy denies the solution to the problems of the Jews along the lines of democratic development within the countries where they lived;
- (b) By declaring that the only solution must be mass immigration to Palestine and therefore it agrees with the anti-Semites that the Jew is a 'foreigner' in the country of his birth;
- (c) By implying a self-imposed alien status upon the Jews in the countries where they live;
- (d) By its claim to Palestine as a Jewish National State Zionism becomes the tool of imperialist power politicians in the Middle East.²³⁷

Apart from Zionists, liberal assimilationists, and Communists also the radical Orthodox appeared before the Anglo-American Committee. Radical Orthodox opinion was represented by Dayan Rabbi Grunfeld, who had been designated by Chief Rabbi Hertz as the spokesman of the Beth Din,²³⁸ and by Goodman, Rabbi Ochs, and Rabbi Babad, who gave evidence on behalf of the London Executive of the Agudath Israel World Organization. With regard to the DPs Goodman stated that there was 'widespread, unchallenged evidence that the vast majority of displaced Jewish persons in Europe wish to settle in Palestine' and that there was a consensus between Orthodox and Zionists that Palestine was 'the only land in the world, as far as one can see, which is prepared to take them',

²³⁶ *Jewish Clarion*, 1946.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, England, Friday, 25 January 1946', 1-4, PRO 30/78/8.

and reiterated the demand, which had been put forward by the first Agudist post-war conference, that the doors of the Mandate be opened to Jewish immigration, subject only to the absorptive capacity of the country.²³⁹ According to Goodman 'the solution of the Jewish problem as such is quite an independent problem' and had not to be delayed until the coming of the Messiah. At any rate, 'The settlement in Palestine is a religious obligation and the gathering together of the dispersed of Israel is something which we believe will take place before the coming of the Messiah. The two do not synchronize in time.'²⁴⁰ Yet, in contrast to the Zionists, the British Agudas Israel did not only call for free Jewish immigration into the Mandate but also for an 'extension of the present immigration schemes to England and the U.S.A.'²⁴¹ Its espousal of freedom of migration as a general principle was unique among the propositions put before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry: 'It should... be the task of the leading powers of the UNO to impress on all the member nations a reversal of their present restrictive immigration policies, which are contrary not only to human brotherhood but also in many cases to the economic and social interests of the countries concerned.'²⁴² When Crick observed a contradiction between the Agudist recommendation that the DPs should be absorbed into Palestine within the shortest possible time on the one hand and the demand for changes in the American and British immigration laws on the other, Goodman clarified that only the entirely unattached DPs were supposed to emigrate to Palestine. The British Agudists entertained little hope, however, that immigration laws would in fact be changed. If, on pragmatic grounds, the radical Orthodox regarded Palestine as the primary place of refuge, they did not insist on channelling the DPs exclusively there. As Goodman put it: 'If Canada or Australia were prepared to take in a number, I see no reason why, if they wanted to, they should not be able to go there.'²⁴³ Asked by Singleton about the impact of Jewish immigration on Arab-Jewish relations, Goodman replied that the Arabs had nothing to lose by it, and when Singleton was not satisfied with this answer, he countered:

²³⁹ 'Memorandum submitted by the Agudas Israel World Organisation (London Executive) to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry', London, January 1946, AIWO, folder 19; 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', 55-6.

²⁴⁰ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', 68.

²⁴¹ 'Memorandum submitted by the Agudas Israel World Organisation (London Executive) to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry', London, January 1946, AIWO, folder 19.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946', Mr Harry A. Goodman accompanied by Rabbi A. Babad and Rabbi Dr D. Ochs, representing the Agudas Israel World Organization, 72-3, PRO 30/78/9.

‘Well, sir, we are trying to find, if I may say so, a solution of the [Jewish, S.W.] problem at the moment not of the Arab problem.’²⁴⁴

The claim of the Jewish people to Palestine had in Orthodox eyes its foundation in the eternal validity of the Covenant. As Goodman emphasized in his oral evidence, the acceptance of the Balfour Declaration, the approval of the Mandate for Palestine, and the rejection of the White Paper by the Agudas Israel followed from ‘our absolute belief that there is an inseparable association between the Jewish people and the Jewish land based on the Thora’.²⁴⁵ If the Orthodox claim to the Land of Israel was unequivocal, it was not translated into overall support for the Zionist project. With regard to the constitutional regime of the Mandate for Palestine the British Agudists objected to the monopolization of the JA by the WZO, called for the official recognition of those Orthodox who did not wish to be represented by the Zionist-controlled institutions of the *yishuv*, and put on record their opposition to a secular Jewish state. Goodman complained that ‘the task of the Mandatory Power to see that the Jewish Agency for Palestine should cooperate, as is laid down in paragraph 4 of the Mandate, with all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish National Home’ had not been fulfilled.²⁴⁶ Not only had the Agudas Israel World Organization been excluded from an official role in the development of the JNH, its members had for several years been unable to receive certificates for immigration from the JA and were accorded 6 per cent only after the intervention of the High Commissioner. If Goodman was critical of the biased allocation of certificates, he disagreed with Morrison and Crum, who had asked him whether there would have been fewer frictions between Arabs and Jews and fewer Jewish terrorist activities if the JA had admitted a larger number of Agudists. Regrettable as the JA’s discrimination in its selection of immigrants was from the perspective of the Orthodoxy of Jewish life in Palestine, it was responsible neither for Jewish terrorist attacks on the British nor for clashes between Arabs and Jews, for ‘when the Arabs riot, they don’t make any difference between orthodox Jews and unorthodox Jews’.²⁴⁷

The Agudist charges against the Zionists were not restricted to the distribution of certificates, but concerned, on a more fundamental level,

²⁴⁴ ‘Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946’, 62.

²⁴⁵ ‘Memorandum submitted by the Agudas Israel World Organisation (London Executive) to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry’, London, January 1946, AIWO, folder 19; ‘Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946’, 54, PRO 30/78/9.

²⁴⁶ ‘Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, England. Monday, 28 January 1946’, 56–7, PRO 30/78/9.

²⁴⁷ Ibid. 74–5.

their attitude towards Orthodoxy. 'The real difficulty', as Goodman put it, was that the AI was based on Orthodoxy, whereas the WZO was not: 'There is a very important religious section, but the Zionist organization as such, if we put it mildly, is neutral in regard to religious work.'²⁴⁸ What was at issue was the meaning of religion for Jewish existence, as Goodman explained: 'Our criticism of the Zionist organization is that we do not believe that religion is a private affair of the Jewish individual. We believe it is an affair of the Jewish nation and the Jewish family and the Jewish home. We cannot understand a Jewish organization of any description saying, 'We want a Jewish home but we are neutral "vis a vis Judaism."'²⁴⁹

In a supplementary confidential memorandum Goodman was more outspoken in his criticism of the powers possessed by the WZO in relation to the Mandatory power, which he blamed in large measure for the deterioration of the situation in Palestine. As a remedy he suggested the reorganization of the JA to comprise all groups interested in the building of the JNH: 'in this manner the more moderate elements, both the non-Zionists and orthodox Jews could exercise restraint.'²⁵⁰ Apart from reservations about Zionist policy towards Britain and the Arabs Goodman's main grievance was the Zionist monopoly of the privileged public status which the JA enjoyed under the constitution of the Mandate. Contrary to the impression given by the Zionists that they represented a broad coalition, Goodman protested that 'in point of fact the whole movement is completely dominated by the Jewish Socialist Party Poalei Zion', in Palestine by the 'Histadrut, a left-wing irreligious and nationalist movement'.²⁵¹ During the 1930s Zionist control of the JA and, thus, of the distribution of immigration certificates had impaired the chances of the Orthodox to escape from persecution and extermination:

Not a single certificate was given for years to any applicant not a member of the Zionist Organisation. In this manner they wielded considerable influence, bearing in mind that for many years the obtention of a certificate meant life—or a concentration camp. No member of the Agudas Israel received a certificate until, owing to repeated intervention at the Colonial Office, the High Commissioner and the League of Nations, the Agency was compelled to arrive at an agreement giving our organisation 6%. When it is borne in mind that in central and eastern Europe at least 50% of the Jewish population are rigidly orthodox,

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 66.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. 69.

²⁵⁰ Goodman to Harold Beely, Secretary of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, 1 February 1946, AIWO, folder 19.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

that our organisation was directly represented for 20 years in Polish Seim and Senate, . . . this 6% was a farce, which often proved a tragedy.²⁵²

As a consequence, Goodman demanded that either the JA be reconstructed or divested of its control over the issue of certificates: 'Immigration should take place either through ordinary British consular channels, or the Colonial Office should insist on the setting up of a politically neutral economic body as Jewish Agency on which Zionists, non-Zionists and Agudists should be equally represented.'²⁵³

With regard to the constitutional future of the Mandate Goodman went as far as playing with the idea of an Arab Agency, and eventually a joint Arab–Jewish Agency. He left no doubt that whilst the AI wanted to see the continued development of the JNH and the extension of Jewish immigration, it had no interest in a Jewish state per se. If the government decided on a firm policy making it clear that 'Jews will not be allowed to dominate Arabs, nor Arabs Jews' and allowing immigration 'to the utmost absorptive capacity of the country, in particular from the camps in Germany and Italy', Goodman argued, the 'problem of a Jewish State does not arise'.²⁵⁴ While Goodman's evidence before the Anglo-American Committee—with the exception of his suggestion to set up an Arab Agency—enjoyed the support of the British and US branches of the AI,²⁵⁵ the authority of the London-based Advisory Executive Committee to speak on behalf of the Agudas Israel World Organization was permanently challenged by Agudist circles in the Mandate since the end of the Second World War. The opposition centred on Dr Isaac Breuer and the PAI, who had boycotted the AI conference held in London in December 1945.²⁵⁶ There Goodman had carried the day against a reluctant minority and seized the opportunity provided by the Anglo-American Committee to reassert the Agudists' liberty of action: 'We must break the monopoly of the Histadrut. In no circumstances should we go as part of the Agency delegation. We must finally emancipate ourselves.'²⁵⁷ While the JA had agreed to liaise with the AI in political questions and to co-opt one of its

²⁵² Goodman to Harold Beely, Secretary of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, 1 February 1946, AIWO, folder 19.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ AIWO, Advisory Committee, New York, Minutes, 7 February 1946; AIWO, Advisory Executive, London, Minutes, 13 February 1946, AIWO, folder 19.

²⁵⁶ Breuer's animosity towards the Agudist leadership, in particular Rosenheim, dated back to the succession crisis in the leadership of the neo-Orthodox *Austrittsgemeinde* in Frankfurt am Main: Isaac Breuer, *Mein Weg*, ed. Mordechai Breuer (Zurich, 1988).

²⁵⁷ Harry Goodman to Rosenheim, I. M. Lewin, Blau, Ehrmann, Jacobsen, 15 February 1946, AIWO folder 19.

members to the commission on immigration, the Zionists were neither prepared to discuss the public status of religion in the prospective state, nor to give the Agudists a share in the Zionist funds, nor to raise their portion of certificates beyond 7 per cent.²⁵⁸ As the negotiations between the JA and the AI had yielded only limited results, the Agudist leadership saw little reason why they should acquiesce in the Zionist claim to overall Jewish representation. The PAI, by contrast, favoured cooperation with the JA. In *Shearim*, the official newspaper of the PAI, Breuer attacked the British AI for appearing before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry and demanded that all affairs relating to the Mandate be left to the Palestine AI. When the Anglo-American Committee proceeded to Palestine, British and American Agudist circles remained apprehensive until the last minute as to whether the local AI would step out of line. Their feeling of relief over Breuer's evidence²⁵⁹ was proportionate to the shock it produced in Zionist quarters. Rosenheim commented: 'Nach allem was voran ging war die klare, ehrliche Stellungnahme gegen den souveränen Juedischen Staat eine frohe Ueberraschung fuer uns.'²⁶⁰ Goodman was sufficiently contented with the Palestine AI memorandum's 'clear charges against the Jewish Agency' to conclude that 'the views of Jerusalem and London in these matters are not far apart'.²⁶¹

The testimonies presented to the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry provide a comprehensive overview over the panorama of British-Jewish opinion not only on the DPs and Palestine crises, but also, on a more fundamental level, on Jewish existence in the diaspora and Zionist state- and nation-building. They are also indicative of changes of opinion since the Second World War. At one extreme the establishment of a Jewish state was uncompromisingly rejected on theoretical and practical grounds by Jewish Communists like Piratin and Gaster who represented the CPGB before the Anglo-American Committee. It was not only as a matter of principle that Communist assimilationists were opposed to a

²⁵⁸ AIWO, Advisory Committee, New York, 13 March 1946, AIWO, folder 8.

²⁵⁹ 'Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, Hearing in Jerusalem, Palestine, Wednesday, 13 March 1946', PRO 30/78/20, 2-4, 9-13; Isaac Breuer, 'Testimony before the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry', in Rivka Horwitz (ed.), *Isaac Breuer: The Man and his Thought* [Hebrew] (Ramat Gan, 1988).

²⁶⁰ 'After all that had happened the unequivocal, honest statement against the sovereign Jewish State came as a pleasant surprise to us', Rosenheim to I. M. Lewin, 14, 27 March 1946, AIWO, folder 19.

²⁶¹ Goodman to Lewin, 21 March 1946; the British AI likewise approved of the evidence and memorandum presented by the Palestine AI with the exception of the suggestion to have the constitutional future of the Mandate decided by an international court. AIWO, Advisory Executive, London, Minutes, 2 April 1946, AIWO, folder 19.

Jewish nation-state and demanded an independent Palestinian state, but also on practical grounds, dismissing Jewish statehood as an adequate means of alleviating Jewish suffering. If liberal assimilationists shared the theoretical reservations about a Jewish nation-state as well as the anxiety that a Jewish state would give credence to the idea that Jews were foreigners elsewhere, they, except for the radical minority of the Jewish Fellowship, had come to accept the practical advantages of the Zionist project. In contrast to Communist and intransigent liberal assimilationists, who insisted on the separation of the displaced persons problem from the political future of the Mandate, assimilationist British-Jewish opinion as represented by the AJA or ICA had, although reluctantly, linked the two issues. Whereas Jewish Communists abiding by the party line continued to place their hopes in the Soviet Union as the harbinger of a society welcoming Jews as equal participants and regarded Zionism as an irritating deviation from this goal, liberal assimilationists had become disillusioned with their counterparts in the non-Jewish world, the liberal democracies, and, despite continuing reservations, in particular regarding the claims of the prospective Jewish polity on the Jewish diaspora, begun to accommodate themselves to the Zionist project.

The proceedings of the Anglo-American Committee took place against the background of heightening tension in Palestine and growing animosity towards Zionism and Jews in Britain. The attitude of the British public was a matter of increasing concern for the JA.²⁶² With the exception of the *MG* no paper had published the Zionist evidence before the Committee of Enquiry.

On 18 April 1946, on his return to London Sacher informed 77 Great Russell Street of the current situation in Palestine. Concerning the prospects of what British initiative the *yishuv* would put up with Sacher was of the opinion that 'if the British returned to a pre-White Paper policy, i.e. with immigration based on absorptive capacity and with no land restrictions, that might satisfy the *yishuv*. The same would be true of a reasonable partition or a bi-national state—anything which allows expansion without artificial restriction.'²⁶³ Asked about the British military interest in Palestine, Sacher warned his audience not to attach too much importance to this calculation. While the military was still thinking along traditional lines such as the maintenance of imperial communications, they could change their minds and cut their losses. Foreseeing demands for the withdrawal from the Middle East and anticipating 'that the British might quit', Sacher thought it illusory for the Zionists to rely on the permanence of the British presence.²⁶⁴

²⁶² JA (London Executive), 22, 24 January, 4 February 1946, CZA Z4/302/31.

²⁶³ JA (London Executive), 18 April 1946, CZA Z4.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

When the report of the Anglo-American Committee was released, 77 Great Russell Street was split over how to respond. While Ben Gurion insisted on the continuation of the fight for a Jewish state, Sacher, Marks, and Dugdale suggested a policy of acceptance while reserving their ultimate goal.²⁶⁵ In the end, the JA did not respond officially before the US government reacted and Marks sent a non-committal letter to *The Times*, demanding of Attlee the acceptance of the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry and blaming Jewish terrorism on British policy.²⁶⁶

On 15 May 1946 events took a turn for the worse for the Zionist side. Not only did the government announce the postponement of its statement on the Committee's report, 77 Great Russell Street got notice that the JA's liquidation had been raised by the Premier.²⁶⁷ With government and public opinion becoming more and more hostile to Zionist aspirations, 77 Great Russell Street became so concerned with the lack of rapport with British public opinion that Ben Gurion suggested the JA employ 'an anglicised Jew who would be fully informed as to the English state of mind'.²⁶⁸ Brodetsky and Dugdale considered this proposal a waste of money, with the latter remarking: 'they had long passed the stage when British public opinion mattered. They were in the stream of big events which were now taking place and to spend four thousands a year to explain the meaning of those events seemed a waste.'²⁶⁹

Stein commented on the mounting tensions in Palestine in summer 1946 that on the one hand the AJA was 'bound to support His Majesty's Government in any measures which can be shown to be indispensably necessary in the interests of public order and security in Palestine', that they would not 'condone acts of violence', and that they resented 'the objectionable inflammatory propaganda carried on by certain groups in the United States'.²⁷⁰ On the other hand he called for an investigation into the roots of the imbroglio: 'we cannot close our eyes to the events which led to the present lamentable situation.'²⁷¹ As a remedy he advocated a policy based in principle on the recommendations of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, which were to be implemented as soon as American cooperation had been secured. Convinced that 'the demand

²⁶⁵ JA (London Executive), 29 April 1946.

²⁶⁶ Marks to Weizmann, 3 May 1946, WA 2656; letter to the editor by Marks, *The Times*, 4 May 1946, 5.

²⁶⁷ JA (London Executive), 15 May 1946, CZA Z4/302/31.

²⁶⁸ JA (London Executive), 19 June 1946, CZA Z4/302/31.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ AJA, Minutes, Statement by the President on the Course of Events in Palestine, 3 July 1946, endorsed at Council Meeting, 8 July 1946, AJ37/1/6.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

for a Jewish State is ill-advised and against the true interests of the Jewish National Home in Palestine' and having 'consistently abstained from advancing it' the Association accepted the recommendations in their entirety thus not only assenting to the immigration of 100,000 Jewish displaced persons, but also to the proposition that Palestine should be neither an Arab nor a Jewish state. As late as 23 July 1946 the AJA expressed its support for a 'league for Arab-Jewish Cooperation' working for a bi-national Palestine.²⁷²

When the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry released its report, Gaster denounced the proposals as the result of imperialist power politics and hypocrisy: 'Let Britain and the U.S. if they mean business show the way to other countries by opening their own gates without "red tape" and immigration bars to the Displaced Jews.'²⁷³

Against the background of the disappointment with the non-implementation of the recommendations made by the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, with Jews running the British blockade, establishing new settlements, and the Mandatory making reprisals on the *yishuv*, the situation in Palestine escalated. The arrest of over 2,000 leaders of the *yishuv* on 29 June 1946 provoked a storm of popular protest. On 7 July about 8,000 demonstrators, led by the Jewish war hero Thomas Gould, VC, marched from the East End via Beaver Hall, where the ZF had organized a special emergency conference, to Trafalgar Square.²⁷⁴ The demonstration ended there with the crowd singing the Hatikvah and 'God Save the King' and a deputation proceeding to 10 Downing Street to present to the Prime Minister the protest resolution. The ZF condemned 'the aggressive action taken by British forces on the orders of His Majesty's Government against the Jewish community of Palestine, its leaders and the elected representatives of the World Zionist Movement. . . . repudiates the attempt to place the blame upon the whole Yishuv . . . for the terror perpetrated by small groups under the stress of the frustration and despair created by the continuation of the illegal and immoral policy of the 1939 White Paper which was unequivocally condemned by, among others, the British Labour Party and leading members of the present Government', and demanded the immediate release of the arrested politicians, the cessation of attacks on Jewish settlements, and the opening of Palestine to 100,000 Jews from the Continent.²⁷⁵ The mass protests in London

²⁷² AJA, Minutes, 23 July 1946, AJ37/1/6.

²⁷³ *Jewish Clarion*.

²⁷⁴ JC, 12 July 1946, 7; *Zionist Federation: Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (London, n.d.), 10.

²⁷⁵ Palestine Emergency Resolution, Special Conference, ZF, 7 July 1946, CZA F13/334.

were echoed in the provinces. In Glasgow 2,000 demonstrators marched from South Portland Street Synagogue into George Square, with the Union Jack and the blue-and-white banner flying over their heads, and the Jewish Representative Council declared the 'British government, by its policy of procrastination and vacillation, responsible for the present tragic position'.²⁷⁶ Mass meetings took place also in Liverpool, Leeds, and Manchester.²⁷⁷

In 1947 relations between Britain and the Zionist movement deteriorated further. Against the background of Jewish immigration into Palestine, which was increasing despite the efforts of the British authorities to intercept the refugee ships, culminating in the *Exodus* affair, the kidnapping of British military and civilian personnel by right-wing extremists, the whipping of Englishmen in retaliation for the flogging of members of their own groups, the hanging of two sergeants after the execution of two of their members, and the introduction of a repressive regime after the declaration of martial law in March 1947. On the one hand the condition of British Jews deteriorated as the ZF's annual report recorded: 'The struggle between the British forces and the dissidents in Palestine was paralleled by an increasing tide of anti-Semitism in England. Synagogues have been desecrated, anti-Semitic slogans have once more become frequent, and garbled newspaper stories have fed the fires of misunderstanding and hatred.'²⁷⁸ Against this background of heightened anti-Semitism the ZF expanded its activities. Zionists voiced their views at public meetings and reached a larger audience than before.²⁷⁹

FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL TO THE SUEZ CRISIS

When the State of Israel had been proclaimed on 14 May 1948, survived the first crucial months of its existence, and gained the recognition of the superpowers and Britain, one of the most agonizing periods of modern British Jewry came to an end. Not immediately though, as Britain's belated *de jure* recognition of the State of Israel and a clash of Israeli and British warplanes over the Negev demonstrated. The mixture of relief and

²⁷⁶ JC, 12 July 1946, 12; *Zionist Federation: Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (London, n.d.), 5–6; Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, 8 July 1946, CZA F13/334.

²⁷⁷ JC, 19 July 1946, 12.

²⁷⁸ *Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Seventh Annual Report* (London, n.d.), 5.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

concern which was typical of British Jewry in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the State of Israel is brought out in a letter of Melchett to Weizmann in which he expressed his satisfaction that despite an 'exhibition of raw and unbridled anti-semitism' *The Times* had accepted the 'fact that Israel has now been established by Jewish arms'.²⁸⁰

Although the end of the Mandate and the establishment of the State of Israel had placed British Jews in the same position as other Jews in the diaspora as far as their relationship to their respective nation-state was concerned, the question of dual loyalties did not arise 'more acutely than before'.²⁸¹ The establishment of the State of Israel and its subsequent recognition by the international community were decisive in altering the terms in which the debate over Zionism was conducted between Jews and non-Jews.²⁸²

The proclamation and recognition of the Jewish state in 1948 not only affected Jewish/non-Jewish relations, but also threw into focus the question of what the Zionist project meant for Jews who were not Israeli citizens. There were two schools of thought among British Zionists about the merits of Zionist nation-building in the diaspora after the foundation of the State of Israel. In Britain, Namier and Koestler were the most vocal protagonists of the former strand which came to be known as Koestlerism. Their argument was that now that there was a Jewish state, Jews had the option of either going there or of merging with their respective larger societies: 'The conclusion is that since the foundation of the Hebrew State the attitude of Jews who are unwilling to go there yet insist on remaining a community in some ways apart from their fellow-citizens has become an untenable anachronism . . . ' Speaking for himself and many thousands in a similar situation, Koestler continued:

They have done what they could to help to secure a haven for the homeless; to establish the new State in the teeth of prejudice, violence, and political treachery. Now that Israel is firmly established it remains for them to wish it good luck and to go their own way—with now and then a friendly glance back and a helpful gesture. But nevertheless to go their own way with the nations whose life and culture they share, without reservations or split loyalties.²⁸³

Koestler's train of thought was not shared by the majority of British Zionists who advocated a concept of Zionism that extended beyond the

²⁸⁰ Melchett to Weizmann, 16 July 1948, WA 2849; *The Times*, 15 July 1948.

²⁸¹ Norman Bentwich, 'The State of Israel and Jewish Loyalties', 1, CZA A255/7.

²⁸² For a general discussion of Israel's relations with the diaspora see Ben Halpern, *The Idea of the Jewish State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), 211–48.

²⁸³ Koestler: 'The End of a Mission: The Jewish Future', *Manchester Guardian*, 23 December 1948, 4, 6.

State of Israel and in which they could claim a share. Locker stressed that Zionism was not limited to the Jewish nation-state: 'The State was not created for the inhabitants of Israel alone. This movement of liberation called Zionism is in a way similar to other nations which have struggled for liberty and independence.'²⁸⁴ Brodetsky also rejected the notion that the establishment of the State of Israel meant the end of diaspora Zionism. The plane of citizenship excepted, he allowed for no differentiation between Israeli and non-Israeli Jews: 'We are one Jewish people!'²⁸⁵ The continued existence of the WZO was necessary, he argued, to do (a) the political work Israeli diplomats would not be able to perform, lobbying MPs, the press, and the non-Jewish public, (b) propaganda among Jews, (c) cultural work, (d) fundraising, and (e) assistance with *aliyah*.²⁸⁶ Brodetsky's views were echoed by the ZF's honorary officers, who favoured a *Gegenwartsprogramm* and were opposed to turning the ZO 'into a sort of "Society of Friends of Israel"'.²⁸⁷

With the exception of political work which was passed from the JA's London Executive to the Israeli Legation the moment it was opened, Brodetsky's prognosis was borne out by subsequent events.

Koestler's denial that there was no third way provoked a controversy with Isaiah Berlin, who insisted on a variety of ways of being Jewish.²⁸⁸ The idiosyncratic view that the Ashkenazim were in the main descended from the Khazars and had, therefore, little to do with the State of Israel or the Jewish tradition at large, which Koestler expounded in *The Thirteenth Tribe* may be taken as an attempt to provide a justification for his own attitude towards the Jewish state, whose establishment he welcomed, but in which he saw no place for himself.²⁸⁹

If the levels of both anxiety and commitment characteristic of the years preceding the birth of the State of Israel were not upheld in the 1950s, this is not to be mistaken for apathy. The diplomatic and military conflicts Israel was engaged in, British Middle East policy, Israeli domestic policy, and the division of labour between the Zionist Federation and the Israeli Embassy were concerns for British Jews. Notwithstanding the appointment of the observant Mordechai Eliash as Israel's first representative to the Court of St James, Orthodox British Jews, including Chief Rabbi Brodie, became disillusioned with the secular orientation of Israeli society. On the occasion

²⁸⁴ Locker, ZF, 49th Annual Conference, 8, CZA F13/1004/II.

²⁸⁵ Brodetsky, ZF, 48th Annual Conference, 1949, 15, CZA F13/1004/II.

²⁸⁶ ZF, Honorary Officers, 28 July 1948, F13/1007/I.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ David Cesarani, *Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind* (London, 1998).

²⁸⁹ Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and its Heritage* (London, 1976).

of the Quiba incident, the Israeli government was heavily criticized by British Jews. During the Suez crisis, the greater part of British-Jewish opinion supported Israel as acting in self-defence and asserting its legitimate claim to free navigation through the Suez Canal under international law, though not necessarily the motives behind the British government's intervention. Adopting both supportive and critical attitudes to Israel testified to the continued involvement of British Jews in the Zionist project on various levels and their refashioning as part-time members of the new Jewish nation.

5

Belonging through Giving? Financial and Economic Support

To give a comprehensive assessment of the economic and financial contribution of British Jews to the establishment of the Jewish polity in the Middle East raises difficulties, since support was given through a multitude of channels, organizationally and privately. A necessarily incomplete picture may be gleaned from the following figures. They should be taken as rough indicators rather than as precise statistical data.²⁹⁰

Donating money to Zionist funds gave British Jews opportunities to participate in Jewish state- and nation-building. The JNF and the KH were the two principal funds of the Zionist movement. The former was concerned with the purchase of land in Mandatory Palestine, the latter provided the finances to run the machinery of the Zionist movement and contributed to Jewish state- and nation-building. The British KH contributed to the costs of the Zionist movement on the transnational as well as on the national British level. Before the establishment of the State of Israel, the funds enabled the Zionist movement to build up a state-like infrastructure, complete with health and educational system. After 1948 they were instrumental in assisting the internal nation-building process of the Jewish state, in particular, the absorption of immigrants. Apart from the two major Zionist funds, British Jews contributed to funds which were tied to Zionist parties or specific purposes. Of the Zionist parties, the Mizrahi and the Socialist Zionists had their own fundraising agencies. Although operating outside the Zionist party spectrum, the British AI supported Orthodox projects in the Mandate and Israel. To the party funds must be added those devoted to charitable and educational purposes such as WIZO, Children and Youth Aliyah, and the Friends of the Hebrew University.

The British-Jewish participation in the JNF over the first fifty years of its existence is calculated to have accounted for about 7 per cent of

²⁹⁰ If not otherwise indicated, the figures are taken from the ZF's Annual Reports.

the total.²⁹¹ This amounted to approximately £4,000,000. From its inception in 1921 until 1948, British Jews contributed an estimated £2,800,000 to the KH, also about 10 per cent of its income, to Youth Aliyah over £500,000, and to the Hebrew University approximately £500,000. From 1933 until 1940, when the fundraising machinery of the British KH was tied to the appeals for Jewish refugees, the KH and the JNF benefited on the scale of approximately £2,000,000 from the contributions of British Jews, as compared to £14,000,000 raised the world over. Following negotiations between British Zionists and the New Court Circle in 1933, the British KH had suspended its independent fundraising efforts and placed its machinery and staff at the disposal of the CBF and later the Council for German Jewry. On the Council for German Jewry the assimilationist side was represented by Sir Herbert Samuel as chairman, Lord Bearsted, and Sir Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid, the Zionist side by Weizmann, Marks, Namier, Brodetsky, and Maurice Perlzweig, the latter three in an alternating capacity. The agreement between the British KH and the Council for German Jewry terminated in early 1940. After lengthy negotiations another joint appeal was launched in February 1940 with Anthony de Rothschild and Marks as joint presidents and Lionel Cohen and Sieff as joint chairmen. In early 1941 the British KH terminated the cooperation with the Council for German Jewry and launched its own appeal in the hope of increasing the Zionist share in the proceeds.²⁹² With the KH increasing its income to £90,000 in the 1941 drive, as compared to the £75,000 it had been accorded in 1940 under the agreement with the assimilationists, the calculation of the Zionist hardliners which had expected an increase of the income of the KH, if it turned to the British-Jewish public with an appeal for Zionist funds, proved correct. In 1942, the income of the KH increased to £125,000, in 1943 to £238,500. The income of the JNF which had not been part to the Joint Appeals for Refugees run by Zionists and assimilationists rose from £64,109 in 1939 to £384,000 in 1943. For three consecutive years, from 1944 until 1946, the KH, the JNF, FWZ, Children and Youth Aliyah, and the Mizrahi Palestine Fund combined forces in the UPA campaigns. The allocation of the funds under the UPA agreement was 39.5 per cent each to the KH and the JNF, 11 per cent to Youth Aliyah, 6 per cent to the FWZ, and 4 per cent to the Mizrahi. In 1944, the UPA raised £434,000, in 1945 £402,000, and in 1946

²⁹¹ Elias Epstein, 'British Zionists' Contribution to Israel', in Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 315–17.

²⁹² For controversy among South African Jews about Zionist priority in the allocation of funds see Shimoni, *South African Experience*, 171–2.

£447,000.²⁹³ In January 1947, the UPA broke up as a result of the demand for a greater share in the proceeds by the junior partners which the KH and the JNF were not prepared to fulfil. In 1947, the latter two set up the JPA, which raised £565,000. In 1949, the figure dropped to £1,278,643.²⁹⁴ The income of the JPA passed the £2,000,000 mark again in 1951 with a sum of more than £2,310,000. During the 1950s the income of the KH varied between £1,250,000 and £1,500,000, peaking close to £1,750,000 during the Suez crisis.²⁹⁵ The number of direct contributors to the KH, the UPA, and JPA showed the following development: 5,500 direct donors contributed to the KH in 1943, and 8,000 in 1944. The number of direct donors to the UPA and JPA respectively stood at 10,000 in 1946, rose to 23,000 in 1947, peaked at 33,000 in 1948, and dropped to 16,000 in 1949.²⁹⁶

Apart from direct assistance in the form of donations to Zionist funds, food parcels in the early years of Jewish statehood, and material support of British *olim*, British Jews supported the *yishuv* and the State of Israel in a number of indirect ways, for example, through private investment, the buying of its products, and tourism. Investment companies such as the Palestine Corporation were financed in Britain. Private investment from 1922 to 1948 is estimated to have amounted to £12,500,000.²⁹⁷

The industry of the Mandate was helped by exports of *Totzeret Ha'aretz* which penetrated a number of British stores like Selfridges as a result of British Zionists' business connections. From the 1950s, the ZF encouraged British Jews to visit Israel as tourists.

The following tentative conclusions can be drawn from the picture painted above. First, in particular through the Zionist funds, but also in a number of more indirect ways, British Jews assisted the Zionist state- and nation-building project in the Middle East. Second, more interesting than the figures as such are the trends they indicate. Both the amounts of money raised by the major Zionist funds, as well as the number of direct, major contributors, suggest a direct relationship between the willingness of British Jews to give on the one hand, and the critical years of Jewish state-building on the other. Third, raising further questions rather than providing definite answers, the dissolution of the joint fundraising efforts

²⁹³ JC, 31 January 1947; CZA KH4/10505.

²⁹⁴ 'Marks "Family"', ch. vii, 7, M&SCA; ZF, Annual Conference, JPA Session, 2 February 1947, 24, CZA F13.

²⁹⁵ Schneier Levenberg, 'Forty Years of the Keren Hayesod', in *Zionist Yearbook*, 5720—1959/1960 (London, 1960), 320–6.

²⁹⁶ 'Marks "Family"', ch. vii, 7, M&SCA; ZF, Annual Conference, JPA Session, 2 February 1947, 24, CZA F13.

²⁹⁷ Elias Epstein, 'British Zionists' Contribution to Israel', in Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 315–17.

between Zionists and assimilationists in 1941 and the subsequent increasing successes of Zionist fundraising efforts suggest (a) that the British Zionist leadership echelon accorded Jewish state- and nation-building priority over other Jewish needs, and (b) that fundraising for a national purpose, or the combination of a national and a charitable purpose, proved more attractive to British Jews than donating money for relief or rescue of Jews irrespective of national considerations. The first hypothesis can be answered in the affirmative. To give a satisfactory answer to the problem of whether British Jews at the grassroots level made conscious choices between Zionist and other Jewish purposes in donating money requires a detailed study of its own. The following quotation suggests that the insistence of the British Zionist leadership on obtaining maximum financial support for the Zionist project in the Middle East to the detriment of relief and rescue was neither perceived in terms of choice at the grassroots level of British Jews, nor that such a one-sided decision would have been approved of, if it had been presented in terms of choice. Among British Zionists two opinions existed on the relation between Zionist fundraising and *Hatzalah*. Whereas the ZF's Council favoured the inclusion of *Hatzalah* in the UPA appeal, its President, Simon Marks, favoured separate appeals, which amounted to a rejection of the idea of raising money specifically for the purpose of rescue. In 1944, the Manchester ZCC appealed to Marks to reconsider his attitude, arguing that it was impractical to have two separate appeals: 'They have always stressed in the U.P.A. here in recent years the strong factor that it is the only constructive effort in the work of salvage of the remnants of our people and they give the general impression that we are in fact rescuing Jews from the Continent of Europe. In their opinion it would be ruinous to now give the impression that rescue work as such is in fact not within our purview...' ²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ Norman Jacobs to Bakstansky, 28 April 1944, CZA F13/9.

6

Aliyah

Part-Timers and Full-Timers

According to the figures of the *Hitachdut Olei Britannia* approximately 6,000 Jews from Britain had settled in Israel by 1959.²⁹⁹ One can distinguish between several categories of British *olim*, according to their employer or the organization which facilitated their emigration and which also reflected their occupational profile and motivation. Both the British administration of Mandatory Palestine and Zionist institutions drew on the services of British Jews, several of whom stayed on for good. The precedent of government service was followed by the State of Israel which employed a number of British Jews.³⁰⁰ *Chalutzic aliyah* from Britain varied considerably during the period under consideration. An estimated 600 to 700 *chalutzim* went from Britain to Israel between 1948 and 1958; several thousand had gone during the preceding decade. This period was exceptional first because of the transit of continental *chalutzim* through Britain and second because an array of emotional, political, and economic factors in the immediate post-war period induced British Jews to look for a life overseas.³⁰¹ Two exclusively *chalutzic* youth movements, Hashomer Hatzair and BACHAD, and one that was pioneering in part, Habonim, had existed in Britain since the 1930s. Whereas the graduates of Hashomer Hatzair and of Habonim emigrated under the auspices of HeChalutz, until December 1949 altogether 1,123,³⁰² BACHAD operated independently. The first group of *chalutzim* had left Britain in 1937.³⁰³ Among

²⁹⁹ Schneier Levenberg, 'British Aliyah', *Zionist Year Book*, 5713—1958/59 (London, 1959), 337; Shlomo Temkin, 'The Israel Office of the Zionist Federation', in *Zionist Year Book* 5714—1959/1960 (London, 1960), 328.

³⁰⁰ Lucien Harris, 'British Settlers in Israel', in *Zionist Year Book* 5720—1959/1960, 335–6; for a list of British Jews employed in the public sector of the Mandate and the State of Israel see Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 321–3 and Elias Epstein, 'British Jewry's Contribution to Israel', *JC*, 25 March 1949, 10.

³⁰¹ Levenberg, 'British Aliyah', 337.

³⁰² *Zionist Federation: Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (London, [1950]), 63.

³⁰³ *JC*, 28 May 1937, 27.

the first settlements populated by *olim* from Britain was the Anglo-Baltic Kibbutz.³⁰⁴ Kfar Blum was established in 1943 as the first kibbutz of Habonim. Kibbutz Habonim, later renamed Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi, was established in 1948 as the second kibbutz of Habonim, the Anglo-Hungarian Kibbutz Yasur by Hashomer Hatzair in December 1948—reinforced by *chalutzim* from Bedford in December 1949³⁰⁵—and Kibbutz Lavi by BACHAD in 1949. Beth HaEmek was founded in 1951 as the third kibbutz of Habonim. Kfar Mordechai, sponsored by the ZF as a cooperative settlement for middle-class immigrants from Britain, was established in 1952. In 1953 Kibbutz Amiad was reinforced by Habonim, Kibbutz Zikim by Hashomer Hatzair, and the settlement Massuoth Yitzchak by BACHAD.³⁰⁶

In contrast to the pioneering youth movements the Professional and Technical Workers' Aliyah (PATWA), founded in 1943 by Walter Eytan and several other British Jews working at Bletchley, promoted non-*chalutzic* emigration.³⁰⁷ At first, PATWA appealed only to would-be emigrants with university degrees; later it included also applicants who were skilled or possessed technical knowledge. With the number of professional *olim* from Britain reaching the 1,000 mark in 1958, PATWA came to provide a greater share of immigrants than *chalutzic aliyah*. The promotion of the *aliyah* of professional and skilled Jews through PATWA was a specifically British contribution to Zionist state- and nation-building. It was regarded as a 'product of British Zionism', from where the idea spread to other countries.³⁰⁸

Apart from government service, *chalutzic*, and professional *aliyah*, there were several other routes by which British Jews arrived in the JNH and the State of Israel. Relatives followed immigrants. Pensioners spent their old age in Israel. British Jews who came as tourists decided to stay on, as did *machalniks* and participants in the various Zionist programmes that gave young people an opportunity to spend a limited period of time in Israel. Haonim, a *moshav* near Atlit, was set up in 1948 by *machalniks* from South Africa and Britain. The settlement Bet Chever was founded in 1951 by *machalniks* from Britain and other Western countries.

With regard to *aliyah*, work-sharing between Anglo-American and European Zionists has long been taken for granted. While it was the task of the former to mobilize political and financial support, the exclusive provision

³⁰⁴ ZF, 39th Annual Conference, 14 May 1939, Minutes, 7–8, CZA F13/1003.

³⁰⁵ JC, 7 January 1949, 9; 23 December 1949, 8.

³⁰⁶ Shlomo Temkin, 'The Israel Office of the Zionist Federation', in *Zionist Year Book 5714—1959/1960* (London, 1960), 330–1.

³⁰⁷ Interview with Walter Eytan, 3–7, HU, No. 2354.

³⁰⁸ Schneier Levenberg, 'British Aliyah', 340.

of manpower fell, often involuntarily, to the latter. This black-and-white interpretation minimizing the impact of British *olim* for Zionist state- and nation-building and, in particular, the place of *aliyah* within British Zionism needs to be partially revised in two respects. First, while *aliyah* from Britain was small in absolute numbers—although higher than from other Western countries with the exception of South Africa³⁰⁹—it made a significant contribution to the Zionist project through the provision of professional and skilled immigrants. PATWA played a pioneering role in assisting the immigration of qualified British Jews and was adopted by the JA as a model for the promotion of *aliyah* from Western countries. Second, although the ZF, in contrast to the British Mizrachi, HeChalutz, and Hashomer Hatzair, had not incorporated a formal demand for *aliyah* into its platform, it did not disapprove of the emigration of its members as a matter of principle, as did the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA). Referring tongue in cheek to ZOA's hostility towards *aliyah*, the report of the ZF's 51st Annual Conference recalled that the situation in Britain contrasted positively with other countries where 'the necessity and even possibility of chalutzit was doubted'.³¹⁰ Elias Epstein, a British Jew who had become an Israeli civil servant, captured the attitude towards *aliyah* that was prevailing in the British Zionist youth movements in his recollections: with British Zionists regarding the Jewish polity as 'a national centre of the Jewish people and not only as a refuge for the persecuted', "Mass" emigration from England to Israel was never evoked, but the practical significance and moral value of the settlement of individuals, and later of groups, was emphasised.³¹¹ While calls for the voluntary wholesale liquidation of the *galuth* that were ritually emanating from emissaries of the *yishuv* and Israel were met with polite silence by British Zionists and although the Spartan living conditions British *olim* were subjected to during the transfer to and during the initial period of their stay in Israel frequently gave rise to criticism among British Zionists,³¹² there was no opposition within British Zionist ranks to *aliyah* as a matter of principle. The reasons for British *aliyah* varied from the preponderant desire to live in a Jewish society to economic problems, fear of anti-Semitism, and a sense of adventure.³¹³

The support of the British Zionist movement for *aliyah* was not restricted to the absence of opposition, occasional verbal encouragement

³⁰⁹ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 323.

³¹⁰ L. Schafer to WZO, Organization Dept., 3 April 1952, CZA S5/10483.

³¹¹ Schneier Levenberg, 'British Aliyah', 317–18.

³¹² Leeds ZC, 17 November 1949, Leeds JNF Commission.

³¹³ Schneier Levenberg, 'British Aliyah', 341.

at the sessions which the ZF regularly devoted to *aliyah* during its annual conferences,³¹⁴ or the casual interest in events like the departure of the 'Third English Aliyah' on 16 January 1939, which comprised eight *olim* and was worth a picture to the *JC*,³¹⁵ nor was *aliyah* the compartmentalized playground of the *chalutzic* youth movements and PATWA. The interest of the movement as whole found practical expression in the financing of several *hachshara* centres in Britain. Of the altogether 600 who had gone on *aliyah* in 1951, for example, 150 were *chalutzim*, of whom 100 had been trained on farms of the ZF.³¹⁶ By opening an Israel Office in Tel Aviv in October 1949 which provided loans to individual British *olim* and settlements populated by British immigrants, the ZF extended its support also to British Jews who had settled in Israel.³¹⁷ Apart from coordinating assistance for British *olim*, the Israel Office of the ZF initiated the *Hitachdut Olei Britannia*, an association of *olim* from Britain, and provided help for British-Jewish tourists.

Aliyah from Britain did not only constitute a contribution to the Zionist project in the Middle East, it was also instrumental for Zionist nation-building in Britain by creating numerous links between the Jewish polity and British Jewry. The settlements populated by British Jews were the recipients of charitable donations from books to food parcels. In 1953, for example, Leeds Zionists, local JNF fellowships and women's groups, and the New Leeds society sent a consignment of 1,000 books to the Technion in Haifa, Kfar Blum, Kfar Hanassi, Beth HaEmek, and Kfar Mordecai.³¹⁸

By serving as destinations of support, foci of interest, and sources of pride British *olim* and the settlements populated by them provided British Jews with opportunities to feel part of the new, Palestinocentric Jewish nation.

³¹⁴ ZF, 39th Annual Conference, 14 May 1939, Minutes, 7–8, CZA F13/1003.

³¹⁵ *JC*, 20 January 1939, 25.

³¹⁶ *ZF*, 51st Annual Report, 10.

³¹⁷ *Zionist Federation: Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (London, [1950]), 27–8; L. Schaffer to WZO, Organization Dept., 3 April 1952, CZA S5/10483.

³¹⁸ Leeds ZC, Annual Report 1952/53, 6, Leeds JNF Commission.

7

Fighting and Dying for the Jewish Nation

The involvement of British Jews with the military side of the Zionist project was not restricted to agitation for the establishment of a Jewish fighting force during the Second World War. British Jews fought in military units that were bound up with Zionist state- and nation-building. A significant, if limited number had joined the ranks of the Jewish Brigade, which saw action in the final stages of the Second World War. Several hundred were among the *machalniks*, volunteers from the diaspora who fought in the Israeli War of Independence.

BRITISH JEWS AND THE JEWISH BRIGADE

Immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War the JA and the NZO had started lobbying the British government to give Jews the opportunity to fight the Axis powers in separate Jewish units. A distinctly Jewish contribution to the Allied war effort was to give substance to the Zionist claim that the Jews constituted a nation and to strengthen the Zionist bargaining position for a Jewish state at the prospective peace conference. While Palestinian Jews were expected to provide the bulk of the manpower, the Jewish units should, in principal, be open to all Jews. In 1944 the British government, after protracted negotiations, allowed the formation of a Jewish Brigade which saw active service in Italy and took part in the occupation of Germany. The personnel of the Jewish Brigade was comprised primarily of Palestinian Jews and Jewish refugees, but also included a number of Jews from Britain and the British Dominions.

For the Jewish Agency the public and diplomatic campaign for the formation of a Jewish fighting force played a key role in the struggle for the recognition of the Jews as a nation and the establishment of a Jewish state. The personal motivation for British Jews to join the Jewish Brigade differed. In case of British Zionists like Wellesley Aron or Cyril Goodman

as well as members of the *chalutzic* youth movements joining the Jewish Brigade meant a particularly intensive, if temporary, involvement in Zionist state- and nation-building.³¹⁹ A resolution adopted by the Jewish Brigade's English-speaking members expressed their motives, declaring that if they did not emigrate themselves they saw their fight as part of the nation's birth, and called on the Jews in the Anglo-American world to participate 'in the upbuilding of Eretz Israel'.³²⁰

On a more general level, service in distinct Jewish military units could also serve as a vehicle for the expression of Jewish national sentiment that was not defined in Zionist terms. For self-declared non-Zionists like Edmund de Rothschild, who served as an officer in the artillery unit of the Jewish Brigade, the primary motive for joining it had been to fight against the Germans as a Jew. His case exemplifies how the Zionist movement succeeded in allying non-Zionist support by meeting a demand for which there was no alternative way of satisfaction.

BRITISH *MACHALNIKS* IN THE ISRAELI WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Participation in Israel's War of Independence was another radical, if also temporary, form of identification with the military side of the Zionist project. At the ZF's 47th Annual Conference in January 1948, Brodetsky and Locker appealed to British Jews 'to stand behind the Yishuv, not only with money and sympathy and political support but with readiness to go and take part in the fight, to sacrifice [their, S.W.] lives'.³²¹ More than 1,000 British Jews were reported to have been among the *machalniks*, the volunteers from abroad.³²² This figure apparently includes British Jews resident in the Mandate, for when Brodetsky reported to the ZF's 48th Annual Conference that several hundred British Jews had volunteered to fight in Israel's War of Independence, he spoke of *c.*650 British subjects, some of them non-Jews.³²³ According to the internal records of

³¹⁹ ZF, Executive Council, 23 October 1944, CZA Z4/10.299 III; ZCC of Manchester & Salford, Executive, 12 December 1944, CZA F13/19; Leeds Zionist Council, 16 May 1945, Leeds JNF Commission.

³²⁰ *A Call to English-Speaking Youth*, Ellul/August 1945, LILA IV 208-1-3311 D.

³²¹ Brodetsky, Political Address, 5; Berl Locker, Political Address, 6, ZF, 47th Annual Conference, 31 January 1948, CZA F13/1004-I.

³²² Elias Epstein, 'British Zionists' Contribution to Israel', in Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 319–20.

³²³ Brodetsky, ZF, 48th Annual Conference, 1949, 15, CZA F13/1004/II; Norman Bentwich, 'State', 3, CZA A255/7.

the Israel Defence Forces, out of a total of 4,500 *machalniks*, 800 had come from Britain, another 800 from the United States, 600 from South Africa, and 300 from Canada.³²⁴

The British *machalniks* served in any military formation of the Israeli Defence Forces, Army, Navy, and Air Force. Their contribution to the embryonic Israeli Air Force, one of whose tasks it was to move weapons from Czechoslovakia to Israel, was appreciated as particularly valuable. Some of the British volunteers died in the hostilities, among them Esther Cailingold, the daughter of a London publisher, who lost her life in the defence of the Old City.³²⁵ It was not only the *machalniks* who had died for the Jewish state-to-be whom British Zionists recorded with pride, but also Jews who had gone on *aliyah* earlier on and fell in 1948. Ten members of the British Zionist youth movement died in the War of Independence.³²⁶

The recruitment of volunteers from Britain in the first half of 1948 had been a joint effort of the JA and the British Zionist movement. In Leeds, for example, a meeting for ex-servicemen was called at Jubilee Hall, at which 600 men were present. With only 11 volunteers, Leeds was badly represented compared to places like London, Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow. After a health check by local doctors, the volunteers were questioned about their motivation and experience by JA representatives in London, at Marks & Spencer, where Haganah recruiters had secretly set up shop, before they were sent to Marseilles, where they underwent basic Hebrew and military training by instructors from the *yishuv*. Through May, June, and July 1948 British *machalniks* arrived in Palestine by various routes.³²⁷ Their participation in the War of Independence helped create the Jewish nation-state and reinforced the volunteers' Zionist commitment. A British *machalnik* recalls national pride and a feeling of satisfaction at the accomplishment of difficult tasks as a lasting legacy of his experience:

when our Berets with the Magen David were presented to us we were all thrilled at the feeling of being Jews in a Jewish Army, the true descendants of the Maccabeans. . . . Although my experiences . . . were often hazardous and difficult,

³²⁴ Report to the Chief of Staff by Akiva Skidell, Head of Mahal, 27 April 1949, Israel Defence Forces Archive, 1308/50-435, quoted from Shimoni, *South African Experience*, 200–1.

³²⁵ Elias Epstein, 'British Zionists' Contribution to Israel', in Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 319–20; *JC*, 11 June 1948, 1.

³²⁶ *Zionist Federation: Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (London, [1949]), 21, 44.

³²⁷ Louis N. Harris, 'An Historic Journey: Recollections of 1948', *Leeds Jewish Representative Council: Year Book 1970*, 14; Jason Fenton, *Volunteers in the War of Independence* (New York, 1998).

I still look back on 1948 and 1949 as years of achievement and personal satisfaction.³²⁸

It was not only the individual British Jew who forged a particularly close link with the Zionist project through his or her voluntary military service in the Israeli War of Independence.

The appeal which participation in the military side of the Zionist project held out to British Jews as well as the controversies surrounding it may be explored within four contexts. First, although it was Emperor Joseph II who had first introduced military service for his Jewish subjects, it was the *levée en masse* of the French Revolutionary Wars that provided the model for the citizen-soldier as an attribute of the modern nation-state and for the obligation to risk one's life in the service of the nation. Accordingly, the army service of Jews came to be seen both as a vehicle and as an expression of their integration. The association of military service, citizenship, and national loyalty explains both the symbolic value which the Zionists accorded to the establishment of a Jewish fighting force, however small, and the opposition of assimilationist quarters.

Second, the idea of enlisting the support of a national movement intent on (re)gaining its independence is as old as Napoleon and the Polish Legion serving under his command from 1797. Apart from other non-Jewish examples like the Czech Legion there were also Jewish precedents for separate Jewish military units. The Zion Mule Corps, originally consisting of Jews expelled by the Turks from Palestine, took part in the Gallipoli campaign under the command of Lt.-Col. J. H. Patterson. Towards the end of the First World War the British government authorized the formation of Jewish military units in Britain. The three battalions of the City of London Regiment, the Royal Fusiliers, the 38th, 39th, and 40th battalions, became known as the Jewish Legion.

Third, independent of and in part contradicting Zionist motivation a specific Jewish contribution to the war effort was also justified as a way of combating anti-Semitism or as a demonstration of loyalty. It was in this sense, as a defence measure, that the BoD deliberated the donation of a squadron of Spitfires.

Fourth, the British forces included not only contingents from overseas, but also units tied to the historic components of the United Kingdom.

³²⁸ Louis N. Harris, 'An Historic Journey: Recollections of 1948', *Leeds Jewish Representative Council: Year Book 1970*, 14.

In contrast to the practice of other countries, where military service is an instrument used to break up regional loyalties, Britain had a tradition of making use of them. It was also against the background of the existence of Scottish, Welsh, and Irish military units that British Zionists considered the formation of a Jewish Fighting Force plausible.

III

THE CONQUEST OF THE COMMUNITY

The Zionization of British Jewry

While Part II is concerned with British-Jewish responses to the Zionist project in the Middle East, Part III investigates Zionist nation-building within the British-Jewish community. Looking back at where the process started reveals the extent of the Zionist transformation of British Jewry during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. With the exception of an upsurge of activity in the wake of the Balfour Declaration, the British Zionist movement had been moribund for most of the inter-war period.¹ Although there had been an upward trend from the early 1930s, it was only from the late 1930s that it turned into a mass phenomenon. Apart from the weakness of the British Zionist movement itself, important areas of the British-Jewish public and social sphere, in particular the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the communal parliament of British Jewry, and the synagogues,² the key associational units of British Jewry, had remained reserved or indifferent towards Zionism during the inter-war period. By the 1950s the picture had changed dramatically. This process is approached from four perspectives. The eighth chapter charts the growth of the Zionist movement. The ninth chapter examines the main instruments of internal nation-building from fundraising to demonstrations, committee meetings, garden parties, lectures, and bazaars through which British Jews came to imagine themselves as part-time members of the new Jewish nation with its centre in the *yishuv* and subsequently the State of Israel. The tenth chapter charts the proliferation of Zionism within the institutional fabric of British Jewry and the eleventh chapter investigates how the rise of Zionism relates to the social transformation of British Jewry.

¹ For a detailed survey of the state of affairs of British Zionism during the 1920s and 1930s see Cesarani, 'Zionism'.

² Ibid. 164-5.

8

The Weight of Numbers

Whether one takes the number of Zionist associations, the membership figures of Zionist organizations, parties, or local societies, the density of the organizational infrastructure, the variety of Zionist publications, or the results of shekel sales and the participation in Zionist Congress elections as indicators, the general development of the British Zionist movement was characterized by continuous growth from the second half of the 1930s.

Changes in the size, efficiency, and diversity of the organizational infrastructure of the Zionist movement are yardsticks for measuring the expansion of the Zionist public and social sphere in Britain. From the mid-1930s numerous new Zionist societies were founded, in particular in the London suburbs, in Camden Town, Edgware, and Hendon; others which had been moribund during the 1920 and early 1930s, like the Manchester Zionist Association, were reconstituted.³ The development of the corporate membership of the ZF in the period under consideration shows the following picture. The number of constituent bodies of the ZF rose continually from 111 in 1939 to 326 in 1953, and then stabilized at around 300. These figures comprise the General Zionist Societies as well as the groups of the following affiliated organizations: FWZ, FZY, PZ (since 1942), HeChalutz (since 1943), HH/Mapam (since 1951), and the JSP (from 1945 to 1946). The number of affiliated synagogues dropped from 71 in 1939 to 51 in 1944, picked up in the second half of the 1940s, reached a record number of approximately 130 during the early 1950s, and then contracted again. The number of affiliated friendly societies, shrinking from 64 in 1939 to 20 in 1944, shared the downward trend of the synagogue affiliation during the war, but not its post-war recovery.⁴

A further indicator for the growth of British Zionism is the increase in the individual membership of Zionist societies and the ZF as a whole. By

³ ZF, *39th Annual Report*, 19.

⁴ For the development of the ZF's corporate membership from 1939 until 1956 see Appendix II.

launching a membership campaign in early 1943 the ZF, together with its principal affiliates, the FWZ and the PZ, hoped to increase the number of its members from 5,500 to a joint membership of 50,000. The target for London and the Home Counties stood at 25,000 to 30,000. The figure aimed at for Birmingham was 1,500, for Cardiff 1,000, for Glasgow 5,000, for Leeds 5,000, for Liverpool 2,000, for Manchester 7,500, and for Sheffield 1,000.⁵ The membership drive, which was carried out by full-time organizers, achieved considerable results. The aggregate membership of the ZF rose from 5,500 in 1942 to 31,000 in 1946.⁶ In London, the overall membership of the constituent societies of the ZF and its affiliated bodies, excluding friendly societies and synagogues, increased from 2,000 in 1942 to 8,500 in 1943.⁷ The following figures are available for individual societies: between 1942 and 1946 the membership of Beth Zion, the East London Zionist society, rose from 51 to 1,150, of Barcai, the Zionist society of Cricklewood and Willesden, from 101 to 800, of Golders Green from 56 to 635, of Hampstead Garden Suburb from 68 to 445, of Hendon from 25 to 500, of St John's Wood & Maida Vale from 150 to 759, of Stamford Hill from 51 to 1,418, and of West Central from 51 to 800. The picture in the provinces resembled the development in London. In Glasgow, membership of the Zionist Organization rose from 149 in 1942 to 450 in 1946, in Leeds from 150 to 639. In Liverpool the figure stood in 1946 at 279 and in Manchester at 740.⁸ The membership of the FWZ rose from 2,740 in 1938 to 5,400 in 1943 and to 16,000 in 1957.⁹ The membership figures for individual London societies and provincial centres were those of the respective General Zionist Society, and, therefore, represented only part of the local Zionist clientele. Whereas, for example, the Liverpool General Zionists counted only 350 members in 1944, the Liverpool ZCC, the local Zionist umbrella organization, reckoned with an overall Zionist membership of 1,200 in adult organizations and 200 in junior ones.¹⁰ By the end of 1930s, the major provincial communities, with the exception of Glasgow, possessed ZCC for the overall coordination of local Zionist activities. The number of the ZF's direct annual subscribers, which prior to May 1947 had never exceeded 250, increased to 1,350 in 1948, of which 80 per cent lived in London. Subscription stood at £10. 10s. in 1949.¹¹

⁵ Honorary Officers, ZF, 4 February 1943, CZA Z4/10.346 I.

⁶ *Zionist Federation: Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (London, n.d.), 7.

⁷ ZF, Supplement to letter to Janner dated 18 May 1944, CZA/Z4/10299-II.

⁸ ZF, Membership Figures 5705/1946, CZA F13/41-I; see Appendix III.

⁹ ZR, 5 November 1943; JC, 30 July 1943; ZF, 57th Annual Report, 63, see appendix.

¹⁰ M. Schwab to Bakstansky, 23 July 1944, CZA F13/21.

¹¹ *Zionist Federation: Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (London, [1949]), 12.

Apart from the expansion of the organizational infrastructure of that segment of the British Zionist movement which was general Zionist in the sense of having the broadest appeal and General Zionist in the sense of party affiliation, the period under scrutiny also witnessed the organizational consolidation of the increasing diversification in two areas: party politics and *chalutz* work. By the 1930s the General, Socialist, Marxist, Religious, and Revisionist strands of Zionism had established themselves as permanent features of the British-Jewish landscape, complete with national executives, conferences, branches in the major Jewish population centres, publications, and at least a rudimentary organizational machinery. Whereas the *chalutzic* and Marxist radicalism of HH and the chronic internal strife within Revisionist ranks between the JSP and the NZO confined both the extreme secular Left and Right to the margins of the British Zionist party spectrum, the PZ and the Religious Zionists were solidly entrenched. While the Mizrachi, in contrast to the PZ, remained outside the centre of power of the British Zionist movement, in numerical terms it could lay claim to a following rivalling, and by the 1950s out-doing, that of the PZ. If the arrival of Jewish refugees had given an injection to the flagging indigenous Mizrachi Federation, the same can be said of pioneering Zionism. Due to the influx of continental members of HeChalutz, BACHAD, and HH, the fledgling British efforts at *chalutz* work since the mid-1920s were transformed into a permanent feature of British Zionism.¹² In 1934 the ZF set up a Hechalutz Committee for the supervision of the *bachshara* centres of the secular *chalutzic* Youth Movements and in 1935 bought a training farm, named the Eder farm. This farm, located first at Ringlestone near Maidstone in Kent and moved to Horsham in Sussex in 1947, became the showpiece of the ZF's involvement in pioneering Zionism.¹³ In addition to the David Eder farm, the ZF's HeChalutz Committee supported the *bachshara* centres at Redhill in Surrey, Bosham, and Bedford. The trainees at the Eder farm, at Redhill, and Bosham were mainly recruits from Habonim, those at Bedford from

¹² While several studies have been devoted to the history of Jewish refugees from the Continent, their impact on the consolidation of radical Orthodoxy and Zionism has not been thoroughly explored. See Werner E. Mosse (ed.), *Second Chance: Two Centuries of German Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom* (Tübingen, 1991); Marion Berghahn, *Continental Britons: German-Jewish Refugees from Nazi-Germany* (London, 1984); Rainer Kölmel, *Die Geschichte deutsch-jüdischer Refugees in Schottland* (Ruprecht-Karl Universität Heidelberg doctoral thesis, 1979); for an introduction to the relationship between continental refugees and the British Zionist Youth Movements see David Mendelsohn, 'Zionist Youth Movements in Britain' (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem MA thesis, 1982).

¹³ ZF, 39th Annual Report, 27–8.

HH.¹⁴ BACHAD, the religious pioneering youth movement, operated its *hachshara* centres independently of the ZF.

Parallel to the expansion of the Zionist organizational infrastructure and their membership their machinery became more professional. Although continuing to rely heavily on voluntary participation, the voluntary component of Zionist activities was complemented by the work of an increasing number of full- and part-time officials. During the 1940s, the movement towards greater efficiency was particularly marked in the areas of Zionist propaganda and lobbying. Whereas negotiations with the government fell within the prerogative of the JA, British Zionists played a supportive role through lobbying MPs and propagating Zionist aims with both the general and the British-Jewish public. The JA's London Information Department, partly staffed by British Jews, stood at the intersection between the JA, the ZF, and British Zionist grassroots activities. The internal lines of communication were strengthened through the establishment of a network of Zionist key men. They had to ensure Zionist majorities in their respective communal bodies, when issues of Zionist interest were at stake, as, for example, in 1944 during the controversies with the AJA over the Zionists' demand for a Jewish state. The personnel of the JA's Information Department and the members of the ZF's Organization and Propaganda Committee supplied speakers to address the non-Jewish public as well as the Zionist constituency. At the local level, these efforts were echoed in the establishment of Propaganda and Information Committees, whose activities ranged from monitoring the local press and lobbying local MPs, to maintaining contacts with civic dignitaries and Christian clergy and seeking to convince the local Jewish and non-Jewish public of the merits of Zionism.

One aspect of the intensification and professionalization of Zionist activities was the proliferation of Zionist publications in the form of books, such as those of Namier which were sponsored by the WZO,¹⁵ pamphlet literature, and periodicals. In part, the increasing number of printed media served the internal demands of the growing Zionist movement; in part, mainly as a result of the campaign for Jewish statehood, they were directed at the non-Jewish public, though their readership was not restricted to it. The ZR, the official organ of the ZF, which had ceased publication in 1926, was resurrected in 1934. It was run jointly by the General Zionists and the PZ. Although suffering from chronic financial difficulties, it continued until 1952, when the *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review* took its place. After 1945 the ZF published *The Gates of Zion*

¹⁴ ZF, 47th Annual Conference, CZA Z4/10.346-V.

¹⁵ Weizmann to Dugdale, 8 January 1943, WA 2420.

which targeted the synagogue-going British-Jewish public. Apart from the bi-monthly *Jewish Labour*, the PZ distributed the weekly *Jewish Labour News* among Labour Party, cooperative movement, and trade union activists, which increased its circulation from 700 in 1945 to 3,000 in 1949, and published the *Yiddisher Sozialist* and the *Poale Zion Information*. In addition to its own publications the Executive of the PZ distributed copies of the American *Jewish Frontier* and the South African *Labour Zionist*.¹⁶ The *Jewish Standard*, the organ of the world NZO, catered for Revisionist Zionists. The JNF published the *JNF News*. Beyond the periodical press the 1930s and 1940s witnessed the publication of several books promoting the Zionist case¹⁷ and reprints of Zionist classics and a mushrooming of pamphlets, newsletters, and internal circulars catering for the internal needs of the various ideological shades and generational strata of British Zionism. In 1943 the PZ, for example, published several pamphlets: *An Australian Looks at Palestine*, *Road to New Life* by Freda Whittaker, *Labour and the Jewish People*, and *Jews, Arabs and the Middle East* by Ephraim Broido. In addition to printed publications the PZ issued the following stencilled material: 'What is Poale Zion?' by Berl Locker, 'The Co-operative Movement in Palestine', 'Road Transport in Palestine', 'The Histadrut', 'Ourselves and Moscow' by I. Klinov and reprints of two articles on anti-Semitism by Harold Laski in the *New Statesman and Nation* and *Time and Tide*.¹⁸

Shekel sales, on which representation at the congresses of the WZO was based, and participation in the elections to Zionist Congresses serve as yardsticks both for the growth of the British Zionist movement and its ideological diversity. For much of the 1920s and 1930s, actual shekel sales remained below 20,000 and had to be artificially inflated to guarantee British Zionists a respectable delegation to Zionist congresses.¹⁹ In 1939 shekel sales rose to a pre-war peak of 23,750. With approximately 13,000 shekels sold in 1941 and 15,000 in 1942, sales slumped during the first years of the war. They picked up again with around 24,000 shekels being sold in 1943, 21,532 in 1944 (5704), and 31,200 in 1945 (5705), reached a peak with 67,200 in 1946 (5706), and dropped again.

¹⁶ 'Poale Zion. Jewish Socialist Labour Party. Annual Report. Submitted to National Conference, 1st & 2nd April 1944', 8, LALI IV-208-1-3311B.

¹⁷ Paul Goodman (ed.), *The Jewish National Home: The Second November 1917-1942* (London, 1943); Schneier Levenberg, *The Jews and Palestine: A Study in Labour Zionism* (London, 1945); Henry Mond, *Thy Neighbour* (London, 1936); Lewis Namier, *Conflicts: Studies in Contemporary History* (London, 1942); idem, *Facing East* (London, 1947).

¹⁸ 'Poale Zion. Jewish Socialist Labour Party. Annual Report. Submitted to National Conference, 1st & 2nd April 1944', 7, LALI IV-208-1-3311B.

¹⁹ Cesarani, 'Zionism', 18-19.

In 1949 (5709) 46,560 shekels were sold, 48,456 in 1950 (5710), and 171,008 in the campaign prior to the 24th Zionist Congress in 1956.

Shekel sales are not only an indicator for the ability of the Zionist movement as a whole to mobilize British Jews, but also for the strength of the individual Zionist parties and organizations which sold them. In 1936, with the ZF selling 17,000 shekels as compared with a mere 100 sold by the Mizrachi, 50 by the PZ, and 5 by the JSP, the General Zionists possessed almost a monopoly. Of the 67,200 shekels sold in 1946 (5706) the General Zionists had sold 35,726, of which 9,459 had been sold through the FWZ and 3,967 through synagogues, the JSP and the Revisionists came second with 10,294, the PZ third with 10,262, the Religious Zionists fourth with 8,543, and HH fifth with 2,375 shekels.²⁰ In 1947 (5707) the General Zionists sold 34,543, including 5,468 through synagogues), the PZ 5,105, the Mizrachi 3,250, the UZR 735, and HH 500. Of the 54,939 shekels sold in 1948 (5708) the general Zionists share accounted for 37,384, to which the synagogues had contributed 6,500 and the FWZ 10,000, the PZ for 10,000, the Mizrachi for 5,481, HH for 1,339, and the UZR for 735. Of the 46,560 shekels sold in 1949 (5709) the constituent bodies of the ZF were responsible for the sale of 38,625. Out of the 48,456 shekels sold in 1950 (5710) the General Zionists sold 41,241. To the 171,008 shekels sold in the campaign prior to the 24th Zionist Congress the ZF contributed 112,894, the Mizrachi 23,598, the PZ 21,997, Mapam 10,269, the Revisionists 404, Achdut Avodah 204, Dror Hechalutz 15, and others 1,627.²¹

As shekel sales required a certain amount of organizational machinery, their results reveal more about the organizational strength of the Zionist organizations which undertook them than about the ideological predilections of the buyer. The extent to which the General Zionists owed their high shekel sales to their superior machinery can be gleaned from the results of the Zionist Congress elections, which convey a more accurate picture of the ideological leanings of British Zionists.

At the elections to the 19th Zionist Congress the General Zionists won seven, the Mizrachi three, the PZ two, and the JSP no seats.²² The British delegates to the 20th and 21st Zionist congresses had not been elected, but had been chosen by arrangements between the major British Zionist parties. Of the fifteen British seats at the 20th Congress seven were allotted to the General Zionists, three to the Mizrachi, three to the PZ, and one to

²⁰ Central Election Board for Great Britain and Ireland, 21 October 1946, CZA F13/1011 I; *JC*, 1 November 1946, 6.

²¹ *ZF, 55th Annual Report* (London, 1955), 53.

²² *JC*, 9 August 1935, 18.

the JSP.²³ At the 21st Congress eight seats went to the General Zionists, three each to the Mizrachi and the PZ, and one to the JSP. The election to the 22nd Zionist Congress in 1946 was openly contested again.²⁴ Around 20,000 went to the polls, about four times as many as at any previous Congress election in Britain.²⁵ As many of the voters had not been on the register, the Central Election Board invalidated 5,248 votes, a decision against which the Revisionists protested.²⁶ The General Zionists won four seats, the Religious Zionists three seats, the PZ two seats, and the UZR one seat. At the Congress elections in October 1950 the General Zionists polled 4,253 votes, the Mizrachi 3,054, the PZ 2,892, Mapam 606, and the Revisionists 141, which left the General Zionists with four mandates, the Socialist and the Religious Zionists with three each, and Mapam and the Revisionists with none.²⁷

What conclusions may be drawn from the shekel sales and the participation in Congress elections? While the development of the shekel sales during the period under scrutiny was characterized by an upward trend, the rise was not continuous. Against the background of the acute national crisis in 1946, shekel sales peaked and the participation in the elections for the 22nd Zionist Congress also saw an unprecedented turnout. About a quarter of the voters had apparently gone spontaneously to the polling stations as they cast their votes without having bought the required shekel beforehand. Judging by the shekel sales and the participation in Congress elections which were expanding in general and in 1946 in particular, the Zionist movement in Britain not only became more attractive, it also grew more diverse ideologically. Although the General Zionists preserved their leading position, their relative weight within the British Zionist party spectrum diminished. While the General Zionists, thanks to their near-complete overlap with the ZF and their backing by the FWZ and sympathetic synagogues, which made them more a general Zionist organization than a General Zionist party, continually sold by far the largest amount of shekels of all the Zionist parties, the election results indicate significant shifts at their expense. The popularity, however, which the different Zionist parties enjoyed among the electorate was not necessarily reflected in their place in the power structure of the British Zionist movement. The Mizrachi, which was neither affiliated to the ZF nor

²³ *JC*, 18 June 1937, 34.

²⁴ ZF, Honorary Officers, 24 September 1946, CZA F13/1007-I.

²⁵ *JC*, 18 October 1946, 1.

²⁶ Central Election Board for Great Britain and Ireland, Minutes, 21 October 1946, CZA F13/1011 I.

²⁷ ZF, *Annual Report 1950*, 49–50; General Election Board, 14 November 1950, CZA F13/1011 I.

prominent in political lobbying or fundraising and effectively excluded from the commanding roles of the British Zionist movement by General and Socialist Zionists, could claim a following which was far larger than their marginal position could lead one to expect. In the 1946 election they polled almost as many votes as the PZ, in fact more, if one takes into account only the valid votes. In the 1950 elections, they came close to three-quarters of the General Zionist share and overtook the PZ. The short-lived success of the Revisionists in 1946 when they sold 10,294 shekels shows the potential extent of the reservoir of secular, right-wing Zionism. It remains unclear, however, whether the British Revisionists benefited more from the tense atmosphere of the late 1940s or the suppression of their internal squabbles after the fusion of the JSP and the NZO into the UZR on 19 March 1946.²⁸ The figures presented above are indicative of the expansion of the Zionist share in the British-Jewish public and social sphere, but have no automatic explanatory value for the process of the Zionization of British Jewry.

²⁸ *JC*, 5 April 1946.

9

Avenues of Internal Nation-Building

The Zionist transformation of British Jewry cannot be reduced to the expansion of Zionist activity in quantitative terms. The process of how British Jews came to see themselves as participants in the new, national Jewish community with its focus in the JNH and the State of Israel will be illustrated by exploring four vehicles of internal Zionist nation-building: meeting as Zionists, visualizing Zion, parading Modern Hebrew as the national language, and fundraising.

THE BLUE AND WHITE BAZAAR: BRITISH JEWS MEETING AS ZIONISTS

The importance of the institution of the Zionist Congress as a crucial instrument of Zionist nation-building in Western countries has been recognized.²⁹ In contrast to the meetings of the Zionist parliament on the transnational level little has been done to explore the significance of regularly recurring meetings on the state or local level for Zionist nation-building.

The ZF's annual conferences provide an instructive example of the role which associational life played in the process of British Jews inventing themselves as part-time members of the modern Jewish nation with its focus in the JNH and subsequently the State of Israel. Each year they provided the representatives of Zionist societies and of other Zionist organizations affiliated to the ZF with an opportunity of meeting and socializing with fellow Zionists, listening to the speeches of British and non-British Zionists, exchanging views on Zionist high politics, deciding on British Zionist matters, and passing resolutions. For two or three days they could meet, talk, and feel as near full-time members of the new, Jewish nation. While resembling the conferences and annual meetings of

²⁹ Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, 4, 8–39.

political parties and associations, the ZF's annual conferences were not a mere variation on a general British theme. Several elements, including the composition of the audience, the visual symbolism, linguistics, and the topics under discussion, marked them as part not only of the British, but also of the transnational Zionist sphere.

With the growing number of Zionist societies, the number of delegates at the ZF's annual conferences rose from 439 in 1938 to more than a thousand by the beginning of the 1950s. As the ZF's annual conferences were attended not only by the delegates of British Zionist parties and organizations, but also by Zionist politicians active at the inter-state level, or occupying positions both in the British and the world Zionist movement, by visitors from the *yishuv* and later Israel, and by continental refugee Zionists, they provided the audience with an opportunity to imagine themselves as members of a nation cutting across state boundaries. With part of the JA's Executive permanently or temporarily based in London, speeches by Zionist luminaries such as Weizmann, who combined the offices of President of the WZO and the ZF, were regular features at the ZF's annual conferences.

Apart from the composition of the ZF's annual conferences, their visual symbolism, the increasing, if largely ritualistic, tributes to Modern Hebrew language and culture, as well as the nature of the topics under discussion, reinforced their function as a link between British Zionism and the Zionist movement at large. With the delegates meeting in assembly halls adorned with the national colours blue and white and displays of the Star of David and singing the *Hatikvah*, the anthem of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel, the ZF's annual conferences were instrumental in engendering feelings of national communion. The debates of British Zionists on the future of the JNH had the same effect. Their primary significance, like those of the countless resolutions passed and congratulatory or protest telegrams sent, did not lie in the impact they had either on Zionist politics or on British Middle Eastern policy, but in the fact that British Zionists expressed their solidarity with the Jewish polity and their pride in its constructive achievements through them, thereby asserting themselves as part of the Jewish nation. The role of the ZF's annual conferences as a vehicle for British Jews to invent themselves as part-time Palestinocentric Jewish nationalists was, however, not restricted to rhetoric. If the delegates had for the overwhelming part no inclination to go on *aliyah*, they would nevertheless once a year renew the grants for the *chalutzim* at the Eder farm or the ZF's Israel Office catering for British *olim*.

The ZF's annual conferences acted as a powerful medium of transmitting the Zionist agenda. With the press commenting on the events and the

delegates conveying their impressions to the bodies they represented, Zionist conferences reached a British-Jewish audience far broader than the circle of Zionist activists.

The annual conferences of the Zionist parties, the FWZ, the JNF, and the Zionist Youth Movements, the frequent emergency mass meetings of the 1940s, the Israel Independence Day celebrations after 1948, and a plethora of similar functions at the grassroots level provided British Zionists with an increasing number of further arenas where they could act as part-time members of the wider Zionist community. The annual conferences of the JNF for Great Britain and Ireland almost equalled those of the ZF. The JNF's 21st Annual Conference for example lasted for two days from 5 to 6 January 1946 and was attended by 280 delegates.³⁰ In recognition of the value of the ZF's annual conferences as vehicles of nation-building, the ZF's leadership established in the 1930s and 1940s regional councils and conferences.³¹

Zionist associational life gave British Jews not only opportunities of imagining themselves as part-time Palestinocentric Jewish nationalists, but also of demonstrating their British loyalties. Until 1947 the resolutions passed at the ZF's annual conference recommended the inclusion of the prospective Jewish state within the British Commonwealth of Nations. At Zionist functions in general it had become customary to sing the Hatikvah along with 'God save the Queen'.³²

BRITISH JEWS VISUALIZING ZION

The promotion of a stock of Zionist visual themes depicting the landscape of Palestine and of its Jewish society was another important means of bringing about the national transformation of Jewish consciousness in Western countries.³³ British Zionists employed several media for the visual projection of Jewish Palestine and Israel, including pamphlets with photographic illustrations, films, tourist photographs, or the design on the JNF box. The most widespread were probably the thousands of photographs found on posters and in publications.

The souvenir programme published by the Manchester ZCC on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the independence of the State of Israel

³⁰ *JC*, 11 January 1946.

³¹ ZF, Executive Council, 4 May 1943, CZA Z4/10.346-I; ZF, 47th Annual Conference, CZA Z4/10.346-V.

³² Leeds Zionist Council, 26 January 1954, Leeds JNF Commission.

³³ Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, 144–64.

exemplifies the contemporary repertoire. There were photographic reproductions of historic and contemporary documents testifying to the harmony between British and Zionist interests, ranging from the Balfour Declaration to a letter by C. P. Scott of the MG referring to Weizmann's contribution to the Allied victory in the First World War through his ingenuity as a chemist and a sympathetic, if non-committal message from the Prime Minister Winston Churchill. It also contained numerous portrait photographs depicting contemporary and historic Gentile Zionists from Balfour to Churchill, Zionist veterans like Weizmann, Israeli statesmen like the President, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister, and the Israeli Ambassador to the Court of St James. The photographs featuring scenes from Israel featured British *chalutzim* riding a tractor and clearing stones from the land with their own hands, a nurse with a bunch of smiling children ostensibly from one of the kibbutzim with a high percentage of British *olim*, the secular Socialist Kfar Hanassi or the Religious Socialist Lavi and the Independence Day military parade in Tel Aviv.³⁴ A plethora of pamphlets and brochures handed out at British Zionist functions conveyed a similar canonized iconography. The thematic pattern typically followed emphasized the Zionist and Israeli political, social, and economic achievements, including a sanitized military prowess, the British-Jewish contribution to them, and the historic role of Britain as the initial patron of the Jewish polity.

Apart from illustrated pamphlet literature, and before the films and photographs taken by the increasing number of British Jews who visited Israel as tourists from the 1950s popularized Israeli imagery on a hitherto unknown scale, amateur and professional Zionist propaganda films and slide shows of the 1930s and 1940s served as a means of visualizing Zionism in Britain. The pioneer in using films as an instrument for the promotion of Zionism in Britain was the Glaswegian Zionist strongman Fred Nettler. Rather than showing the colour film which he had taken during a visit to Palestine on its own, he used it to complement his propaganda lectures. The majority of films distributed by the ZF and the British KH for propaganda purposes among Jews and non-Jews were British versions of films which had been commissioned by the KH for use the world over, in particular the USA. *The Land of Promise* was the first professionally made film distributed by the ZF. Presenting an array of scenes featuring immigration, construction, the woman as an equal participant in physical labour, the kibbutz, the thriving Jewish city of Tel Aviv, the Jewish return to the soil, irrigation, the Hebrew University, the

³⁴ *The Sixth Anniversary of the Establishment of the State of Israel, 10th May 1954—7th Ayar, 5704. Souvenir Programme* (Manchester, 1954).

Haifa Technion, and the Sieff Institute at Rechovot, the draining of swamps, and the inevitable picking of oranges, the film reinforced the image of a modern, Jewish model society in a way that was attractive both for its emotional appeal and its rational persuasiveness. The film circumvented potentially disruptive factors such as the presence of anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews and Arabs by depicting relations between secular and observant Jews as harmonious and the country as waiting for cultivation by the returning descendants of its one-time possessors.³⁵ In order to appeal to the British audience, the British version contained a passage pointing out Palestine's administration by Britain under a League of Nations Mandate. *The Land of Promise* proved a great success all over the country and was continually being requested by Jewish and non-Jewish organizations.³⁶ In a shortened version, as a twenty-minute documentary travelogue, *The Land of Promise* had been distributed throughout the country since 1936, had been shown in most leading cinemas, and had been favourably received.³⁷ In addition, 16 mm copies showing the film in full length were made available for screenings in private houses, associations, and clubs, and were shown 120 times from mid-1937 until March 1938, and more than 500 times between April 1938 and May 1939. With only 21 performances during 1938/9, lantern slides apparently proved less popular.³⁸ Thousands of non-Jews were acquainted with the JNH through *The Land of Promise*.³⁹ In the case of both films and lantern slide shows, one quarter of the performances were held before Jewish audiences, mainly Zionist Societies but also friendly societies and synagogues.

The Palestine films, as they were called in contemporary language, proved immensely popular.⁴⁰ Recognizing their value as a means of propaganda which conveyed Zionist achievements with a vividness unmatched by other media among the general and the British-Jewish public, the ZF made increasing use of them.⁴¹ For example, when the JNF's twentieth annual exhibition and bazaar opened on 12 March 1939, the programme included the refugee film *The March of Time* and the Palestine film *This is the Land*.⁴² In 1942 the ZF's Organization and

³⁵ Hillel Tryster, '“The Land of Promise” (1935): A Case Study in Zionist Film Propaganda', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 15/2 (1995), 187–217.

³⁶ *JC*, 22 October 1937, 22.

³⁷ *ZF*, 39th Annual Report, 1938–1939, 24; *ZCC of Manchester and Salford Jews: Annual Report* (1937), 12.

³⁸ *ZF*, 38th Annual Report 1937–8, 18–20; 39th Annual Report 1938–9, 20–5.

³⁹ 38th Annual Conference, *ZF*, 21 and 22 May 1938, Minutes, 3, CZA F13/1002.

⁴⁰ Henry Mond to Weizmann, 28 June 1944, WA 2508.

⁴¹ *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Fifth Annual Report. January–December 1945*, London, 18, 32.

⁴² *JC*, 10 March 1939, 24; 17 March 1939, 28.

Propaganda Committee obtained three new films: *A Day in Degania*, *They Find a Home*, and *Palestine at War*.⁴³ In 1947, the ZF's repertoire comprised five 35 mm films for performances in cinemas: *Collective Adventure*, *Road to Liberty*, *Palestine on the March*, and a short as well as a long version of *Land of Promise* and nine other 16 mm films suitable for private screenings: *Road to Liberty*, *They Build and Defend*, *A Day in Degania*, *Homeland in the Making*, *Collective Adventure*, *They Find a Home*, *The Land of Promise*, *Hadassah*, and *Palestine at War*.⁴⁴ After a successful West End première, *The Great Promise*, a film sponsored by the KKL, was distributed to many cinemas by the JNF's Publicity Department.⁴⁵

The Zionist propaganda films of the 1930s and 1940s were designed to convince the Jewish and non-Jewish British public of the merits of Zionist state- and nation-building in Mandatory Palestine by visualizing its accomplishments. If until the establishment of the State of Israel the non-Jewish public had been their primary target, the imagery transmitted by them played a crucial role in the national transformation of British-Jewish identity. Since the visual projections of Palestine in Zionist propaganda films were visual projections of the *yishuv*, which either excluded or marginalized the Arab population, British Jews came to regard it as a Jewish country. Like photographic illustrations in the print media cinematic images provided British Jews with foci of national identification. The dominant theme of Zionist films was the creation of a model society by Palestinian Jews, an achievement from which also British Jews could derive satisfaction. By highlighting the contributions of British Jews, for example by showing a British *chalutz* working in the fields or a ward of the Jerusalem Baby Home or by repeating topoi with specifically British connotations, such as the Balfour Declaration, visual Zionist propaganda gave British Jews the opportunity of regarding themselves as playing a part in creating Palestine as a Jewish country. If some of the features of the Zionist film recurred regularly, there were also changes in the themes covered. Whereas in the 1930s the economic and social achievements of the *yishuv*, the creation of a model society which was both modern and Jewish, had been the sole theme of the Zionist film in Britain, in the 1940s images of the *yishuv* as a safe haven for Jewish refugees, its capacity for self-defence, and its military contribution to the Allied war effort were added to the spectrum of cinematic projections of Jewish Palestine. *The Road to*

⁴³ ZF, 42nd Annual Report, 8.

⁴⁴ ZF, Organization and Propaganda Committee, 17 June 1947, CZA Z4/10.299 VII; 47th Annual Conference, CZA Z4/10.346 V; copies of *The Land of Promise*, *Hadassah*, and *Homeland in the Making* are held at the NFTA.

⁴⁵ ZF, 47th Annual Report, 27.

Liberty, for example, was a ten-minute 20th Century Fox production on the Jewish Brigade.

The ZF and the KH were not alone in making use of propaganda films. In January 1937 a Betar 'Barmitzvah' in London was crowned by a speech by Jabotinsky and a film on the training ship *Sara* of the Jewish Naval Training College, which the Marine Department of Brit Trumpeldor had attached to the Italian Naval Training College at Civitavecchia.⁴⁶

During the 1930s and 1940s the visual propaganda employed by the British Zionist movement, in particular the films, enjoyed considerable popularity. By giving British Jews access to a set of common Palestino-centric national Jewish images, visual projections of Zionist achievements served as a means of engendering a feeling of national communion.

BRITISH JEWS COMMUNICATING IN MODERN HEBREW

Whether one looks at Zionist propaganda among British Jews, at communication within the British Zionist movement, or at the relations of British Zionists with the WZO, the *yishuv*, and Israel, in terms of writing and speaking, British Zionists relied in the period under scrutiny almost exclusively on languages other than Ivrit. If British Zionists, for the most part, showed only a limited, if growing inclination to acquire a semblance of knowledge of Ivrit, what role did modern Hebrew culture play in Zionist nation-building in Britain?

While the EZF and the ZF published material in English, Yiddish, and Modern Hebrew,⁴⁷ the bulk of its publications were in English. A substantial, but declining part was published in Yiddish. A minor, though increasing proportion appeared in Modern Hebrew. If Yiddish had disappeared from the printed material of the ZF by the late 1940s, British Zionists originating from the immigrants' milieu like Brodetsky continued to make use of it in internal oral communication and at mass meetings, in order to strike an emotional chord with an audience they could expect to be sufficiently conversant in Yiddish. English was the preferred medium of British Zionists not only for written communication within their own ranks, but also within the transnational Jewish sphere. The correspondence of British Zionists with Zionist parent organizations and other Zionist institutions in the *yishuv* and the State of Israel was mainly

⁴⁶ *JC*, 5 February 1937, 34.

⁴⁷ Goodman, *Zionism*, 61.

conducted in English. Their usage of Modern Hebrew was restricted to the address, the final greeting, and a limited stock of ritualistic expressions. British Jews training for emigration were no exception. The *mazkir* of the HH *hachshara* in Bedford, for example, apologized in his report to the JA's Youth and Hechalutz Department in Jerusalem for being unable to write it in Ivrit.⁴⁸ For oral communication on the inter-state Jewish level British Zionists continued to use the so-called Congress Deutsch, the official language of the Zionist Congresses until 1935, and Yiddish until they were replaced by English and Modern Hebrew. With the English-language skills of Palestinian Jews sometimes hardly better than those of British Jews in Ivrit, emissaries from the *yishuv* addressing Zionist audiences in Yiddish could be found in Britain until the late 1940s.⁴⁹

Although English remained the dominant language of the British Zionist movement, modern Hebrew culture became more important from the late 1940s. Until then, interest in Modern Hebrew had been restricted to minuscule circles of Hebraists. The Revd J. K. Goldbloom, for example, was a pioneer of the Ivrit b'Ivrit method at his *talmud torah* in the East End of London. Hebrew-speaking circles, like that founded in Liverpool in 1916, existed in every major Jewish community, but their membership was small enough to be accommodated in private homes.⁵⁰ While the cultural session formed an integral part of the agenda of the ZF's Annual Conference, it amounted to little more than an opportunity for lamentation in the 1930s and 1940s. In May 1939 Leon Simon summed up the state of Modern Hebrew in Britain as 'a drop in the ocean', a 'few Hebrew meetings and lectures, and a couple of hundred young men and women studying Hebrew (not at our [the ZF's] expense)'.⁵¹

In the late 1940s and early 1950s there were both signs of an expansion in and of the limits to the promotion of Modern Hebrew among British Zionists. The quality of the existing Ivrit classes was improved by the employment of Palestinian Jews as teachers.⁵² The ZF started the publication of *Tarbut*, a Hebrew monthly, and of *Lana'ar*, a vowel-pointed leaflet for younger students of Hebrew. *The Gates of Zion* carried a small section of articles in Ivrit. In 1952, the ZF reported proudly to Jerusalem that the cultural session of that year's Annual Conference had been

⁴⁸ Yosef Hudaly (*Mazkir*) to JA Youth and Hechalutz Dept., 9 January 1949, CZA S32/832.

⁴⁹ Leeds Zionist Council, 16 October 1947, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁵⁰ Emmanuel Fagin, 'Jubilee Liverpool Zionist Central Council', *Shalom* (1950), 195.

⁵¹ ZF, 38th Annual Conference, Opening Speech for Tarbut Session, 14 May 1939, CZA F13/39-I.

⁵² 47th Annual Conference, ZF, CZA Z4/10.346-V.

conducted entirely in Ivrit.⁵³ A further indicator for the greater usage of Ivrit was the spread of abbreviated minutes in Modern Hebrew by British-Jewish organizations. Zionist ones were the first to adopt this habit. The Leeds Zionist Council, for example, started in 1949.⁵⁴ The BoD followed in the 1950s.

If one turns to the situation at the grassroots level in a provincial Jewish community, a similar picture of greater effort, but overall limited success emerges. As the Annual Report of the Leeds Zionist Council in 1953 recorded, local 'endeavours to provide for Hebrew education were taking shape slowly... indeed very slowly'.⁵⁵ The report admitted that with the exception of the Zionist Youth Movements, hardly any society in Leeds had applied itself seriously to the task of acquiring a practical knowledge of Hebrew in order to enable its members to have direct access to Israeli culture. The beginners' class had an average attendance of just 8, the intermediate class of 12. In addition to the Zionist Council, the local Habonim group as well as the WIZO groups ran an Ivrit class each. The Chug Ivri met monthly in a private home. Each year Leeds Zionists held a Herzl-Bialik Memorial Meeting at which passages from the work of the poet Bialik were read out in the original Modern Hebrew.⁵⁶ The promotion of modern Hebrew culture in Leeds was not restricted to learning Modern Hebrew. A lecture course on Modern Hebrew Literature, in Ivrit, provided by the extra-mural department of Leeds University in conjunction with Zionist Council's *Tarbut* Committee attracted an attendance of 12 to 15, and was praised for its high quality in the report, which at the same time regretted that 'its Hebrew was far from easy'.⁵⁷ While the report lamented that the 'greatest and most obvious weakness' in the programme of Zionist societies was the lack of attention devoted to Hebrew, other cultural activities on the local Zionist agenda, in particular Zionist films and Israeli music, proved more successful. At their fortnightly or monthly meetings, the members of the various Zionist groups in Leeds heard lectures on a variety of Zionist and Jewish topics, watched film shows, for example, a colour film on Kfar Blum, a kibbutz with a high percentage of British *olim*, and the Youth Aliyah Film *Tomorrow is a Wonderful Day*, and listened to records of Israeli music.

With their efforts to promote Modern Hebrew on a voluntary and amateurish basis yielding only meagre results, British Zionists sought to

⁵³ L. Schafler to WZO, Organization Dept., 3 April 1952, CZA S5/10483.

⁵⁴ Leeds Zionist Council, 17 November 1949, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁵⁵ Leeds Zionist Council, Annual Report 1952/53, 5, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁵⁶ Leeds Zionist Council, 25 June 1952, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁵⁷ Leeds Zionist Council, Annual Report 1952/53, 5, Leeds JNF Commission.

put the dissemination of Modern Hebrew among British Jews on a sounder institutional and financial basis. When the 1944 Education Act provided the opportunity for the foundation of new denominational schools as well as favourable financial conditions for their upkeep, British Zionists came to see the Jewish day school as the most promising avenue of promoting modern Hebrew culture among British Jews.⁵⁸ The ZF's deliberations were echoed at the grassroots by demands for Jewish day schools as the best guarantee for a Zionist education: 'its approach must be from the earliest days to the imagination of the Jewish child so that there will be provided that understanding of, and feeling for, Jewish tradition in which alone Zionism can find its roots.'⁵⁹ The adoption of a Zionist-inspired Jewish curriculum by the majority of Jewish day schools and agencies of Jewish part-time instruction after the Second World War transformed Modern Hebrew culture from a leisure activity accessible only to a small circle of enthusiasts, into an integral component of the Jewish education of those British Jews who received such education.

After this brief overview over the variety of languages used by British Zionists and the development of modern Hebrew learning during the period under scrutiny, one wonders, what was the link between modern Hebrew culture and Zionist nation-building in Britain? Before enquiring into this relationship it is worth remembering Anderson's warning against treating languages as emblems of nationalism, like flags, customs, or folklore, as well as his suggestion to study languages for their capacity to create national solidarities.⁶⁰ Although the uses of language by the Zionist movement represent a unique combination, they illustrate, if disentangled, three aspects of the relationship between nationalism and language in an exemplary fashion. First, the lack of a given, automatic correlation between one particular nation-in-the-making and one particular language. Second, the independence of modern nation-building from linguistic uniformity. Referring to Switzerland and the national movements of colonial peoples, Anderson has shown that the communications revolution of the twentieth century and the sufficient spread of bilingualism made it possible and practicable to represent imagined national communities in ways not requiring linguistic uniformity.⁶¹ By using Yiddish, German, English, Modern Hebrew, and a whole range of other languages to generate a national community the Zionist movement underscores the possibility of imagining a national community in more than one language

⁵⁸ L. Schafler to WZO, Organization Dept., 3 April 1952, CZA S5/10483.

⁵⁹ Leeds Zionist Council, Annual Report 1952/53, 5, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁶⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 133.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 139.

and in languages which were not necessarily the vernacular of those who used them. Third, while resembling Swiss nationalism in its dependence on a bi- or multilingual social stratum, and being similar to the nationalisms of colonial peoples for the same reason and their usage of a 'borrowed' language as the principal means of generating an imagined community, Zionism differed from both by copying nineteenth-century linguistic nationalism and according to Hebrew, a language claimed by no other nationalism, the status of the sole national language.

Whereas in Mandatory Palestine and the State of Israel the relationship between language and Zionist nation-building followed the pattern of other nation-states where one language was promoted as the official language, in the transnational Jewish sphere and, in particular, within the communities *in situ* it remained characterized by the continuing tension between the promotion of Modern Hebrew as the national language and the factual use of others. In their use of English as the dominant linguistic medium for imagining themselves as part of a national community, British Zionists resembled Scottish, Irish, and Welsh nationalists. The latter two they resembled furthermore in their elevation to national status of a language which was neither used by the majority of the putative nation nor necessarily by nationalist activists themselves.

If Modern Hebrew possessed little relevance as a medium of practical communication for British Zionists, what role did it play in the Zionization of British Jewry? Modern Hebrew served as an instrument of Zionist nation-building in Britain in two respects. First, as the national language, it was the obvious choice in Zionist-backed cultural and educational projects. Until the 1940s only a small fraction of the British Zionist movement shared the belief of nineteenth-century European cultural nationalism that a national language was a necessary means for the expression of national identity and a precondition for leading a fulfilled life. For the Hebraists to qualify as a real Jew one had to know Modern Hebrew. Hence their obsession with the diffusion of Modern Hebrew:

I do not believe that it is ultimately worth while to set up a Jewish National Home, or even a Jewish State, in Palestine if at the same time the millions of Jews outside Palestine are not encouraged and helped—I wish I could say compelled—to earn the right to call themselves Jews by acquiring a knowledge of the language and the literature and the thought which belong to them and to their descendants as Jews.⁶²

⁶² 38th Annual Conference, ZF, Opening Speech for Tarbuth Session, 14 May 1939, CZA F13/39 I.

This quotation from Leon Simon, who was one of the foremost British Hebraists until his departure for Israel to join the HU's Board of Governors, is symptomatic of the claim that the authenticity of the national identity of a member of the putative national community rose in proportion to the familiarity with the national language and culture. Although in the British diaspora the shift from religion to culture as the focus of Jewish identity was not, and for internal and external reasons could not be, as clear-cut as in the Jewish polity, modern Hebrew culture provided British Jews with an alternative way of being Jewish. The establishment of Jewish day schools with a Zionist-inspired Jewish curriculum turned modern Hebrew culture from an occupation of a small circle of enthusiasts into a successful instrument of Zionist nation-building in Britain.

Second, Modern Hebrew, irrespective of whether it was spoken and understood, served to delimit the boundaries of the national community, of which British Zionists saw themselves to be part-time members. The scattered usage of Modern Hebrew by British Zionists in communication among themselves and with Zionist organizations in the *yishuv* and the State of Israel as well as the increasing trend of British-Jewish organizations to produce abbreviated minutes in Modern Hebrew or of Zionist publications to have summaries in Modern Hebrew served as cultural signposts, dividing British Zionists from the larger society and linking them with Jews in the transnational Jewish sphere who identified themselves with Palestinocentric Jewish nationalism. Through the ritualistic usage of Modern Hebrew or the mere knowledge of its existence British Zionists could belong to a communion which was no longer religious, but national and cultural, independent of their actual acquisition of language skills or knowledge of modern Hebrew culture. Simon Marks, who linked himself to a national communion extending over past, present, and future through the medium of a language he did not speak, provides a poignant example of how Modern Hebrew as a cultural reference could provide British Jews with an opportunity to restore pasts, imagine solidarities, and dream futures on a national plane.⁶³

BELONGING THROUGH GIVING: BRITISH JEWS AS ZIONIST SPONSORS

If fundraising provided Jews in the diaspora with opportunities of making direct contributions to the Zionist project in Palestine, it served

⁶³ Bookbinder, *Simon Marks*, 78; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 154.

simultaneously as an avenue of the Zionization of the Jewish communities *in situ*.⁶⁴ While in Part II fundraising has been examined as a means of British-Jewish participation in Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East, this chapter is concerned with its role in the Zionist transformation of British Jewry.

The machinery of the KH and the JNF, the two principal Zionist funds, the UMPA, the campaigns for Children and Youth Aliyah and WIZO, the Israel Histadrut Committee, and the combined appeals of the UPA and the JPA with their own offices, staff, propaganda, conferences, meetings, campaigns, and collectors at the grassroots level formed a considerable part of the British Zionist public and social sphere. In particular the JNF possessed an expanding organizational infrastructure of its own, complete with annual conferences, permanent offices in London, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, and Glasgow, and a network of collectors at the local level. The funds also played a pivotal role in maintaining the transnational Zionist sphere by their close relations with the head offices in Jerusalem and by organizing visits of guest speakers from the *yishuv* and Israel, Commonwealth countries, and the USA.

Apart from providing a considerable part of the Zionist infrastructure in the country the funds were instrumental in Zionist nation-building in Britain through involving large numbers of British Jews. If the collection of money established a factual link between Jews in the diaspora and the Jewish polity, how did it translate into a vehicle of the Zionist transformation of British Jews? In return for enlisting their financial support for the Zionist project, the Zionist funds offered British Jews the opportunity to feel part of a lasting national enterprise. By making a donation, British Jews could substantiate their claim to partnership in the new, Palestino-centric national Jewish community, contribute to national continuity, and thus acquire a place in eternity.

While all the funds provided British Jews with opportunities of participation in the wider Zionist community, they appealed to different sections of the community and used different methods to reach their donors. A characteristic feature of the KH campaigns was the raising of large sums of money by direct appeal at larger social functions, such as banquets addressed by prominent Zionists, or at drawing-room meetings in private homes. The two outstanding functions of the second UPA campaign, for example, a dinner at the Dorchester Hotel in honour of Weizmann, arranged by Simon Marks and Edward Sieff, and a luncheon in honour of Stephen Wise, organized by Sam Goldstein, raised £48,000 and £30,000

⁶⁴ For the role of the JNF in the Zionization of Western European Jewish life before 1914 see Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, 5, 165–87.

respectively. Some forty other functions organized by the Functions Department yielded another £40,000. In addition the Trades Department raised £65,000, to which the Textile Trade Committee had contributed £30,000, the Fur Trade Committee £5,000, the Electrical Trade Committee £9,000, and the Shoe and Leather Trade Committee £10,500.⁶⁵ At a party at his London residence, to which he had invited members of the furniture and timber trade, Isaac Wolfson, the appeal chairman, raised £52,000 for the 1949 JPA.⁶⁶

Whereas the income of the KH derived from the comparatively large donations of a restricted social stratum, that of the JNF was made up of smaller sums from a larger range of donors. On the local level the JNF was represented by commissions. The JNF had devised a variety of channels through which British Jews could make a financial contribution to the Zionist project: the JNF Blue Boxes, Golden Book inscriptions, functions, legacies, the Tree Fund, and appeals for the planting of forests in honour of prominent Zionists and Gentiles. In 1935 the 13th Annual Conference of the JNF for Great Britain and Ireland welcomed the opening of the *Sefer Haya'eled*, the Children's Book of Honour, by the KKL head office in Jerusalem and appealed to British Jews to inscribe their children at the minimum cost of two guineas, 'thus ensuring their life-long association with the redemption of Eretz Yisrael and providing the means whereby that redemption will be hastened'.⁶⁷ In 1947 the JNF set up a Functions Department, which organized concerts, shows, bazaars, and other functions for the benefit of the fund, the most outstanding of which was the Blue and White Ball held annually at the Albert Hall.⁶⁸ The spread of the JNF Blue Boxes, into which a Jewish household was ideally expected to donate 1*d.* per day, conveys a picture of the involvement of British Jews in Zionist fundraising at the grassroots level. In 1938 the JNF received an income of approximately £19,000 from the 23,000 collecting boxes distributed among British-Jewish households and in 1949 £42,465 from 38,000 Blue Boxes.⁶⁹ The 9,593 Blue Boxes distributed in London in 1939 meant that 16 per cent of the estimated 58,550 Jewish families living there possessed one. In the provincial communities, in particular the

⁶⁵ *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Fifth Annual Report. January–December 1945* (London, n.d.), 31–2.

⁶⁶ *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Ninth Annual Report. March 1949–March 1950* (London, n.d.), 35.

⁶⁷ *JC*, 30 October 1935, 41.

⁶⁸ *47th Annual Report, ZF*, 26–7.

⁶⁹ *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (London, n.d.), 54; *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Ninth Annual Report*, 36–7.

smaller ones, the respective figures were higher. In Manchester about 25 per cent of the households possessed Blue Boxes with 2,300 Boxes for an estimated 9,370 families, in Leeds 45 per cent with 2,800 Boxes for 6,250 families, in Glasgow 20 per cent with 735 Boxes for 3,750 families, in Liverpool 57 per cent with 1,000 Boxes for 1,750 families, and in Sheffield 65 per cent with 350 Boxes for 540 families.⁷⁰ Golden Book inscriptions stood at 220 in 5704 (1943/4), increased to 318 in 5705 (1944/5), to 523 in 5708 (1947/8), and to 535 in 5709 (1948/9).⁷¹ In 1946 the JNF campaigned for the Forest of Freedom Scheme as a result of which 75,000 trees were planted from the donations of c.10,000 contributors.⁷² Due to the Forest of Freedom Scheme the JNF's Tree Fund raised £30,000 in 1946.⁷³

The JNF is not only of interest as the Zionist fund which reached the largest number of British Jews, but also for the ways in which it operated. The JNF had a mass appeal, was public, offered a multitude of opportunities of participation, and conveyed the impression to its donors that they assisted in a particularly important aspect of Zionist nation-building in the Middle East. The foremost purpose of the JNF was the purchase of land which would become the permanent, national possession of the Jews. It was the arm of the Zionist movement which literally provided soil under Jewish feet.⁷⁴ Since the acquisition of land was not only a vital prerequisite for the creation of a national polity, but its cultivation and the afforestation stood symbolically for the constructive character of the Jewish presence in Palestine, British Jews had the chance to make a personal contribution to an enterprise which was presented as national as well as unquestionably beneficial and modern. By granting public recognition to even the smallest contributions and by devising a range of instruments which established a direct link between individual Jews in the diaspora and the national project in the Middle East, the JNF gave large numbers of British Jews access to the Palestinocentric national community. In return for Golden Book inscriptions, for example, the donors or the honorees received certificates, a visible proof of their connection with the national project. The JNF Blue Box embodied both the link which Zionist fundraising established between diaspora Jews and the national project and the democratic appeal it had by

⁷⁰ *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Thirty-Ninth Annual Report*, 54.

⁷¹ *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Fifth Annual Report*, 33; *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Ninth Annual Report*, 37.

⁷² *The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland: Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (London, n.d.), 27.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Berkowitz, *Zionist Culture*, 168.

offering the donor of modest means an entry ticket into the national communion.

The Israel Histadrut Committee was instrumental in attracting the support of working-class Jews for the Zionist project. In addition to participation in the fundraising efforts of the JPA, of which it formed a part since 1950, the Israel Histadrut Committee had chosen the field of the small contributor as its specific sphere of activity and sought 'to increase the number of supporters of J.P.A. and bring the message of Israel and its achievements to masses of people who would otherwise be denied the opportunity of participating in the work of upbuilding Israel...'.⁷⁵ It derived its income through the Factory Scheme under which the staffs of certain factories and enterprises contributed to the JPA through weekly deductions from their wages and door-to-door canvassing.

The increasing appeal of the various Zionist funds during the period under scrutiny turned fundraising into one of the main vehicles of Zionist nation-building in Britain. Why was donating money to Zionist funds attractive for British Jews? The funds' appeal to all British Jews and their insistence that even the smallest contribution was welcome increased their popularity and reinforced the image of the Zionist project as a national enterprise. Although the employment of specific methods of targeting different social groups and the dominant influence of the Marks family made Zionist fundraising not necessarily more democratic than traditional forms of Jewish fundraising, its public image was that of a people's enterprise. By endowing donations, irrespective of their size, with a national purpose, Zionist funds created a semblance of equality between the small and the large donor, united in a constructive national effort.

The national purpose of the Zionist funds did not only transcend social divisions, it also differentiated donations to Zionist funds from those to traditional Jewish charities. When competing with other Jewish fundraising efforts, British Zionists presented their funds as the most legitimate recipients of the money of British Jews with explicit or implicit reference to the national purpose they served. During the 1930s and 1940s Zionist fundraisers argued that money donated to Zionist funds would not evaporate in the bottomless pit of Jewish misery, but would be a solid investment in a national Jewish future. Portraying non-Zionist efforts to alleviate the Jewish plight as short-term and lacking a collective Jewish objective, British Zionists were careful to distinguish themselves from Jewish philanthropy and relief work on traditional lines. While they

⁷⁵ 'Israel Histadrut Committee Report. 1954 Campaign', 4, LILA IV-208-1-7584.

presented their funds as effective instruments of alleviating Jewish hardship, whether it was that of the refugees of the 1930s or the DPs of the 1940s,⁷⁶ they simultaneously claimed that their funds fulfilled a wider purpose, aiming to change fundamentally the Jewish condition through the creation of a national polity. By making a donation, a British Jew could become a partner in the project of the national redemption of the Jews.

The publicity which accompanied Zionist fundraising, both the nationwide appeals and the small, individual donations, was a source of satisfaction to those who wanted to appear in the limelight. Zionist fundraising was a visible affair. The publication of appeal results and subscribers' lists increased the sense of importance of donors and campaign organizers and satisfied their hunger for public recognition. As the contributions of individual Zionist organizations, trades, or provincial communities to the overall campaign results were published separately, particular groups took pride in their collective achievements and competed with each other.

During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s the Zionist funds proved one of the most important and far-reaching instruments of Zionist nation-building in Britain. By offering frequent opportunities for the temporary expression of national solidarity fundraising was uniquely suited to the condition of British-Jewish part-time Palestinocentric nationalists. Requiring no permanent commitment, fundraising succeeded even in reaching Jews who were unconnected with, or on the margins of, Jewish communal life.

⁷⁶ ZF, Annual Conference, JPA Session, 2 February 1947, 24, CZA F13.

10

The Extension of Zionism over the Institutional Fabric of British Jewry

The Zionization of British Jewry was not identical with the expansion of the Zionist share in the British-Jewish public and social sphere. As important for the Zionist transformation of British Jewry as the growing appeal of Zionist activities proper was the Zionization of the existing Jewish communal infrastructure and social networks. In the following the Zionist transformation of three key areas of British Jewry is explored: the BoD, the communal 'parliament' of British Jewry; the mainstream Orthodox synagogues, the basic organizational units of British Jewry; and British-Jewish social life.

THE ZIONIST CAPTURE OF THE BOARD OF DEPUTIES

Top on the agenda of the Zionist 'conquest of the community' came the Zionization of the BoD. Talking about the limits of Zionist advances within British Jewry at a meeting of the JA's Information Department in 1942 Bakstansky pointed out that it was 'easy to assume that all Jews were Zionists. In some provincial centre it might be possible to work on such an assumption. In London it would be sheer affectation. We knew the opposition was there and was strong', and that the 'foundation of a strong, official, formally constituted anti-Zionist group at the Board' was a real possibility.⁷⁷ At the same meeting Brodetsky expressed the opinion that

we could just say we want the 400,000 Jews of this country to be Zionist . . . He did not believe we would make any great progress at the present moment by starting

⁷⁷ JA (London Executive), Information Department, Central Committee, Minutes, 23 November 1942, CZA A341/I.

upon a great education campaign... The main issue was, could we make Anglo-Jewry give the impression of being a Zionist Anglo-Jewry? ... He did not believe very much in converting non-Zionists. They were generally quite beyond conversion.⁷⁸

Instead, British Zionists were 'to build up a strong propaganda in this country in order to get all the Jewish bodies, organisations and groups of people in all the different parts of the country to establish that they were in favour of what has now been laid down as Zionist policy...'⁷⁹ If British Zionists saw themselves still far away from the wholesale conversion of British Jewry, the Zionization of the communal bodies offered the chance of at least a semblance of wholesale British-Jewish support for Zionism. Since the BoD was regarded as the central arena of British-Jewish politics by the Jewish community as well as by the British government, its control was particularly important for the Zionists. Bakstansky made the motivation for the Zionist efforts to gain control over the BoD clear when he explained them on the grounds that 'the next Board may be called upon to function during the period of the Peace Conference when the future of our people will be determined'.⁸⁰ Zionist policy was driven by the determination to prevent a repeat performance of the events which had accompanied the Balfour Declaration. On 17 May 1917 David Alexander, who was then the BoD's President, and Claude Montefiore, the AJA's President, had issued an anti-Zionist manifesto, which was published in *The Times* only a few days before the issue of the Balfour Declaration, on behalf of the CFC, a body established in 1878 by the BoD and the AJA to coordinate their activities in foreign affairs.⁸¹ In order to present to the government a Jewish community unified behind the Zionist cause the Zionists pursued two aims: first, the BoD as the representative body of British Jewry had to come under Zionist influence and, second, the non-Zionist opposition had to be prevented from setting up a parallel structure to articulate its views vis-à-vis the government.

Although the circumstances of the Zionist takeover of the BoD point to exigencies of Zionist state-building as its cause, it has hitherto been studied within the context of the transformation of communal authority, the rise of the immigrants, or a clash between British Zionists and their opponents rather than in the context of Zionist high politics.⁸² By

⁷⁸ Ibid. ⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Bakstansky to Norman Jacobs, 7 April 1943, CZA F13/72-I.

⁸¹ CFC, Statement on the Palestine Question, 17 May 1917, AJ/37/6/1b/3; *The Times*, 24 May 1917.

⁸² Stuart Cohen, 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry: Another View of his Role and Achievements', *JJS* 24/1 (1982), 25–38; idem, 'Same Places, Different Faces: A Comparison of Anglo-Jewish Conflicts over Zionism during World War I and World War II', in S. A. Cohen and E. Don-Yehiya (eds.), *Comparative Jewish Politics*, ii:

enquiring into the realization of and the motivation behind the capture of the BoD this chapter will attempt to determine its place within Zionist state- and nation-building.

From the 1930s the ZF sought to influence the election of Deputies and to secure the election of Zionist Deputies to the important committees of the BoD. In 1936 the ZF formed a committee to coordinate Zionist policy on the BoD. In the 1937 election to the BoD the Zionists increased their overall representation and secured a majority on the BoD's Palestine Committee. It was, however, not until the election of Selig Brodetsky as the first avowedly Zionist President of the BoD in 1939 and the Zionist victory at the BoD's elections in 1943 that the Zionists could claim control over the 'communal parliament' of British Jewry.

Brodetsky was aware that Zionist interests were not safeguarded by merely preventing non- or anti-Zionists from using the Board of Deputies as a platform for propagating their views. At least a semblance of British-Jewish unanimity in favour of the Zionist cause had to be secured. This did not presuppose the conversion of the entire Jewish community to the Zionist idea but precluded the setting-up of rival bodies, for which the League of British Jews, an anti-Zionist organization founded in the aftermath of the Balfour Declaration, had set a precedent. Brodetsky had not fallen victim to the illusory belief that a Zionist march through at the BoD, even if as complete as it turned out to be in 1943, would silence the non-Zionist quarter of the community. As he correctly observed, the liberal assimilationists, although not interested in mass politics, continued to have access to the government. If communal unity was to be preserved and the non-Zionists were to be prevented from establishing parallel organizations, challenging the prerogative of the BoD to speak on behalf of British Jewry as its sole representative, their views had to be accommodated to a certain extent.

The limits for compromise with the non-Zionists became clear when the 'Biltmore Programme' brought again to the fore the issue of Jewish statehood as in 1937, when the Peel Report came forward with the proposal of partition and therefore with the prospect of a Jewish state. The 'Biltmore Programme' alarmed the assimilationists for two reasons. First it raised the spectre of a sovereign Jewish state, which was anathema to them because of the alleged threat it posed to the status which

Conflict and Consensus in Jewish Political Life (Tel Aviv, 1986); Shimoni, 'From Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry, 1937-1948', 19-47; idem, 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937-1948', 89-115; idem, 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry (1939-1945)', 125-61; Cesarani, 'The Transformation of Communal Authority', 116-40.

emancipated Jews enjoyed, and, second, because they saw it as an assault on their own government. In October 1942 Gluckstein tried to commit the BoD formally against the Biltmore Programme, a move which Bakstansky was proud to report to the JA had utterly failed.⁸³ At a meeting of the Junior Membership Group of the West London Reform Synagogue and at other venues Gluckstein expressed his opposition to the Jewish state idea on the grounds that its establishment would prejudice the rights of Jews. When he assured his audiences that he and his friends were to take up the matter with 'the appropriate authorities', Bakstansky complained that no member of the BoD 'can take it upon himself to act in this matter behind the back of the Board, the Palestine Committee, etc.', and wanted Brodetsky to raise Gluckstein's lack of loyalty at the BoD.⁸⁴ As anti-Zionist flare-ups at the BoD demonstrated, Brodetsky's re-election as the BoD's President was insufficient. It was far more decisive to ensure Zionist majorities on its plenum and major committees. Urgent from a Zionist perspective was the dissolution of the JFC and its replacement by a body responsible to a Zionized BoD only.

With the approach of the Board's triennial elections in June 1943, the ZF under the leadership of its general secretary Bakstansky staged a campaign to 'Zionize' the composition of the Board and its major committees.⁸⁵ He asked Zionist key men to persuade synagogues and friendly societies to elect Zionists as Deputies, to make sure that the representatives of provincial organizations were willing to attend meetings in London or to appoint reliable Zionist candidates from London, if this was not the case. Synagogue congregations and other organizations which were not yet represented on the Board of Deputies, or made no active use of their right of representation, were now approached to apply for membership and to send their representatives to the crucial sessions on 4 July 1943, when the election for the presidency and the Executive Committee were to take place, and on 25 July, when the members of the other committees were to be elected.

The Zionist campaign paid handsome dividends, as not only Norman Jacobs, the Manchester Zionist strongman, could assure Bakstansky of a solid block of 'pro-Zionist and anti-Sir Robert' delegates.⁸⁶ The BoD's Annual Report for 1943 observed that there was 'an extraordinary increase in the numbers of Deputies elected and the number of constituencies which obtained representation for the new session ... an increase of 148

⁸³ Bakstansky to Ben Gurion/Shertok, 19 October 1942, CZA S25/1925.

⁸⁴ Bakstansky to Brodetsky, 4 June 1942, CZA Z4/101995.

⁸⁵ Norman Jacobs to Bakstansky, 8 July 1943, CZA F13/72-II.

⁸⁶ Norman Jacobs to Bakstansky, 13 April 1943, CZA F13/72-I.

Deputies and 47 constituencies as compared with the previous session'.⁸⁷ Although Brodetsky was re-elected President unopposed, not all candidatures backed by the Zionists materialized. The main objective of the Zionist caucus, however, the dissolution of the JFC, was achieved by a slim majority of 154 to 148 votes with 37 abstentions.⁸⁸ With the JFC dissolved, with Waley Cohen replaced by Samson Wright as Vice-President of the BoD, and with a solid majority in the BoD's principal committees, Bakstansky cabled the JA's Jerusalem Executive that the 'Zionist electioneering effort' at the BoD had proved triumphant.⁸⁹ At the BoD the Zionists called themselves the 'Progressive Group' in order to avoid labelling other groups as anti-Zionist.⁹⁰

While the capture of the BoD was hailed as a victory by Zionists throughout the country,⁹¹ it caused a bitter controversy in British Jewry which was given ample publicity through the *JC*, whose editor, Greenberg, a declared supporter of Jabotinsky's Revisionist Zionism, had opposed the Zionist caucus.⁹² The *JC*'s hostile coverage of the Zionist capture of the BoD, in turn, evoked the criticism of mainstream Zionists.⁹³

When the AJA did not accept the dissolution of JFC as final and continued to liaise with the government, it became clear that Zionist control of the BoD was not sufficient for displaying a unified Jewish voice vis-à-vis the government. In what was a parallel exercise to the JA's courting of the assimilationists—Weizmann addressed the Council of the AJA in April 1944⁹⁴—Brodetsky was anxious to prevent the non-Zionists from establishing competing organizations. He went to considerable lengths to placate assimilationist sensibilities without, however, compromising on essentials of Zionist policy. He had not only considered the dissolution of the agreement with the AJA to be a grave mistake but had also advocated the re-election of Waley Cohen, the most vocal assimilationist, as a Vice-President of the Board. Although he had failed in restraining the Zionist militants from dissolving the JFC, Brodetsky persisted in negotiations with the AJA with the objective of preventing separate representations to the government on the Palestine question, but in vain.⁹⁵ Although the Board had severed its formal arrangements with the AJA in 1943, deliberations between the two

⁸⁷ BoD, Annual Report 1943, 17; JTA, 5 July 1943.

⁸⁸ BoD, Minute Books, vol. 32, 89–90, Board Meeting, 4–5.

⁸⁹ Bakstansky to Shertok, 29 July 1943, CZA S25/5268.

⁹⁰ Bakstansky to Dr S. Rabinowicz, 27 January 1944, CZA F13/44-II.

⁹¹ Leeds Zionist Council, 25 October 1943, Leeds JNF Commission.

⁹² *JC*, 9 July 1943, 6.

⁹³ Jacobs to Greenberg, 26 October 1943, CZA F13/72-II.

⁹⁴ Stein to Weizmann, 30 March 1944, WA 2497.

⁹⁵ BoD, Minute Books, vol. 32, 117, BoD and AJA. Correspondence following the Dissolution of the JFC, 2, No. 5 and 4, No. 8.

bodies continued until November 1944. Only when all attempts had failed to prevent the AJA from approaching the government with a statement of its own did the Board decide to act independently, adopting Statements on Palestine and Foreign Affairs on 5 and 19 November respectively.⁹⁶ The former was presented to the Colonial, the latter to the Foreign Office. The BoD urged the government to

declare that undivided Palestine be designated to become... a Jewish State or Commonwealth. All Jews who wish to make their home in Palestine, shall have the right of entry, settlement and citizenship, in accordance with its laws, it being provided that nationality of the Jewish State or Commonwealth shall be confined to its own citizens, and shall not, in the terms of the Balfour Declaration, prejudice 'the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country...'

and expressed the hope that 'the Jewish State or Commonwealth may find an appropriate and legally secured place within the British Commonwealth of Nations'.⁹⁷ The differences between the Zionist-controlled BoD and the AJA over the political implications of Jewish nationalism, reflecting a fundamental clash in their members' respective self-images as Jews, proved to be insurmountable and resulted in separate representations to the government.⁹⁸

To bolster the JA's demand for a Jewish Commonwealth the ZF initiated a campaign to have the BoD's demand for a Jewish Commonwealth endorsed by Jewish representative bodies throughout the country.⁹⁹ The aim of the carefully orchestrated campaign was to demonstrate support for the BoD's demand for a Jewish Commonwealth and to discredit the AJA as unrepresentative of Jewish opinion. With the exception of Sheffield, whose local Zionist strongman, A. Krausz, took exception to the campaign against the AJA,¹⁰⁰ the BoD's demand for Jewish sovereignty and the rejection of the AJA's independent approach were echoed by the Jewish Representative Councils throughout the provinces. The Zionist Central Councils and the Jewish Representative Councils of Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds, and Liverpool passed resolutions unanimously demanding a Jewish state or Commonwealth, asserting the role of the BoD as the only legitimate spokesman of British Jewry, condemning the AJA, and expressing the hope that the future Jewish polity would be closely linked to Britain.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ PC, Minutes, 29 November 1944, see plenary session.

⁹⁷ Statement of Policy on Palestine.

⁹⁸ Annual General Meeting, AJA, 2 November 1944, WA 2529.

⁹⁹ Bakstansky to David Freeman (Manchester), 19 December 1944, CZA F13/166.

¹⁰⁰ Bakstansky to A. Krausz, 16 December 1944, CZA F13/417.

¹⁰¹ Fox to Bakstansky, 12 December 1944; 18 December 1944, CZA F13/44 II.

When it turned out that the AJA was intent on submitting its own memorandum on Palestine, the ZF first tried to undermine its credibility by inciting local AJA branches against the decision of the AJA's London Council. Zionist members of the AJA were provided with a list of questions they should raise at local branch meetings, asked to press for resolutions disapproving of the Council's action and to send protest telegrams.¹⁰² As soon as the AJA had decided to submit its memorandum, the ZF embarked on a campaign to have as many of the AJA's members as possible dissociate themselves publicly from this move.¹⁰³ The ZF drew up a memorandum and circulated it to key men throughout the country.¹⁰⁴ After the memorandum had been signed by those members of the AJA who were dissatisfied with the AJA's independent presentation to the government, it was forwarded to the Colonial Office.¹⁰⁵

The Zionist capture of the BoD is significant both as an important stage in the Zionist transformation of British Jewry and as an example of the impact of Zionist high politics on British Zionism. It marked the establishment of Zionist hegemony over the BoD which was recognized as the representative body of British Jewry by the British-Jewish as well as by the general public. While this did not amount to every British Jew regarding himself as a Zionist, it meant that Zionists could count on 'the communal voice' of British Jewry supporting their policies. With regard to the interplay between the transnational and the British Zionist spheres of interaction the timing, the realization and the motivation behind the Zionist capture of the BoD demonstrate that it was not only an episode of British-Jewish communal politics, but a function of Zionist state- and nation-building. The timing of the Zionist caucus at the BoD, masterminded by Bakstansky with the objective of preventing a repeat performance of 1917 and of ensuring a Zionist BoD for the time after the war, when the future of the JNH would be decided, shows that the decisive impetus for the Zionization of the 'communal parliament' of British Jewry came from Zionist high politics.

If the immediate cause of the Zionist capture of the BoD was its value for Zionist strategy on the road to Jewish statehood, it is also indicative of a general trend. It formed part of a wider process of the Zionist transformation of an array of Jewish communal bodies, voluntary associations, synagogues, and their umbrella organizations. From the mid-1920s, British-Jewish

¹⁰² 'Copies of telegrams sent from 17 Brunswick Street re A.J.A.'; Max Brostoff to the Secretary of the AJA, 5 December 1944, CZA F13/44-II.

¹⁰³ Bakstansky to Fox, Samuels, Wigoder, 15 December 1944, CZA F13/44-II.

¹⁰⁴ Bakstansky to S. Samuels, Joe Levy, David Fox, Colman, S. Phillips, Wigoder, Nachman Engelsberg, Dr Shaffer, 28 December 1944, CZA F13/417, F13/166; *Points and Questions*. Re: *A.J.A. Meetings*, 25 January 1945, CZA F 13/417.

¹⁰⁵ Bakstansky to S. Samuels, 20 February 1945, CZA F13/358 II.

communal organizations started to adopt a Zionist colouring.¹⁰⁶ Given the existence of organizations like the BoD and the chief rabbinate, which were traditionally regarded as representative of the community, their Zionization carried particular weight. The BoD had agreed to join the JA in 1924. From 1928 it was represented at the EZF's annual conferences. After the election of Brodetsky it became standard practice to elect Zionists as presidents of the BoD. Chief Rabbi Hertz had become President of the British Mizrahi upon its foundation in 1918. His successor, Israel Brodie, followed him in this office. To add a few more examples: B'nai B'rith lodges took an interest in Zionism and elected Zionists as their presidents. In 1925 the Grand Order of Israel, the largest Jewish friendly society, suggested that friendly societies permit the imposition of a levy to support Jewish institutions in the Holy Land. By the end of the Second World War, the communal institutions which possessed a representative character, the BoD on the national and the Representative Councils on a regional or local level, had become dominated by Jews who were sympathetic to Zionism. The Zionization of the synagogues, which carried particular weight, since they were the basic organizational unit of British Jewry, is the topic of the following section.

THE ZIONIZATION OF THE SYNAGOGUES

The Zionization of the synagogue will be examined for two reasons, for its importance as a vehicle of the Zionist transformation of British Jewry on the grassroots level and as an indicator for the transition from religious to national identity. In contrast to continental Europe, where Jews were organized into *Gemeinden* chartered in public law, the predominant unit of Jewish organization in Britain and other Anglo-American countries was the synagogue congregation, membership of which was voluntary. As the majority of British Jews belonged to synagogue congregations which recognized the authority of the Chief Rabbi, Orthodoxy was the predominant form of British-Jewish religious affiliation. The male membership of the United Synagogue totalled 8,310 in 1930. The Federation of Synagogues is estimated to have comprised sixty-eight synagogues catering for more than 50,000 Jews.¹⁰⁷ The synagogue congregation was not only the most widespread form of Jewish organization in Britain, it was also the unit on which the representative system of the BoD was based. The majority of Deputies of the BoD represented synagogue congregations.

¹⁰⁶ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 260.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 254, 371; Aubrey Newman, *The United Synagogue, 1870–1970* (London, 1977), 216.

Whereas Part II has addressed the responses of the Mizrahi and the radical Orthodox represented by the AI to Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East, this chapter is concerned with the impact of Zionism on mainstream Orthodoxy in Britain. The Zionist permeation of Orthodoxy is examined from two perspectives, first the reassessment of Zionism by Orthodox functionaries, in particular, the chief rabbis, and second, the attempts of British Zionists to ally the synagogue congregations to the Zionist project.

The reassessment of Zionism by British mainstream Orthodoxy during the first half of the twentieth century can be measured by the changing attitude of the Orthodox rabbinate and ministry and the incorporation of Zionist elements in the synagogue service.¹⁰⁸ In 1897 Chief Rabbi Hermann Adler had derided the first Zionist Congress as 'an egregious blunder' and denounced the idea of a Jewish state as 'contrary to Jewish principles'.¹⁰⁹ By contrast, his successor Joseph Hertz who served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire from 1912 to 1946 was a committed Zionist and served as President of the British Mizrahi.¹¹⁰ Israel Brodie, Chief Rabbi from 1948 to 1965, was also President of the British Mizrahi. The Zionist sympathies of Hertz and Brodie were not directly mirrored in their official pronouncements or changes in the liturgy.¹¹¹ In his installation address on 28 June 1948, Brodie made no reference to the prior establishment of the State of Israel. Although a prayer for the welfare of the State of Israel had been included in the Shabbat and Festival services in 1949, it was not until 1955 that Brodie conducted the first Israel Independence Day service and that special prayers and readings were inserted in the service of the Sabbath prior to 5th Iyyar, the day of the proclamation of the State of Israel in the Jewish calendar, on which Israel Independence Day came customarily to be observed by a special service.¹¹² Although no comprehensive study of the sermons or writings on Zionism by the British-Jewish clergy at

¹⁰⁸ Immanuel Jakobovits, 'The Attitudes to Zionism of Britain's Chief Rabbis as Reflected in their Writings', in idem, *If Only my People...: Zionism in my Life* (London, 1984), 209–42.

¹⁰⁹ *JC*, 16 July 1897, 13.

¹¹⁰ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 217–21; Joseph Hertz, *Sermons, Addresses and Studies*, vol. i (London, 1938), 332–3.

¹¹¹ For the changes in the liturgy compare Joseph Hertz, *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire* (London, 1945) and Israel Brodie (ed.), *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth of Nations* (London, 1962).

¹¹² Jakobovits, 'Attitudes', 8; Israel Brodie, 'Israel Independence Day', in idem, *A Word in Season* (London, 1959), 104–7; idem, *Israel's Tenth Anniversary 5708–5718*, three talks (London, 1958).

large exists, in the sermons a gradual shift towards a friendlier attitude to Zionism appears to have taken place. In Liverpool, for example, S. Frampton, the senior minister of the Old Hebrew Congregation in Princess Road, had resigned from the Chovevei Zion when its members turned to Herzlian Zionism, but after the First World War was happily preaching sermons in support of the KH which were printed and circulated by Zion House.¹¹³

The change in mainstream Orthodox attitudes towards Zionism was not restricted to the pronouncements of the chief rabbis or the sermons of rabbis and ministers. Since the 1920s Orthodox synagogues became affiliated to the ZF, served as avenues of Zionist fundraising, organized shekel sales to its members, allowed religious services under Zionist auspices, and offered their premises for Zionist functions. The Federation of Synagogues was both the first synagogal body and the first major non-Zionist organization to make contributions to the KH and the KKL in 1926 and since then on an increasing scale.¹¹⁴ After the 1920s the majority of assimilationist honorary officers of the United Synagogue under the leadership of Waley Cohen clashed with the Zionist faction in the United Synagogue, including Chief Rabbi Hertz.¹¹⁵ It was not until 1928 that on the initiative of a number of suburban constituents of the United Synagogue, including Hampstead, Hammersmith, and Golders Green, the honorary officers of the United Synagogue Council agreed to the formation of 'The United Synagogue Central Keren Hayesod Committee' as a body for the coordination of Zionist fundraising in the United Synagogue.¹¹⁶ The struggle to introduce Zionism into the synagogue services at the Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation scored its first success against considerable opposition when in 1937 the Herzl Memorial service was held for the first time in the Princess Road Synagogue.¹¹⁷ While Zionists had encountered less opposition from rabbis and synagogue officials since the late 1930s, when they wanted to hold Herzl Memorial services inside the synagogue, it was only in 1949 that the success of Zionist state-building was granted formal recognition in the regular synagogue service.

The Zionization of the mainstream Orthodox synagogues was neither an even nor by the 1950s a completed process; nor did the accommodation of Orthodox rabbinical opinion to Zionism amount to its wholesale

¹¹³ Bill Williams, *Liverpool Jewry: A Pictorial History* (Liverpool, 1987), 16.

¹¹⁴ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 256.

¹¹⁵ Jakobovits, 'Attitudes', 225–6.

¹¹⁶ Cesarani, 'Zionism', 51–3; Alderman, *British Jewry*, 259–60.

¹¹⁷ David Hudlay, *Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation, 1780–1974* (Liverpool, 1974), 63.

endorsement. On the one hand, fundraising for Zionist purposes through the synagogues, the sympathetic treatment of Zionist concerns in sermons, and finally the introduction of prayers for the State of Israel into the regular synagogue service integrated Zionism into the synagogal life of British mainstream Orthodoxy in the period under scrutiny. This trend was supported by a generational shift among the rabbis and ministers. The younger generation tended to be more sympathetic to Zionism than their predecessors.¹¹⁸ Some of them welcomed Zionism as an instrument to stem the tide of secularization:

It is through this national consciousness that these young men and women will return to their religion. The task of the Synagogue will be to inspire that return. By making it a house of meetings, of social gatherings and popular lectures, in addition to divine service, a substantial step forward will have been made in uniting our young Jews with the Jewish religion.¹¹⁹

On the other hand, the endorsement of Zionism by the representatives of British mainstream Orthodoxy tended to be restricted to those of its aspects which could be regarded as extensions of traditional Orthodox notions of Jewish peoplehood, stopping short of substituting nationalism for observance of the Torah as the defining concept of Jewishness. The limits of the accommodation of mainstream British Orthodoxy to Zionism found practical expression in the following areas. It was not until 1962 that Chief Rabbi Brodie sanctioned the introduction of the Sephardi pronunciation in the classes of the London Board of Jewish Religious Education (LBJRE), thereby modifying an earlier ruling to the contrary, but not its use in synagogue services. It was only when the ZF's Educational Trust alleviated fears of a secular education by placing its day schools under the religious supervision of the LBJRE that mainstream Orthodoxy rallied behind the Zionist day schools.¹²⁰

When the ZF welcomed 'the institution of Palestine Sabbath in the Synagogues of this country',¹²¹ this was more the expression of a hope rather than a description of reality. During the 1940s and early 1950s, Zionist attempts to use the synagogue for their purposes met with considerable opposition from Orthodox functionaries.¹²² The continuing reservations

¹¹⁸ Cesarani, 'Zionism', 181; Alderman, *British Jewry*, 309.

¹¹⁹ Revd Shalom Coleman, 'Jewish Ex-Servicemen and the Synagogue', *Gates of Zion* (October 1947), 30–1.

¹²⁰ Jakobovits, 'Attitudes', 231; interview with William Frankel, London, 22 June 1993.

¹²¹ ZF, 47th Annual Conference, 1948, Zionism and the Synagogue, 5, CZA Z4/10.746-V.

¹²² Leeds Zionist Council, 18 December 1947; 15 January 1948, Leeds JNF Commission.

on the part of official Orthodoxy came under criticism by Zionists who had regarded the synagogue as a vehicle to preserve the Jewish nation. In 1956 Israel Fox complained that 'even today to link up the word "Zionism" with the synagogue is enough to make some Synagogue officials shudder', and that ministers and rabbis 'will get red in the face and hot under their ministerial collar' when Zionism is mentioned in connection with synagogue services.¹²³ The Orthodox discrimination between the State of Israel and Zionism prompted his question why 'Israel is accepted but Zionism is taboo'.¹²⁴ He considered this differentiation to be the reflection of a inappropriate separation between secular and religious matters. He argued that the synagogue had been identified with Zionism from its very inception: It 'was first established in the Golah... and its original function was exactly what we now call Zionism: to preserve the Jewish people as a nation, to keep alive the Messianic vision of a return to the Holy Homeland...'¹²⁵ In the 1950s Israel Fox was not alone in his complaints about insufficient and partial recognition of Zionism by the Orthodox religious and lay authorities. A Liverpool Zionist activist observed that 'our synagogue bodies have hardly given more than a de-facto recognition of Israel. The prayer for Israel on Shabbat morning seems to be their single token of recognition', and denounced the rabbinate for its failure to accord Israel Independence Day 'its due religious status'.¹²⁶

Notwithstanding the criticism which Zionist activists raised against the insufficient recognition of Zionism within mainstream British Orthodoxy, by the 1950s the assimilationist tendency of mainstream British Orthodoxy to refashion Jewishness as a confessional religion coupled with an exclusively British national identification had not only come to a halt, but had been reversed.

As has already been pointed out, in Britain, as in other Anglo-American countries, the synagogue congregation served not merely as the focus of religious life, but simultaneously as the main organizational unit of the community, a function performed on the Continent by the *Gemeinde*, of which the synagogue congregation formed a part. As many British Jews were members of an Orthodox synagogue in order to be linked to the community, irrespective of the degree of their observance or religious views, examination of the Zionization of British mainstream Orthodoxy would be incomplete if the Zionization of the synagogue congregations as the mainstay of British-Jewish communal life was not taken into account.

¹²³ Israel Fox, 'Zion and the Synagogue', *Gates of Zion* (January 1956), 9.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ H. Lewis, 'Independence Day Merry-Go-Round', *Shalom* (1954), 33-5.

There was more to the Zionization of the synagogue than changes in the prayer book or the Chief Rabbi conducting a service commemorating the independence of the State of Israel. In recognition of the importance of the synagogues in order to reach British Jews at grassroots level and to gain Zionism a secure footing in the congregations, the ZF had established the Synagogue Council as one of its standing committees in 1917 on the initiative of Nahum Sokolow.¹²⁷ The original objectives of the ZF's Synagogue Council were the dissemination of Zionist ideals in the synagogues, the promotion of their affiliation to the ZF, the support of Zionist fundraising, and the inclusion of the shekel fees in the synagogue seat rentals. By 1956 the scope of its programme had become more ambitious, hoping to mobilize through the synagogues 'the masses of the Jewish People in a non-party form of Zionism'; to assist through the synagogues the JPA; to encourage *aliyah*; to secure the election of Zionists as synagogue representatives on the BoD; to assist the educational programme of the ZF through the establishment of Jewish day schools, the introduction of Ivrit in synagogue religion classes, the establishment of Hebrew-speaking circles among synagogue members, and the education of Jewish mothers in the importance of a Zionist education for their children; to help Zionist youth movements by making synagogue premises available for their activities; to encourage the recruitment for Zionist youth movements from synagogue classes; to include the shekel in the synagogal seat-rental; and to organize within the synagogues national celebrations (M'Lavei Malkoth, Onegei Shabbat, Lag B'Omer, Independence Day, Tu B'shvat, Herzl Yahrzeit, Weizmann Yahrzeit, etc.).¹²⁸

In order to realize its programme the ZF, in addition to the establishment of its Synagogue Council, appointed a synagogue organizer and founded a quarterly for the promotion of Zionism among the synagogue-going audience.¹²⁹ After some deliberation and against the opposition of the PZ members Richtiger and Levenberg who feared for competition for the secular and largely PZ-controlled ZR, the ZF decided in favour of Paul Goodman's plan to found a synagogue journal in June 1946.¹³⁰

The efforts of the ZF to strengthen its foothold in the synagogues paid handsome dividends. In 1939 71 synagogues were affiliated to the ZF. By 1948 the number had reached 97, of which 41 were provincial synagogues, 33 belonged to the Federation of Synagogues, 14 to the United

¹²⁷ Litvin, 'Zionism and the Synagogue', in Cohen (ed.), *Rebirth*, 131; Goodman, 'Mount Zion or Mount Gerizim?', *Gates* (1946), 2.

¹²⁸ 'Work of the Synagogue Council', *Gates of Zion* (January 1956), 11.

¹²⁹ ZF, Honorary Officers and KH Committee, 16 November 1944, CZA Z4/10.299-III.

¹³⁰ ZF, Honorary Officers, 6 May 1946; 19 June 1946, CZA F13/1007/I.

Synagogue, including 4 of its constituent synagogues, namely Brondesbury, Dollis Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb, and Hendon, and 9 others. In 1954 the number of affiliated synagogues had reached 132. The Council's work consisted primarily in providing Zionist speakers to synagogue congregations on religious festivals and fundraising. During the High Festivals in 1938/9 alone more than 100 addresses were organized by the Synagogue Council.¹³¹ From 1946 the ZF's Synagogue Council issued a quarterly review, *The Gates of Zion*, which in contrast to the ZR, the ZF's main organ, did not suffer financial difficulties.¹³² Under Litvin's editorship the tenor of the *Gates* was characterized by devotion to the tenets of Orthodoxy, of political Zionism, and the promotion of a Jewish state based on the Torah. Whereas the majority of its articles were in English, the *Gates* also contained a small Hebrew section. Although exact figures are not available it seems that a substantial part of the income of the Zionist funds resulted from the appeals by the Synagogue Council.¹³³ By proclaiming 14 June 1947 Palestine Sabbath, the ZF's Synagogue Council set a successful precedent: 'Taking into consideration the tremendous opposition which was manifested by all kinds of non- and anti-Zionists, the results cannot but be regarded as very satisfactory. In many synagogues, including constituent United Synagogues, sermons dedicated to the Palestine Sabbath were delivered, special prayers were introduced into the Service, and the attendance was greater than on an ordinary Sabbath.'¹³⁴ During the final years of the Mandate the Synagogue Council provided speakers to address congregations on the Palestine crisis and sent letters to all rabbis and ministers requesting them to introduce special prayers into the service and deliver sermons on Palestine and the DPs during the high festivals. The Synagogue Council claimed credit for the participation in the fast proclaimed by the Beth Din in solidarity with the *Exodus*.¹³⁵

Having charted two avenues of the Zionist transformation of the British mainstream Orthodox synagogue—the changing attitude of the rabbinate and the efforts of the ZF's Synagogue Council to rally the synagogue congregations behind Zionism—two questions are examined. First, why was the Zionization of the synagogue attractive at the grassroots level? And, second, what was specifically British about the Zionization process?

¹³¹ ZF, 39th Annual Report, 26.

¹³² In 1948 the ZR ran a deficit of £4,000, *Zionist Federation: Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (London, [1949]), 20.

¹³³ *Daily Telegraph*, 10 September 1948; Litvin, 'Comments', *Gates of Zion* (October 1948), 37.

¹³⁴ ZF, 47th Annual Conference, CZA Z4/10.346 V.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

For many nominally Orthodox synagogue members the attraction of Zionism consisted in its capacity to provide a new, secular Jewish identity by substituting nationalism for religion.¹³⁶ Describing the Jewish condition in Britain in the 1950s, Beatrice Barwell, an activist in the FZY, argued that Judaism as a religion had lost its potency, that the rise of Jewish consciousness in the wake of the nineteenth-century immigration wave from Eastern Europe was ebbing, and that Jewish education had lost in importance: 'The Anglicisation has been to all intents and purposes completed, but we are now faced with the need for re-Judaising if Jewish integration into English life is not to become complete assimilation and eventual extinction.'¹³⁷ In order to reverse the process leading to the disappearance of British Jews she suggested the introduction of a Jewish education system based on Jewish day schools and part-time centres and the transformation of the synagogues into 'the focal point of Jewish life', into 'cultural and social centres as they were in the past'.¹³⁸ Although Zionism had come to provide a de facto secular Jewish identity to many British Jews by the 1950s, the transition from a primarily religious to a national Jewish identity took a less overt form than on the Continent or the *yishuv* as British Zionists, including cultural Zionists, were careful not to break openly with the religiously defined public face of Jewishness. This unbroken partially religious self-perception of British Zionists and British Jews in general, irrespective of the degree of their observance, needs to be borne in mind when one applies the term 'secular' to British-Jewish history.

The Zionization of the Orthodox mainstream synagogue was not merely a reflection of the secularization of British Jewry. A second tributary to the Zionization process was those British Jews who regarded Zionism not as a replacement for Orthodoxy but as its logical extension. Presenting Zionism as the unfolding of divine planning, the *Gates* called upon its readers to express their sympathies with 'the hallowed aspirations foretold by the Hebrew prophets: that one day God will again gather his people in the land promised by Him to their forefathers—aspirations that have found their concrete formulation and development in the programme and activities of the Zionist Organisation'.¹³⁹ Despite heated controversies about the religious merits of Zionism, Herzl's scheme had attracted British Orthodox support from the beginning, both from rabbis ministering to the immigrants and from those identified with the

¹³⁶ Israel Cohen, *Jewish Life in Modern Times*, 2nd edn. (London, 1929), 317–18.

¹³⁷ Beatrice Barwell, 'Some Tercentenary Reflections', *Gates of Zion* (April 1956), 5.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ *Gates of Zion* (January 1947), 2.

Anglicized section of British Jewry.¹⁴⁰ In the period under scrutiny the British Zionist movement counted numerous Orthodox Jews, rabbis, and ministers in its ranks, the bulk of whom did not belong to the Mizrachi, but the General Zionist ZF. Rabbi S. Brown, for example, was Chairman of the Leeds Zionist Council in the 1950s.¹⁴¹ In Liverpool, Zionists organized *minyans* and Shabbat services.¹⁴²

What is striking about British Zionism is that the ZF, by and large, succeeded in containing potentially divisive debates about the place of Orthodoxy in the Zionist movement and in rallying not only nominally Orthodox but also observant Jews behind a common, general Zionist platform. The ZF's Synagogue Council offered a home to nominally Orthodox as well as to those Zionists who wanted to create within Zionism a movement loyal to the Torah, without making it a party issue. Contemporary observers noted that the ZF was the only national Zionist organization with a committee dedicated to the promotion of Zionist affairs in the synagogues. When the Synagogue Council was set up in 1917 British Zionists were pursuing two aims, to render Zionism palatable to the general British as well as to the Orthodox section of the British-Jewish public: 'it had been founded to demonstrate to the larger British society and some sections of the Anglo-Jewish community that Zionism was not merely a political movement, to prove that Zionism was recognized by religious, orthodox Jewry, organized throughout the country in synagogues and integrated into Jewish life.'¹⁴³

With the integration of Zionism into British mainstream Orthodoxy the objectives of the founders of the ZF's Synagogue Council had been largely achieved by the 1950s. The extent of the Zionization of the British mainstream Orthodox synagogue can be measured by several yardsticks. The ZF expressed its satisfaction with the growing influence of Zionism in the synagogues.¹⁴⁴ Orthodox rabbinical opinion had endorsed large aspects of Zionism despite continuing reservations about secular parts of its programme. Zionist concerns and symbolism had found entry into the regular synagogue services. Orthodox synagogues had become avenues for Zionist fundraising. In terms of communal policy, British Zionists had gained a majority on the BoD through the election of Zionist synagogue representatives as Deputies.

¹⁴⁰ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 231.

¹⁴¹ Leeds Zionist Council, 25 June 1952, Leeds JNF Commission.

¹⁴² Emmanuel Fagin, 'Jubilee Liverpool Zionist Central Council', *Shalom* (1950), 205.

¹⁴³ Fox, 'Zion and the Synagogue', 8–11.

¹⁴⁴ ZF, 46th Annual Conference, 1947, Zionism and the Synagogue, 4, CZA Z4/20161.

The Zionization of Jewish Sociability

Apart from the Zionist transformation of the synagogue life of British mainstream Orthodoxy, the Zionist permeation of Jewish social life served as a major avenue for the Zionization of British Jewry at the grassroots level. One can distinguish between two mechanisms of how British Zionists tied social structures to Zionism. One option was to give traditional forms of Jewish sociability a Zionist colouring, a second one, to ally patterns of general British social activities to Zionism.

An example of the first option is the incorporation of Zionist symbolism and purpose into Jewish family and religious festivities. It became customary to toast the President of the State of Israel and to sing the Hatikvah at family functions. Birth, *simcha*, barmitzvah, and other rites of passage provided opportunities for donations to Zionist funds. At such occasions relatives and friends could have the name of the celebrated individual inscribed in the Golden Book of the JNF or the *Sefer Hayerled* or a tree certificate in return for a donation. If the commemoration of rites of passage through the purchase of JNF certificates helped to raise funds for Zionist state- and nation-building in Palestine it also served as a vehicle of internal nation-building by giving events which had previously had an exclusively family or religious connotation a national, Palestinocentric character.¹⁴⁵ By establishing real and imaginary links between the participants and the Jewish polity Jewish festivals with a Zionist imprint provided British Jews with entry tickets to the Zionist national community.

British Zionists did not only appropriate traditional forms of specifically Jewish social life for their purposes, but also employed patterns of general British associational culture. Three examples of this latter variant of the Zionization of Jewish social life will be examined in greater detail: the activities of Manchester women Zionist societies, Leeds JNF fellowships, and fundraising functions. The following quotations from an article written

¹⁴⁵ In 1939 the JNF derived £1,345 from inscriptions in the Golden Book, £71 from the *Sefer Hayerled*, and £4,926 from tree certificates; ZF, 39th Annual Report, 54–5.

by Clare Green, a woman Zionist activist from Liverpool, illustrate the way in which the Zionization of British-Jewish social life worked in practice. Asked to write 'an article oozing white-hot Zionism, keeping "Fath and Dior out of this"', she wondered, in the light of her recollections of Zionist functions, whether a strict separation of the two themes worked to the benefit of Zionism:

From what I know of our Zionist societies, fashion and fundraising go hand-in-hand (remember the Huldah's fabulous mannequin parade last autumn? AND the spectators? . . . This is sound psychology. You know, as I know, how women will flock to a fashion parade like bees round honey, when they might, let's face it, be quite tepid about cultural meetings. . . . £200 were raised and few Jewish Women in Liverpool were unaware of WIZO's needs, above all the Jerusalem Baby Home. The recipe for success was to give venues that were attractive anyway a Zionist meaning: 'Be generous—but be gay!' . . . Once you harness fashion, that powerful influence in women's lives, to fundraising, you're on to a sure-fire formula. Please, executives, you're appealing to women, not dehydrated statistics. Be human. . . . And frankly, aren't we just as keenly Zionist?¹⁴⁶

As Clare Green argued, the successful integration of Zionism into British-Jewish social life did not derive from the appeal of Zionism as such, but from its combination with socially attractive events. To link a social venue which was popular already to a Zionist purpose guaranteed higher financial proceeds as well as a bigger audience than a purely Zionist event like a lecture on modern Hebrew literature. Apart from fashion parades there were numerous other social activities such as dinner parties, teas, luncheons, garden parties, dances, raffles, bazaars, or balls, which British Zionists successfully allied to their purposes. The 3rd Annual Blue and White Ball, for example, held by the JNF at the Albert Hall was attended by 3,000 people.¹⁴⁷ While a mannequin parade organized for the benefit of a Zionist fund might, measured by the yardstick of *aliyah*, appear to be an inadequate expression of Zionist identification, it contributed to the Zionist redefinition of the British-Jewish social sphere. As the above quotation indicates, it was precisely through social events which were tied to a Zionist purpose, or which possessed a Zionist colouring, that Zionism ensured popularity among British Jews. In this particular case, the audience had been attracted by the fashion parade in the first place. While attending, the visitors had simultaneously been supplied with information about the programme of WIZO in general and the needs of

¹⁴⁶ Clare Green, 'Mainly Feminine', *Shalom* (1951), 95.

¹⁴⁷ *JC*, 25 March 1949, 15.

the Jerusalem Baby Home, the major recipient of money raised by British women Zionists, in particular, and had expressed their sense of national Jewish solidarity through donations amounting to £200.

The importance of the Zionization of British-Jewish social life for sustaining the momentum of Zionism in British Jewry becomes apparent if one looks at the respective weight which events of a more political nature on the one hand and those of a mixed social and political character on the other possessed at the grassroots level of Zionist activity. The minutes of the Didsbury and South Manchester Women's Zionist Society, one of the five women Zionist societies affiliated to the Manchester & Salford Women's Zionist Council, the umbrella organization of five women Zionist groups, reveal the following picture. While the activities of the society ranged from bazaars, teas, dances, and garden parties to attendance at cultural meetings and speeches by Zionist politicians, the election of delegates to the annual conferences of the JNF and the FWZ, and the petitioning of MPs over matters of Zionist concern, those events which fulfilled both a social and a Zionist purpose were by far the most frequent. During the 1930s the members of the Didsbury and South Manchester Women's Zionist Society met for monthly 'propaganda teas' in one of the members' homes with proceeds amounting to £5 on average. In addition to the monthly tea party, the society held lunches and occasionally a cultural meeting.

Although these events primarily provided opportunities for the society's members to meet they were also instrumental in establishing links with the British Zionist movement as well as with the Zionist enterprise in the Middle East. Through the collection of money the society supported the general work of Zionist bodies but also of specific projects. The recipients of the donations provided, in turn, a focus of identification and a source of pride. Since the money collected by the Didsbury and South Manchester Women's Zionist Society was earmarked exclusively for Zionist purposes, the society's fundraising efforts in their support reinforced a Palestino-centric form of Jewish national consciousness. In this particular case the bulk of the money collected went to the FWZ, the JNF, the WIZO Jerusalem Baby Home, the David Eder farm, and the Hashomer Hatzair training farm at Bedford. A specific aspect of women Zionist societies was that their members were called upon by Zionist activists to get their husbands to make donations.¹⁴⁸

Fundraising apart, there were further links between the Didsbury and South Manchester Women's Zionist Society and the *yishuv*, and later the State of Israel. At irregular intervals the society's members were addressed

¹⁴⁸ Didsbury and South Manchester Women's Zionist Society, 13 January 1949, MCL M331/1.

on Middle Eastern politics by lesser as well as greater Zionist luminaries, Gentile Zionists, or non-Jewish politicians interested in the area. During the 1940s Rebecca Sieff, Dr James McDonald, an American serving on the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, Lorna Wingate, the widow of the Gentile Zionist Orde Wingate, and Aubrey [Abba] Eban were among the society's guest speakers.

Although the size of the society with a membership of well below fifty, with on average five to fifteen women present, was designed to meet the needs of neighbourhood social life, the Didsbury and South Manchester Women's Zionist Society did not only organize events for the benefit of its members, but also participated in the activities of the British Zionist movement at large. As has already been pointed out, part of the money raised by the society contributed to the training schemes for British and refugee *chalutzim*. The bazaars and fashion shows put on by the society attracted an audience which was far larger than its membership. The society's Blue and White Bazaars, at which the helpers were required to wear overalls in the national colours of the Zionist movement, raised several hundreds of pounds.¹⁴⁹ In September 1948 a mannequin parade with over 400 women present raised £277.¹⁵⁰ Besides, the members of the society participated in the sale of shekels during the elections to Zionist congresses, elected delegates for the annual conferences of the JNF and the FWZ, and in moments of Zionist crisis sent protest letters to local MPs and the government.

The minutes of the Manchester Daughters of Zion reveal a similar picture.¹⁵¹ With usually five to ten of its members attending, the size of the society fitted the needs of neighbourhood social life. The society's range of activities comprised teas, *purim* parties, dances, raffles, garden parties, mannequin parades, and jumble sales on the primarily social side. On the purely Zionist side, Daughters of Zion participated in the events put on by the Manchester & Salford Women's Zionist Council. The involvement of British Jewesses in Zionism also highlights the ability of Zionism to transcend the boundary between the sexes and to accord women an avenue for self-advancement. By participating in Zionist activities, primarily, but not exclusively in areas traditionally associated with the female sphere, British Jewesses carved out a place in the British-Jewish public and social sphere.

The JNF fellowships which sprang up in the late 1940s provide another example of the Zionization of British-Jewish sociability. In Leeds the first

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., March 1936.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 14 September 1948.

¹⁵¹ MCL M348.

JNF fellowship had come into being in 1949. Its activities ranged from lectures to purely social gatherings such as musical evenings, card evenings, dances, dinner parties, and get-togethers. As in the case of the women Zionist societies the social gatherings of the JNF fellowship were tied to a Zionist purpose, with the difference that the sole beneficiary of the funds raised by a JNF fellowship was the JNF. The proceeds of a dance arranged on Boxing Night 1949, followed by a card evening, enabled the Leeds JNF fellowship to plant 1,000 trees in Israel. Out of a membership of 45 an average of 30 attended every meeting. It was the policy of the fellowship not to accept more members than could be accommodated for meetings at members' homes. The fellowship attributed its success to three factors: (a) that it was based on husband-wife membership, (b) that it developed from an existing group of friends, and (c) that it was socially homogeneous.¹⁵² The Leeds JNF fellowships proved so successful that they were copied in Glasgow and Liverpool.¹⁵³ Although being primarily a manifestation of social life, the JNF fellowships possessed a Zionist dimension in one crucial respect. Zionism provided the focal point which endowed the JNF fellowship's social gatherings with a wider purpose, which, in turn, was instrumental in giving it sense and direction.

Fundraising functions provide a third example for the successful Zionization of social life. The regular contributors to Zionist funds were invited to festive dinners on an annual basis or on the occasion of the visits of Zionist politicians. The participants of such dinners were addressed by a more or less prominent speaker, preferably from the *yishuv* or Israel. Dinner and speech were followed by personal canvassing for donations. Specific institutions in Israel, such as the Hebrew University or the Weizmann Institute, often appealed to a more particular clientele through, for example, the Friends of the Hebrew University. By employing traditional forms of British philanthropy, British Zionists succeeded in rallying British Jews behind the Zionist project in the Middle East.

The Zionization of British-Jewish sociability, rather than being a dilution of Zionism, served as a major avenue for the Zionization of British Jewry. This was in particular the case when, after the establishment of the State of Israel, the importance of alternative means of Zionist nation-building increased.

¹⁵² Leeds Zionist Council, 8 February 1950, Leeds JNF Commission.

¹⁵³ Leeds Zionist Council, 4 February 1954, Leeds JNF Commission.

ZIONISM AND CLASS: THE SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATION OF BRITISH JEWRY

Whereas the preceding sections have investigated the national transformation of British Jewry, the objective of this section is to explore how the Zionization of British Jewry during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s related to its simultaneous social transformation. Is it possible to establish a causal link between the rise of Zionism and the *embourgeoisement* of British Jewry at large? If there was a causal link, why was Zionism, rather than any other form of British-Jewish identity, the beneficiary of this socially upward movement? Is there a social answer to the question why, by the end of the 1950s, bar Orthodox revivalism and non-articulated assimilationism, Zionism had become the most pervasive and uncontested form of British-Jewish identity, when before it had had to compete with vocal assimilationism and Bundist-style non-Palestinocentric Jewish nationalism?

Starting in the first decade of the twentieth century and gaining momentum in the inter-war period, the immigrant segment of British Jewry underwent a profound social transformation leading to the virtual eclipse of a Jewish working class after the Second World War. By the 1960s the majority of British Jews were to be found in the professional, self-employed, managerial, and skilled middle classes.¹⁵⁴ British Jewry's *embourgeoisement* found expression in the changes in residential patterns. The trend was movement from the semi-ghettos of original Jewish immigrant settlement to the suburbs: in London from the East End to the northern, particularly north-western London suburban area of Barnet, Brent, Camden, and Harrow and the north-eastern area of Redbridge; in Leeds from the Leylands and Chapeltown to Moortown and Alwoodley; in Manchester to Crumpsall, Cheetham Hill, and Prestwich; in Glasgow from the Gorbals to Pollockshields, Newlands, and Giffnock; and in Liverpool from the old Jewish quarter in Brownlow Hill to Sefton Park, Childwall, and Allerton.¹⁵⁵ While evacuation during the Second World War played a role in the shifts of the British-Jewish patterns of

¹⁵⁴ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 328–35; idem, *Politics*, 137; E. Krausz, 'A Sociological Field Study of Jewish Suburban Life in Edgware 1962–1963 with Special Reference to Minority Identification' (University of London, Ph.D. thesis, 1965); S. J. Prais and M. Schmool, 'The Social-Class Structure of Anglo-Jewry 1961', *JJS* 27 (1975), 5–15.

¹⁵⁵ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 329–31; idem, *Politics*, 135; Bill Williams, *Manchester Jewry: A Pictorial History 1788–1988* (Manchester, 1988), 115–16; idem, *Liverpool Jewry: A Pictorial History* (Liverpool, 1987), 16; Ernest Krausz, *Leeds Jewry* (Cambridge, 1964), 24–5.

residence, it only accelerated a long-term trend set in motion by upward social mobility.

If one looks at the geographical distribution of Zionist societies in London during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, it becomes apparent that the new areas of British-Jewish residence coincided with the greatest density of Zionist activity. As has been shown both in terms of the number of societies and of membership figures, it was the suburban areas of North London where Zionism was strongest, not the East End of London. Contrary to the Zionists' pretensions as the champions of the proverbial Jewish masses, the London East End was the soft spot of the ZF in terms of membership. David Cesarani has charted the increase of Zionist societies in inter-war British-Jewish suburbia in parallel to the *embourgeoisement* of the community at large.¹⁵⁶ Since the late 1920s Zionist societies had succeeded in establishing themselves as centres of Jewish social life, for example, the Barcai Zionist society in Brondesbury and Cricklewood. Even more pronounced was the concentration of the Zionist youth movements in the new British-Jewish residential areas. A further indicator for the connection between Zionism and the suburban-dwelling segments of British Jewry was the location of Zion Houses. Since the 1930s local Zionist societies had, with the assistance of the ZF, set up Zion Houses for the coordination of Zionist political work and fundraising, but even more so as social and cultural meeting places. In 1947 four Zion Houses existed in London: the North West London Zion House, the North London Zion House, Barclay House of the Golders Green Zionist Society, and Dalston Zion House in the East End.¹⁵⁷ In the provincial communities one finds a similar picture. In Liverpool a Zion House was opened in 1935 in Childwall, the new residential centre of its Jewish community.¹⁵⁸ Leeds followed in the 1940s. The Zion Houses became the focus of cultural work, fundraising, and a multiplicity of social activities. Their premises were used for the meetings of the local Zionist society and Zionist youth groups and usually housed a small library containing literature of Zionist interest, but could also be rented for private functions.

Having juxtaposed the increasing *embourgeoisement* of British Jewry and the rise of Zionism the existence of a link appears to be obvious. What did this link consist of? Apparently Zionism could provide answers to problems raised by the social transformation which British Jewry underwent in the first half of the twentieth century. The British-Jewish community of

¹⁵⁶ Cesarani, 'Zionism', 456, 467–8.

¹⁵⁷ ZF, Organization and Propaganda Committee, 20 May 1947, CZA Z4/10.299-IV.

¹⁵⁸ Williams, *Liverpool Jewry: A Pictorial History*, 16.

the inter-war and war years was no longer characterized by the dramatic impact of the mass immigration from Eastern Europe at the end of the nineteenth century, but processes of internal consolidation, acculturation, assimilation, socio-economic improvement, and shifts in the patterns of residence. As the immigrants of an earlier period and their offspring moved up the social ladder, not only their social standing, but also their ways of being Jewish changed. Second-generation immigrants tended to be more middle class, had more disposable income and more leisure time to spend, were more Anglicized, less observant, and less secure in what it meant to be Jewish than their parents' generation. They were leading a different life from that of their parents and Zionism appears to have offered solutions to the challenges which went along with it. Zionism provided them with opportunities to express middle-class respectability through making charitable donations and offered a multiplicity of occasions, from at-homes to dancing parties, to spend their leisure time in a way commensurate with the social behaviour of the British middle classes at large. By simultaneously endowing middle-class, suburban-dwelling British Jews with a sense of national communion when satisfying their immediate social needs, Zionism offered a solution to another of their dilemmas. It supplied the growing number of increasingly less observant British Jews with a secular alternative of Jewish identity by giving them the opportunity to imagine themselves as part of a national Jewish community with the Jewish polity as its focal point. Although Zionism offered the possibility of total identification involving emigration to the *yishuv* and subsequently the State of Israel, it offered also less demanding forms of identification ranging from that of full-time Zionist activist residing in Britain to the occasional donation to a Zionist fund. Its capacity to provide variegated forms of identification of vastly differing intensity, most of which were compatible with advancement in British society, was a characteristic of Zionism which gave it a crucial advantage over competing forms of Jewish identity.

The combination of the *embourgeoisement* of British Jewry and the ability of Zionism to provide answers to the problems raised in the process does not only explain the growing success of Zionism among British Jews, but also why competing forms of Jewish identity receded in the period under scrutiny. The more socially advanced, one can argue, the more potentially Zionist did a British Jew become. This is not to say that Zionism increased in direct proportion to the *embourgeoisement* of British Jewry. It was neither the sole nor the automatic beneficiary of the socially upward movement of British Jewry. Zionism had to compete with non-articulated assimilationism, drift, and radical Orthodoxy. What happened was that the long-term social development of British Jewry expanded the

potential social basis of Zionism while it contracted that of other, though not all, competing forms of Jewishness. The *embourgeoisement* of British Jews provided the social backdrop for the rise of Zionism, silent assimilation, absorption by the larger society, and Orthodox revival, but cut the social ground from under the feet of non-Palestinocentric Jewish nationalism of the Bundist type as well as of Communist assimilationism, which were tied to the declining Jewish working class and the immigrant milieu.

Contrary to the Zionists' self-perception as the vanguard of the Jewish people and the embodiment of the popular will, they had made little headway with the proverbial Jewish masses. To Herzl's proclamation 'The East End is ours', there was little more substance than the occasional mass meetings in Whitechapel.¹⁵⁹ While Zionism struck a chord with the immigrants, it had no relevance to their immediate social problems nor did it serve as a vehicle for the expression of their Jewishness. Living within the immigrants' milieu with its comparatively set ways and given frames of references, their Jewishness had not yet become a source of problems of identity. In response to their social problems working-class Jews had developed loyalties to the trade union and friendly society movements rather than to Zionism.¹⁶⁰ Some of the trade union branches were Jewish in all but name, for example the East London branch of the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association (NAFTA)¹⁶¹ In terms of political allegiance, left-wing radicalism proved more attractive in the East End than Zionism which was regarded as a bourgeois movement.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the social advancement of the second-generation immigrants. While not the only beneficiary of this development, Zionism thrived on the *embourgeoisement* of British Jewry as it offered solutions to the problems which arose in the course of this process. A by-effect of the *embourgeoisement* of British Jewry was the disintegration of the immigrants' milieu which had provided the social basis for a variety of non-Zionist forms of Jewish identity ranging from Jewish diaspora nationalism of the Bundist type to Communist assimilationism.

The topic of Part III has been internal Zionist nation-building in Britain. If the extent of the Zionization of the Jewish population of the United Kingdom during the period under scrutiny was—with the exception of Northern Ireland—not as comprehensive as in South Africa, one can nevertheless speak of a Zionist transformation of British Jewry. By the

¹⁵⁹ *JC*, 7 October 1898, 12.

¹⁶⁰ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 261.

¹⁶¹ Elaine Smith, 'Jews and Politics in the East End of London, 1918–1939', in Cesarani, *Modern Anglo-Jewry*, 160.

end of the 1950s Zionism had not only succeeded in establishing itself as a permanent feature in the British-Jewish landscape, but had also assumed a dominant position, both in terms of organizational strength and as a form of Jewish identity. During the 1940s British Zionism became a mass movement. In what there was of a distinct Jewish public and social sphere in Britain, the Zionist movement had become the largest organizational network, with the exception of the synagogue congregations, an increasing proportion of which had, however, become Zionized themselves. Zionism had gained this pre-eminent position in the organizational infrastructure of British Jewry first through the expansion of the variegated British Zionist movement itself; second, through drawing the majority of already existing Jewish organizations into its orbit; and third, through the disintegration or marginalization of its competitors. By supplanting and complementing other Jewish identities, Zionism had become the dominant form of British-Jewish consciousness. The Zionist transformation of British Jewry was assisted by its *embourgeoisement*, which cut the social foundation from under the feet of competing identities such as the Bundist style combination of radical socialism with territorial Jewish nationalism and Communist assimilationism.

British Jews reinvented themselves as part-time members of the new Jewish nation with the Jewish polity as the focus of identification by a variety of means, ranging from political lobbying to meeting as Zionists, visualizing Zionist achievements, participating in modern Hebrew culture, fundraising, or visiting the *yishuv* and later Israel. One can distinguish between the vehicles of internal Zionist nation-building according to several criteria, as to whether they also served as instruments of Zionist state- and nation-building in Palestine, their ability to sustain momentum, and their relative importance. Until the establishment of the State of Israel the Zionist transformation of British Jewry developed primarily as a function of Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East. During the 1930s and 1940s political lobbying and fundraising served as the main expressions of British-Jewish identification with the Zionist project in Middle East and as the main instruments of the Zionization of British Jewry. In an alternative reading to traditional interpretations the Zionist capture of the BoD has been explained as a function of Zionist high politics. Rising shekel sales, the unprecedented turnout at the 1946 Congress elections, record donations, and record numbers of contributors to Zionist funds during the late 1940s demonstrate how the appeal of Zionism increased in proportion to the perception of the intensity of national crises.

While lobbying in support of the Jewish polity continued to be on the agenda of British Zionists, its relative weight as a vehicle of internal

nation-building diminished after 1948. Apart from the continuing importance of fundraising Zionism thrived on alternative means in the 1950s. The expansion of British Zionism after the mid-1930s not only proceeded on an unprecedented scale, but also established Zionism as a permanent feature on the British-Jewish landscape. It was through the Zionization of the communal infrastructure, the mainstream Orthodox synagogues, and Jewish associational and social life that Zionism turned from a fluctuating phenomenon into a permanent feature of British-Jewish life. In particular the incorporation of Zionism into Jewish social life, a development which Zionist purists decried as a dilution of authentic Zionism, a tendency also echoed in scholarship,¹⁶² guaranteed Zionism a permanent place in British Jewry. The continuing momentum of Zionism in the 1950s, once the anxieties and the excitement caused by the emergence of the State of Israel had evaporated, was in marked contrast to the time after the Balfour Declaration, when British Zionism declined after a short-lived upsurge.

¹⁶² Alderman, *British Jewry*, 261.

IV

BRITISH JEWRY, ZIONISM, AND THE BRITISH POLITY

Following on the examination of how British Jews related to the Zionist project in the Middle East and the Zionist transformation of British Jewry Part IV probes how the participation of British Jews in Zionist state- and nation-building related to the fabric of the British polity. The impact of Zionism on Jewish integration will be explored in two areas: the presentation of the Zionist case in British parliamentary politics and the place of Zionism in the English educational landscape. The interaction of Zionism with British state and society is discussed against the background of three interrelated factors that were specific to the British-Jewish condition: first, a nation-state qualified by several premodern features and the presence of Empire, second, the parameters delineating the British pathway of Jewish emancipation and integration, and third Britain's assumption of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine.

12

British Terms of the British-Jewish Condition

The history of British Jews is traditionally counted among the Western variants of modern Jewish history, characterized on the one hand by the impact of a liberal political system, equality of the individual before the law, and a bourgeois society, and corresponding developments on the Jewish part on the other: integration, the refashioning of Jewish collectivity in terms of a religious denomination, and *embourgeoisement*.¹ Yet if the British-Jewish condition shared many characteristics with the position of Jews in other European and American countries, it was also influenced by the particular fabric of British state and society shaped by a highly centralized unitary political system, the Empire, deep class divisions, an asymmetrical ecclesiastical constitution with two established churches and several more religious communities, two legal systems, provisions for schooling that were anything but an orchestrated school system, and in addition to England three further major historic constituent parts, the integration of one of which—Scotland—was a success story and that of another—Ireland—a failure. If this pluriverse of national and cultural communities, religions, and social classes is difficult to square with any of the nation-state variants established in research—it fits neither the unitary nation-state on the French model, nor the federal system of the American type, nor the *verzuiling* known from Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, or Austria²—it betrays structural vestiges of an early modern composite monarchy and the corresponding mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. The vertical and horizontal divisions as well as the high pressures for conformity at the top and at the centre and a remarkable

¹ Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (eds.), *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States and Citizenship* (Princeton, 1995); Rainer Liedtke and Stephan Wendehorst (eds.), *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants: Minorities and the Nation State in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Manchester, 1999).

² Verzuiling; Tony Judt, 'The Stateless State: Why Belgium Matters?', in *Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century* (2000; London, 2008), 233–49.

latitudinarianism at the bottom and the fringes that characterized the British polity have left their imprint also on its Jewish history, on the modes and possibilities of the integration of the Jews as much as on its limitations. In the following three sections three factors deemed to have made the twentieth-century British-Jewish condition specifically British will be examined in greater detail: the structural deficiencies of Britain as a nation-state, the legacy of the circumstances of Jewish emancipation in Britain, and Britain's assumption of the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine.

THE BRITISH POLITY BETWEEN PREMODERN FOUNDATIONS, EMPIRE, AND NATION-STATE

In the first half of the twentieth century Britain, like other Western countries, witnessed two seemingly contradictory developments: advancing public boundaries, but also retreating ones; a trend towards greater standardization, yet also a countervailing trend towards greater diversity.³ The shift towards the ever more uniform mass society aided by the homogenizing impact of greater mobility, broadcasting, the two wars, and the interventionist state was checked by increasing diversity, finding expression in an expanding network of societies, clubs, pressure groups, and other associations.⁴ While Britain shared in these developments, specifically British factors had left their imprint on them. The key factors according to Tom Nairn were developmental priority, residual *ancien régime*, patrician liberalism, and Empire.⁵ Ironically it was precisely because of Britain's developmental priority that there was comparatively little incentive for more thorough and systematic reforms: 'the Anglo-British system remains a product of the general transition from absolutism to modern constitutionalism: it led the way out of the former, but never genuinely arrived at the latter.'⁶ Although the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of Parliament had developed in opposition to absolutist ambitions, it prevented the emergence of the doctrine of popular sovereignty as the ultimate source of power in Britain. The enfranchisement of ever wider sections of the population was brought about through the gradual extension of the liberties and privileges of the *ancien régime* rather than

³ S. J. D. Green and R. C. Whiting (eds.), *The Boundaries of the State in Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1996), 4.

⁴ John Stevenson, *British Society 1914–1945* (London, 1984), 468–9.

⁵ Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*.

⁶ *Ibid.* 75.

through a break with it. The growth of the state, in particular, after the First World War had not changed its underlying nature. In Britain state activity multiplied in response to successive challenges with pragmatic expediency, which meant that new agencies and functions were created in a random, ad hoc manner, rather than as a result of structural reforms according to grand designs.

It was not only the political system in a narrower sense, but also its rapport with society that determined what was specifically British about the British polity. The modern constitutional state that originated in the American and the French Revolutions corresponds to an abstract national collective of equal citizens. As Nairn has argued with reference to Gramsci, the bourgeois revolution meant the progressive absorption of the entire society into this new state–society relationship emblemized in nationalism.⁷ In Britain the relationship between state and society did not fit this paradigm. Neither did an abstract concept of the state exist nor a corresponding dynamic aiming at its identity with an abstract community of citizens. On the one hand, although politically Britain was a modern state, unitary, with the absolute sovereignty of Parliament unquestioned until the 1960s, with national political parties, and with a highly centralized government, it lacked the pointed emphasis on equality and uniformity so characteristic of nation-building on the French model. On the other hand, with the exception of Ireland and parts of Glasgow, Liverpool, and London the transformation of religious and national differences into social and political compartments through *verzuiling* was absent as well. If Britain's civil society was markedly stratified socially, culturally, and nationally, it was also remarkably cohesive: the 'unitary state was compatible with civil variety in the different countries composing it. Instances of forced levelling notwithstanding the state did not necessarily seek to impose a uniform culture, language or way of life. In the main "Anglicization" was left to the slower, more natural-seeming pressures of one large central nationality on the smaller peripheral areas. In spite of pressure, a comparative latitude was left by the system to the personality of the smaller nations.⁸ The residual *ancien régime* and the incomplete realization of the modern nation-state that went along with it had important corollaries, the lack of radical, egalitarian democracy and of national uniformity.

Of what was specific about the British polity, it is in particular the resilience of class that has attracted constant attention.⁹ What sustained the characteristic fabric of British state and society? Nairn has identified two factors why the British system remained stable. If the external secret of

⁷ Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* 137.

⁸ Ibid. 12–13.

⁹ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918–1951* (Oxford, 2000); idem, *Parties and People: England 1914–1951* (Oxford, 2010).

the longevity of England's *ancien régime* was Empire, the internal secret lay in the co-optive and cohesive authority and the patrician liberalism of its ruling elite. The Empire revolved around a comparatively non-regimented society: 'But the absence of bureaucracy was always the presence of an extensive, able, co-optive patriciate: rule from above was stronger, for being informal and personally mediated, not weaker. Peace was paid for by democracy—that is, in terms of the loss of any aggressive egalitarian spirit.'¹⁰ The strategy of the British ruling classes was the preservation of rule from above by constant adaptation and concession, supported by a pervasive informality and powerful civil conventions of self-organization and regulation. This strategy presupposed the 'restriction of the political dialogue to what can be demanded or conceded in this fashion' and was responsible for Britain's peculiar mechanism of development that brought about the broadening of its social basis in successive stages from 1832 piecemeal, not by structural changes.¹¹ Patrician liberalism had not only succeeded in integrating the working class to astonishing degrees,¹² but also in drawing the national peripheries of Scotland and Wales into its orbit: 'They also were for long integrated into its peculiar success story, in a way quite different from most other minor nationalities... At bottom, this freer, less painful, less regimented form of assimilation was simply a function of the unique imperialism England established in the wider world, and of the state-form which corresponded to it internally.'¹³ Given their priority and success the English ruling classes were able to tolerate a high degree of Scottish national autonomy: 'Hence the lack of what were to become the standard practices of discrimination, ethnic oppression and *Kulturkampf*. These were not due to the milk of English Benevolence, as so many apologists of the Union have proclaimed.'¹⁴ As Nairn argued, benevolence did not flow so generously in the case of incompatible social formations which could not be brought into partnership, as was most noticeably the case with Ireland. The Scottish, by contrast, joined the English in a junior partnership, both in Britain and in the Empire.¹⁵ As a consequence of Scotland's subordinate position in the British system Scottish civil society lacked a corresponding state. This meant, in turn, that the Scottish developed no unitary national culture, but a bastard product, half an indigenous 'cultural subnationalism' and

¹⁰ Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, 68.

¹¹ Ibid. 36–7.

¹² McKibbin, *Parties*, 69–105, n. 51 in particular, 160–1.

¹³ Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, 65.

¹⁴ Ibid. 138–9. ¹⁵ Ibid. 138–9.

half British or imperialist.¹⁶ The absence of enforced internal nation-building, of absolute equality, and of exclusive relations between the nation-state and the individual meant the presence of intermediary social formations, or at least the possibility thereof. Lord Acton had already drawn attention to this when he argued that it was imperfect nation-states like the British and Austrian empires that were most apt for the integration of distinct nationalities without oppressing them.¹⁷

THE BRITISH PATHWAY: JEWISH EMANCIPATION AS CO-OPTATION

The argument about what was specifically British about the pathway of Jewish emancipation suggested here and encapsulated in the term 'emancipation as co-optation' rests on two premisses: first, to take Britain not only as a modern unitary nation-state, but also as a polity characterized by premodern components and Empire, and second, to look at the Jewish condition not only from the perspective of the individual Jew, but also from the vantage point of the Jews as a group.¹⁸ The understanding of how the British mechanisms of integration and exclusion worked with regard to the Jews as a group stands to benefit from comparisons with other groups defined in religious or national terms. If Nairn's heterodox Marxist analysis is silent on the accommodation of religious pluralism through Britain's religious constitution several of his observations concerning Scottish integration into Britain as a 'cultural subnationalism' may be usefully applied to the Jewish case. The evolutionary character of the British political system, its developmental priority, its residual *ancien régime*, the Empire, and the patrician liberalism of its ruling elite had not only produced an exceptional combination of a unitary political system with a society divided vertically on social and horizontally along national lines, but also a specifically British pathway of Jewish emancipation and integration.

The place Jews occupied in Britain's political and legal order and how they came to occupy it reflects several aspects of the expansion of its social, religious, and national basis, a process of which it formed one facet.

¹⁶ Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, 155–6.

¹⁷ Lord Acton, 'Nationality' (1862), in idem, *Essays on Freedom and Power* (London, 1956), 168.

¹⁸ For this approach see the introduction of Stephan Wendehorst, 'The Forgotten Side of Emancipation: The Jews in the Religious Constitution of the Holy Roman Empire and its Successor States', forthcoming, http://www.uni-giessen.de/cms/fbz/fb04/institute/geschichte/fruehe_neuzeit/personen/wendehorst.stephan; accessed 28 July 2011.

Though limited in scope Jewish emancipation in Britain was anything but a swift affair as in France, where it was part of a radical, overall redefinition of state and society; rather it was a protracted process. Contrary to the impression of swiftness implied in the equation of Jewish emancipation with Baron Lionel de Rothschild taking up his seat in the House of Commons in 1856, the disabilities of the Jews were removed step by step in a process dovetailing the removal of discriminatory legislation against other groups outside the established churches and with the gradual broadening of the political participation of the general population. The limited scope of state-sponsored emancipation, restricted to the removal of certain legal and political disabilities and a pragmatic, non-ideological approach, meant that a number of problems besetting the emancipation process on the Continent either did not arise, or, if they did, arose in an attenuated form. If the implication that there was no or little of an emancipation contract in Israel Finestein's argument that it had been part of the public campaign for emancipation that Jews should be free to cultivate those elements in Jewish life deemed necessary to ensure their distinctive survival, and that the success of the campaign was taken as an indication that they were accepted despite their necessary exclusivity,¹⁹ appears to be overoptimistic in view of the erosion of Jewish life and the dearth of stable Jewish institutions in Britain,²⁰ the quid pro quo arrangements operated in a fashion that was different from France or Germany. In Britain there were fewer radical breaks, less state intervention, less enforcement, and less public debate. There had been less talk of what Jews ought to be than of what they actually were, fewer questions asked and fewer answered than on the Continent. Protagonists as well as opponents of emancipation took a degree of Jewish separateness for granted which, defined in religious term, was not expected to disappear. Thus, in Britain, Jewish emancipation, integration, and assimilation, operating from the start within internally and externally imposed limits, did not aim at the fusion of the Jews with non-Jewish society. Britain, one can argue, was unique in that there was less of an abstract national public sphere to which Jews had to or wished to develop an immediate relationship than in other countries. British, unlike French or German, liberalism was not of the brand which exacted the price of total conformity in return for civic equality. The incomplete realization of the notion of popular sovereignty in Britain had the consequence that the modern nation of individual

¹⁹ Israel Finestein, 'Jewish Emancipationists in Victorian England: Self-Imposed Limits to Assimilation', in Jonathan Frankel and Steven Zipperstein, *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 1992), 50.

²⁰ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 67.

citizens existed alongside residues of the *ancien régime*. For the Jews this meant that they were not only emancipated as individuals, but also, to some extent, co-opted as a group into British state and society. They had been co-opted into a historical, multi-faceted structure of state organization and a pluralistic and associational society. The history of British Jewry, one can argue, reflected that of Britain in general: alone, [the British system] represented a 'slow, conventional growth, not like the others, the product of deliberate invention, resulting from a theory'. Arriving later, those others 'attempted to sum up at a stroke the fruits of experience of the state which had evolved its constitutionalism through several centuries'. Because it was first, the English—later British—experience remained distinct. Because they came second, later bourgeois societies could not repeat this early development. Their study and imitation engendered something substantially different: the truly modern doctrine of the abstract or 'impersonal' state which, because of its abstract nature, could be imitated in subsequent history.²¹ For the most part Britain shared in the general development of modernization and all its concomitants: industrialization, general literacy, and political democracy which 'notoriously tend towards uniformity and the standardization of many aspects of existence',²² trends which deeply affected Jewish existence as well. But the element of co-optation remains significant nonetheless, for it accounts for the fact that Britain gave legitimacy to a carefully circumscribed degree of Jewish collectivity in the public and social sphere. This toleration of a limited degree of Jewish collectivity reflects an important aspect of British state and society, a comparative lack of insistence on the idea of absolute equality amounting to uniformity.

Paradoxically there were so many premodern elements in Jewish relations with state and society in Britain because there had been so little *ancien régime* in the first place. Due to the expulsion of the Jews in the Middle Ages and the lack of a formal legal basis of their readmission in the seventeenth century no body of Jewry laws specifically directed at Jews and regulating their existence in minute detail, as was the case in Central Europe well into the nineteenth century, existed in Britain. As a consequence Jews were not subject to formal economic or social discrimination. On the legal plane they did not suffer from disabilities as Jews except insofar as they were barred access to public office and other privileges such as the enrolment and the taking of degrees at the ancient universities that

²¹ Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, 17–18; the inner quotations are taken from Charles Frederick Strong, *Political Constitutions*, 8th rev. edn. (London, 1972), 28; the emphases have been added by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 155.

²² Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, 134.

were reserved for members of the established churches. Emancipation legislation was, thus, limited to the removal of such barriers, amounting to the extension of privileges hitherto reserved for members of established churches.

A limited degree of Jewish collective distinctiveness, although not necessarily liked, was taken for granted by the larger society and was accorded public recognition. On the one hand there were numerous instances of unfavourable comments about Jews and Jewish distinctiveness.²³ On the other hand, those who appreciated the Jewish presence in Britain also assumed a significant, if unproblematic, degree of Jewish separateness.

At the dinner hosted by the Board of Deputies on the occasion of the tercentenary of the Jewish resettlement, Lord Salisbury, with the express approval of Hugh Gaitskell, his Labour counterpart at the dinner, described the Jewish position in the following way:

though merging their interests in those of the country as a whole, the Jews have preserved their identity. A British Jew may be British, but he is also a Jew. He is, if I may use such a metaphor, like a piece of shot fabric composed of strands of different colours yet woven together in a single web. Such a fabric may look different according to the angle from which we view it, but it is in fact all one fabric, only made more brilliant by the diversity of the threads which compose it. In the last 300 years the British thread and the Jewish thread have been well and truly woven together. It is that which makes the Jewish community here a strength and not a weakness to Britain.²⁴

Gentile sympathizers of the Zionist cause were outspoken about Jewish distinctiveness in a positive sense. In a volume produced in 1943 by the ZF, Blanche Dugdale remarked: 'Jews can deceive themselves into supposing that their neighbours do not see the difference of race and the difference of character which they themselves are determined to try to forget.'²⁵

British Jews, whether Zionist or assimilationist, were also aware of the continued perception of Jews as different from the majority. In August 1942, at one of the JFC's rare sessions devoted to a general debate of the Jewish condition in Britain Leonard Stein made the following contribution:

²³ For Attlee against Mikardo as a Jew see Ben Pimlott, *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918–40, 1945–1960* (London, 1986), 508; for an anti-Semitic incident in the Commons see John Doxat, *Shinwell Talking* (London, 1984), 12; for criticism of Jewish distinctiveness on the radical Left see Srebrnik, 'Sidestepping the Contradictions', 124–41.

²⁴ *Tercentenary Brochure* (London, 1956), 125.

²⁵ Blanche Dugdale, 'Its Origins', in Goodman (ed.), *The Jewish National Home*, 4.

He was not speaking of mere vulgar anti-semites or sadistic persecutors, but of normally constituted people who, while having no sympathy with persecution, were unable, for deep-seated psychological and historical reasons, to regard the Jews as fully integrated in the various communities, of which they were citizens. It was not necessarily a case of regarding the Jews as unequal in the sense of inferior; it was surely that the Jews were regarded as ultimately belonging to a different group, or at all events as having a foot in two camps, so that they could not be looked upon as identified with the countries in which they lived as unreservedly as normal inhabitants of those countries.²⁶

Brodetsky, pointing to his experience that 'only very rarely was he able to discover among the many English people that he knew a person who would recognise that a British Jew was a Britisher of a different religion' and that '[T]here was even in England that feeling of something separating the Jews from others', came to the conclusion that '[T]he question of the Jews was a question of Jewish collectivity.'²⁷ He was sceptical about the possibility of achieving a status of perfect equality for the Jews:

Concerning equality, he said that things which were perfectly in order in law are not so simple in fact, and even in England a Cabinet of Ministers consisting largely of Jews, although they might only be Jews by name, would be considered as something very anomalous. The same might refer to Catholics. In trying to define the status of the Jews in the various countries and safeguard it, we only want that there should be no discrimination and no privileges, except perhaps the privilege of not being entirely alike.²⁸

What was the underlying reason for the high degree of Jewish integration, yet also incomplete realization of equality? Britain did not hold out the utopia of a society whose members would enjoy the kind of absolute equality and immediate relationship to the public sphere, as did the United States and France, or if we eclipse the political side until the Weimar Republic and restrict our observations to culture, as did Germany. State and national identity in Britain had been neither as demanding nor as alluring as in France, the United States, or Germany, and, therefore, it seems less forthcoming in formulating total Jewish equality as a goal and more accommodating to a carefully circumscribed degree of Jewish separateness.

The JC would probably have described its attitude as just realistic, while in fact it amounted to the surrender of the claim to unconditional equality: 'Whatever the moral and logical arguments might be about tolerance, and the implied assumption in the word that the majority is

²⁶ JFC, Minutes, 3 August 1942, 1.

²⁷ Ibid. ²⁸ Ibid.

somehow superior to the minority, the strong inherently superior to the weak, the realistic fact is that, short of Utopia, without the tolerance of majorities minorities could not live.²⁹

The specific trajectory of the British path of Jewish emancipation, its gradual and uneven implementation, the involvement of an element of co-optation, and the incomplete conceptualization of absolute equality within society at large had long-term repercussions on the Jewish condition, a high degree of integration and acceptance, including the collective side of Jewish life, yet within certain limits, which were not to be overstepped. The discrepancy between emancipation on the politico-legal plane completed in the nineteenth century and its slower progress on the cultural and social planes, for which the late entry of Jews into the universities as students or faculty in significant numbers—by and large a post-Second World War phenomenon—was symptomatic, was characteristic of the uneven progress of Jewish emancipation in Britain. Paradigmatic for the co-optative dimension of Jewish emancipation in Britain was the BoD and its relation to the public sphere. Compared with the USA, France, and Germany, Britain stood out as the only Western country where the Jewish community possessed a voluntary representative body, which was recognized as such by the larger public, a model that was copied in several Commonwealth countries.

THE BRITISH MANDATE FOR PALESTINE

If the construction of the British nation-state and the trajectory of Jewish emancipation in Britain were two specifically British factors that an analysis of the impact of Zionism on the British-Jewish condition needs to take into account, one of Britain's many imperial entanglements, the assumption of the Mandate for Palestine was a third one. The endorsement of Jewish national aspirations by the member states of the League of Nations and, since the Anglo-American Convention of 1924, also by the United States of America through the Mandate worked in two directions. First, the Mandate accorded external legitimacy to the Zionist project in Mandatory Palestine. Second, with Art. 4 of the Mandate calling upon all interested Jews to assist, within the framework of the JA, in the building up of the JNH, it gave Jews as a collectivity a recognized role in the Mandate. The Mandate was, thus, instrumental in creating an transnational Jewish

²⁹ Reprint from *JC*, 27 January 1956.

platform transcending the confines traditionally imposed on Jewish political action by the nation-state.³⁰

While the Mandate carried a general resonance by sanctioning the participation of all Jews in the building up of the JNH, it also had a specifically British impact, which changed considerably over time. As long as it lay in the interest of the British government and worked to the satisfaction of the Zionist movement, it provided a common platform for Jews and non-Jews, ranging from Whig Imperialists to Revisionist Zionists, and also served as a means of internal integration by providing a common denominator for Zionists and assimilationists. Embodying an identity of interests between Britain and the Zionist movement, and thereby also removing the basis for accusations of dual loyalty, the Mandate made support for the Zionist enterprise a popular cause beyond Zionist quarters proper and generated what came to be termed 'Patriotic Zionism'. It was under this heading that Zionism appealed to what might be called Jewish Whig Imperialists from the assimilationist Waley Cohen to the Zionist Labour peer Nathan of Churt. Participation in the Palestine Economic Board, the Palestine Electrical Company, and the Potash Works were practical manifestations of this Zionist-cum-imperial identification. Given the success of 'Patriotic Zionism' the noticeable waning of the organized British Zionist movement in the 1920s and early 1930s, after its short-term dramatic upsurge in connection with the Balfour Declaration had died down, comes as little surprise. Nairn has explained the absence of Scottish nationalism in the nineteenth century on the grounds that the Scottish ruling class had given up statehood in return for a junior partnership in the union with England. Only when the Anglo-Scottish imperialist success story was drawing to a close did Scottish nationalism arise.³¹ A similar case can be made for British Zionism, which thrived again when the cleavage between British and Zionist interests opened up with Britain's retreat from the Mandate.

Although its lasting importance until 1948 as the foundation of the JNH in international law and as the basis for what there was of British cooperation with the Zionist movement should not be underestimated, the Mandate took on a new meaning as a safety valve from the perspective of British-Jewish relations with society at large when the British retreated from their commitments under the Mandate. The importance of the legitimacy which the Mandate accorded to the support of British Jews

³⁰ Leonard Stein, *Palestine Royal Commission: Minutes of Evidence Heard at Public Sessions*, Colonial No. 134, 244–62; various memos written in his capacity as legal adviser to the Jewish Agency, WA.

³¹ Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain*, 129.

for the Zionist project, in particular, to their interventions in British politics, increased in proportion to the growing unpopularity of the Mandate with the British government and public. From an internal Jewish perspective the Mandate also assumed a new meaning from the 1930s. With British-Jewish discontent over Britain's retreat from the terms of the Mandate reaching far into assimilationist quarters, it became instrumental in bridging the gap between assimilationists and Zionists on the basis of common Zionist, no longer imperial-cum-Zionist objectives.

In sum, while the British-Jewish condition shared structural similarities with that of Jewish minorities in other liberal countries, it was also characterized by a set of distinctively British determinants, the construction of the nation-state, the terms of emancipation, and the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine.

13

The Zionist Impact on the British-Jewish Condition

In Britain the involvement of Jews, as individuals and as a collectivity, in the public sphere was delineated by a set of specifically British opportunities and constraints. After the identification of these factors it remains to explore how the participation of British Jews in Zionist state- and nation-building impacted on the Jewish position within the fabric of British state and society. There were several areas, ranging from such mundane affairs as capital transfers to questions of identity and school curricula, where the boundaries delineating the position of British Jews within British state and society shifted through the latter's Zionist redefinition and, thus, had to be renegotiated.

In economies where zero-sum calculations made capital transfers abroad synonymous with a diminution of the national wealth, transferring money could become problematic for members of a minority. In Britain, by contrast, a combination of imperial considerations and a liberal economic tradition seems to have worked against the British public or the British government incriminating British Jews for making donations to Zionist funds, although they were destined for a national movement that was engaged in a confrontation with Britain. While quotas had to be negotiated, the British government fixed them according to need. When in February 1950 the British government raised the quota of remittances to Israel for charitable purposes from £1,500,000 to £2,200,000, this step was welcomed by ZF.³² Only when Britain restricted capital flows more rigidly in general were donations to Zionist funds also affected. At its 54th Annual Conference the ZF passed a resolution putting on record its regret that the restrictions applying to the transfer of capital from Britain for investment purposes, purchase of Israel government bonds, private securities, or for long-term financing of capital goods prevented the British

³² *Zionist Federation: Fiftieth Annual Report* (London, n.d.), 43–4.

community from taking a more active part in the economic development of Israel.³³

Not only on the prosaic level of capital flows had Zionist commitment to be reconciled with integration into British state and society, but also on the more intimate level of emotional identification. The year 1948 meant a significant change. While the communal rabbi of Manchester, Dr Alexander Altmann, in a lecture on 'Judaism and the State' under the auspices of the AJA observed that the establishment of the State of Israel had transformed the position of Jews in the diaspora, 'for whom it was now more difficult, than in the days when they could live according to the Mendelssohnian pattern, which had led to the reduction of Judaism to a pure religion, compatible with undivided loyalty to the state of his citizenship',³⁴ for British Jews it meant, in fact, the approximation of their relationship with the Jewish polity to that of other Western Jewries. British Jews met charges of dual loyalty by two strategies. One possibility was to compartmentalize citizenship and national identification, as did Maurice Edelman, MP, in an article entitled 'Diaspora Jews & Citizenship', in which he argued that 'there was only one allegiance as far as citizenship was concerned, but many emotional loyalties, including communal sentiment and fellow feeling with other people abroad'.³⁵ In another article, entitled '1830: A Lesson for our Time' and published two weeks later, Edelman stressed that the establishment of the State of Israel had brought to the foreground again charges of dual loyalty, that the Jews' political allegiance was to Britain, but that they were entitled to a spiritual attachment to Israel.³⁶ Alternatively, a conflict of interest could also be negated, for which the speech that Lord Nathan of Churt delivered as guest of honour at the dinner given by the Golders Green JPA Committee in celebration of Israel's Independence provides an example: 'Dual loyalties to him presented no difficulty. There was nothing incompatible in his passionate devotion to the land of his birth and an equally passionate desire to see the building of a nation in Israel... How could it be otherwise?... Does not the same blood run in my veins and do I not acknowledge the same ancient faith?'³⁷ Far more problematic for British Zionists was the time prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. Their predicament is reflected in the apologetic stances they were forced to adopt vis-à-vis both the British and the Palestinocentric transnational Jewish public. As much as the Zionist redefinition of British Jews made them suspect in the eyes of an increasing part of the former were they

³³ ZF, 55th Annual Report, 77.

³⁵ JC, 18 February 1949, 1, 5.

³⁷ JC, 1 July 1949, 5.

³⁴ JC, 14 January 1949, 5.

³⁶ JC, 4 March 1949, 9.

expected to stand up against their government by the latter. In his speech delivered at the 1949 UPA dinner at the Savoy Hotel Harry Sacher recalled the strain experienced by British Jews prior to the establishment of the Jewish state: 'American Jews were privileged in that they did not live under the government of the Mandatory Power in Palestine. For British Jews, the fact that they did was tending to create a tension which was becoming almost intolerable.'³⁸ When, during the hearings of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, Hutcheson expressed astonishment that British Jews seemed far less critical of Britain than American Jews, Brodetsky responded that, while they were grateful 'for all that Britain has done in protecting Jewish rights and in initiating the return of the Jews to Palestine', the basic fact had to be taken into account that they were also 'living in this country although they were dissatisfied with the whittling down of the Mandate', to which he added that 'From time to time it has been very difficult for us to say these things without giving some false impression as to our attitude to Britain itself, about which there can be no question.'³⁹ Later during the year British Jews were put even more on the defensive by the spread of rumours about the imminent arrival of Jewish terrorists in Britain and the scare that members of the Stern Gang would blow up Parliament. Concerned that they could only create bad feelings against Jews, the BoD condemned sensationalist reports about alleged terrorist infiltration in British newspapers.⁴⁰ When security precautions against terrorist outrages in Britain were discussed in Parliament, Janner asked the Home Secretary for a calming statement in view of the fact that fewer police had been employed at the State Opening of Parliament in 1946 than in previous years.⁴¹ Further examples for the air of defensiveness could be added: the note of relief with which the *JC* described the departure of a certain Professor Smertenko allegedly involved in terrorism and the steps taken to exclude him for the future by the Home Office or Max Beloff's review of Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*, in which he criticizes the author for pro-terrorist sympathies without hiding a degree of simultaneous fascination: 'A book which none can avoid reading, and which every Jew must wish had not been written.'⁴² Assertiveness was demonstrated on many public and semi-public occasions displaying the compatibility of Zionist and British identification, such as the march of

³⁸ *JC*, 14 June 1949, 7.

³⁹ Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, London, Friday, 25 January 1946, Morning Session, Professor Brodetsky, representing the Board of Deputies of British Jews, PRO 30/78/8, 26-7.

⁴⁰ *JC*, 15 November 1946, 1; 22 November, 1, 6, 9.

⁴¹ *JC*, 29 November 1946, 5; *JC*, 6 December, 1.

⁴² *JC*, 20 December 1946, 5, 13.

protest to Trafalgar Square after the arrest of the JA leaders or the Annual Remembrance Service at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue on 10 November 1946 attended by hundreds of Jewish ex-servicemen and -women representing the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen, the Monash Branch of the British Legion, the Maccabean Branch of the Legion and its Women's Section, the South London Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association, and the Jewish Brigade Group and ending with the singing of the National Anthem and the Hatikvah.⁴³ The disillusionments of the 1940s did not eclipse a genuine appreciation or realistic assessment of Britain among British Jews, which also meant a distance from the anti-British feeling in large parts of the Jewish public, where some voices had difficulty in distinguishing between Nazi Germany and Britain.⁴⁴ If the escalating confrontation between the Zionist movement and Britain cast a shadow on British Jews in the view of the British public, among the Jewish public they had to defend themselves against charges of pro-British sympathies and not standing up against the British government. The controversy over support for Weizmann and participation in the London conference on the basis of partition at the Zionist Congress resulted in the split of the Confederation of General Zionists and a bitter clash of Abba Hillel Silver with Brodetsky and Janner who organized the pro-Weizmann faction, in which British General Zionists were prominently represented and which numbered between forty and fifty delegates. In the political debate Brodetsky, speaking in Yiddish, was anxious to invalidate the reproach 'that British Jews were not opposing the Government policy because of the embarrassment caused to them in their country. That was not true. British Jewry stood for the whole Jewish people. British Jewry had carried out Herzl's injunction of winning over the community, and as President of the Jewish Board of Deputies he would say that that body, representing the whole of the British-Jewish Community, had adopted a firm policy of supporting the agency and of opposing the Government policy.'⁴⁵ British Zionists drew a line when it came to terrorist acts in Britain contemplated in right-wing Zionist circles. Brodetsky left Congress in no doubt that they wanted 'a State, no new mandate or trusteeship' and that, while they did not exclude the improvement of relations in the future, they had no illusions for the present: 'He did not believe they could talk about cooperation with Britain at the moment' and expressed his conviction that 'in the near future the British

⁴³ *JC*, November 1946, 11.

⁴⁴ For an article by Robert Weltsch on anti-British feeling in Israel see *JC*, 15 July 1949, 13.

⁴⁵ *JC*, 20 December 1946, 8.

people would feel ashamed of what was now being done in Palestine and outside Palestine in their name'.⁴⁶

Among the areas where the integration of British Jews into British state and society had to be negotiated with their Zionist commitment, politics and schooling seem to be particularly apt to reveal what was especially British about British Zionism's refraction with British state and society. In the following two sections the Zionist impact on the British-Jewish condition as reflected in the parliamentary arena of Westminster and the provision of Jewish education will, therefore, be studied in greater detail.

ZIONIST POLITICS IN WESTMINSTER

In Britain there had never been an attempt to create a Jewish party. Neither were there sufficient numbers as in Eastern Europe nor had the Jewish community any interest that Jewish MPs should be regarded as a sectarian phalanx in Westminster. On the other hand British Jews expected the support of Jewish members of Parliament on issues where Jewish rights, interests, or honour were at stake. And they got it, not always, but often, and, as a rule, not without qualifications.⁴⁷ British Zionists sought to promote their aims—the establishment of the Jewish state, of JFF, and later British–Israeli cooperation—through two distinct avenues at Westminster, (a) by forming cross-party parliamentary pressure groups supportive of Zionism and (b) by lobbying Zionist and Jewish members of both Houses of Parliament.

Before the establishment of the State of Israel the main, if ineffective, avenue of Zionist lobbying in Westminster was the PPC, founded in 1926 by the Conservative Jewish MP Samuel Finburgh, whose aim it was to support 'the Balfour Declaration and...the policy of Great Britain as the Mandatory Power'.⁴⁸ It was a cross-party committee consisting of members of both Houses, as well as politicians who had no seat in Parliament, the majority of whom were non-Jews. In the late 1930s, it was given a new lease of life thanks to Janner's efforts. After the Biltmore Declaration had become official Zionist policy, the PPC arranged several meetings where prominent Zionists addressed members of both Houses.⁴⁹ In Zionist eyes, the PPC served also

⁴⁶ *JC*, 20 December 1946, 8.

⁴⁷ Michael Clark, 'Jewish Identity in British Politics: The Case of the First Jewish MPs, 1858–87', *Jewish Social Studies*, 13/2 (2007), 93–126.

⁴⁸ Quoted from Alderman, *Politics*, 110.

⁴⁹ Brodetsky, 'Policy', 1943, CZA.

as counterweight to the anticipated machinations of Louis Gluckstein and Lipson, the Jewish MPs who were associated with the Jewish Fellowship.⁵⁰ In order to promote a distinctly Jewish contribution to the war effort, the JA's London Executive had set up a Committee for a JFF, whose membership was outside and inside Westminster, cross-party, non-Jewish as well as Jewish. The same applied to the Revisionist-sponsored Committee for a Jewish Army, set up for the same purpose. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Labour Friends and the Conservative Friends of Israel rallied British parliamentary support for Israel.

During the period under consideration only a limited number of Jewish MPs were prepared to speak up for Zionism. As a rule, Jewish, including Zionist, MPs adhered to their respective party line. Only when the party was not united behind a specific policy did Jewish MPs speak and vote against the party line. The May 1939 White Paper, for example, was opposed not only by Jewish Labour MPs who were in the opposition, but also, with one exception, by the Jewish Conservative MPs who like a large number of non-Jewish Conservative MPs defied their government over this issue. Louis Gluckstein was the only Jewish MP who supported the White Paper policy. General considerations were decisive for the voting behaviour of Jewish MPs.

In April 1946, only six out of twenty-six Jewish MPs, notably Janner, Marcus Lipton, and Sidney Silverman, could be induced by Zionist lobbying to voice their opposition in Parliament to Bevin's Palestine policy.⁵¹

The behaviour of Zionist Labour MPs during the Suez crisis revealed the dilemma of Zionists being members of a party which clashed with the State of Israel and demonstrated at the same time that, faced with conflicting loyalties, Zionist MPs gave their party line priority over their Zionist commitment. As the Labour Party opposed the government's intervention in the Canal Zone, Zionist Labour MPs who sympathized with the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt were in a difficult situation. Despite expectations to the contrary in many sections of British Jewry, and in particular in Zionist circles, Labour Zionist MPs, including Janner who at the time was President both of the BoD and the ZF, obeyed the three-line whip and supported Labour against the government in November 1956.⁵² The Jewish Labour MP Shinwell, ironically not a Zionist, did not vote with his party as he was in Australia. From such safe distance he poured scorn on the behaviour of Jewish MPs. 'Israel was right. . . I have the outmost contempt for those Jews, including British M.P.s, who, though professed Zionists, claim to see in Israel's action an offence against international law. They

⁵⁰ Ibid. ⁵¹ *JC*, 26 April 1946, 5.

⁵² Alderman, *Politics*, 131–2.

ought to be ashamed.⁵³ When the position of Janner, who had come under heavy Zionist attack for not abstaining, was discussed at the BoD on 18 November a large majority expressed their confidence in him.⁵⁴

A peculiar feature of the British parliamentary system was the existence of one Jewish MP who acted as the unofficial mouthpiece of the British-Jewish community in the Commons and, if not necessarily liked in this capacity, was acknowledged as such by his fellow MPs. This phenomenon had a parallel only in other democracies of the Westminster model.⁵⁵ During the period under consideration Janner and to a lesser extent Silverman occupied this position. That Janner was expected to present the Jewish and the Zionist case in Parliament, but to vote with his party in case of conflict, was characteristic of the specifically British way of accommodating Jewish distinctiveness in public affairs.

ZIONISM, JEWS, AND THE SECRET GARDEN OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

One of the most striking features of the post-war history of British Jewry was the expansion of Jewish education. In comparison to the inter-war period the number of Jewish children which received Jewish education, either full-time at Jewish day schools or part-time, increased.⁵⁶ The post-war burgeoning of Jewish day schools and other forms of Jewish education gives rise to two questions. First, which sections of British Jewry promoted the revival of Jewish education? Second, how did Jewish education fit into the educational landscape of the larger society?

The late, reluctant, and limited intervention of the state in education renders the English educational landscape fundamentally different from those of the Continent.⁵⁷ Whether one looks at France or at Germany, the trend from the beginning of the nineteenth century was towards centralization and standardization through mass educational systems, compulsory schooling, core curricula, centralized examinations, and close ministerial supervision.⁵⁸ When the state introduced compulsory elementary

⁵³ *JC*, 16 November 1956, 1.

⁵⁴ Owen and Epstein (eds.), *Suez*, 195; *JC*, 16 November 1956, 1; 23 November 1956, 1.

⁵⁵ Shimoni, *South African Experience*, 156.

⁵⁶ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 367–9.

⁵⁷ Given the very different educational arrangements north of the border, the scope of this section of Part IV is restricted to English education, 'English' meaning English and Welsh.

⁵⁸ Andy Green, *Education and State Formation: The Rise of Education Systems in England, France and the USA* (London, 1990), 1–26, 208–307.

education, a central educational authority, and state secondary schools in England, it was both later, roughly a century, than on the Continent and to complement existing schooling rather than to supplant it by a unified system. The obverse side of state indifference to education was a comparative tolerance of alternative, in particular denominational, educational agencies. Not only did the state exercise only minimal control over the privately funded public schools, it also contented itself with a subordinate position in the control of state schools and the publicly subsidized voluntary schools. Effective power over the employment of teachers and the determination of the curriculum rested with the local education authorities, teachers, school managers, and denominational bodies.⁵⁹ The secular-religious divide was not absent from educational politics in England, but less of a source of constant polarization than in France. To the extent that educational politics served as a code for party-political allegiance in Britain it took the form of a struggle between the Conservative Party favouring the position of the Church of England in the educational system and, the, because of its Nonconformist electorate, Liberal Party fighting against Anglican and by extension any denominational influence in the school system. After the 1902 Education Act and the Liberals' failure to overturn it in 1906, denominational schooling and public funding for it had ceased to be an explosive political issue and become accepted features of the English educational landscape.⁶⁰ The 1944 Education Act guaranteed the existence of voluntary schools and provided also for the establishment of new ones. As the state was to shoulder a considerable part of the financial responsibilities, the 1944 Education Act relieved those bodies interested in denominational education of a considerable part of the financial burden, while at the same time guaranteeing their autonomy in religious instruction and choice of teachers.

The debate about educational reform in the larger society coincided with the crisis of Jewish education. The crisis of Jewish education in the inter-war and war period was caused by problems intrinsic to its organization and by long-term changes within British Jewry, such as the erosion of traditional ways of Jewish learning, the *embourgeoisement* of second-generation immigrants, their subsequent geographical dislocation, and general trends such as secularization and wartime disruptions through evacuation. The appeal of traditional forms of Jewish education, both the instruction in *talmud torahs* and the assimilationist day schools on the

⁵⁹ Adrian Wooldridge, 'The English State and Educational Theory', in Green and Whiting (eds.), *Boundaries*, 233–4.

⁶⁰ Liberal educational policy is identified as one of the causes of Jewish support of the Conservative Party in Alderman, *Politics*, 78–9.

model of the Jews' Free School in London, had been declining since the inter-war period. As a result, the number of Jewish children who received organized Jewish instruction diminished.⁶¹ The only innovation in British-Jewish education in the inter-war period was the Jewish Secondary School Movement, which catered for the radical Orthodox section of the community. In 1929 Rabbi Dr Victor Schonfeld set up the Hasmonean Jewish Secondary School in Finsbury Park in London, which after initial difficulties was put on a secure footing when Solomon Schonfeld replaced his father as the school's principal. In 1936 the Hasmonean school was complemented by a separate girls' school.

British Zionists were quick to recognize the potential value of the 1944 Education Act as a vehicle for Zionist nation-building in Britain.⁶² Brodetsky saw in its provisions for denominational schooling an opportunity to reshape the education of British Jewry according to Zionist designs. The primary task of Jewish education, as he put it, was the safeguarding of Jewish continuity. This could only be successful under three conditions. British Jews had to design a form of Jewish education for their children from the age of 5 to the age of 15 which was (a) commensurate with the advances of science and (b) the aspirations of the young and (c) which took account of the fact that British Jews were living in a predominantly non-Jewish environment. The controversy with the Orthodox highlighted the specific agenda which British Zionists wished to impart on Jewish education. Delineating its contents, Brodetsky singled out three essentials: traditional Jewish religion, Jewish knowledge, and Jewish association. What did British Zionists have in mind when they talked of traditional Jewish religion? While Brodetsky looked 'upon Jewish education which is not based upon the Jewish faith as such a departure from our traditional conception of Jewish life as to make this education almost worthless for making a Jew in the future',⁶³ he was not referring to Jewish Orthodoxy. Addressing the Leeds ZCC he criticized the Chief Rabbi's definition of Jewish education as '*the gradual adjustment of the Jewish child to the spiritual possessions of Israel*' as a definition of 'Jewish Religious Education', and not of 'Jewish education', as the Zionists intended, and rejected it for

⁶¹ M. B. B. Steinberg, 'Provisions for Jewish Schooling in Great Britain, 1939–1960' (MA thesis, University of London, 1963); idem, 'Jewish Education in Great Britain during World War II', *JSS* 29/1 (1967), 63–72.

⁶² Joseph Heller, *Jewish Education and Methods* (London, 1945); Brodetsky, 'The Future of Jewish Education in Great Britain', speech delivered at the Anglo-Palestinian Club, 16 January 1944; 'The Aims of Jewish Education', address delivered at the Leeds ZCC, CZA A82/16.

⁶³ Brodetsky, 'The Future of Jewish Education in Great Britain', 8.

being too limited and potentially divisive.⁶⁴ Jewish education, Brodetsky argued, had two aims: to impart Jewish knowledge and to prepare Jewish youth for membership of the Jewish community. To him, both exclusively religious and exclusively secular conceptions of Jewish education were defective instruments for the bringing up of Jewish children. In his concept of Jewish education, traditional Jewish religion served as the starting point. The destination was the child's awareness of being part of a 3,000-year-old collective continuum. The means were twofold: (a) the historicization and personalization of the Jews' sacred texts and past, and (b) the moralization of Jewish religion. When Brodetsky said that 'To the Jews the redemption from Egypt represents the emergence of his own national individuality, while the dispersion is a bitter personal experience, possessing a significance that persists to this day, deepened by many centuries of personal pain and personal hope', and asked, 'How then can a Jewish child read the Bible as a mere religious exercise?' he demanded that Jewish education should impart a historicized and personalized identification with the Jewish experience.⁶⁵ Although historicization and nationalization represented departures from Orthodoxy, Brodetsky was no advocate of a purely secular conception of Jewish education. Through the moralization of religion Jewish education was to produce devotion to an ethical purpose. For Brodetsky the Bible provided both the historical narrative for the formation of a national, Palestinocentric Jewish identity, as well as a basis for the formation of ethical norms, humanity, justice, freedom, and rationality. Among the national epics the Bible stood out as moral document, Brodetsky argued: 'It is indeed significant that no national literature I know of is so much characterized by self-denunciation as is the Bible. When a nation . . . can use all its powers of publicity for the advertising of its shortcomings, then its history is not only an historical but also a moral document.'⁶⁶

The second mainstay of Jewish education, as Brodetsky put it, was Jewish knowledge, intrinsically bound up with the Zionists' historicized and moralized version of Jewish religion: 'a person who understands the Jewish faith, but has no conception of the geography of Palestine, and the place of Palestine in the world in the last three thousand years, does not understand the place of Palestine in the whole conception of the development of Jewish history and has not much conception of what the Jewish faith means in fact.'⁶⁷ Jewish knowledge was meant to include Jewish

⁶⁴ Brodetsky, 'The Aims of Jewish Education', 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 10.

⁶⁷ Brodetsky, 'The Future of Jewish Education in Great Britain', 8–9.

history and the history of anti-Semitism: a 'child must know that the present persecution of Jews in Europe is not the first case in Jewish history: e.g. the child might read a few chapters from the Book of Maccabees and see how the Syrian Greeks anticipated what the Nazis are doing now'.⁶⁸ Brodetsky's demand that Jewish children 'ought to be able to realize that the entry of Abraham into Canaan and the Balfour Declaration are events that form links in one chain', that 'Joshua, Judas Maccabeus, Bar-Kochba and Trumpeldor should share equally in the child's admiration for bravery in an ideal cause', that 'David, Yehuda Halevi and Bialik should all figure in its gallery of Jewish poets', and 'Moses, Zerrubabel and Herzl should all figure in its gallery of Jewish emancipators',⁶⁹ demonstrates paradigmatically how Zionists sought to promote a novel Jewish identity through education based on a selective account of Jewish history perceived as being directed at the attainment of national goals.

Brodetsky's third educational postulate was the promotion of the awareness of 'Jewish association' among Jewish youth: 'the ordinary person cannot dispense with the communion of those that share his views and beliefs. The Jewish child needs the support afforded by the consciousness of membership of a great and ancient brotherhood.'⁷⁰ To Brodetsky the 'Jews from whom Jewishness had been removed, and who were overtaken by the Nazis, represented the greatest of all the tragedies in Jewish life in our generation'.⁷¹ The following passage exemplifies how Brodetsky sought to translate the abstract concept of a Jewish national community into social reality through education:

A miserable looking old Jew passes me in the street. He bears upon his face the imprint of the anguish of Czarist persecution, his back is bent under the yoke of the *Golus*. He is the *dirty Jew* of legend, the downtrodden and stone-pelted product of European civilisation. If I cannot say to myself truthfully, sincerely, with dignity and with deep sympathy: 'There, but for the accident of fate, go I!' then my Jewish historic consciousness is sick unto death. The child must see itself in the Jew of history. It must see itself indissolubly bound by ties of common ancestry and common fortune to the Jews of all lands. It must not be eclectic in its Jewish loyalty. It must see a brother and a sister in every member of the House of Israel, it must find a home in every Jewish community, eastern or western, Ashkenazic or Sephardic, orthodox, liberal or reform.⁷²

⁶⁸ Brodetsky, 'The Future of Jewish Education in Great Britain', 10.

⁶⁹ Brodetsky, 'The Aims of Jewish Education', 17.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 15.

⁷¹ Brodetsky, 'The Future of Jewish Education in Great Britain', 9.

⁷² Brodetsky, 'The Aims of Jewish Education', 16.

British Zionists saw education as an important avenue of nation-building. The education of Jewish youth under Zionist auspices was to create a Jewish consciousness unencumbered by the divisions within Jewry. The two main instruments for the creation of a Jewish identity transcending the chronological, social, religious, and national divisions between Jews were the historicization and personalization of the Jewish experience. This was what Brodetsky referred to, in less theoretical terms, when he insisted that Jewish education produce a 'family kinship of the Jew of today with the Jew of the past'.⁷³

Although the 1944 Act gave the Jewish community the same opportunities as other denominations for the maintenance and the establishment of voluntary schools, it did not meet with an immediate response.⁷⁴ Yet already before 1956, when the first Zionist day school opened its doors, Zionist notions came to permeate the existing conduits of Jewish education including the Jewish withdrawal classes in state schools. Especially after the establishment of the State of Israel, the curricula of the communal educational bodies became heavily influenced by Zionist thought. The first report of the London Board of Jewish Religious Education stated that the establishment of the State of Israel was a stimulus for Hebrew as a living language. Apart from Hebrew as a spoken language its curriculum included religion, Jewish history, and Palestinography.⁷⁵ In 1956 the Rosh Pina School in Edgware opened as the first Jewish voluntary school under the auspices of the ZF.⁷⁶ The aims of the Zionist day school movement were: to counteract the tendency towards assimilation, to forge close links with Israel, to introduce Hebrew as a living language, and to provide a modern general education. The establishment of the Rosh Pina School had been preceded by protracted negotiations between the ZF's Day School Committee, the United Synagogue, and the London Board of Jewish Education over the contents and religious orientation of Jewish education. The United Synagogue, the London Board of Jewish Education, and the ZF reached an agreement on the following principles: The curriculum of the Rosh Pina day school was to include secular and Jewish subjects, the latter to be based on the tenets of Jewish Orthodox tradition; all Hebraic subjects were to be taught with Sephardic pronunciation, which was current in Israel, instead of the Ashkenazic one traditionally used by the majority of British Jews; in addition to Jewish religious education the knowledge of Jewish history and of the

⁷³ Ibid. 10.

⁷⁴ Bernard Steinberg, 'Anglo-Jewry and the 1944 Education Act', *JJS* 31/2 (1989), 81–108.

⁷⁵ London Board of Jewish Religious Education, First Report, 1948–1950, 4–5.

⁷⁶ Fox, *Zionist Yearbook* (1956/7); (1957/8), 345.

State of Israel were to form part of the curriculum.⁷⁷ The ZF also gave an undertaking to desist from secular propaganda. With the foundation of the Clapton School in East London, the Selig Brodetsky School in Leeds, and others the Zionist day school system kept expanding. By 1960 there were altogether six Zionist day schools.⁷⁸ In addition to the Zionist day schools operating under the auspices of the ZF, the British Mizrahi supported the Yavneh Grammar School in north-west London.⁷⁹

Although the ZF had agreed to adhere to the 'national-traditional formula' and to base the religious side of its day schools on the tenets of Orthodox Judaism, the implementation was a source of frequent controversies with the chief rabbinate and the Orthodox. While from the Orthodox perspective the relationship between 'whole-hearted Jewish schooling and the real Zionism' had never been questioned, this had, as Schonfeld argued, little to do with the ZF's educational agenda.⁸⁰ The Agudist *Jewish Post* carried aggressive articles against Zionist day schools. At a meeting of the Stamford Hill Beth Hamedrash, Orthodox Jews, including senior representatives of the British Mizrahi, attacked the ZF for its day schools.⁸¹ Despite the 'national-traditional formula' the schools run under the auspices of the ZF did not satisfy the standards of the radical Orthodox.

The analysis of the post-war Jewish educational scene in Britain is instructive in three respects. Changes in education can be studied as an important avenue for the Zionization of British Jewry, but also serve as a barometer for the educational priorities of British Jews and as an indicator for the shifting boundaries delineating the position of British Jews within British state and society. How did the rise of Zionism relate to the crisis of Jewish education and its post-war convalescence and to the renegotiation of the respective shares of the denominations and the state in British education? Apart from the radical Orthodox, the British Zionist movement was both the main champion and the main beneficiary of the post-war revival of Jewish education, which in terms of contents was no longer assimilationist or traditional Eastern European style. Although the spread of modern Hebrew culture had long been on the agenda of British Zionists it was not until the 1950s that they entered the field of school education. Up to then the British Zionist movement, preoccupied with the immediate demands of Jewish state- and nation-building, the

⁷⁷ *Zionist Yearbook* (1957/8); Executive Council, ZF, 14 November 1955, CZA F13/1005/IV.

⁷⁸ ZF, *Annual Report 1960*, 20.

⁷⁹ Steinberg, 'Schooling', 312–14.

⁸⁰ Schonfeld, *Gates of Zion* (January 1951), 17.

⁸¹ ZF, Executive Council, 22 October 1956, CZA F13/1005/IV.

diplomatic struggle with the Mandatory power, and fundraising, had not given priority to *Gegenwartsarbeit*, nor had there been any of the opportunities for denominational schooling which only the 1944 Education Act opened up.

What does the expansion of organized Jewish education on the basis of the 1944 Education Act demonstrate about Jewish relations with the larger society? To start with, Jewish schools were only one facet of the variegated educational landscape in England, which, consisting of controlled and voluntary state schools as well as of independent schools, was characterized by the absence of a centralized, state-controlled school system and a correspondingly high degree of localized public or independent control over school education. Classified as religious schools, Jewish schools fitted into the larger category of denominational voluntary schools. While there continued to be disagreement about the extent of financial public commitment to denominational schools, there was little controversy over their existence or over the principle of their public funding.⁸² The idea of distinct Jewish voluntary schools benefited from the widespread consensus among the English public that the denominations had a role to play in education and that education was a shared responsibility of the state, the local authorities, and the denominations rather than a state monopoly. In contrast to the Continent, in particular in comparison with France, the educational strategies pursued by the state in England were less instrumental in fulfilling a uniform, national purpose beyond the satisfaction of openly admitted sectional interests, nor were controversies over the role of the denominations in education the source of perennial ideological battles or a persistent code for party-political allegiance, because of the party-political cross-cleavages on the issue. As a result Jewish day schools, like other denominational schools, benefited from public funding on a scale for which there was no parallel, either in the USA or in Commonwealth countries.⁸³

If the 1944 Education Act created new opportunities for denominational, including Jewish, schooling in general, how did Zionism relate to the renegotiation of the respective shares of interested religious groups and the state in British education? There was no unanimous response on the part of British Jewry. The Zionist and Orthodox strata of British Jewry took advantage of what was the result not of the renegotiation of a bipolar Jewish/non-Jewish relationship, but of the shifting boundaries between

⁸² Denis Huot, 'Denominational Schools as a Political Problem in England and Wales, 1940–1959' (University of Oxford, D.Phil. thesis, 1962), 369–74.

⁸³ Interview with Ernst Frankel, HU, Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Oral History Division, Tape 2218, 19.

the denominations and the state in the realm of education, which in turn also had an impact on British-Jewish education. The post-war expansion of organized Jewish education was the result of competing efforts by Zionists and the Orthodox to overcome what they regarded as a severe crisis of Jewish education, and of changes within British society at large that led to the 1944 Education Act and subsequent legislation.

Conclusion

British Zionism: A Composite Jewish Identity between Exit Strategy, Empire, and Diaspora Subnationalism

The concluding chapter summarizes where our understanding of the rise of Zionism in British Jewry during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s may have benefited from the main argument of the book, to explain British diaspora Zionism in terms of a particularly complex, but not untypical variant of the general nineteenth- and twentieth-century trend to reimagine communities in national terms. It also shows how alternative factors that shaped British Zionism need to be taken into consideration: the Empire and Britain's administration of the Mandate for Palestine until 1948 as well as the traditional terms of the Jewish condition in Britain coexisting with modern parameters within which a more diverse society evolved.

The purpose of this study has been to explore the relationship between British Jewry and Zionism in the two decades from 1936 to 1956. It has sought to answer several questions: What was British Zionism? Why, and to what degree, was it successful? And how did it take shape in practice? My argument has been that during the period under consideration British Jewry underwent a Zionist transformation, a particular, but not untypical variant of the profound change of consciousness, the rise of national identity, which occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Since British Jews were a minority existing within the framework of British state and society, Zionization took place in a limited Jewish social and public sphere. As a result of this transformation, Zionism came to provide the predominant, although not exclusive form of Jewish identity in Britain. Whereas for a small minority of British Jews, Zionism took on radical forms resulting in the temporary or permanent substitution of the Jewish polity for Britain as the main focus of national identification, for the majority it took the form of a diaspora subnationalism adapted to their participation in the British nation-state. Unlike Irish, Scottish, and Welsh subnationalisms British Zionism was not territorial bound to one of the historic constituent parts of the United

Kingdom, but stretched across it. The reinvention of British Jews as part-time members of the new Jewish nation with its centre in the *yishuv*, and, after 1948, the State of Israel, was not restricted to a transformation of identity, but had a practical side to it as well, pertaining to three areas: the transnational Jewish public and social sphere, the British-Jewish public and social sphere, and British state and society. Although the Zionization of the Jewish community of the United Kingdom had, with the exception of Northern Ireland, not reached South African proportions, by the mid-1950s Zionism had assumed a central position in the self-perception and organizational structure of British Jewry.¹ While the pre-eminent if elusive position of Zionism in British Jewry during the second half of the twentieth century has been acknowledged, no satisfactory explanation has been put forward for this phenomenon.²

This study has attempted to make a contribution to the clarification of the place of Zionism in British Jewry in three ways: through the expansion of the chronological scope of enquiry, through the broadening of the thematic range, and through the introduction of a new synthesizing approach. Chronologically, it has taken the history of British Zionism to the Suez crisis in 1956. Like research on British Jewry beyond the inter-war period in general, historiography on British Zionism for the 1940s is scarce, and is virtually non-existent for subsequent years. The reluctance to deal with the war and post-war era is all the more remarkable since this period coincides with the two turning points of modern Jewish history, the *shoah* and the birth of the State of Israel. British Jewry, though not itself exposed to the former nor playing a decisive part in the latter, had to respond to the destruction of continental Jewry, the emergence of the Jewish state, and a whole range of related challenges such as the exodus of Jews from Germany and Central Europe, the displaced persons problem, and British Middle East policy. While these were problems which Jewish communities faced all over the world at the time, British Jewry was placed in a uniquely delicate position until the establishment of the State of Israel. Being citizens of the country which had been entrusted with the Mandate for Palestine and which was the only European nation to fight against Nazi Germany throughout the war without being overrun, British Jews confronted the consecutive crises and challenges of the 1940s in an atmosphere characterized by a unique mix of opportunities and dilemmas.

Thematically, the study has sought to make a contribution, in particular, in two areas, first, by showing the diversity of British-Jewish responses to Zionism and second by investigating how Zionism related to the fabric

¹ Shimoni, *South African Experience*, 27–60.

² Alderman, *British Jewry*, 314.

of British state and society. With regard to the diversity of British Jewry, an attempt has been made to redress the bias in extant scholarship to the detriment of Religious, Revisionist, and Marxist Zionists and liberal assimilationists, and to the virtual exclusion of Jewish Communists as well as the radical Orthodox, and to present the whole spectrum of British-Jewish responses to Zionism. In the analysis of the impact of Zionism on the Jewish condition in Britain there has been an attempt to avoid regarding the larger society as a given, static social formation set apart from the minority and seeing in Jewish/non-Jewish relations a bipolar relationship determined by a dynamic intrinsic to it rather than by external factors operating independently of it. Instead, British Jewry has been studied as part of the specifically British construction of the modern nation-state and the relation between the Zionization of British Jewry and British state and society been examined on different levels. By taking into account that being a Zionist in Britain had different meanings in different contexts and that the simultaneous integration into the British nation-state had to be negotiated, zero-sum games implying that being more Zionist meant being less British or vice versa have been evaded. Contrary to the assumption that modern state and society favour overall homogeneity, it could thus be demonstrated that a diaspora subnationalism, supported by an associational culture, dovetails with the requirements of modern state and society.

Methodologically, the study has aimed at a novel, comprehensive understanding of British Zionism by exploring it as part of Zionist state- and nation-building within the framework of elements borrowed from theories of nationalism. In order to explain what the rise of Zionism in British Jewry during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s meant, where its limits lay, why it happened at this particular historical juncture, and in order to account for the variety of its practical expressions, the majority of the methodological approaches used by scholarship on the Zionist movement have proved inadequate. The historiography of Zionism has traditionally been dominated by two strands. One focuses on the Zionist movement from the perspective of its ideology and practical aspirations, the reconstitution of the Jews as a political nation, and measures the success of Zionist activity in terms of contribution to them. The other seeks to explain Zionism in the diaspora in communal terms, judging its success or failure according to whether it answered the needs of the Jewish community *in situ*. While both historiographical approaches have their indisputable merits, the first highlighting the focal point of Zionism's vision and much of its practical activity, the other underlining the need for compatibility with the surrounding society as a precondition of its existence, they also have serious shortcomings. The scholarship focusing on Zionist state- and

nation-building in the Middle East tends to dismiss diaspora Zionism, whereas the studies on Zionism in the diaspora neglect the impact which factors external to local Zionism, the local Jewish community, or the country of residence had on the development of Zionism in the respective Jewish community. A radical variant of the second strand is the scholarship which explains American Zionism as a function of the needs of the local Jewish community.³

The extant scholarship on British Zionism by Cesarani, Cohen, and Shimoni has been held captive by this communal approach.⁴ It has sought to explain the phenomenon of British Zionism primarily in terms of internal changes, in particular, the power struggle for the exercise of communal authority and the quest for participation by second-generation immigrants. This approach fails to provide a satisfactory answer to several aspects of British Zionism. First, it does not explain why Zionism was attractive to British Jews who kept a distance from the internal workings of communal life. Second, it is silent on the question of why Zionism became acceptable to the assimilationist part of the community in 1948 and, if only in parts, already before. Third, it fails to give proper weight to the impact on the development of British Zionism of hostile external forces such as anti-Semitism, both domestic and foreign, or British Palestine policy. Fourth, it misses out on supportive, external factors: the attractions derived from the feeling of being part of a national community engaged in the establishment of a model society and a sense of self-assertion deriving from doing so in the face of adverse circumstances. And fifth, it proves inadequate in explaining *aliyah*, the participation of British Jews in the Israeli War of Independence, fundraising, and political lobbying on behalf of the Jewish polity in the Middle East. If *aliyah* or participation in the Israeli War of Independence were exceptional forms of British Zionist identification there are other indicators of the importance of the inter-state Jewish sphere of interaction for the practical expression of British Zionist commitment. The willingness of British Jews to donate money to Zionist funds, in times of crisis generously, and the level of political campaigning on behalf of the Jewish polity correlated with the intensity of the crises through which the *yishuv* and the State of Israel passed. If association with fundraising carried communal prestige, the satisfaction of hunger for communal recognition appears to have been of

³ Urofsky, *American Zionism*; Mendelssohn, *Politics*, 132–9.

⁴ Cohen, *English Zionists*; Cesarani, 'Zionism'; idem, 'The Transformation of Communal Authority'; Shimoni, 'From Anti-Zionism to Non-Zionism in Anglo-Jewry, 1937–1948', in idem, 'The Non-Zionists in Anglo-Jewry, 1937–1948'; idem, 'Selig Brodetsky and the Ascendancy of Zionism in Anglo-Jewry (1939–1945)'.

secondary importance for the donors. The coincidence of the consecutive Jewish catastrophes and crises of the 1930s and 1940s and the crucial phase of Zionist state- and nation-building in the Middle East with the dramatic expansion of British Zionism highlight the importance which external factors had on its development, and also explain the fluctuations of the Zionist commitment of British Jews.

Since the period covered by this study includes the two turning points of modern Jewish history, the *shoah* and the establishment of the State of Israel, which had strong, if mediated, repercussions on British Jewry and were of decisive importance for its Zionist transformation, an attempt to account for the ascendancy of British Zionism within communal terms would have been incomplete. To consider the impact of external factors on the development of British Zionism a different approach was needed. Instead of analysing British Zionism from the exclusive perspective of either the contribution of British Jews to Zionist state- and nation-building or its role for the Jewish community *in situ*, it has been explored as part of the wider, transnational Zionist movement, extending to both spheres. To examine British Zionism within the context of theories of nationalism, I have argued, makes it possible to understand British Zionism in a more comprehensive way, explaining aspects of British Zionism which the traditional approaches have left unaccounted for, and also providing, within their own communal frame of reference, a more satisfactory explanation for the success of Zionism. On the one hand, tools offered by theories of nationalism, such as the concepts of the disintegration of a taken-for-granted social and religious frame of reference, of an antagonistic Other, and of the attractions derived from the multiple opportunities of participation and identification offered by modern state- and nation-building, provided a more satisfactory understanding of British Zionism than the traditional communal approach. On the other hand, they raised new problems from the perspective of scholarship on both nationalism and Zionism. The first concerned the study of Zionism in general as a variant of modern nationalism, the second the examination of diaspora Zionism as a form of nationalism. Neither has Zionism received adequate consideration in the scholarship on nationalism, nor has, conversely, the historiography on Zionism been eager to apply the categories developed by that scholarship, with the exception of the primordialist variant, to their object of enquiry. The main reason for the reluctance to conceptualize diaspora Zionism, or any other nationalism cutting across state boundaries, in terms of nation and nationalism appears to be the prevailing norms of modern politico-legal theory and practice which accord legitimacy to national identification only on the basis of territorialized citizenship. Although the vast majority of British Zionists,

like Zionists in any Western country, showed little inclination to conform to the prevailing politico-legal norm and the predilections of Zionists equating Zionism with leading one's life in Israel, whose rejection of diaspora Zionism did not only flow from their conviction, but also reflected that norm, it appears as though the notion that in order to qualify as a Zionist one had eventually to throw in one's lot with the Jewish polity, and, conversely, that a Jew living in the Western diaspora, however emphatically protesting his Zionist commitment, was no Jewish nationalist in the real sense, proved sufficiently strong to be replicated in two distinct sets of scholarship on Zionism.

In order to explore British Zionism as part of a national movement extending to both British Jewry and the transnational Jewish sphere of interaction, it was necessary to remove the conceptual limits of the existing scholarship and to accommodate also nationalisms cutting across the boundaries of states. This study has adapted Ernest Renan's and Seton-Watson's essentially subjective and voluntaristic definitions of the nation and combined it with a radicalized version of Anderson's approach, who has defined a nation as an 'imagined community' and nationalism as a form of identity which can be projected onto any social or political reality, which, in turn, imposes limits on, or offers opportunities for, its practical expression. In order to accommodate British Zionism and other nationalisms which cut across the boundaries of state, the implicit conditionality of Anderson's definition of nation on a territorially delimited political unit had to be dropped. Thus equipped with a new, comprehensive, and elastic concept of nationalism, it became possible to explore British Zionism as part of a wider process of Zionist state- and nation-building, to take into account the role of the imaginary and practical forms of British-Jewish interaction with non-British Jews, and to investigate the impact of forces that were external to British Jewry. Although the links with the trans-state Jewish sphere were often indirect rather than direct and the impact of external factors frequently mediated, they are nonetheless decisive for an understanding of the causes of British Zionism and the trajectory of its development. The repercussions of foreign anti-Semitism, in particular of the *shoah*, but also of domestic anti-Semitism and of British Palestine policy, have been identified as crucial for the increasing acceptance of Zionism among British Jews. By treating British Zionists as part-time members of an transnational Zionist public and social sphere, it has been possible to consider the satisfaction British Jews gained from being participants in that national community engaged in the establishment of a model society, as well as from their sense of self-assertion deriving from their doing so in the face of adverse circumstances. The identification of British Jews with the Zionist project in the Middle East found practical

expression primarily in political lobbying and fundraising, but could also take radical forms such as *aliyah* and participation in the Israeli War of Independence. Apart from their neglect of extra-communal developments, the traditional explanations of British Zionism as a function of the internal workings of the British-Jewish community have been unsatisfactory in further respects. Although Zionism did provide an avenue for the realization of the aspirations of second-generation immigrants to share in communal government and prestige, it owed its success ultimately not to the rise of one and the demise of another Jewish class or milieu. Like other nationalisms, British Zionism owed its success to the capacity to transcend the barriers which existed between British Jews from different social strata and milieux, with different religious backgrounds and of different degrees of communal attachment. The argument put forward in the introduction has been played out in four parts. Part I, 'The Mechanics of British Zionism', has addressed the question of why British Jews became Zionists; the subsequent body of this study, divided into three parts, has analysed how the Zionist transformation operated in three arenas: the transnational Jewish sphere of interaction, British Jewry, and British state and society. Part I has accounted for the rise of Zionism in British Jewry at a particular historical juncture. The ascendancy of Zionism in British Jewry during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, after a low ebb during the 1920s, has been explained as the result of a combination of structural, long-term developments and temporary, but no less decisive factors. The first section, 'Preconditions of British Zionism', has identified the disintegration of a traditional Jewish order with set social, cultural, and religious ways as a precondition of the rise of Jewish nationalism in Britain. As British Jewry in the 1930s consisted of two still recognizably distinct milieux, that of long-established Anglo-Jews and that of the immigrants from Eastern Europe, to which might be added as a third one that of the refugees from Nazi persecution, one has to distinguish between the 'post-assimilationist' Zionism of already assimilated Jews and the 'immediate' Zionism originating in the second-generation Eastern European immigrants' milieu. It was in the inter-war period that the immigrants' milieu and the organizational framework that sustained it disintegrated. The crisis of traditional social and religious frames of reference was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the rise of Zionism. It might lead, as for substantial numbers of British Jews it did, to assimilation or fusion with the surrounding society. Additional factors, positive and negative ones, had to come into play to explain the success of Zionism.

Among the 'Others' that acted as catalysts of Jewish nationalism in Britain a distinction has been made between those external and those internal to the supposed national body, between general and British

factors, and between long-term, structural trends and temporary developments. In addition, a qualitative distinction has been made between antagonists, which took the form of direct aggression against Jews, and what has been termed 'anti-Semitism by default', developments which although not anti-Semitic as such, turned out to be inimical to Jews or could be regarded as conflicting with specific Jewish concerns. The general increase of anti-Semitism after the First World War, the extermination of Jews in continental Europe, but also the upsurge of domestic anti-Semitism during the 1930s, provoked Jewish nationalism in Britain. External antagonists as catalysts of British Zionism were not restricted to mediated foreign anti-Semitism or the Arab threat to the Jewish polity or the domestic anti-Semitism immediately felt by British Jews. In a Western country like Britain, factors accentuating the difference of British Jews from the majority society, which were bound up with modern industrial society and liberal democracy rather than being deviations from it, carried greater weight than direct forms of aggression or antipathy against Jews. Jewish disillusionment with liberalism in general and with specific British policies in particular was of decisive importance for the upsurge of British Zionism. There were two sides to Jewish disenchantment with liberalism. On the one hand, while not disappointed with liberalism as such, British Jews could not help witnessing the failure of the world to develop according to the rational optimism of the nineteenth century. And not to forget, by the 1940s many of the traditional 'natural' allies of British Jews had gone or receded to the margins of political life and society. The Liberals, which as the party of nonconformity and Celtic Britain had to some extent stood outside the traditional English order belonged to the foremost victims of the First World War.⁵ Lloyd George, for example, one-time Prime Minister and political heavyweight, skilful orator of small-nation rhetoric and champion of the Balfour Declaration, no longer carried political weight. Jewish relations, both with the Conservatives at the time and with Labour after 1945, were more complicated than they had been with the Liberal Party. The crisis of liberalism in inter-war Europe, the rise of National Socialism, the *shoah*, and the failure of the democracies to alleviate Jewish suffering combined to undermine the belief in the perfectibility of human society. The *shoah* and the non-Jewish response to it had not only radicalized British Zionism but also increased the acceptance among broader British-Jewish circles of two arguments on which the Zionist critique of liberalism rested. First, if the unique fate of the Jews as Jews in the *shoah*, as well as their prominence among the

⁵ McKibbin, *Parties and People*, 2–3, 22–4, 179, 189, 193, 198.

refugees and DPs, did not prove the Zionist claim that there was a 'Jewish question' and that this question was a national one, cutting across wider political, economic, and social questions, it made the adoption of specific measures to alleviate Jewish suffering plausible. Second, the inadequate non-Jewish response to the Jewish catastrophe had underlined the structural marginality of Jewish minorities in a world of nation-states, and thereby strengthened the Zionist demand for a Jewish nation-state. On the other hand, liberal society as such proved problematic. Its attractions, as well as the pressures for conformity it exerted, resulted in increasing Jewish assimilation and absorption into the larger society. In this respect, it was the very success of liberalism which caused alarm among those British Jews who were concerned about the continuity of a measure of Jewish collective distinctiveness. Twentieth-century British society was characterized by mass communication and mass democracy. It has been argued that one may speak of a 'national culture' or a 'national British cultural identity' for the first time in the first half of the twentieth century, reflecting the homogenization of mid-century suburban Britain, its key vehicles being the cinema, the popular press, and the BBC.⁶ The Second World War had reinforced the trend towards national uniformity. As Stephen Brooke has noted, throughout the war 'the question of class versus community was resolved forcefully in favour of the latter'.⁷ For British Jews this uniforming legacy of the Second World War was highly ambivalent. While they fully shared the British pride of having fought and vanquished Nazi-Germany, in particular the *shoah* set them apart from the majority society. The extent to which the Second World War encouraged the complacent insular belief in the value and singularity of British institutions and traditions, which had clearly not been conducive to Jewish concerns, may have added to the divergent experience of the legacy of the Second World War and its aftermath between Jews and non-Jews.⁸

Whereas the twentieth-century crisis of liberalism and the concern over assimilation in liberal nation-states were general trends on which British Zionism thrived, the British retreat from the Mandate, the failure to admit refugees from Nazi persecution into Palestine during the war and survivors from the *shoah* after, were specifically British factors which account for the rise and radicalization of British Zionism during the 1940s. Yet, British

⁶ Siân Nicholas, 'Being British: Creeds and Cultures', in Keith Robbins, *The British Isles 1901–1951* (Oxford, 2002), 102–35, here 103–4.

⁷ Stephen Brooke, *Labour's War: The Labour Party during the Second World War* (Oxford, 1992), 273.

⁸ McKibbin, *Parties and People*, 147–8.

Zionism developed not only in opposition to external but also to internal Others: liberal assimilationism, Communism, and radical Orthodoxy.

The breakdown of traditional Jewish society and the impact of antagonistic developments explain the rise of Jewish nationalism in Britain, but not the success of its Zionist version for which the attractions of the Zionist project, the theme of the third section, had to come into play. What made Zionism attractive for British Jews was a combination of several elements: its comprehensiveness, its accessibility, its capacity to provide answers to pressing needs, and its compatibility with the requirements of living in British state and society. In contrast to forms of Jewish nationalism that were restricted to the diaspora, like that of the Bund, Zionism, internal opposition notwithstanding, was inclusive, aspiring to represent Jews the world over and thereby bridging the gap between the diaspora and the Jewish polity. By establishing a multiplicity of links between British Jews and the Jewish national project in the Middle East, Zionism provided British Jews with a large choice of usually easily accessible opportunities for participation, requiring different forms and degrees of commitment ranging from the casual donation to a Zionist fund or participation in a political demonstration in a moment of national crisis to *aliyah* or to risking one's life in the Israeli War of Independence. Zionism was attractive not only for its accessibility, but also for its capacity to produce solutions for practical problems as well as for personal needs and desires. With the *yishuv* providing the most realistic prospect for the solution of the displaced persons' problem, support for Zionism had become expedient from a practical point of view, and in this respect enjoyed the near-unanimous support of British Jews. In addition to practical reasons Zionist state- and nation-building was attractive for fulfilling the aspirations of all British Jews who wanted to play a part in the creation of a national Jewish future, irrespective of whether this was to consist in a Jewish model society according to socialist or orthodox designs or, as Namier had put it, in a Jewish society that was enough to itself and no longer in constant need to distinguish itself. On a personal level, Zionism provided an answer to the needs of those British Jews who were searching for a substitute for their traditional way of being Jewish, whether this was of the assimilationist or Eastern European immigrant type.

By charting the responses of British Jews to the Zionist project in the Middle East, Part II, 'British Jewry and Zionist State and Nation-Building', has outlined the areas where British Jews were involved, brought out the diversity in their reactions and underscored their role as participants in the inter-state Jewish sphere of interaction. It has surveyed the contributions of British Jews to Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East in terms of political campaigning, fundraising, *aliyah*, and participation in

the Israeli War of Independence from the Peel Commission until the Suez crisis. By exploring not only the responses of British Jews associated with the JA and the General Zionist ZF towards the Zionist project, but also those of Socialist, Revisionist, and Religious Zionists as well as liberal assimilationist, Communist, and radical Orthodox British Jews, it has highlighted the heterogeneity of the Zionist party spectrum in Britain and of British Jewry in general.

Whereas Part II of this study had examined the responses of British Jews to Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East, and, in particular, the contribution of British Zionists to it, the theme of Part III was the Zionist transformation of British Jewry. Against the background of the numerical growth of the British Zionist movement as well as its increasing ideological differentiation, measured by membership figures, shekel sales, and the election results to Zionist congresses, and against the background of the extension of Zionism into areas of Jewish life outside the organizational framework of Zionist organizations—the establishment of a Zionist hegemony over the Board of Deputies, its communal ‘parliament’, the entry of Zionism into the mainstream Orthodox synagogues, the basic organizational units of British Jewry, and the Zionist permeation of British-Jewish social life—two main questions have been pursued. Along which avenues did the Zionist transformation of British Jewry proceed? And why was it successful? It has been shown that the Zionization of British Jewry proceeded through a multiplicity of channels. Lobbying British politicians and the British public for the establishment and support of the Jewish state, as well as fundraising, which established grassroots links between the donor and the Zionist project, did not only serve as means of Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East, but simultaneously as instruments of Zionist nation-building in Britain. In addition, national conferences of Zionist parties and the JNF in Britain as well as regional and local Zionist meetings, the spread of modern Hebrew culture through language courses and the Jewish day schools, the propagandistic visualization of the Zionist project in the Middle East in films and printed pictures, and the Zionist colouring of Jewish family festivities and social functions were instrumental in creating a network of real and imagined links between British Jews and the Zionist project in the Middle East and combined to expand the Zionist share in the British-Jewish public and social sphere. If it was one objective of Part III to investigate the channels of the Zionist transformation of British Jewry, it was a second one to attempt to explain why it was successful. In order to account for the ascendancy of Zionism, its correlation with core trends which British Jewry experienced during the period under scrutiny, the fragmentation of traditional milieux and *embourgeoisement*, have been investigated. While the increasing fragmentation

and differentiation of British Jewry had been noted, no causal link has been established with the success of Zionism,⁹ which was attributed explicitly or implicitly to the rise of the descendants of Eastern European immigrants or the enthusiasm generated by the establishment of the State of Israel. In Part III it has been argued instead that British Zionism, like other forms of nationalism, owed its success ultimately not to the rise and corresponding demise of one particular group, but to its capacity for transcending the barriers of class, milieu, and religion. At a time when the traditional social and religious frames of reference were rapidly disintegrating and when the growing divisions within British Jewry called into question the notion of community, Zionism provided a readily accessible common denominator. Interpreting the Zionization of British Jewry as a response to internal polarization rather than as a direct function of the rise of second-generation immigrants or 'the Jewish masses', one can argue that the more fragmented British Jewry was, the more attractive a national Jewish identity became. This explains, in turn, why Zionism appealed to British Jews from a variety of backgrounds and why accommodation outweighed the moments of confrontation, victory, and defeat in the national transformation of British Jewry. It has, thus, become possible, to take an extreme example, to explain the Zionist commitment of British Jews who possessed no other Jewish, let alone a communal Jewish attachment. Moreover, it explains the ease with which most representatives of vocal liberal assimilationism, who had neither changed their milieu, class, nor religious leaning, jumped on the Zionist bandwagon after 1948, if not earlier on. Jacques Cohen prophetically anticipated this process, in which accommodation outweighed confrontation, with reference to the honorary officers of the United Synagogue, veritable stalwarts of liberal assimilationism, whose conversion into vocal advocates of the Zionist cause he expected to be tacitly accepted by British Jewry:

the Anglo-Jewish Community . . . will good humouredly consent with a benevolent shrug of its shoulders, when they loudly protest that the national God of Israel was essentially a Being of their creation.¹⁰

If twentieth-century British Jewry was riven by internal divisions there was also one trend making for homogeneity, its *embourgeoisement*, in particular, of second-generation immigrants. The transition of British Zionism from a restricted circle of enthusiasts to a movement with widespread appeal outside its official membership coincided with a profound social,

⁹ Alderman, *British Jewry*, 314.

¹⁰ Jacques Cohen, 'The Synagogue and Some of its Lay Leaders', *Gates of Zion* (September 1946), 20.

occupational, and geographical transformation of British Jewry. Assimilation, merger with the surrounding society, and the rise of radical Orthodoxy apart, it was Zionism which capitalized on this upward social change, whereas the corresponding disintegration of the immigrants' milieu, which was socially working or lower-middle class, religiously traditional though not rigidly Orthodox, linguistically bilingual, English and Yiddish speaking, and had its own charitable, cultural, and synagogal organizational framework, cut the social foundation from under the feet of two competing identities, the Bundist combination of radical socialism with territorial Jewish nationalism and Communist assimilationism.

Part IV has explored the intersection of Zionism with the modes of Jewish integration into British state and society. The specifically British variations of Zionism on the nationalist theme are explained by their refraction against a particular political and social order, in this case British state and society. British nineteenth- and twentieth-century history, including that of its Jewish minority, shows many parallels to that of other Western countries. The break-up of the old order, the emancipation of minorities, the rise of industrial society, secularization, and growing state intervention, trends which made for overall, though not total, homogenization, were in general characteristic of Western societies, as were their Jewish counterparts: integration, acculturation, and assimilation of Western Jewries. While sharing in these common trends the fabric of British state and society as well as of British Jewry also possessed specifically British characteristics, which, in turn, influenced the involvement of British Jews in Jewish state- and nation-building in the Middle East as well as the Zionization of British Jewry. Three factors have been identified as being crucial for constituting what was specifically British about Britain's Jewish space: the construction of British state and society with its specific combination of *ancien régime*, Empire, and nation-state elements, the co-optative dimension of Jewish emancipation in Britain, and the Mandate for Palestine. Modern British nation-building impacted on British Jewry and Zionism in two respects. On the one hand, the trend towards the modern nation-state went hand in hand with a reduction of Jewish space. Internally, increasing state intervention and the emergence of the welfare state resulted, for example, in a number of social services no longer being administered by Jewish agencies, but those of the larger society. Externally, Britain's retreat from and eventual abandonment of the Mandate for Palestine in 1947/8, part of the larger process of shedding imperial commitments, ended a project which provided British Zionists with a legitimate platform for action beyond state boundaries. On the other hand, the rise of the modern nation-state was not synonymous with overall homogeniza-

tion, but also left, and even increased, room for social and cultural diversity. If the inter-war years had, for the first time, seen something amounting to a homogeneous national culture in Britain, this development was, to some extent, countered by manifestations of cultural nationalism in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.¹¹ These general trends were modified, partly offset, and partly reinforced by specifically British conditions. The co-optative dimension of Jewish emancipation accorded legitimacy to a limited degree of public Jewish collectivity instead of insisting on an exclusive immediate relationship between the individual and the nation. It resulted from the gradual transition of Britain from the old order to modern society, involving neither the break-up of an estate-like *kehilla* nor the removal of specific Jewry laws as on the Continent, and from the arrangement of church–state relations, which allowed British Jews to maintain a relationship to the public sphere in two ways, as a religiously defined and publicly recognized collective group and as individual citizens. In addition to the co-optative dimension of the Jewish condition in Britain, which was reinforced through the informal and plural corporatism characteristic of the country, Britain's assumption of the Mandate for Palestine proved crucial until 1948 for bestowing imperial legitimacy on British Zionism and, when Zionist and British interests no longer overlapped, for justifying the intervention of British Zionists in British politics against the policies of the British government. If during the period under scrutiny there was a general feeling that the project Britain as it had existed globally since the eighteenth century was at an end,¹² this was particularly true for British Jews whose identification with the Zionist project had, to an extent, been part of this global British project.

To sum up, British state, and society, with their unique combination of *ancien régime*, imperial, and nation-state elements, both imposed limits and offered opportunities that were particular to British Jewry. The trajectory of the development of Zionism in British Jewry during the period under scrutiny throws this into stark relief. To define any clear-cut parameters of the political and social fabric of Britain or the United Kingdom respectively has been anything but straightforward. Confronting the British puzzle, Sir Ernest Barker, first chair of political science in the University of Oxford, wrote in 1942: 'Britain did not possess a simple uniformity. Britain was not one, but

¹¹ Siân Nicholas, 'Being British: Creeds and Cultures', in Keith Robbins (ed.), *The British Isles 1901–1951* (Oxford, 2002), 102–35, here 121–3.

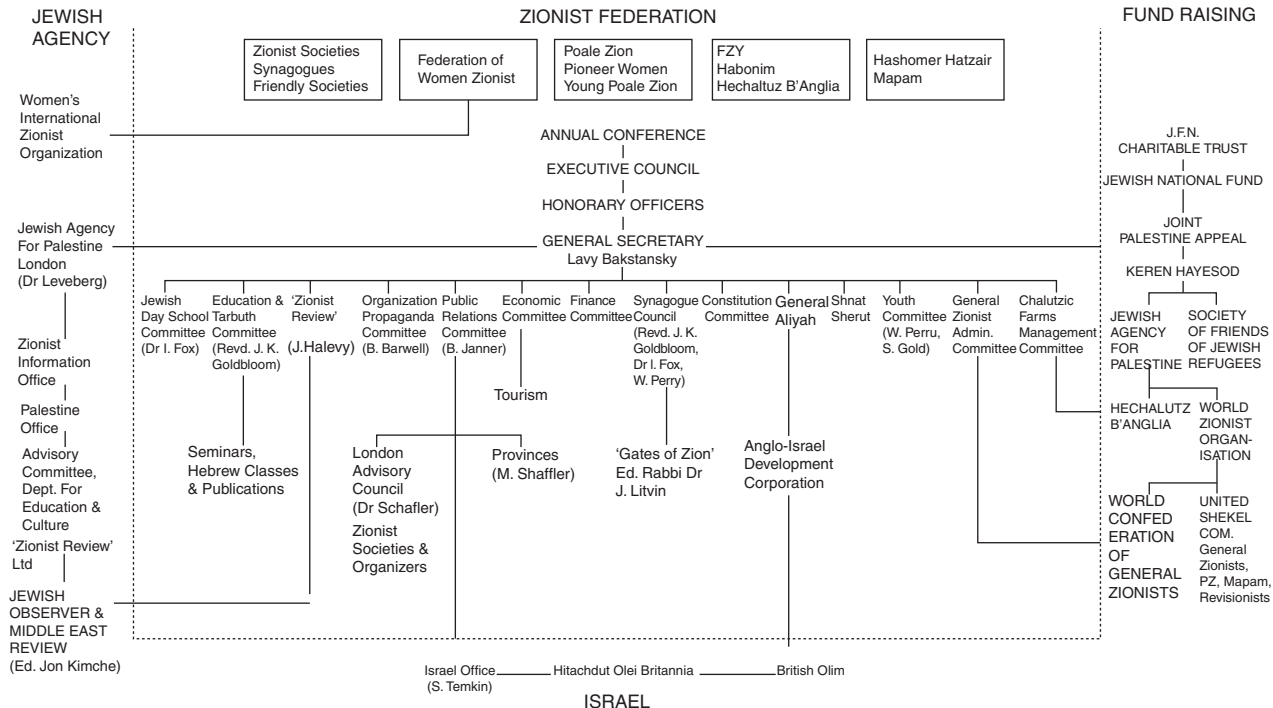
¹² Keith Robbins, 'The British Way and Purpose', in id. (ed.), *The British Isles 1901–1951* (Oxford, 2002), 73–100, here 74.

many. Even so, the many were nonetheless one.¹³ Barker conceded that the forces making for unity and for diversity were enigmatic. Sometimes social formations and institutions covered the 'whole of the British nation', but more often than not they belonged to only one of the historical constituent parts of the United Kingdom, 'and yet in other instances there were ethnic mixtures and overlapping identities about which it was impossible to speak with precision. This diversity could be administratively irksome and intellectually irritating in its indutiating fuzziness, but it was nevertheless seen as a defining strength. It reflected,' as Keith Robbins argues, 'the complex pattern of relationships across the British Isles as they had evolved over centuries.'¹⁴ By investigating the relationship between British Jewry and Zionism this study has no doubt purposefully added one more highly complex facet to the picture of British history, enigmatic as it already is. In addition to reconstructing a part of Jewish as well as British history this book is hoped to serve as an example that Jewish history—pace David Cannadine—is also of interest in the context of general British history, possessing a heuristic value for the identification and analysis of some of its puzzling complexities.

¹³ Quoted from *ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 73–4, 76.

Appendix I The Structure of Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland



Appendix II Corporate Membership of the Zionist Federation and Affiliated Bodies, 1939–1956

	Zionist Societies	Synagogues	Friendly Societies	<i>Poale Zion</i>	<i>HeChalutz</i>	Federation of Women Zionists	Federation of Zionist Youth	HaShomer Hatzair/Mapam	Jewish State Party
1939/40	111	71	64				42		
1940/41	132	60	54			47	<30		
1942	144	58	41	12 ¹		66	21		
1943	204	55	25	16	12 ²	80	18		
1944	220	51	20	16	12	96	18		
1945	242	56	22	16	25	96	19		5 ³
1946	255	88	22	27	26	96	19		5
1947	261	95	22	25	26	100	19		
1948	261	95	22	25	26	100	18		
1949	265	100	20	26	26	112	19		
1950	265	115	20	26	26	112	19		
1951	266	118	18	29	26	114	19	10	
1952	248	130	12	30	25	114	19	10	
1953	326	130	18	29	36 ⁴	114	19		
1954	281	132	16	29	33	129	18		
1955	292	119	17	29	33	142	19		
1956	318	117	16	29	33	158	27		

¹ PZ affiliated to ZF since 1942.

² *HeChalutz* affiliated to ZF since 1943.

³ Jewish State Party affiliated to ZF from 1945 to 1946.

⁴ Figures from 1953 to 1956 include *HaShomer Hatzair*

Appendix III ZF Membership Drive, 1942–1946

Individual Zionist Societies	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946
Beth Zion (East London Zionist Society)	51	922	1100	1135	1150
Stamford Hill	51	1133	1332	1714	1418
Hendon	25	459	495	495	500
Golders Green	56	355	516	1042	635
West Central Zionist Soc.	51	502	806	n.a.	800
Barcai (Cricklewood, Willesden)	101	573	743	800	800
Hampstead	68	364	447	464	445
St John's Wood	150	304	753	775	759
Glasgow	149	250	n.a.	420	450
Leeds	150	n.a.	639	749	635
Liverpool	n.a.	n.a.	350	276	279
Manchester	n.a.	n.a.	738	1147	740
ZF Aggregate Membership	5500	20000	36000		

Appendix IV British Representation at Zionist Congresses, 1937–1956

	Confederation of General Zionists (Zionists 'A')	<i>Mizrachi</i>	Poale Zion Zionist Jewish Socialist Party	Jewish State Party	Hashomer Hatzair- Mapam	Other	Total
20 th Congress - 1937 *	7	3	3	1			14
21 st Congress - 1939 *	8	3	3	1			15
22 nd Congress - 1946	4	3	2	1			10
23 rd Congress - 1952	4	3	3				10
24 th Congress - 1956	4	3	3		1	1	12

* agreed lists

Glossary

Dutch/Flemish

verzuiling pillorization

German

Arbeiter worker
Arbeiter Ring working men's association, literally: working men's circle
Austrittsgemeinde radical Orthodox secessionist Community
Congress Deutsch official language of the Zionist Congresses until 1935
Gegenwartsarbeit Zionist work for the diaspora as opposed to Palestino-centric Jewish state- and nation-building, literally: work for the present

Gemeinde municipality, congregation, a Jewish community according to public ecclesiastical law and not necessarily identical with a Jewish community according to internal Jewish standards

Jasager yes-man
Judenstaat Jewish State
Jugendbewegtheit state of being imbued with the spirit of youth and acting according to this spirit

Luftmensch uprooted human being
Neinsager nay-sayer
Ostjude Jew from Eastern Europe, pejorative term
reine Lehre pure doctrine
Romantik Romanticism, the unrealistic assessment of a particular state of affairs

Umkreisung encirclement
Weltanschauung ideology, worldview

Hebrew

Agudath Israel Political Arm of Radical Orthodoxy (literally: Association of Israel)

aliyah ascent, emigration to the Land of Israel
Aretz Land, Land of Israel
Ashkenazi,
 pl. *Ashkenazim* Jew of Central or Eastern European origin

<i>barmitzvah</i>	attainment of religious majority by a male Jew on his thirteenth birthday
<i>beth din</i>	Jewish law court
<i>Bnei Akiva</i>	junior branch of the Religious Zionist movement, literally: Sons of Akiva
<i>Brit Trumpeldor</i>	Trumpeldor covenant
<i>chalutz</i> , pl. <i>chalutzim</i>	pioneer
<i>chalutzit</i>	pioneering ethos
<i>chalutzic</i>	pioneering, imbued with pioneering ethos
<i>chaver</i> , pl. <i>chaverim</i>	friend, comrade
<i>cheder</i>	makeshift traditional religious instruction class, literally: room
<i>Chug Ivri</i>	Hebrew conversation circle
<i>dayan</i>	rabbinical judge
<i>dror</i>	freedom
<i>Eretz Israel</i>	Land of Israel
<i>Galuth</i>	exile, diaspora
<i>gdud</i> , pl. <i>gdudim</i>	group
<i>gvir</i>	powerful person, communal oligarch
<i>gvirocracy</i>	communal oligarchy
<i>hachshara</i>	training for <i>aliyah</i> , training centre
<i>hachsharot noar</i>	youth training schools
<i>hagshama</i>	self-realization of the individual in the Kibbutz
<i>Ha-am</i>	chief rabbinical authority of the Sephardim in Britain
<i>Ha-kibbutz</i>	United Kibbutz
<i>Ha-meuhad</i>	
<i>Ha-kibbutz</i>	
<i>Ha-artzi</i>	Kibbutz of the Young Guard
<i>Halachah</i>	codified Jewish law
<i>HaPoel HaMizrachi</i>	Socialist Religious Zionist Party
<i>Hashomer Hatzair</i>	The Young Guard
<i>Haskalah</i>	Jewish Enlightenment
<i>Hatikvah</i>	national anthem of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel (literally: Hope)
<i>Hatzalah</i>	rescue, relief
<i>HeChalutz</i>	pioneering movement
<i>Hitachdut</i>	Union of Immigrants from Britain
<i>Olei Britannia</i>	
<i>hityashut</i>	permanent settlement on the land
<i>Ichud</i>	Union
<i>Ichud Olami</i>	World Union of Jewish Labour Parties
<i>iton</i>	newspaper
<i>Kehilla</i>	autonomous, pre-emancipation Jewish community

<i>ken</i>	nest
<i>Keren HaTorah</i>	AI fund for religious education, in particular <i>yeshivot</i>
<i>Keren Hayesod</i>	Palestine Foundation Fund, established in 1920 to bear the running costs of the WZO
<i>Keren Hayishuv</i>	AI fund for <i>Eretz Israel</i>
<i>Keren Kayemet</i>	Jewish National Fund, established in 1901 to purchase and reclaim land in Palestine
<i>Leisrael</i>	
<i>Kinus</i>	workshop
<i>Klal Yisroel</i>	All of Israel
<i>Knessia Gdola</i>	world Congress of the AI (1923 and 1929 in Vienna, 1937 in Marienbad, 1954 and 1964 in Jerusalem)
<i>Knessia Mechina</i>	preparatory convocation
<i>Kol Torah</i>	way of life in accordance with the Torah
<i>Kultura</i>	secular culture
<i>melamed</i>	teacher
<i>menabel</i>	principal, head, manager
<i>merkaz</i>	executive
<i>meshek</i>	farm
<i>michtav kesher</i>	circular
<i>moshav</i>	cooperative agricultural settlement of smallholders
<i>nessiut</i>	presidency
<i>Neturei Karta</i>	Guardians of the City
<i>Noar Agudati</i>	Agudist Youth
<i>Poalei Agudath Israel</i>	Association of Agudist Workers
<i>Poalei Zion</i>	Workers of Zion
<i>Sepher Hayered</i>	Children's Book of the KKL
<i>shaliach,</i>	emissary
pl. <i>shlichim</i>	
<i>She'erit Hapleta</i>	The Remnant, survivors of the <i>shoah</i>
<i>shekel,</i>	ancient Jewish coin, membership token of the WZO
pl. <i>shakalim</i>	
<i>shekinah</i>	divine presence
<i>Shem Yisborach</i>	God (literally: blessed name)
<i>Shema</i>	Hear, O Israel; central prayer in Jewish Prayerbook
<i>Shevuot</i>	Jewish festival commemorating the revelation on Mt Sinai and the giving of the Torah; restyled as a harvest festival
<i>shomer,</i>	watchman
pl. <i>shomrim</i>	
<i>shadlanut</i>	intercession by Jewish notable
<i>simcha</i>	festive event
<i>snif</i>	group
<i>talmud torah</i>	Jewish religious school

<i>Torah v'Avodah</i>	Senior branch of the Religious Zionist youth movement (literally: Torah and Labour)
<i>Totzeret Ha'aretz</i>	products of the Land of Israel
<i>Tu b'Shvat</i>	15th day of the month Shvat in the Hebrew calendar, JNF holiday, Spring Festival
<i>Vaad Hapoel</i>	General Council
<i>Vaad Leumi</i>	Jewish National Council
<i>vatikim</i>	elders, seniors, veterans
<i>Yaar Yizkor</i>	memorial forest
<i>Yishuv</i>	Jewish community of Palestine

Polish

<i>Sejm</i>	Lower House of the Polish Parliament
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Yiddish

<i>Arbeter</i>	worker
<i>Arbeter Ring</i>	working men's association
<i>bren</i>	fervour, ardour, energetic and/or charismatic person
<i>Britisher</i>	Briton
<i>Bund (Algemeyner)</i>	Bund (General Jewish Labour Bund in Lithuania, Poland and Russia)
<i>Yidisher Arbeter</i>	
<i>Bund in Lite, Polyn un Rusland)</i>	
<i>doikoyt</i>	determination to stay put in the diaspora (literally: here-ness)
<i>golus</i>	exile, dispersion
<i>Jaecke</i>	German Jew, pejorative term
<i>Jahrzeit/Yahrzeit</i>	annual commemoration of a person's death
<i>luftmensh</i>	uprooted human being
<i>Yahudim</i>	pejorative term for assimilationist Jews
<i>Yiddishkeit</i>	authentic (Eastern European) Jewishness; authentic (Eastern European) Jewish way of life

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SOC.YOC Glasgow Jewish Youth Council.
 POL.BAC Bachad Fellowship.
 POL.BLU Blue & White Committee.
 POL.BNE Bnei Akiva.
 POL.EMU Edith Wolfsohn Emunah Group.
 POL.GZO Glasgow Zionist Organisation.
 POL.HAB Habonim.
 POL.JIA Joint Israel Appeal.
 Pol.JNF Jewish National Fund.
 POL.JPA Joint Palestine Appeal.
 POL.JSP Jewish State Party.
 POL.WIZ WIZO.
 POL.WJC World Jewish Congress.
 POL.WOR Workers' Circle.
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