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Colonising Nationalism:
Zionist Political Discourse 1845-1948

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Statement

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature

Colonising Nationalism: Zionist Political Discourse 1845-1948

This thesis traces the emergence of the Zionist political movement from the mid nineteenth century until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The thesis explores the impetus behind the mainstream political movement which led to the establishment of the State, throwing light on the kaleidoscope of spiritual and political Zionisms. However, the ultimate focus is on the statist form of Zionist ideology which marginalised other forms of Zionism rendering them historical curiosities devoid of meaningful political impact. I analyse the texts of some prominent Zionist ideologues through the theoretical framework of nationalist, colonial and post-colonial theories forging the concept of colonial nationalism to interpret and analyse Zionism. I limit my work to Zionist political texts and their anchor in the surrounding milieu of European nationalism and colonialism in the 19th century. The chapters deal with different trends within the then emergent movement from spiritual Zionism and the religious justification of political Zionism through liberal and bi-national Zionisms. Each chapter engages with Zionist political thought offering textual analysis and historical contextualisation of the major forms of the movement. I argue that at its inception, Zionism was anchored in European ethno-nationalism and colonialism and a modern and highly contingent interpretation of the Hebrew biblical traditions. As such it is rendered a reactionary and regressive form of ethno-nationalist colonialism that, as an ideology in the contemporary world, it can only survive when it is premised on ideas of cultural supremacy. Thus post-Zionism with its espousal of a multiplicity of narratives and valorisation of minority rights is, rather than forging a new de-territorialized identity, a return to a model of diasporic Jewish identity where a common cultural heritage is disparate from citizenship and nationality.

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Introduction

This thesis is about Zionism. The thesis is not intended as an expose of Zionist thought and discourse, rather it is my exploration of a distinctive movement which is simultaneously an ethno-nationalist and a colonial-settler one, a model which I call colonising nationalism. Colonising nationalism or colonial nationalism (I use the two expressions interchangeably throughout this thesis) involves a category of territorial, ethnic nationalism: a project to establish a nation-state based on Jewishness as an ethnicity. For Jewish communities in different parts of the world, territorial nationalism was 'different from and alien to the ethnic Jewish way of life', therefore, colonising nationalism employed the methodology of European settlement colonies in order to acquire territory and statehood. Colonising nationalism, thus, can be defined as a category of ethnic nationalism that employs an ethnic settlement form of colonialism as a methodology to realise its goals. Khalidi (1971), Rodinson (1973, 1974) and Shafir (1989), among others, have analysed Zionism as colonialism, although Shafir was the first to locate it within the typology of settler colonialism put forth by D. K. Fieldhouse and George Fredrickson (Fieldhouse 1966; Fredrickson 1988). Shafir develops the four-way typology of colonialism offered by D. K. Fieldhouse and George Fredrickson by adding a new category of colonialism, which he calls ethnic plantation settlement/colony. He locates Israel within this colonial model. An ethnic plantation colony is based upon massive European immigration and control of indigenous land and opposition to ethnic mixture with the local non-European population. The concept of colonising nationalism, which this thesis develops, goes further by merging these theories and establishing a causal relationship between them: the ethno-nationalist project uses the model of ethnic colonialism as methodology to reach the national goal. Hence, colonising nationalism is a territorial ethno-nationalist movement that seeks to found a nation-state by settler colonial methods, specifically the ethnic settlement colony, in other words a colony that rejects ethnic mixture with the indigenous population. Furthermore, the colonial nationalist model seeks to erase the indigenous character and culture of the target area and replace it with an 'invented tradition', in the Hobsbawmian sense, of the new settlers

(Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Zionism is the colonial nationalist movement par excellence.

Zionism represents an intersection between a colonial enterprise and an ethno-nationalist movement which has aimed to found a secular state that, paradoxically, uses religious texts to justify its ethos. This makes Zionism distinctive amongst other nationalist and colonial-settler movements. This thesis argues that the above combination gives rise to an intriguing discourse that drifts from the nationalistic to the colonial and from the mystic to the supremacist as will be shown in the following chapters. Zionist discourse is positioned uneasily between the ethno-centric and the universal and between an attempt to revive the ancient and a privileging of the progressive and contempt for the 'primitive'. As such it is a discourse that merits careful scholarly enquiry into the mechanisms and power relations that produce it. Reading Zionist texts as cultural-political treatises requires exegetical and hermeneutical analysis as much as reading literary texts.

Zionism is above all a political project. Examining Zionist discourse cannot be equated to an attack on Jewish or Israeli identity. Such suggestions, common in the media and some academic discourse, are theoretically as well as politically invalid. My contention is that this can be a manoeuvre to delegitimise and prevent any critique of the Zionist movement and discourse. Similarly, analysing the discourse of Indian nationalists or British colonial officials is not tantamount to an attack on either identity. Lord Macaulay's 1835 Minute on Indian Education which claims that 'a single shelf of a good European library [is] worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia', has been analysed and critiqued by post-colonial theorists numerous times but it has never been claimed that these critiques amount to an attack on British identity (Said 1995, p. 152; Loomba 1998, p. 85). A further example is the analysis of Indian nationalist discourse by the Subaltern Studies Group and other post-colonialist theorists (Ahmad 1992; Chatterjee 1986; Chatterjee 1993). Colonial discourse analysis and post-colonial theory are disciplines that rest on critiquing the politics of identity formation and exclusion. The post-colonial critical approach is a method of reading and thinking that brings certain questions and issues to the fore. Such analyses should not be read reductively as attacks on the identities of the producers of the discourse under consideration.

This thesis traces the development of Zionist discourse since the early days of the movement relating the development of Jewish nationalist thought to the rise of nationalism in Europe. The exploration of Zionist thought is carried out through analysing the discourse of several key Zionist ideologues and campaigners. The thesis looks at some of the texts of early religious Zionism as well as the religious opposition to it. It also examines some of the key figures in secular political Zionism. My argument shows that Zionism is Janus-faced, in the words of Tom Nairn, and has multiple meanings and representations (Nairn 1997). I also argue that political Zionism, in the Herzlian sense, has assumed mainstream, ‘official’ status and peripheralised all other forms of Zionism.

My interest in Zionism arose from various academic and personal reasons and positions. As a student of literary and critical theory, I have a scholarly interest in and a fascination for prominent theorists like Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida and Helene Cixous among others. The political implications of the positions of these intellectuals generally advocated diversity, multiplicity and the ‘little narratives’ of the Other. These theorists have, contentiously, been labelled ‘postmodernist’, a movement whose most prominent political manifestation is the attempt to make contemporary culture acknowledge and respond to “difference” or “otherness”. Theorists and of postmodernism critique Enlightenment reason for seeking to impose its norms as universal values upon others (Cahoone 1996, p. 19).

Emmanuel Levinas, in particular, is the philosopher of ‘the Other’. His philosophy of ethics spiritualises responsibility for the Other; according to Levinas the self reaches infinity through alterity. He theorises the responsibility to the Other as ‘a perpetual duty of vigilance and effort which can never slumber’ (Levinas 1995, p. 195). For Levinas human freedom is limited by responsibility to the Other: ‘even if I choose not to accept [the other] I remain forever accused, with a bad conscience’ (Levinas 1995, p. 198). Jacques Derrida, on the other hand, investigates the fundamentals of Western thought ‘by deconstructing a conceptual and institutional structure of invention that would neutralize [its claims] by putting the stamp of reason on some aspect of invention, of inventive power’ (Derrida 1991, p. 218). His philosophical enterprise attempts to deconstruct the presuppositions and cultural

assumptions of the Western tradition. Lastly, the 'post-feminist' writer Helene Cixous critiques the 'binary system' of 'dual hierarchical oppositions' through which Western thought functions (Cixous and Clement 1996, p. 64). Cixous maintains that this binary system sustains itself through maintaining mastery over the Other until s/he is subsumed (Cixous and Clement 1996, pp. 63-130).

However, these icons of ethics, justice and Otherness are all staunch Zionists. Derrida clearly stated in a conversation with Helene Cixous and Jacqueline Rose during the Jewish Book Week on 1st March 2004: 'even if I have in the back of my mind some questions about the conditions in which the state [of Israel] has been created, I'm still in favour of the state. That's a fact.' Cixous agreed with him and both of them failed to register any reservations on the occupation or the treatment of minorities. Levinas's position is more problematic as his ethical stances become confused and confusing when he discusses Israel and the Palestinians. His positions are exhaustingly analysed by Adam Zachary Newton in his book *The Fence and the Neighbour* (2001) and by Howard Caygill in his book *Levinas and the Political* (2002). Suffice it to mention that when asked about the issue of Israel and whether the Palestinian can be 'the Other', he replied: 'My definition of the other is completely different... in alterity we can find an enemy... There are people who are wrong' (Newton 2001, p. 63). In Caygill's words Levinas's engagement with the issue of Zionism and the State of Israel 'opens a wound in his whole oeuvre' (Caygill 2002, p. 192).

The contradiction between, on the one hand, thinking and theorising a cultural politics of ethics, multiplicity and responsibility for the Other, and, on the other hand, espousing a political creed that excludes and marginalises the Other is problematic, to say the least. My examination of the discourse of Zionism has started off as an attempt to find some deeper meaning or redeeming value within Zionism that has attracted the philosophers of ethics and alterity. I have found that power, domination and exclusion are represented in the trappings of nationalism and the nation-state.

Zionism has been studied by a number of historians, political scientists and other experts as a nationalist movement that has restored the Jewish people to their long-lost home in Palestine, a movement that has put right the wrong that has been

inflicted by centuries of expulsions, anti-Semitism and discrimination. Zionism came to resolve this oppression by delivering the Jews to their 'homeland' and liberating them from centuries of injustice. This meta-narrative, however, leaves strands of the story untold. I do not propose to offer an alternative narrative or a narrative from the 'Other' perspective. What I aim to do is look at Zionist discourse itself. Whereas I realise the discrepancy between politics, ethics and morality, my argument is akin to Reinhold Niebuhr's in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (1932) where he argues that people allow themselves to be seduced into operating manipulative power-interests by deceiving themselves into interpreting their acts as altruistic concerns for the sake of corporate structures to which they belong, nationalism being the prime example. Niebuhr goes on to say 'there is an alloy of projected self-interest in patriotic altruism'; this perfectly applies to colonialism as well (Niebuhr 2002, p. 93). The use of essentialist national cultural values is a subtle pretext to pursuing self-interested policies. Zionism can be regarded as representing the interests of those who espouse it and use it to justify political, military and other actions.

The 'traditional' Zionist narrative conflates ancient history with modern geography, nationalism and politics in an eschatological discourse so that ancient Jewish history becomes an inherent part of today's political world map. The wrongs suffered by Jewish communities at the hands of Europe become an issue Palestinians have to reckon with and consider in their current debates and negotiations over land, rights and other political questions. Zionist discourse thus weaves the biblical traditions into modern political realities in an attempt to represent Jewish history as a continuous uninterrupted progress towards the Jewish state. Furthermore, world events seem to conflate and pivot around Western Jewry's experience in Europe so that the pogroms and ghettos of Europe become a more relevant issue in the Zionist discourse than say Israel's relations with its neighbours or the ethos of its nationalism. Israel then becomes a European 'nation' with its history situated in Europe and its geography in the Middle East.

The paradox of a political movement that uses Jewish religious texts and traditions to found a secular state serves to legitimise the movement in subtle ways, not just for ardent Zionists, of whichever background, but also for the hegemonic Western 'nations' who wield the strongest influence in international political

institutions and whose values, whether political, economic, social or even moral, serve as universal and normative standards to the rest of the world. The biblical narratives are the foundational texts that many Zionists use as justification for their 'return' to Palestine. I argue that the fact that the Judaeo-Christian biblical tradition constitutes the roots of Western culture and world view facilitates the acceptance of the Zionist narrative so that during the international negotiations that preceded the establishment of Israel, terms like the 'return' of the Jews to their 'homeland' were used during UN talks and negotiations and are still used today. Ancient Jerusalem is conflated with a modern day nation-state and the biblical kingdom of Judea is transposed in the 21st century into a Jewish ethnic state in constant fear of the indigenous demographic 'threat' and engaged in an acrobatic struggle to suppress the Palestinian population, transfer Jews and Jewish converts to Israel and contain the neighbouring Arab states in order to maintain Jewish demographic and political supremacy on a small piece of land in the Middle East.

Zionism has succeeded in as far as it has established and maintained a Jewish state. This is, to a large extent, due to the co-incidence of its interests with those of major world powers, thus winning their support. It has drawn upon the biblical narratives of the ancient Israelites and the biblical promises regarding the 'land of milk and honey' (Exod. 3.8; Exod. 23.30-33) as well as modern discourses of nationalism and democracy to secure this support. The European sense of shame and guilt in the wake of the disclosure of the Nazi atrocities of the Holocaust is also a contributing factor in silencing possible objections to an ethnically-oriented form of colonial-nationalism that has led to one of the bitterest struggles in history. However, the legitimacy of Israel is still sometimes called into question. The UN General Assembly revoked its Resolution 3379 of 10th November 1975 which had equated Zionism with racism as late as December 1991 (General Assembly Resolution 46/48). Israel had put the revocation of the resolution equating Zionism with racism as a precondition for its participation in the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991. Moreover, whereas by definition the 'nation-state' attempts to regulate subjectivities in order to create a homogenous nation, the nation-state, at least theoretically, assumes an inclusive framework for those within its borders. In the case of Israel, the state is openly ethno-centric as evidenced by the Law of Return 5710-1950, the Law of Absentee Property 5710-1950, the Law of the State's Property 5711-1951, The Law

of Nationality 5712-1952, the Personal Status Law (1952), the Israel Lands Administration Law 5720-1960, the Planning and Building Law 5725-1965, the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order 5763 passed by the Knesset in 2003 and regularly renewed, upheld by the Israeli Supreme Court in January 2012), the 2010 amendment to the Nationality Law 5712-1952 requiring non-Jews seeking Israeli citizenship to pledge loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state and, above all, the rejection of any suggestion to grant Israeli nationality to Palestinians and the absolute rejection of the return of the Palestinian refugees to Israel (Massad 2003, p. 444).

Thus despite the diversity within the Zionist movement, the discourse of Zionism has some elements in common, like its disregard towards the indigenous population of Palestine. The fact that most 'mainstream' Zionist discourse still represents the Zionist project as a 'utopian ideology' or a benign liberation movement without giving consideration to its dispossession effects on Palestinians and other minority groups compels the scholar to investigate the functioning of this discourse (Adelman 2008; Dershowitz 2003; Gorny 1998; Laqueur 1972; Mosse 1992; Vital 1975; Vital 1982; Vital 1987; Winer 1971). As Homi Bhabha has suggested, by studying the tensions and contradictions of nationalist discourse and exploring its performative functioning we can draw some conclusions about the construction of identity, nationhood and ethnicity (Bhabha 1990a, pp. 291-322).

This study aims to interrogate Zionist discourse both as a discourse of colonialism as well as a nationalist discourse. My contention is that Zionism is not only morally contentious on the colonial level but most specifically on the nationalist one. I do not engage with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the current political situation between the Israelis and the Palestinians in this thesis, nor do I engage with the rise of Arab and Palestinian nationalisms. Although the current conflict and the Palestinian and Arab responses to Zionism fall outside the immediate remit of the thesis, these issues are inevitably touched upon. However, the focus of the thesis is on Zionist theories and discourses as expounded by some Zionist thinkers. I analyse the political discourse of Zionist thinkers looking at the crevices and interstices within their writings. The writers I deal with are noted 'thinkers and intellectuals' some of whom have contributed to the Western 'canon', to Jewish thought in Europe and even to important international institutions and decisions.

In analysing Zionist discourse, this study explores the different influences that shaped it, and the nationalist, colonialist and religious elements within it. I am a literary critic by training and the thesis deals with the theoretical discursive side of Zionism rather than the Zionist actions on the ground, although, again, these issues inevitably emerge in the discussion. Of course, political discourses involve more than just language; they are also constituted by a set of ‘institutional and organisational practices’ in addition to symbols, myths, histories and legal and institutional structures; ‘Discourses can be considered to be an amalgam of material practices and forms of language and knowledge where each reinforces the other in a continuous cycle’ (Jackson 2005, p. 19). Zionist discourse relies heavily on the appropriation of symbols like the Star of David, myths and histories like biblical traditions and archaeological excavations to construct an unbroken line that extends from time immemorial to the present. Laws, policies and regulations are also an integral part of Zionist discourse.

My choice of texts requires some explanation. Most of the theorists I engage with are ‘humanists’, liberals usually studied for their astuteness and contribution to the ‘Western’ tradition. I do not seek to disprove that. However, I seek to question our reading of texts and the tradition that sees Hess, Cook and Buber, for example, as beacons of humanism and enlightenment. As a literary critic, I am more interested in ‘intellectuals’ than in ‘politicians’ although, as Partha Chatterjee has perspicaciously remarked, ‘the critical analysis of nationalist thought is also necessarily an intervention in a political discourse of our time’ (Chatterjee 1986, p. 52). Thus, this thesis aims to analyse a few examples from various Zionist thinkers within the framework of the concept of colonising nationalism. The main focus will be on the two extremes of the Zionist ideological spectrum – the religious and the liberal. Most studies of Zionism, which will be reviewed in Chapter II, have focused largely on Labour Zionism, whereas this thesis aims to analyse the colonial and ethno-nationalist aspects of the movement and their relation to each other. Thus, the choice of theorists for analysis was determined by their texts and their theorisation of Zionism as either nationalism or colonialism. The notion of colonising nationalism consists of ethno-nationalism, settler colonialism and the ‘invention of tradition’. Zionist discourse redefines and reinterprets Jewish traditions to legitimise the colonial and nationalist

aspects of the movement, hence, the choice of Zionist religious ideologues and Rabbis for analysis in Chapter III.

As will be discussed in Chapter II, most studies of Zionism are either condemning or laudatory, with largely a pro-Israeli or pro-Arab stance. Pro-Zionist scholars usually view the Zionist movement as a national movement for the (re) establishment of a Jewish state. The pro-Arab studies see Zionism as a colonial movement that sought to dispossess the indigenous Palestinian population and appropriate their land for the benefit of European Jewry. Some analysts view Zionism as a colonial-settler movement, albeit a benevolent one. I perceive Zionism as both a form of colonisation and a form of nationalism. Whereas Zionism is, without doubt, a colonial movement, its political ideology comprises elements, traits and characteristics of nationalist movements as defined mainly, for my purposes, by Benedict Anderson.

In the following chapters, I try to show that despite the diversity and nuances of Zionism, Zionist discourse theorists failed to think outside the general framework of the hegemonic Western theories, terminologies, and definitions of their day. Their perspective reflects the 19th century European imperial outlook on the rest of the world. Their discourse is a discourse in the Saidian sense of the term, rather than the Foucauldian one. Said's reworking of Foucault (mainly in *Orientalism*) uses the concept of discourse as a 'systematic discipline' which has discursive consistency and 'economy' and is framed by a set of forces which serve to give it cohesion. It is a tradition, Said contends, and functions within a history and an institutional authority that bears the imprint of individual thinkers. It would be inaccurate, however, to stretch this definition to subsume all kinds of nationalism that arise in different circumstances and in response to incommensurable conditions. The Foucauldian concept of discourse is more akin to the heterogeneous character of nationalisms and the discourses they give rise to. Discourse, for Foucault, is a heterogeneous 'dispersion of elements' and if any unity exists within discourse, it is one that resides in 'the system [of rules] that makes possible and governs that [discursive] formation' (Foucault 1972, p. 72). For him, 'a book [rather than a discourse] is a node within a network', it is 'caught up in a system of references to... other texts' whilst a discourse is much more 'fragmented' than that (Foucault 1972, p. 23). A discourse is not

ahistorical, it is a 'part of transformative historical processes' (Young 2001, p. 406). And very significantly, discourse 'must not be referred to the distant presence of the origin, but treated as and when it occurs' (Foucault 1972, p. 25).

As the main thrust of my project is to analyse and critique Zionist discourse, the following chapters will throw light on the multiple shades and meanings of the Zionist project. I do not pretend to be able to produce an objective, disinterested critique of Zionist discourse, nor do I believe anyone is able to do so. Narratives and their critiques are informed by their authors' affinities: academic, social, political, and personal as well as their perspectives and positions. Zionist discourse is intertextual and builds a tradition where different Zionist thinkers abide by an overarching meta-narrative that so strikingly rejects critique or revision. It exemplifies what Foucault calls 'manifest discourse', which is 'no more than a repressive presence of what it does not say' (Foucault 1972, p. 27). Zionist discourse thus is haunted by its others, even when it does not mention them or when the 'narrator' chooses to construct a discourse that marginalises their existence and their role. The discourse also starkly downplays the power relations inherent in the Zionist project. Zionist ideologies represent a teleological narrative of the history of the Jewish people focusing on the empowering effects Zionism has on them and representing Zionism as the final goal to which Jewish history inevitably leads. This narrative is marked by what it neglects to mention, i.e. the effects Zionism has on groups such as the Palestinians, Arab Jews, and anti-Zionist Jews of different orientations. Conventional studies of Zionism seem to follow suit by concealing resistance to dominant Zionism and representing Zionist narrative as the moral high ground and by portraying any challenge to Zionism as malignant anti-Semitism or another kind of irrational, savage hatred. This works to render Zionism an unreflective, ethnocentric ideology and practice that contributes to plunging the Middle East in violence and counter-violence.

My critique of Zionist discourse aims to highlight the power relations embedded in and legitimised by Zionism. In writing/speaking about the Jewish right of return, for example, the author of this statement performs certain discursive acts. He or she renders Palestine the natural homeland of Jews, he or she creates a collective Jewish identity based on a unitary origin in a native territory, rather than the basic assumption that existed up to the 19th century of a religious identity. The

statement posits the territory of Palestine as an originary home and represents the project of large scale colonisation and state building as a ‘return’, thus undermining two millennia of Jewish experience by portraying it as a sojourn abroad. Describing this as a ‘right’ instantly disarms any objectors by placing them in a position where they seek to sabotage a natural right. It also undermines, if not negates, the ‘rights’ other groups may have to this land, and places Jews who refuse to ‘return’ in a position where they are portrayed as denying and wresting away an integral part of Jewish identity. Furthermore, by being silent in relation to the Palestinians who inhabit this region, the above enunciation has already robbed them of their status and committed an injustice against them. This statement then testifies to Foucault’s formulation defining discourse:

[A set of] practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language (langue) and to speech. (Foucault 1972, p. 49).

Zionism’s representation of Jewish identity imposes what Stuart Hall calls ‘an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation’ (Hall 1994, p. 394). Thus, by analysing Zionist discourse we examine the power relations inherent in the regime of Zionist representation.

Political discourses are deliberately structured to determine our perceptions of the world around us. Words have histories which evoke certain emotions and associations so that ‘the act of naming things is always a highly charged process that can have serious political and social consequences’ (Jackson 2005, p. 21-27). In the following chapters I have applied post-colonial discourse analysis to specific texts using an interdisciplinary approach from post-colonial theory and criticism. I use some political terms despite my awareness that they are debatable or reflect a certain hegemonic order or Eurocentric perspective simply because they are more widely used. I use the Middle East to refer to the Arabic speaking member states of the Arab League as well as Israel. The term has political and cultural implications and reflects Western dominance (middle of whose East?) Similar reservations can apply to my use of other terms. I am aware that the West is not a monolithic entity, however, the term is widely used to refer to Western Europe and North America for ease of reference to the most politically influential countries in the world. Another contentious term is the

‘Third World’. It has pejorative connotations and is disliked by many in the post-colonial world, despite its known genealogy and its relations to the three worlds theory. Alternatives like ‘developing world’ are as patronising, paternalistic as the ‘Third world’. The term Tri-continental world is most appropriate although it is not in general usage in the majority of post-colonial academic discourse.

Chapter I deals with different theories of nationalism and colonialism and develops the concept of colonising nationalism while situating Zionism in this political and theoretical context. Chapter II is a literature review of important and influential scholarship on Zionism which is most relevant to the current thesis. Chapter III deals with the precursors of Zionism and the early religious Zionist figures. Chapter IV discusses Herzl’s thought and contribution to the movement. Chapter V discusses Martin Buber as model of the liberal Zionist who called for an ethical form of Zionism that would acknowledge the rights of the Palestinians and throws light on the short-lived bi-national state proposal and its ultimate failure, the chapter also analyses the position of a non-nationalist Zionist, Bartley Crum. Chapter VI, the Conclusion, deals with modes of subjectivity and theories of identity, alternative to Zionism and the dominant territorial, ethnic nationalism, that can be offered by non-hegemonic, post-colonial theories.

Chapter I:

Nationalism, Colonialism and Zionism

This chapter sets out to define the terms nationalism and colonialism and relate them to Zionism. It seems to me that any discussion of Zionism must be firmly anchored within these concepts. There is a broad consensus among political theorists and post-colonial writers as to what colonialism is, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The main theoretical arguments surrounding the concept revolve around its relation to, or interchangeability with, imperialism. Nationalism, however, is a more contested concept. This chapter will outline the current debates around nationalism, thus foregrounding the contentious nature of the term. I argue here that nationalism is a modern theoretical construction and I attempt to position Zionism in relation to both colonialism and nationalism.

Colonialism and imperialism

My focus in this section revolves around modern colonialism, by modern here I mean roughly from the European conquest of the ‘New World’ in the 16th century. Earlier imperial and colonial enterprises were radically different from modern European imperialism in several ways: ancient empires and colonies found much more difficulty maintaining close links between the colonists and their cultures of origin, the ancient Greek conquerors of Egypt eventually became Egyptians, and Romans settled in England permanently, etc. Ancient empires were also territorially coherent, and although they were driven by the desire for power and economic gain on the level of states and ruling elites, they were not involved in capitalist modes of production. Modern imperialism and colonialism, on the other hand, can be said to have commenced with the advent of capitalism as they serve it and function within its orbit.

Imperialism, in the modern sense is a protean concept. According to Robert Young, ‘Koebner and Schmidt (1964, xii) suggest that between 1840 and 1960, the word changed its meaning no less than 12 times’ (2001, p. 25). Despite the different meanings the term imperialism implies, and despite its continual evolution, it lends

itself to analysis as a concept and state policy, an ideology from the metropolitan centres ‘concerned with the assertion and expansion of state power’ (Young 2001, p. 16). It is characterized by ‘the exercise of power either through direct conquest or (latterly) through political and economic influence that effectively amounts to a similar form of domination: both involve the practice of power through facilitating institutions and ideologies’ (Young 2001, p. 27). Colonialism, on the other hand, is a practice. Up until the 19th century it was mostly an economically driven ‘activity on the periphery,’ a pragmatic, non-systematic large scale movement of people for any number of reasons; if not economic ones, then to escape political or religious persecution (Young 2001, p. 16-17). The implications of the term changed with the advent of systematic European colonialism in the 19th century, nevertheless, colonialism should be analysed primarily as a practice. Thus, although the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, imperialism is an ideology of domination and hegemony emanating from the world super powers, while colonialism is the practice of settling in colonies that evolved into the practice of the ideology of imperialism (Young 2001, p. 27).

Modern colonialism involves the domination and subjugation of an indigenous population by colonists or settlers who either maintain total distinction from the indigenes or mix with them as in the case of Spanish and Portuguese settlement in Central and South America. D. K. Fieldhouse’s classifies colonization into four models: occupation colonies where a small number of colonial officers are deployed to the colony to administer it, plantation and mining colonies where the colonial elites import slaves or indentured labour, mixed settlement colonies where the colonizers rely on indigenous labour, and pure settlement colonies where the settlers marginalize the indigenous population or even eliminate them (Fieldhouse 1981). Gershon Shafir (Shafir 1989, p. 9) adds a fifth category, specifically for Zionism, which he calls ethnic plantation settlement. This is because he believes Zionist settlers in Palestine failed to achieve a large demographic majority at the beginning of their colonisation and were forced to rely on Palestinian labour so that they achieved the pure ethnic colony model in gradual stages. However, this category is not necessarily helpful in understanding the nature of Zionist thought and can confuse and conflate the different colonization models, especially in the case of Zionism where reliance on local Palestinian labour was contingent and where the concept of Hebrew labour was

central to Zionist ideology. Thus, I find the pure settlement colony model most suitable to describe Zionism, but only in conjunction with ethno-nationalism.

Zionism as colonialism

In the Zionist context, the *kibbutzim*, the Jewish agricultural settlements in Palestine in the early 20th century, constituted a colonial settler movement although it may not necessarily have represented imperial ideology or policy earlier on. The large scale organised settlement of sections of European Jewry in Palestine should be read in the context of European colonial settlement enterprises, specifically the (ethnically) pure settlement colonies because they maintained sharp segregation from the indigenous population whose culture and way of life they regarded as primitive and inferior. The following chapters will demonstrate that Zionism was anchored in ethnic Jewish exclusivity. The concept of ‘Hebrew labour’, which includes hiring only Jewish workers and the rejection of Palestinian labour for ‘nationalist’ reasons, was one of the proclaimed aims of the Zionist movement from the early 20th century, although this proved difficult to implement in reality and cheaper Palestinian labour was extensively relied upon (Shafir 1989).

The terms ‘colonialism’ and ‘colonists’, however, have very strong emotional connotations for the victims of colonialism in the ‘Third World’ generally, and the Arab world particularly. Whereas the terms have certain definitions, the emotional and historical baggage is sometimes not fully grasped by theorists and intellectuals in the West. Imperialism, and especially colonialism, connote racism, humiliation, oppression, dispossession, and loss of dignity. Thus, the imperial classification of different colonies into ‘protectorates’ as Morocco with respect to France, ‘dependencies’, trust territories as Palestine or other administrative divisions and/or constitutional status is irrelevant as far as anti-colonial activists and post colonial critics are concerned, this is because they identify with the subject position of the colonized (Shaw 2003, pp. 194-195; Harris 2004, p. 130-131; Young 2001, p. 19). The anti-colonial struggle is an important part of the post-colonial identity, it is a symbol of ‘resistance to oppression’ and therefore has strong, albeit vague, implications like ‘honour’ and ‘dignity’. Thus, although theorists on both sides of the colonial divide may agree upon the meanings of the terms imperialism and

colonialism, the connotations of each are different across the colonial divide. In the Arab world, the terror of imperialism and colonialism leads people to tolerate indescribable oppression inflicted by local tyrants for fear of the 'greater evil' of foreign tyrants whose oppression signifies the ultimate humiliation in the imagination of the post-colonial 'nation'.

Towards a definition of 'nationalism'

Theorists of nationalism work with different aspects of this concept; nationalism is an ideology, a practice, a sentiment, a branch of politics, and more generally a discourse that arouses deep passions both for and against it. The concept, though relatively modern, deeply permeates many other discourses and ideologies so that it has become one of the most prominent forces behind a plethora of other seemingly unrelated issues in the world today. There is no general consensus amongst academics on the nature and definition of the concept as will be demonstrated below. Umut Ozkirimli identifies a key word in every scholar's perspective of nationalism thus illustrating how giving prominence to different facets of nationalism, will yield different explanations and perceptions of it (Ozkirimli 2000, p. 59). Furthermore, the term is often used by many writers who do not venture to define it and prefer to utilise the reader's own assumptions of what nationalism is for their purposes (Selby 2006, pp. 40-55). The entanglement of nationalism in modern politics certainly does not facilitate the scholars' task in defining it, or defining his/her position in relation to it. Writing or speaking about the Jewish national movement, for example, will have implications entirely different from describing the same phenomenon as Jewish colonialism or Zionism. In short, albeit vague and debatable, nationalism is more acceptable and 'respectable' than the other two concepts.

Conservative political scientist Elie Kedourie was one of the earliest academics to theorise nationalism and trace its evolution in relation to both the 'West' and the non-industrial world. For Kedourie, nationalism is a parochial, chauvinistic 'doctrine' that arose in Europe in the 19th century and was imitated by the developing countries of Asia and Africa along with other Western concepts that the 'East' adopted but failed to successfully implement (Kedourie 1970; Kedourie 1994, p. 1).

The point here is that nationalism can be acceptable if it is practised by certain 'nations' and peoples but not others. Thus, Kedourie finds 'Eastern' and Arab nationalism to be an exclusivist, parochial, doctrinal ideology. For him the idea of 'the Arabs' is a recent ideological construct, an unstable and changeable notion; 'Arab' is 'an ideological term indicating an aspiration to create a new political order' (Kedourie 1974, p.222). This leads a conservative, pro-empire thinker like Kedourie to view this with suspicion. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to explore Arab nationalism, the concept of nationalism itself is under consideration here. It is the main focus of this chapter to trace any radical difference between Zionism and other nationalist ideologies that would render it an ethically superior doctrine or a more politically expedient one.

Ernest Gellner's groundbreaking studies on nationalism are some of the most important interventions in the field. He analyses nationalism as a 'political principle' (Gellner 1983, p. 1). However, Gellner's tendency to extend a number of examples into a universal principle can be problematic:

Modern nationalism, which is a passionate identification with large, anonymous communities of shared culture and cultural imagery, creates its units out of pre-existing differences of various kinds. Among these, religious ones are important (irrespective of whether the faith which defined the religions in question is still upheld), as the Yugoslav conflict between groups of similar speech and ancestry, but diverse religions, illustrates (Gellner 1995, p. 178).

Few will disagree with the first part of Gellner's above characterization, the latter part, however, can be highly debatable. There are numerous examples of communities who have identified themselves as 'nations' but have comprised different religious identities. These include ancient communities which have co-existed for centuries and later identified themselves as 'nations' with the rise of nationalism and the modern necessity for the existence of the nation-state. In fact the Middle East serves as a good example of modern nationalism where religion was not the most important aspect of the passionate identification within large anonymous communities. Major trends of Arab nationalism were to a large extent fashioned by Arabic speaking Christian communities in the Arab Middle East in response to the Ottoman Empire's foregrounding of religious affiliation (itself aimed at serving the

Ottoman's political interests of securing the allegiance of non-Turkic Arabs to the High Porte in Istanbul).

Gellner's designation of religion as a most important factor is more applicable to Europe than the whole world. Certainly Gellner's Balkan conflict in addition to the Protestant-Catholic rivalry and the persecution of Jews all attest to the truth of Gellner's formulation, at least in relation to Europe, but does not amount to an essential feature of nationalism.

Nationalism derives its legitimacy from another closely interwoven concept – that of the nation. Anthony D. Smith holds the unusual view, among nationalism theorists, that regards nationalism more of a primordial sentiment rather than a construct. He contends that the academic trend of viewing the 'nation' as a modern construction is the direct outcome of the cultural revolution and the post-modernist revolution in the social sciences that we are witnessing at present. He further argues that theories like Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as an imagined community and Eric Hobsbawm's notion of 'invented traditions' assign the intellectual a place of paramountcy as s/he must unmask and deconstruct the texts and logic of the nation. Such a conception, contends Smith, denies 'the power of the past' to determine the present order of the nation:

Given the often vivid ethnic legacy from pre-modern times as the basis of relatively successful nations today, the role of intellectual narrators and artist-celebrators is far more circumscribed than the present approaches suggest. It would be absurd to talk of the intelligentsia 'constructing' Poland tout court, let alone inventing the Polish nation ... without the heritage of pre-modern ethnic ties (memories, myths, traditions, rituals, symbols, artefacts, etc.) that composed the evolving Polish community from the early medieval period, the modern 're-construction' of a Polish nation is inconceivable (Smith 1993, pp. 9-28).

Smith caricatures Benedict Anderson's and Eric Hobsbawm's theories rather than critique them. 'The invention of tradition', as conceived by Hobsbawm and other contributors to his volume, refers to rethinking, remodeling, and redefining the practices, symbols, and spaces of any given community. This process will assume various forms and dimensions to serve particular purposes. It can appropriate ritual or ceremonial practices that had previous practical utilities but no longer do so. It may involve the adherence of quite novel symbolism and significance to historical

monuments or religious symbols or the manipulation of historical figures, by reinventing them into great heroic ancestors, to instill this façade of the nation's immortality and its extension to times immemorial. The political objectives for which a hegemonic social group or powerful elite utilizes and manipulates traditions will vary according to the specific conditions of different societies although, for our purposes, Hobsbawm sums them up in three overlapping types: a) a passionate desire to establish social cohesion and a sense of belonging to real or imagined communities, b) legitimizing institutions and authorities, c) indoctrinating value systems and behavioural conventions. Hobsbawm refers to the symbolism of the Star of David on the Israeli flag as an example of this. A new significance has been attached to the symbol of the Star that gave it an entirely novel meaning, implication and purpose distinct from its ancient ones. Examples abound in relation to British traditions. In Egypt, the festival of the 'fidelity of the Nile' is said to have hailed from time immemorial. In ancient times the pharaohs sacrificed a beautiful, adorned virgin 'bride' to the Nile at the start of the flooding season in return for a fertile inundation and a prosperous, plentiful harvest of the land. Although modern belief system neither hold the river sacred nor believe in the need to court the god of fertility, the annual celebrations are held in modern Egypt offering, not a hapless woman, but a life-size adorned dummy-bride. The significance attached to the modern, celebratory re-enactment of the ritual is to foster a sense of collective memory and national continuity, among other things (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

The example that Smith cites of Poland as a pre-existing nation that was reconstructed along the lines of pre-modern ethnic ties is contrasted later to 'statesmen and intelligentsia' seeking to create 'new "territorial" nations in Africa and Asia,' and hence the appeal of the discourse which emphasizes the 'inventing faculties and processes'. In 'The Nation: Invented, Imagined, Reconstructed?' Smith explains that the pre-modern ethnic and political factors 'select, shape and inspire' modern nations, he implies that 'developing', non-modern nations of Africa and Asia are the only ones which have been invented (Smith 1993, pp. 9-28). This Eurocentric perspective leads Smith to confuse the nation-state, the nation and pre-modern ethnic communities. Ethnic communities have certainly existed in Africa and Asia as much as in other continents, but the modern concept of the nation or nationhood (which informs modern nationalism) is profoundly different from other forms of

communitarian belonging, which he calls 'pre-modern ethnic ties'. Certainly the nationalism of today's 'relatively successful nations', for example Italy, is not related to the ancient ethnic ties between Romans, since ethnicities are themselves socio-political constructs. This also applies to any presupposed form of modern Greek nationalism. These modern 'nations' existed in pre-modern times in the form of autonomous cities with varied local traditions that were often in a state of rivalry (if not war) and when some form of federation was actually established between them, there is evidence that their local communities still viewed themselves as, Athenians, Thebans, Spartans etc. Smith's vision of history is a teleological one where pre-modern ethnic ties progress steadily towards their certain destinations to become fully fledged modern nations and eventually nation-states. This perspective is contestable, to say the least. For it is difficult (if not impossible) to determine, for example, whether the ancient Egyptians of, say, the New Kingdom (c.1570-1070 BCE) living in Memphis, the administrative centre of Lower Egypt, regarded those residing in Thebes, the centre of the Southern Nile Valley, as their 'compatriots'; or whether the inhabitants of ancient Jewish kingdom of Samaria regarded themselves as a homogenous 'ethnic' community with the inhabitants of Judah and regarded their territories as exclusively Jewish.

Smith's Eurocentrism further transpires as he juxtaposes historical Europe with its firmly established pre-modern 'nations' and the new 'territorial' nations of Africa and Asia. He relates what he proclaims to be a 'vivid ethnic legacy' from the pre-modern times of European nations to the modern conception and perception of nationhood within these geo-political formations, and, curiously, to their being 'relatively successful today'. The implication is that the historical roots and shared experiences of these peoples contribute to a large extent to their present 'success'. Smith does not explain, however, whether he has in mind economic, political, cultural or any other kind of success. He also fails to explain how Poland, his example, fits in with this image of success as compared to the capitalist countries of North America, for example, whose citizens do not necessarily have a pre-modern shared experience and 'ethnic ties' among them, but some of whom, surely, will think of themselves as a 'nation'. Moreover, there is ample archaeological and historical evidence that most present-day African and Asian 'nations' do have pre-modern 'ethnic communities', the question is whether these communities actually coincide with the modern

‘borders’ of the nation and the nation-state. In other words whether the ties that existed in pre-modern times within communities are actually identical to the modern national formation. To ascertain that modern European nations are a reproduction or an uninterrupted continuation of pre-modern ethnic communities ignores the fact that ‘ethnicity’ is itself a modern construct and that pre-modern communitarian belonging assumed myriad shapes and forms. We know there is a vivid heritage of communitarian belonging and symbols, myths, traditions, rituals...etc. that existed within various communities in Africa, the Middle East, India, among other places but they do not necessarily comprise the modern national formations in these regions; not because the statesmen and intelligentsia so desired but because the 19th through the 20th century system of colonialism deemed it so. Smith actually confuses and conflates the ‘nation’ with the ‘nation-state’. His above formulation emphasises a continuation between ancient ethnic ties and modern ‘nations-states’, for what else is he referring to when talks about the ‘modern nations’ of Italy or Poland? Smith’s conception of nationalism, then, is of a primordial ethnic tie that permeates the ‘nation’ from the early medieval period to the present (See Smith 1986, ch. 2).

Formulations of nationalism that represent the nation as a natural continuation of pre-modern ethnic communities sometimes fail to address the inevitable diversities, ethnic or otherwise, within every nation; diversities that have also existed since antiquity. Such formulations constitute a problem in relation to differences and heterogeneity generally, and minorities specifically; for example, they will exclude Jewish communities from the ‘nation’. They may relegate them to the land promised to them in the biblical traditions, but then further questions arise as to how to *continue* pre-modern ethnic ties and amongst Jewish communities from entirely different regions. The historian can trace the history and development of nationalism and prove that national communities are a product of modernity, industrialization and the accompanying cultural, economic and political changes, rather than a natural continuation of perennial ethnic ties. National communities may make use of ancient symbols, artifacts, myths, narratives, religion and the sacred but to be a direct uninterrupted continuation is a different matter altogether.

Amongst the major contemporary theorists of nationalism, Smith seems to be the only one who espouses a primordialist theory of nationalism. Ernest Gellner’s

conception of nationalism is at odds with Smith's. For Gellner, there is nothing 'natural' about nationalism. For most of human history the construction of 'otherness' and the politics of exclusion and inclusion within groups revolved around the family, village, church, or other small units and communities. A sense of belonging to a nation, contends Gellner, is decidedly modern. Nations are contingent upon the imperatives of industrialization and economic growth. For Gellner, nationalism is part of modernity – a product of the 18th century Enlightenment movement. As opposed to Smith's perception of culture as the precursor and progenitor of the nation, Gellner sees ethnic culture as a 'shared number of symbols and communication' which, of course, existed in the pre-modern agrarian societies. However, there was nothing in the logic of the political situation to lead political units to expand the boundaries of the culture, sometimes a culture had a political expression, more often it did not... [within nationalism] the cultural continuity is contingent, inessential' (Gellner 1996, pp. 98-145)

The transition from agrarian pre-modern societies to industrial capitalism necessitated the rise of nationalism. In agro-literate societies, the main role of culture was 'to embed [people's] position in a complex usually hierarchical and relatively stable structure' (Gellner 1996, pp. 98-145). Culture, thus, served to determine and fix people's status and identity. In the modern world, on the other hand, culture has acquired a different function and significance. An individual's incorporation into a mastery of 'high culture' renders him/her a member of the 'nation'. High culture is a 'literate codified culture which permits context-free communication' (Gellner 1996, pp. 98-145). Mastery of the local high culture becomes the most valuable possession of the individual, it not only enables him/her to communicate with other members of the culture, but also becomes 'a precondition of all other privileges and participation.' The sustenance of this high culture is a function of the state. The state protects, finances and controls the educational processes which make people members of such a culture. Whereas in the agrarian society, where work was primarily physical, culture was passed on by family members, in modern society culture is taught in an organized, controlled process monitored and controlled by the state and its various institutions. In modern societies the nature of work has become non-physical and semantic so that for a person to participate he/she has to master the literate, codified

culture and its modes of communication as a 'precondition of all other privileges and participation'(Gellner 1996, pp. 98-145).

Smith contrasts ethnic nationalism with civic nationalism in favour of the earlier. Although ethnic nationalism has been described as 'romantic' and contrasted and vilified by theorists, including Gellner, as fanatic and racially-based, Smith makes a case for it as a primordial force that revolts in the face of 'Western' in style civic nationalism that seeks to suppress ethnic culture and heritage. Smith goes as far as declaring that 'the clash of rival nationalisms, ethnic and civic, is at the heart of the conflicts in the Middle East, India, the Caucasus and Balkans' (Smith 1996, pp. 358-365). Both Smith and Gellner agree that 'Oriental' nationalism is ethnic while Western nationalism is civic. However, the dichotomy constructed between the two types of nationalism is a false. The so-called 'civic, territorial nationalism of the French Revolution and the West' which, according to Smith, regards the nation as 'a territorial association of citizens living under the same laws and sharing a mass public culture' (Smith 1996, p. 358-365) is a myth. What this neat division shows is a Eurocentric view that sees the modern West as the domain of 'a nationalism of order and control' whilst the primitive East, or the Third World, as a popular, disordered primitive forms of nationalism: 'of genealogical descent, vernacular culture, native history and popular mobilisation' (Smith 1996, pp. 358-365). What the two theorists fail to emphasise enough is the strong and persistent racial and/or ethnic element of Western nationalism and the powerful civic and political character of Third World nationalism. However, the Eurocentric and orientalist perspective is of paramount importance here; this perspective causes these theorists' conceptions of nationalism and imperialism to be deeply flawed. They fail to see that the two forms of nationalism they erect are deeply related and therefore fail to identify the constructedness of both.

Ernst Gellner defines a 'shared high culture' as one whose members 'have been trained by an educational system to formulate and understand context-free messages in a shared idiom'. The political, economic and educational bureaucracies will reflect this culture and people will then identify with them so that this becomes 'the most important single fact of their lives', and thus they become nationalists. 'Their first political concern must be that they are members of a political unit which

identifies with *their* idiom, ensures its perpetuation, employment, defense’ (Gellner 1995, p. viii). Though Gellner here does not condemn or commend such a paradigm, in other essays his own positions become clearer. He preaches the ‘need for sober realism’ about nationalism and ethnic exclusivity, and proposes that we try to understand the appeal of cultural, ethnic identity and learn to live with its ‘fruits’. However, he professes that ‘the diffusion of economic prosperity can diminish the intensity of ethnic feelings’, but not by ‘sheer good will and the preaching of a spirit of universal brotherhood, or by the incarceration of the extremists’ (Gellner 1995, pp. 45-56).

Gellner regards the struggle against imperialism as a form of nationalism, thus for him the founder of post-colonial theory, Edward Said, is not merely a nationalist but someone who provides the ‘rationale’ for all nationalisms struggling against imperialism (Gellner 1995, p. x). For example Gellner, regards it as a false assumption to consider imperialism as an event in its own right. He contends that what he, in very pastoral terms, calls ‘the recent domination of the world by the West’ is merely ‘an aspect of the transformation of the world by a new technology, economy and science – which happens, owing to the uneven nature of its diffusion, to engender a temporary and unstable imbalance of power’ (Gellner 1995, p. 161).

Gellner rightly points out the complex influence of imperialism and the intricate relationship between both sides of the colonial divide. However, he rates what he believes to be the benign outcome of imperialism very highly, and regards it as outweighing the crimes and injustices perpetrated by the imperialist order: ‘[I]like the emperor who found Rome brick and left it marble, these conquerors found the world agrarian and left it industrial, or poised to become such’, he argues. Of course this claim is highly contentious, as well as being a generalization. Gellner’s argument here reflects a taken-for-granted acceptance of the supremacy of ‘Western civilization’ and its accompanying array of economic, political and social progress to the extent that he believes that forcibly imposing it on all the peoples of the earth is actually a benevolent enterprise for which the colonized subject should feel grateful. He regards imperialism as a necessary stage in what he calls the ‘metamorphosis’ from the backward agrarian societies of the past to the industrial societies of modernity (Gellner 1995, pp. 159-69).

This view valorises the systematic destruction of local cultures, political arrangements and economic systems by imperial expansion in many regions of the world. Samir Amin and Robert Young, in very different ways, draw our attention the impact of the British colonialism on the economy of colonized societies. For example, in India and in Egypt where a 'native' industrial economic system was already functioning and the economy was prosperous, British colonialism applied a systematic policy of deindustrialization which converted these countries into 'an economic satellite of the Lancashire cotton industry' (Young 2001, p. 189). In his studies on 'unequal development' and 'Eurocentrism', the Marxist economist Samir Amin deconstructs the argument that imperialism propels colonized societies to become industrialized claiming that it is an erroneous Eurocentric view of the world on which there is consensus in the West among the political ranks of both the Left and Right. He emphasizes that coercive integration into the capitalist world system and 'the linkage of external factors and internal factors generally operates in a negative way accounting for polarization of centers and peripheries' (Amin 1989, p. 110). More importantly, Amin points out the fact that this 'dominant ideology' is not a mere vision of the world, '[it] is also a political project on a global scale: a project of homogenization through imitation and catching up' (1989, p. 111). The de-industrialisation of, for example, India and Egypt and the rapid increase in illiteracy rates during the British imperial domination of both places belies this.

Gellner considers the view that the complex cultural aspects of the imperialist era in the West were an essential buttressing contribution to imperialism. Instead we are told that those cultural aspects of the 'imbalance of power' between colonizer and colonized were mere superficial accompaniments to it. However, a few pages later he announces in a in a disparaging tone that '[t]he problem of power and culture... is too important to be left to lit crit,' referring to Edward Said's study on culture and imperialism (Gellner 1995, pp. 161-162, p. 169). Unfortunately, we are not informed which discipline or field of study is important enough that it should monopolise the undertaking of this project.

The flaws of Eurocentric scholarship are obvious and manifold, to the extent that they make post-colonialist interventions in debates concerning nationalism and colonialism essential and indispensable, especially since these issues concern the both sides of the colonial divide. Inevitably, the two sides may disagree and fail to share a consistent vision

Benedict Anderson's 1983 seminal contribution to the discourse on the concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism' led to a host of writings exploring the discursive forms through which nations either invent or imagine themselves and the systems of cultural representation involved in this process. Amongst the most notable of those are Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (1986), Homi Bhabha's book on Nation and Narration (1990b), and Ringrose and Lerner's volume *Reimagining the Nation* (1993) which in turn was inspired by Bhabha's book. Anderson explores the origin of nation-ness and nationalism. For him nationalism, rather than being an 'invented' ideological entity, is aligned with such cultural systems as 'the religious community' and the 'dynastic realm', out of which – as well as against which – nationalism emerged. Nationalism, according to Anderson, is a product of modernity: Enlightenment ideals, progress, the spread of education, industrialism and, above all, print capitalism have, amongst other elements, contributed to its rise and development to become a taken-for-granted frame of reference.

Before the rise of modern nationalism the established religious communities in Europe steadily waned during the Middle Ages as a result of, first, the effect of the exploration of the non-European world which widened people's cultural and geographic horizons and made it possible to imagine the existence of other religious communities rivaled and surpassed the world of Christendom. Second, the gradual decline of the sacred language of the Church, by the 18th century, Latin had lost its hegemony and the world-view it embedded was rapidly ebbing. Similarly, the political system of monarchy gradually lost its legitimacy which originally derived from divinity. As Anderson succinctly puts it, '[before the age of nationalism, the] fundamental conceptions about social groups were centripetal and hierarchical, rather than boundary-oriented and horizontal' (Anderson 1991, p. 15).

The convergence of capitalism and print technology towards the end of the fifteenth century ‘created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation’ (Anderson 1991, p. 46). A book, or a newspaper (which to Anderson is ‘an extreme form of the book’), sets certain fixed boundaries of a ‘sociological landscape’ which the reader comes to realize and identify with. A community is actually being imagined as the reader becomes aware of the existence of a vast number of other communicants who share the same familiar landscape and language. Print-languages, thus, laid the bases for national consciousness by creating unified fields of exchange and communication.

According to Anderson, the creole nation-states of Latin America were the first such entities in the world, and served as a model for the rise of nation-ness and nationalism later in Europe. Belonging and loyalty amongst the aristocratic ruling classes before the emergence of nation-states were based on the personalization of political relations through marriage and inheritance, ‘solidarities were the products of kinship, clientship, and personal loyalties. ‘French’ nobles could assist ‘English’ kings against ‘French’ monarchs, not on the basis of shared language or culture, but, Machiavellian calculations aside, of shared kinsmen and friendships’ (Anderson 1991, pp. 76-77).

However, the Creole communities of Latin America found themselves in a strange situation. Although they were essential to the stability of the empire and crucial to the sovereign’s power, they were economically subjected and exploited, in addition to being considered inferior to metropolitans. The recruitment and promotion of Creole functionaries was highly restricted, they rarely rose to positions of official importance, and their careers were confined to the colonial administrative unit where they were born. Their potential, therefore, was thwarted and doomed by the fatality of their trans-Atlantic birth: ‘Even if he was born within one week of his father’s migration, the accident of birth on the Americas consigned [the creole] to subordination...’ (Anderson 1991, pp. 57-58). The creole position was further complicated by the fact that they ‘constituted simultaneously a colonial community and an upper class’ (Anderson 1991, p. 58). Thus, and in total contrast to the indigenes, the creoles had the political, cultural and military means to take power into their own hands and end their subjugation, which they did, thus creating the first geo-

political formations based on the concept of nation-ness, which comprised the indigenous populations as well.

Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities' can be juxtaposed to the notion advanced by the 19th century French historian Ernest Renan (1823-1892) in his 1882 address to the Sorbonne 'What is a Nation?' Although Renan was forward looking and progressive in his outlook in 1882 compared to many of his contemporaries, the principles upon which his understanding of 'a nation' depend take for granted the assumption that a nation is a 'natural' continuation of the ancestral endeavours to build glory and greatness, for him 'the ancestors have made us what we are'. This notion clearly excludes from the nation those who do not share its ancestral lineage, thus challenging Smith and Gellner's neat division between ethnic and civic nationalisms. However, Renan's second principle, that of consent or the daily plebiscite, might offer another chance of 'belonging' to those excluded by the previous principle, but his formulation does not leave scope for dissent; notions of 'cultural difference' and 'minority discourse' within a nation are outside his imagination.

Renan actually imagined the existence of a nation based on the 'social capital' of a heroic, glorious past and the 'consent...to continue a common life.' In the same lecture, he states:

A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul or spiritual principle...One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of memories; the other is present-day consent, the desire to live together, the will to perpetuate the value of the heritage that one has received in an undivided form. (Renan 1990, pp. 8-22)

Thus, for him a nation is 'a large-scale solidarity' and its existence is 'a daily plebiscite' by its members. Notions such as 'race, language, material interest, religious affinities, geography, and military necessity' are, contends Renan, not in themselves adequate for the creation of a nation, but they complement the above two principles. Renan's famous formulation, however, serves to emphasise the fusion between ethnic and civic nationalism. For certainly ethnic minorities, for example in France or Britain, who were previously colonised, will neither share nor cherish the perception of a glorious imperial/colonial past where their ancestors were exploited by imperialism (Gilroy 1987, pp. 43-69). The daily plebiscite, or the civic element of

nationalism is only one half of Renan's formula of the soul/nation. Hence Smith's conception curiously represents Western nationalism as civic by ignoring not just the element of memory, symbol, religion and culture, but also race.

Renan does not examine the supposed continuity of the national past nor does he consider the possibility of the constructed-ness of the ancestral tradition. Nevertheless, his painstaking refutation of the essential racial identity of the nation, and his emphasis on the importance of the consent of the 'inhabitants of a province' before its annexation by another nation is a progressive contribution, even though he lays various restrictions on its applicability. Furthermore, the general direction of Renan's intellectual output certainly does not point towards a systematic project for the rejection of the notions of the racial unity of the nation and or to the right of self-determination for all peoples.

Post-colonialist theories of nationalism

Edward Said also associates the concepts of nation and nationalism with 'culture'. For him, 'culture is used to designate not merely something to which one belongs but something that one possesses and, along with that proprietary process, culture also designates a boundary by which the concepts of what is extrinsic or intrinsic to the culture come into forceful play (Said 1991, pp. 8-9). Hence, Said contends that culture has the power to authorize and differentiate. It is 'a system of exclusions legislated from above but enacted throughout its polity, by which such things as anarchy, disorder, irrationality, inferiority, bad taste, and immorality are identified, then deposited outside culture and kept there by the power of the State and its institutions' (Said 1991, p. 11). Said utilizes the Foucauldian notion of culture as an institutionalized process of 'othering' or excluding what authority deems irrational, in order to maintain its own hegemonic discourse. In *Culture and Imperialism*, he connects the idea of culture directly to the concepts of the nation and nationalism: 'In time, culture comes to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state; this differentiates 'us' from 'them', almost always with some degree of xenophobia. Culture in this sense is a source of identity, and a rather combative one at that (Said 1994, p. xiii).

In *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* Partha Chatterjee attempts to resolve the conundrum of nationalism by emphasizing that there are different ‘nationalisms’, or rather different discourses of nationalism. The nationalist discourse produced by the colonial powers, and the one ‘which seeks to replace the structure of colonial power with a new power, that of national power’ (1986, p. 42). Chatterjee’s critique hypothesizes the existence of different kinds of nationalist discourse produced under different circumstances and in different locations. The discourse of nationalism in the ‘colonized’ and ‘post-colonial’ worlds carries the political burden of opposing colonial rule, therefore it must ‘reject the immediate political implications which colonialist thought refuses to admit.’ Chatterjee defines this kind of nationalist discourse as follows:

Thus nationalist thinking is necessarily a struggle with an entire body of systematic knowledge, a struggle that is political at the same time as it is intellectual. Its politics impels it to open up that framework of knowledge which presumes to dominate it, to displace that framework, to subvert its authority, to challenge its morality.

Yet in its very constitution as a discourse of power, nationalist thought cannot remain only a negation; it is also a *positive* discourse which seeks to replace the structure of colonial power with a new order, that of national power. (1986, p. 42)

Said agrees with Chatterjee, he explains that within ‘Third World’ nationalist ideology, there exists an awareness of the dangers of the European pattern of ‘cultural discourse modified by and conditioned on a national pride and exceptionalism’ which leads to oppression and authoritarianism whether directed against other nations or those groups or individuals regarded as standing outside the nationalist consensus (Said 2000, p. 411-435). Said shows instances of how ‘the discourse of national identity was, if not the first, certainly among the most important elements in the armature of power and justificatory zeal posited by imperial theorists and administrators’. Nationalist education, contends Said, produces and fosters blind loyalty, patriotism, and fabricates excuses and justifications for infringing the rights of those excluded by its criteria. Said extols the role of the intellectual who stands outside the national consensus and undertakes to ‘interpret’ and criticize those powers which purport to represent the ‘nation’ as a pretext to silence voices of dissent (Said 2000, pp. 411-435).

Theorists of postcoloniality, thus, offer a deeper understanding and theorization of the concepts of nationalism, the nation, and nationalist discourse, since they avoid the Eurocentric assumptions of historians and social theorists who take a certain kind of nationalism, namely Western nationalism from the 19th century to the 1940's, to be *the* only kind of nationalism and to be the model upon which all other nationalisms are patterned. Postcolonial critique assesses the achievements of nationalism in the 'Tricontinental World' against its failures.

Chatterjee argues that neither 'First' nor 'Third' world nationalism possesses the ideological means to challenge the consolidation between Enlightenment ideals which led to the spread of such concepts as the nation and national identity on one hand, and Capitalism on the other. This, argues Chatterjee, is the 'blocked dialectic' of nationalism and nationalist thought:

The conflict between metropolitan capital and the people-nation resolves by absorbing the political life of the nation into the body of the state....All politics is now sought to be subsumed under the overwhelming requirements of the state-representing-the-nation. The state now acts as the rational allocator and arbitrator for the nation. Any movement which questions this presumed identity between the people-nation and the state-representing-the-nation is denied the status of legitimate politics (1986, p. 168).

According to Chatterjee, two main hurdles thus face nationalism in the postcolonial world. The first is 'development' which is in fact the outcome of the alliance between Western Enlightenment ideals and capital. Nationalist thought has not been able to question the sovereignty of modern science and technology, since they are presumed to be independent of any form of national or cultural specificity. Therefore, the nationalist movement will remain a subordinate recipient of 'progress' from the developed metropolis, and is left with the task of constantly trying to catch up and adapt with the latest advances in the 'West' which renders it under the hegemony of colonial powers.

The second hurdle is that nationalism tries to sublate difference and diversity within its essentially exclusive boundaries so that any incommensurable elements in the 'nation', whether voluntary dissidents or minorities, are considered a disruptive threat to the 'unity' and 'stability' of the nation. The state professes to represent the nation; it presents itself as the guardian of the national interests, and the nationalist

ruling elite will act ‘as the rational allocator and arbitrator for the nation.’ Those minority groups not represented among the ranks of the ruling elite are marginalized and undermined, and the nation is represented as a homogenous, monolithic entity identifying with the authority of the state. Chatterjee explains the ‘political life’ of the postcolonial nation in which ‘[a]ny movement which questions this presumed identity between the people-nation and the state-representing-the-nation is denied the status of legitimate politics.’ Accordingly, the elite bourgeois nationalist classes tend to suppress the different voices and forces within the nation and give the image of a homogenous nation with a monolithic nationalism. It is the task of the critique of nationalist discourse to ‘subvert the ideological sway of a state which falsely claims to speak on behalf of the nation and to challenge the presumed sovereignty of a science which puts itself at the service of capital’ (Chatterjee 1986, pp. 170).

Frantz Fanon’s essay on ‘The Pitfalls of National Consciousness’ in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) delivers a critique of bourgeois anti-colonial nationalism ‘from an *alternative nationalist standpoint*’ as Neil Lazarus succinctly put it (1999, p. 78). Fanon’s deep insights into the conditions of the newly independent states of Africa on the political, social, and psychic levels are as relevant today as they were in the early sixties. The core of his argument is that the national bourgeoisie of the post-colonial state is as ‘underdeveloped’ as the country itself, with no economic power or intellectual capabilities to replace the long-established metropolitan middle class. To the national bourgeoisie, ‘nationalization quite simply means the transfer into native hands of those unfair advantages which are a legacy of the colonial period’ (Fanon 1963, p. 122). The national bourgeoisie in a postcolonial country will foster a ‘narrow nationalism’ which gives rise to a ‘racism of defense’ among the masses, a kind of racism which is based on fear of competition and economic and political rivalry. Fanon preaches political education and enlightenment for the nation, especially the youth, raising the levels of awareness and critical thinking. He directs his scathing criticism at the bourgeoisie who are incapable of ‘putting into practice a programme with even a minimum humanist content’. The reason for this, according to Fanon, is that all their thoughts and ideas come straight out of European treaties on morals and philosophy (1963, p. 122).

Fanon rejects the tenets of the prevalent Western philosophical, humanist discourse which is ‘[a] permanent dialogue with oneself and an increasingly obscene narcissism’ leading to ‘words, different combinations of words, and the tensions springing from the meanings contained in words’ (1963, p. 253). He urges the ‘Third World’ to start a new History of Man other than the one Europe created and on which stage it is the sole actor that dominates and overshadows its others. For Fanon the anti-colonial struggle is a decisive collective national experience. The struggle for independence stamps the national consciousness and inevitably becomes part and parcel of the national culture, just as the values and methods of national culture have conditioned and ‘ordained’ the struggle for independence. The anti-colonial struggle is usually the site of the renewal of ‘forms of expression and the rebirth of the imagination’ (Fanon 1963, p. 197).

Homi Bhabha finds that Fanon’s essay ‘On National Culture’ warns against ‘the intellectual appropriation of the culture of the people (whatever they may be) within a representationalist discourse that may be fixed and reified in the annals of History’ (Bhabha 1990a, pp. 291-322). Fanon ‘explores the space of the nation without immediately identifying it with the historical institution of the state.’ Bhabha’s object in ‘DissemiNation’ is to critique and question ‘certain traditions of writing that have attempted to construct narratives of the imaginary of the nation-people’. For him the marginal and marginalized voices of ‘minority discourse’ are an important ‘supplement’ mediating any monolithic, homogenous or unison representation of the nation, ‘[c]ounter-narratives of the nation that continually evoke and erase its totalizing boundaries – both actual and conceptual – disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which “imagined communities” are given essentialist identities.’ Bhabha suggests that the ‘unity’ and the atavistic ‘traditions’ of the ‘nation’ are felt to be threatened by the heterogeneity of the marginalized sections within its own borders. He utilizes Freud’s notion that ‘it is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left to receive the manifestation of their aggressiveness’ (qtd. in Bhabha 1990a, pp. 291-322) to suggest that minority discourse emerges to pose ‘the threat of cultural difference’ from the finitude within the ‘nation’ therefore becoming ‘a question of the otherness of the people-as-one’ (Bhabha 1990a, pp. 291-322).

Bhabha's project here, as I understand it, is far from any simple positing of different traditions of cultural value in contention or opposition against each other. His analysis of post-colonial cultural discourse testifies to 'the establishment of new forms of meaning, and strategies of identification, through processes of negotiation.' Kristeva's notion of the 'loss of identity' is crucial to Bhabha's theory of cultural difference within the margins of the modern nation. The 'present' of a specific cultural discourse bears the 'traces' of 'all those diverse disciplinary discourses and institutions of knowledge that constitute the condition and contexts of culture' (Bhabha 1990a). This however does not amount to an accumulative or teleological cultural form; moreover, it certainly evades any form of dialectical sublation. Thus Bhabha's thesis of 'national culture' is one where no hegemonic transcendental essence of the nation or of national culture is authorized. In disrupting the 'harmonious totalities' of Nation and Culture, this theory allows for the difference between diverse representations of the social life of the nation to be articulated while at the same time giving space for the process of trans-cultural negotiation to articulate the incommensurable 'meanings and judgements' that it inevitably produces. Hence, national and cultural identities – 'strategies of identification' – according to Bhabha, are not only always compound and over determined, but also unstable at their origins, and incapable of being stabilized' (Lazarus 1999, p. 135).

The situation of the post colonial, the marginalized subject, the migrant and the exile marks the 'the shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation'. The figure of the post-colonial 'marginalizes the totality of national culture' by virtue of being 'the history that happened elsewhere'. It fills in the gaps, and thus offers an alternative representation of national history: it mimics the holism of history. The return of the postcolonial haunts the national history and 'can never let [it] look at itself narcissistically in the eye'. The mimicry of the postcolonial allows the ambivalent gaps, the absences, of national history to be narrated (Bhabha 1990a, pp. 291-322).

In 'DissemiNation', as in other writings, 'Bhabha tends to use the concept of 'postcoloniality' as he has defined it *against* nationalism' (Lazarus 1999, p. 135). His main thesis being that the position of the postcolonial subject 'mimics', and therefore disrupts and destabilizes, the essentialist nationalist discourse. There is little

distinction between the nationalist ideological projects of colonialism and anti-colonialism in this context. Emphasis is laid on the Western nation, the metropolitan city, and the increasingly significant postcolonial migrants and exiled subject within this milieu. Bhabha conveniently avoids engaging with the more politically charged discourse of anti-colonial nationalism. He confines himself to the theoretical, discursive representation of national identity and social affiliation on the 'borderline' within the metropolitan Western city, claiming that 'it is there that, in our time, the perplexity of living is most acutely experienced.' One can easily argue that the 'perplexity of living' can also be intensely experienced in other locations if one is willing to consider the lives of those who are not securely installed within the Western metropolis.

In giving privilege to this particular position, Bhabha undermines the experience of the vast majority of 'postcolonial subjects' who actually do not have the privilege of witnessing, let alone partaking in, transcultural negotiation and transnational dissemination. Bhabha's formulation registers the 'perplexity of living' among the gathering of the scattered postcolonial elite. The less interesting existence of those on the periphery of the West does not lend itself to flair theorization, those who do not have the luxury to choose or opt for living on the limits of culture or 'in the nations of others', and for whom exile may be salvation are in no position to 'translate' incommensurable narrative into a kind of solidarity. As such this theory offers little space for strategic manoeuvres of resistance against colonialist domination and hegemony. The less sophisticated discourse genre of the subject outside the borderline of the metropolitan centre cannot profess to translate cultural difference, or hope to articulate a minority discourse that is able to 'contest genealogies of "origin" that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority' (Bhabha 1990a, pp. 291-322). Nor can the production of a hybrid ambivalent discourse genre be an immediate concern for the peripheral subaltern subject.

The historicist discourse of nationalism may be espoused by the vast majority of 'postcolonial' subjects who are not diasporic but are living *outside the margins* of empire in order to combat claims of cultural and ethnic supremacy that lead to colonial domination and oppression. Bhabha's language games and intellectual manoeuvres may very well be a theoretical triumph and enrich the field of post-

structuralist and post-modern theory, but his theory manifestly fails to address the more pressing political questions of agency and resistance let alone contribute to it in a more concrete fashion. I would go so far as to suggest that Bhabha's formulation belittles the actual resistance that anti-colonial movements mount in order to campaign for such old fashioned universalist meta-concepts like justice and rights. Robert Young is right to ask 'what reality can such reading between the lines hope to change?' (Young 1990, p. 149). Nevertheless, Bhabha's project does not necessarily aspire to 'change' any political or social reality, and in so far as it seeks to destabilize and question the colonial discourse genre, it does it in an increasingly sophisticated intellectual fashion.

In the Western, economically developed world nationalism has connotations and implications that are entirely different from the meaning the term has acquired during the anti-colonial struggle and the rejection of neo-imperialist hegemony. The nationalist pride and exclusionary politics that some groups seek to deploy under the rubric of nationalism is not necessarily shared by the Tricontinental masses. The concept of nationalism is rendered incoherent when it is universalized – stretched to comprise all forms of anti-imperialism. The issue in theory and the social sciences seems to be one of nomenclature and designation. The same is true of anti-colonial resistance movements that utilized Marxist theory. Theorists and analysts generally consider these movements to be a purely Marxist production, in a manner akin to the colonial authorities' labeling local uprisings against various injustices as 'communist'. In practice, however, resistance and liberation movements adapted Marxian theory to suit local cultures and conditions. A vigorous process of rethinking and reformulating Marxism was actually taking place. Marxist social scientists credit Marxism with framing the nationalist liberation thought and discourse and consider it to be the prime force behind liberation struggles. Such an approach, however, leaves no space for Third World intellectual agency.

Nationalist discourse takes many forms, and adopts different, even contrary, positions and opinions. Nationalism on both sides of the colonial divide is heterogeneous and hybrid arising from the particularities of different cultural, economic, and social conditions. Anti-imperial nationalism and nationalist or

separatist movements within marginalized societies respond to varied colonial strategies and imperial tactics in ways that reflect their cultural specificity. Thus, nationalism is as heterogeneous as imperialism itself. According to Anouar Abdel Malek, 'imperialism is a system of hegemonic imperialist states, rather than an entity, a unified and unifying monad (1981, p. 136). Abdel Malek analyses the concept of specificity and advocates its use in engaging with hegemonic imperialist states against 'universalist and humanist pretensions'(1981, p. 147).

Hence, a theory of nationalism and nationalist thought that professes to consider and analyze 'Nationalism' as a monolithic, univocal entity cannot possibly offer an insight into the disparate national anti-colonial, liberation and resistance movements. Furthermore, the term 'nationalism' is usually applied to different kinds of movements in the three continents ranging from anti-colonialism and liberation to resistance to neo-imperial hegemony. The term is sometimes used to refer to movements for social justice and redressing of wrongs, and rejection of Western universalist ideals. Robert Young explores a variety of anti-colonial movements throughout the world and concludes that:

Whatever it may 'be' or 'have been' in Europe, nationalism...in a tricontinental context, has always been the language in which the power struggle between colonizer and colonized for domination or self-determination operated, functioning as a concept through which a cluster of 'specific' issues and grievances were brought together and politicized. (Young 2001, p. 173)

This is symptomatic of the Western intellectual hegemony and monopoly of discourse and terminology. It is almost as if calling a movement 'nationalist' will convey upon it a certain international respectability that is not afforded to, for example, a Jewish/Muslim movement for social justice in a majority Muslim country. The problem here is that universalist views of nationalism that conflate the Western nationalist discourse with the 'revolutionary' discourses in the periphery is internally paradoxical. For the Western nationalist enterprises, the competition between the European powers was among the reasons that led to colonialism and imperialism. It is reductionist, therefore, to brand any movement opposing oppression or injustice as emanating from the same source as its oppressor. The tendency to reduce all 'political movements for justice' to some form of 'imitation' of European style nationalism is a Eurocentric assumption. Its exponents preach that the 'backward natives' speed up the

process of ‘catching up’ with the developed West where national ideologies gave way to a more ‘humanitarian’ style of thought embracing diversity, human rights, equality and democracy, for example, Smith.

Hence, it may be argued that some colonized and subaltern resistance to injustice and oppression employs the language, or discourse, of nationalism rather than the forms of patriotism that are exclusionist and chauvinistic on the popular level and/or hegemonic and coercive, as represented by some nationalist movements in Europe, most notably leading to World War I and World War II.¹ Movements that seek the revival of the glorious past of a nation, or those which advocate a return to the pre-colonial traditions or systems can also be subsumed under the umbrella term of ‘nationalism’, although Benita Parry’s term ‘nativism’ seems more appropriate. However, to offer a serious critical analysis of nationalism, one has to look at specific manifestations of it pertaining to a certain geo-political formation, a historical phase and a societal context.

Anti-colonial movements and movements of resistance to neo-imperialism must not be sublated under the various Western-originated broad labels or ‘meta-narratives’ like, Enlightenment, Marxism, or fundamentalism. Again this tendency reflects the inadequacy of Western modes of knowledge to account for incommensurable discourse genres, and radical differences in terms other than those pre-constructed hegemonic moulds. Cultural nationalism and religious nationalism are some of the ‘loose’ terms used by theorists to vaguely describe a form of chauvinism or loyal allegiance to a particular culture. Examples of this tendency appear within the field of ‘postcolonial’ studies itself.

Robert Young and Aijaz Ahmad are two theorists of considerable intellectual differences and disparate affiliations but they can serve to demonstrate the point. Young’s use of the term ‘Islamic nationalism’ is quite significant in this context. It is a fraught concept and could be further analyzed. Nevertheless, Young does not attempt to expound what he exactly means by the expression. He argues that ‘Islamic

¹ Abdel Malek rejects the designation of the two World Wars as ‘World Wars’ on the basis that it was ‘Europe’s business’, For him the nomenclature World Wars is another universalist tendency.

nationalism' is, like most other nationalisms, 'a convenient siphon for the representation of a variety of discontents, a means through which they [are] funnelled into a metaphoric meaning beyond themselves' (Young 2001, p. 173). 'Islamic nationalism' is, therefore, 'a means towards some more specific objective[s]' (such as reform, the removal of particular policies, etc.), its particular difference is that it 'embodied' Islam as Young ambivalently puts it. This, in turn, serves to make it function more efficiently on the cultural and social levels.

Ahmad rightly points out to the fact that 'so many different kinds of ideologies and political practices have invoked nationalist claims that it is always hard to think of nationalism at the level of theoretical abstraction alone' (Ahmad 1992, p. 7). However, in his trenchant attack on 'cultural nationalism' throughout his book *In Theory*, he represents it as a parochial 'indigenist obscurantism'. He insists that indigenous cultures are not unitary and cannot be the privileged site of anti-imperialist resistance. He takes issue with theorists of postcoloniality for emphasizing the concept of incommensurable difference and abandoning Marxist and socialist projects in favour of 'little narratives' and post-structuralist tendencies. Meanwhile, Ahmad misrepresents or indeed caricatures some of theorists of postcoloniality, e.g. Said, in order to argue for his formula of dogmatic Marxism and to posit socialism as the one and only site of resistance to capitalism, colonialism, regressive cultural nationalism and a catalogue of other attendant evils. The simple fact remains, however, that he uses 'cultural nationalism' to denote some form of political and theoretical regression from enlightened Marxist theories. As far as he is concerned the only 'dialectical opposite of imperialism' is socialism. As for nationalism, what decides its character as progressive or not is simply 'the power bloc which takes hold of it and utilizes it, as a material force, in the process of constituting its own hegemony' (Ahmad 1992, p. 102).

The rise of nationalism in Western Europe is closely linked with the advent of the 'project of modernity' which, Habermas tells us, was initiated by the 18th century European philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment and 'consisted in their efforts to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic' (Habermas 1993, p. 103). Those Enlightenment thinkers aimed at implementing their ideals 'for the rational organization of everyday social life.'

Modernity is intertwined with the advent of imperialist enterprises and their attendant capitalist economies and modes of production. The nationalisms of the Three Continents, however, are of a radically different calibre and are the product of a distinct historical moment. They were and are movements that embody aspirations of particular peoples; whether these aspirations and projects are progressive, oppressive, or retrogressive depends on a complex set of factors at work, not just on the Gramscian notion of the 'power bloc' upon which Ahmad insists.

The simplistic calls in some postcolonial regions for the 'return' to a glorious 'national' past or/and a 'pure', pre-colonial, traditional way of life either religious, tribal, or any other are dubbed by analysts and thinkers from the metropolitan centres as either 'nationalism' or 'fundamentalism'. The term 'fundamentalism' is used in Western sociology of contemporary religions to denote the alleged crisis of 'the modern rejection of modernity' within monotheistic religious movements. However, the genealogy of the term goes back to 'a circumscribed current within American Protestantism', but has been 'upgraded' from the particular Protestant case to a universally applicable one and has since gained a 'degree of academic respect, which goes well beyond its widespread circulation and use in media representations' (Salvatore 1997, p. 169). Contrarily, most Tri-Continental (Third World) theorists and sociologists have abandoned this universalist notion in favour of other more neutral terms that reflect the cultural and socio-political conditions of their societies.

Even though all forms of nationalism are rejected by some of the proponents of the post-structuralist trend within postcolonial theory as manifestations of totalitarian thinking, this view disregards the intricate differences between forms of existence in affluent, metropolitan societies and conditions of life for the majority of people in the 'periphery'. This notion, nonetheless, is useful at least in two respects: firstly, it underlines the heterogeneity and hybridity of both sides of the colonial divide and challenges any claims to a monolithic national entity. Secondly, it avoids the facile polarization of 'hegemonic centre' against 'dominated periphery', a polarization which denies the marginalized societies any potential for agency; overlooks numerous forms of resistance; and glibly glosses over the highly nuanced and complex relations between different cultures. All this notwithstanding, the hierarchical binary opposition between colonizer and colonized, or between centre

and periphery is the objective and basic construct of colonialism and neo-imperialism in all their forms (Amin 1989, p. 110).

Thus, 'nationalism' is an umbrella term that is used to account for diverse kinds of movements all over the world. Nationalist thought and discourse, however, can take the form of parochial chauvinism, and exclusionary politics, so that nationalism becomes a patriotic movement or sentiment that defines itself in opposition to other 'nations' or by 'othering' certain social groups within or without the boundaries of the modern nation-state. Nationalism can also be a movement for liberation and social justice; it can refer to the revolt against any form of injustice whether emanating from colonial domination, neo-imperialism, or a hegemonic group within the modern national formation. The concepts of nation and nationalism have, therefore, evolved in different contexts according to the political and social needs of particular geo-political formation as a response to specific conditions on the political, cultural, economic, historical, and social levels.

The terminology of Western theory and social science, then, needs to be expanded to include fresh concepts that have not originated in the metropolitan centres of the world. This is a form of resistance to Western intellectual hegemony and manipulation of language and political thought. Conservative social scientists and humanist liberal positions here will coincide in assessing any Third World movement from a purely Western perspective, that is from a position of difference that cannot be assimilated. The case of the resistance of the colonized does not fall within the competence of 'First World' theoretical discourse, it cannot be signified. Political Economists recommend 'delinking' to help solve the economic maladies of the 'Third World'; by the same token, the colonized resistance movements need 'delinking' from Western methodologies of theorization.

Nationalism, whether civic or ethnic, is a combination of a civic contract, a 'daily plebiscite' as well as ethnic and cultural all at once. It is a strategy for inclusion and exclusion that necessarily marginalizes internal difference and dissent as well as othering and excluding what it portrays as 'external enemies'. Zionism in the early 20th century was certainly a colonial movement. However, as the movement evolved it became a colonial-nationalist one as it sought to establish a state, a civic polity, for

the perceived ethnicity of the colonial-settler population. What makes the Zionist state different from colonial-settler states like the US, Canada, Australia, etc. is the fact that the proposed state was not a state for the citizens on its territory but one for Jews wherever they are in the world, and where they must constitute demographic majority.

Whether it is anti-colonial nationalist movements in the Tri-continental world that seek liberation and justice, for example Indian or Palestinian nationalism, or minority nationalist movements, for example Quebec or Basque nationalism; nationalism remains an ideology of demarcation and exclusion. It can be used strategically to achieve political goals and make gains against incumbent hegemonic powers. For example, anti-colonial liberation movements will find it practically difficult to resist a colonial power using a radically different discourse. In a way, liberation movements, e.g. in India, Africa, and the Middle East, could only resist European colonialism by subverting colonial discourse, by showing colonialism for what it is: a contradictory discourse and ideology that purports to promote certain rights, principles and values, but denies these very rights to those it deems ‘backward’ or ‘inferior’. The very nature of the international world order gives supremacy to Western ideas and values and normalizes and universalizes them. Thus third world liberation movements could conveniently oppose colonialism by laying claim to the same Western political systems that oppress them, that is by professing the desire for self-rule and the creation of independent nation-states modeled on the European ones that colonized them.

As we witness frequently today, only movements and regimes that represent themselves in a fashion according to the ‘Western’ democratic nation-state model are taken seriously and respected on the world stage. However, most anti-colonial liberation movements did not attempt to put forward an alternative to nationalism, which is as Chatterjee shows, a paradox at the heart of the post-colonial nation-state. Moreover, post-colonial nationalist movements have systematically failed to achieve real independence and social justice. In many instances they have assumed the mantle of the occupying power far too well. It is a failure on both sides of the colonial divide that nationalism has become the normative political ideology and reality that it is today. However, although nationalist discourse and national identity may be imperial constructs, the subjects of colonialism need to acquire it first in order to surpass it, the

colonized have to possess 'the right of a group victimized in its particularity to be on equal terms with others as far as their self-determination is concerned' (Eagleton 1990, p. 30).

Zionism started as a colonial movement and continues today as a colonial-settler-ethnic-nation-state. It is the very complexity of the combination of all these elements that make Zionism especially problematic. Each one of the constituent components of Zionism by itself is problematic but can be negotiated to produce acceptable measures of social justice in a polity, however the combination of colonial settlement and ethnic nation-state makes it especially oppressive as it supplants and dispossess the original inhabitants while not offering them options to join the new state. This distinct formula of Zionism also makes the ideology theoretically contradictory, morally indefensible and politically unviable in the long term.

Zionism is a form of ethnic nationalism that employs ethnic Jewish colonial settlement in Palestine as its methodology to establish a state for the Jews. The concept of colonising nationalism places equal emphasis on the colonial character and the nationalist goals of the Zionist movement. Zionism claims to represent the nationalism of diverse Jewish communities throughout the world, and seeks to instill the idea that the territorial Jewish nation-state in Palestine is the origin and the referent of Jewish identity. To do so, Zionism 'invents a tradition' by Hebraising Palestine. Thus, for this particular form of nationalism to work, it has to have an exclusive claim to Jewish history, suffering and identity. Hence, a central aspect and goal of colonising nationalism is to erase the indigenous character, culture and human geography of Palestine and replace it by a Jewish one that claims to own an unbroken stretch back to times immemorial when the ancient Jewish tribes inhabited Palestine. Zionism heavily relies on what Hobsbawm calls the 'invention' of national traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

To recapitulate, this thesis situates Zionism in a category of its own which I call colonising nationalism. This concept merges aspects and sub-categories of several theories of nationalism and colonialism so that Zionism can be defined as an ethnic, 'romantic' form of nationalism that employs the model of an ethnic settlement colony in Palestine due to the fact that Jewish communities around the world were not related

by territorial nationalism or cultural and linguistic unity but rather related by shared ritual and ceremonial practices, religious texts and a shared ancient historical narrative. In order to establish a shared national culture based on a European model, Zionism excluded indigenous labour, built ethnically exclusive state institutions (the Histadrut, banking, schools, the Hebrew University and even a transport company) under the British colonial government in Palestine. The British Mandate provided protection and security to the Jewish colonists from the indigenes while the Zionists built a state-in-the-waiting. This colonial nationalist project set out to erase all traces of Arab Palestine in the newly-established State and embarked on extensive Hebraising and archaeological projects to give the façade of a Hebrew Palestine that extends to times immemorial. Colonial nationalism re-interprets biblical traditions, Jewish histories and cultures from the perspective of a modern, mainly European, nationalism to the effect that the newly-created nation-state can lay claim to legitimacy and historical continuity, as well as establish social cohesion between the disparate Jewish communities, and indoctrinate national value systems (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Colonial nationalism appropriates ritual practices, and historical narratives to create nationalist mythologies and instill a façade of national homogeneity among the Jewish settler groups and to erase any trace of Arab Palestine, which could seriously undermine a nation-state built on expropriating Palestinian land. Lastly, this model essentially involves a radical demographic transformation. Thus Zionism needs a Jewish demographic majority in Palestine in order for the State of Israel to remain a Jewish state for all the Jews of the world.

The following chapter discusses the use of religion in the Zionist project. Jewish biblical traditions, including biblical narratives and religious beliefs, were used to normalize and enshrine the idea of a Jewish nation-state. A territorial nation-state for world Jewry was an alien concept to the Jewish way of life in the 19th century. Colonial nationalist discourse used religious traditions and texts not only to legitimize the idea, but also to portray it as the norm and even a duty that the pious Jews had to perform. Jewish traditions as such are central to the colonial nationalist project as they serve as the legitimization of the movement and the unifying element that cements the vastly diverse Jewish communities. Jewish traditions were reinterpreted and redefined to serve as the historical narrative and nationalist myths of a modern nation-state.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This chapter reviews some of the influential literature on Zionism. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a basis for the claim of this thesis to an original analysis of Zionism as colonising nationalism. The chapter will show the originality of the analysis of Zionism offered in this thesis by identifying and highlighting the difference between the existing scholarship on Zionism and the perspective, focus and scope of this thesis.

The literature on Zionism falls into different disciplines including history, politics, literature, sociology and even psychoanalysis (see for example Rose 2005); to this extent Zionism constitutes a field of study on its own. The mainstream pro-Zionism studies portray Jewish history as a teleological narrative of Jewish suffering in the diaspora with a miraculous nationalist movement as its resolution. On the other hand, anti-Zionist studies portray Zionism as the brainchild of British imperialism in the Eastern Mediterranean. The mainstream pro-Zionist literature discusses the movement during the pre-state years as well as the Israeli state and nation generally without considering the conflict between the Zionist colonisers and the Palestinian population as an important and formative aspect of Zionism. Rather, these studies treat the conflict as having no direct impact upon Zionism and Israel (Shafir 1989, pp. 2-7; Kimmerling 2001, pp. 7-13). Zionism is represented in a celebratory tone as a series of political endeavours and diplomatic manoeuvres to enable the European Jewish populations to establish agricultural settlements and build institutions in Palestine with the eventual aim of founding a state for the Jews. The main challenges that confronted the movement were the great powers whose endorsement and support Zionism sought and without which it was be impossible to found a state. The proponents of this first wave of Zionism scholarship comprise scholars in different fields including Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (1967), Walter Laqueur (1972), David Vital (1980; 1988; 1987; 1999), Yosef Gorny (1987), Anita Shapira (1992) and Israel Kolatt (1998). The work of these scholars portrayed the movement as European Jewish nationalism that has conquered the political will of the super-powers of the day as well as an antagonistic environment in Palestine consisting of arid climate, lack

of resources, and a hostile, uncivilised local population whose resistance to the benevolence of Zionism is inexplicable. Other writers interpret Zionism as the liberation movement of the Jewish people from European domination (Penslar 2003, pp. 82-98). These works portray Zionism as the miraculous culmination of teleological Jewish history, the theatre upon which the pioneers and founding fathers acted idealistically under the worst conditions with little or no alternatives. They limit their scope to the study of Zionism's empowering effects on Jews, the power struggles among Zionists and the challenges they met with as they executed their project. These studies constitute an approach or methodology of study which tends to be celebratory and teleological, weaving analysis with ideology and nationalist mythology.

Another approach to studying Zionism went parallel to the above scholarship. It treated Zionism as a colonial movement that was enabled and abetted by the imperial powers to ensure their control over the Middle East. Marxian analysts as well as many Palestinian and Arab writers espoused this approach. They focused on Zionism as part of the colonial and imperial plans of Western capitalism to control not only Palestine but also the whole of the Arabic speaking Middle East through what they considered a client state – Israel. For them Zionist was the 'theft of a nation' in the words of William Baker (Leon 1970; Khalidi 1971; El-Messiri 1977; Rodinson 1973; Baker 1982).

In the 1980s, a wave of critical or revisionist Zionism scholarship appeared in the Israel most notably the work of Baruch Kimmerling (1983), Benny Morris (1987), Gershon Shafir (1989), Ilan Pappé (2001; 1997), and Sternhell (Sternhell 1998) among others. These studies can be grouped under 'post-Zionism', although several of those described as post-Zionists reject the label. This approach of investigating Zionism and the creation of the State of Israel acknowledges the colonial aspects of Zionism and the formative impact of the conflict on the Zionist movement, and subsequently the state of Israel. Critical or post-Zionist scholarship revolutionised the study of Zionism. Critical sociologists and new historians pioneered this groundbreaking wave of scholarship. Silberstein (1999) and Ephraim Nimni (2003, pp. 117-152) establish that post-Zionism is the result of interaction of scholars of Zionism with academic developments in the study of humanities and social sciences, especially the recent critical practices such as post-structuralism, post-modernism,

post-colonialism and feminism as well as Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson's critical scholarship on nationalism.

Critical or revisionist scholarship on Zionism argues that mainstream pro-Zionist scholars employ an ethnocentric, unreflective frame of interpretation. Any critical work that highlights the power relations embedded within the Zionist enterprise is likely to have political implications, at least in reflecting a political position towards the continuing conflict. For example, after the publication of Gabriel Piterberg's *The Returns of Zionism* (2008), political scientist Zeev Sternhell, who wrote the seminal work *The Founding Myths of Israel* (1998) which exposed the myth of the socialism of the Zionist agricultural settlements, wrote an article in the *New Left Review* in March 2010 charging Piterberg with attempting 'the total delegitimization of the Jewish nation-state founded in Palestine' (Sternhell 2010, pp. 99-114). Thus, any analysis of the history or ideology of Zionism or Zionist-Palestinian relations implies a political stance vis-à-vis the resolution of the ongoing situation. The representation of Zionism in any one particular light will either attribute blame to Israel for the dispossession and displacement of Palestinians and therefore lay the responsibility on Israel's door to right the injustices it has committed or portray Zionism as a blameless nationalist movement and Israel as a just inclusive nation-state.

Scholarship, especially historiography, thus, can have a massive impact on the present and the future, in terms of changing the public opinion in Israel and the world and opening new spaces within Israeli culture where alternative discourses can flourish. This can eventually lead to a modification of the power relations between the different sides of the peace negotiations. An important point to emphasise here is that whereas in Israel the study of the position of the Palestinians, their responses to Zionism and the consideration of their voice and perspective may be a relatively recent development, this has not been the case in the rest of the world. Studies have been published about the Palestinian experience since the first waves of Jewish settlement in Palestine and Zionism has been analysed as an aggressive colonial movement since its inception. However, scholarship is divided sharply between studies of the 'Arab-Israeli conflict' on the one hand, and studies of Zionism that

evade the conflict altogether and discuss the travails of the Zionists in Palestine as if they existed in a vacuum, on the other. Post-Zionist scholarship bridges this gap.

Hence, this chapter will focus on Zionism scholarship that does not dwell on nationalist mythologies of a utopian, modern, Western nationalism seeking freedom and equality in a socialist haven in the face of barbaric backward enemies. The work of Walter Laqueur (1972), David Vital (1987), Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (1967), Anita Shapira (1992), Yehuda Reinharz (1996), Derek Penslar (2003) is, in the words of Baruch Kimmerling, ‘a mixture of sociology, ideology and mythology’ (2001). Therefore, only one example will be looked at in this chapter very briefly. This chapter will focus on the revisionist scholarship and analyse the works that have revolutionised the study of Zionism in Israel and the world, especially after the declassification of the documents relating to the 1948 war between the State of Israel and the Arab armies which led to the creation of the ongoing Palestinian refugee problem.

David Vital’s oeuvre on Zionism includes *The Origins of Zionism* (1980), *Zionism: The Formative Years* (1988), and *Zionism: The Crucial Phase* (1987). He has a single-mindedly political approach to his scholarly project which revolves around the rendition of an unsustainable Jewish existence in Europe throughout the ages and the presentation of a political history of the Zionist endeavour. Despite being reductive and of questionable objectivity, Vital’s studies are assiduously researched and carefully documented. In *Zionism: The Crucial Phase*, for example, Vital documents the diplomatic manoeuvres of Zionist political activists in Europe which won them the support of important sections of the British government, especially Lloyd George, the Prime Minister from 1916-1922. Vital discusses the roles played by different Zionist activists in different parts of Europe, Russia and in the Ottoman Empire from 1907 until the 1917 Balfour Declaration. He does not critically consider the notion of colonialism, the relations with the local population, or the conflict that ensued. He limits himself to the discussion of Zionism’s empowering effects on Jews and finds that the likely outcomes are all positive: the Jewish people would gain sovereignty and independence from the evils of minority status and oppression.

Vital's perspective relies on the idea that there exists in the world distinct nations each with unalterable essential characteristics. He believed that every people had a timeless 'national character' so the three protagonists of the formative phase of Zionism were 'the English', who controlled Palestine, the 'Jews' and 'the Arabs'. The English were 'a famously exotic and unfathomable race' (p. 365). The Jews are described as for example: 'There is no people for whom the distant yet recorded past is so central to their being and practice as a collectivity as the Jews' (p. 374). The 'Arabs' suffered a 'malaise' and the tension with the 'modern, Europeanised Jews' exacerbated it. The Arabic press in Palestine was 'primordial' and [i]n its columns were displayed all the strands of the contemporary Arab *malaise*The attraction-repulsion felt for European-style modernism; the ambivalence towards the Turkish held...caliphate...' (pp. 73-74). Vital's single minded understanding of Zionism prevented him from seeing other aspects to the conflict and his understanding of socio-political constructs like race, ethnicity and nation dictates an all-favourable view of nationalism as an organic, natural development of a people's history. His pages display these generalisations that inevitably lead to prejudices and orientalist views. Vital finds that the Palestinians over-react towards Zionism. His dissociation between the nationalist and colonialist aspects of Zionism prevents him from understanding the relationship across the colonial divide, to the extent that Vital's own work reflects this colonial attitude towards the conflict:

It is true that Zionism in these years [the first two decades of the 20th century] was still far from being the maddening red rag to the Arab bull, the demon that *must* be exorcised if ever a proper social and moral order was to be imposed, that it later became. But some of the groundwork for its rise in the Arab public mind as a matter of first importance was being laid (1987, p. 74).

The above statement is typical of Vital's style. He compares the colonised to excitable animals which become violent by a trivial, inconsequential piece of cloth – Zionism. The notion of the 'Arab public mind', albeit unclear, is typical of his academic approach and analysis.

Although his work traces the exploits of Zionists in the corridors of power in the Ottoman Empire, Europe, especially Britain, and among European Jewish populations, the focus is on the achievement of the goals of Zionism, which he regards as unquestionably just and righteous. Vital chooses not to deal with any other aspects of the Zionist ideology and policy. He regards the movement as the expression

of an organic connection between the Jewish people and ‘Erez-Israel’ that has existed from time immemorial; for him Zionism is both the crystallisation of the dream and its achievement. The colonial aspect of the movement is not an issue that David Vital considers, let alone struggle with. This approach continues in works like Alan Hershowitz’s polemical book *The Case for Israel* (2003). This is not a book on Zionism but represents a Zionist perspective on why the Israel must remain a state whose *raison d’être* is to maintain a Jewish demographic majority.

The shift in Zionist studies came with the work of Yonatan Shapiro, Baruch Kimmerling, Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé, Gershon Shafir, Zeev Sternhell, Gabriel Piterberg, Shlomo Sand, Jacqueline Rose and Palestinian scholars like Nur Masalha and Joseph Massad among others. Although the work of scholars of Zionism who have challenged the conventional, ‘mainstream’ Zionist narrative is generally referred to as ‘post-Zionist’, the term is vague and applies to several trends and fields in which Zionism has been studied. However, some scholars, for example Baruch Kimmerling and Gershon Shafir, Zeev Sternhell and Benny Morris, reject the label and are keen to differentiate themselves from the post-Zionists.

Benny Morris’s seminal book *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* was published in 1987. The book depicts the origins of the inextricable problem of the four million Palestinians, classed as ‘refugees, who fled or were forced out of their homes inside the borders of the areas earmarked for Jewish statehood (the ‘greenline’) on the eve of the UN partition of Palestine in 1947-8. Following the declassification in the 1980s of some of the Israeli state and private archival material relating to the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, Morris and other Israeli historians were able to reconstruct the events that led in 1948 to the evacuation of most Palestinians inside the areas of the prospective Jewish state. The issue is extremely sensitive and one of the main obstructions to any peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. The refugees’ right of return to their homes *inside* Israel is a Palestinian demand that causes a deadlock in any peace negotiations (along with other issues like the status of Jerusalem). The *raison d’être* of the Israeli state is to have a demographic Jewish majority and the idea of four million Palestinians having any right of return to Israel is unthinkable from an Israeli perspective.

Up to the declassification of the political documents concerning the events of 1948 and the publication of Morris's book, the Israeli official narrative has been that Palestinians fled their homes inside the part of historical Palestine designated for the Jewish state after Arab states issued a series of radio messages ordering Palestinians to evacuate their homes as the Arab armies were going to destroy everything in their way. In fact, no such orders were issued and no records of any such orders exist (Morris 1987, p. 290). Morris examines the primary sources and documents the different stages of the Palestinian exodus from the Jewish state areas following the UN Partition resolution in November 1947 and until September 1949.

Morris concludes that Zionist politicians since Theodor Herzl had entertained the idea of the 'transfer' of the indigenous population of in order to ensure a 'homogenous' Jewish population. As Ben Gurion succinctly put it: 'We must expel the Arabs and take their places...' (quoted by Morris 1987, p. 25). However, he sketches a nuanced picture of violence and fear that led to the evacuation of the cities, towns and villages earmarked for Jewish statehood. According to Morris, different Jewish militias including the main one, the Haganah (the Defence), attacked some towns and villages forcing their inhabitants to flee for what they, the inhabitants, thought was a temporary period until peace is restored with the aid of the neighbouring Arab armies. Morris emphasises, however, that fear of such attacks was rampant and the terror of the Palestinians precipitated mass flight (p. 59).

Morris reaches several important conclusions. Firstly, that 'the main wave of the Arab exodus, was not the result of a general predetermined Yishuv policy... though it was immediately seen as a phenomenon to be exploited' (p. 128). Secondly, that the pattern of the Palestinian exodus from the regions of historical Palestine earmarked for Israel was complex and varied 'differing widely from place to place and week to week. In trying to elucidate patterns, it is necessary to distinguish between the cities and towns, and the countryside' (p. 129). Thirdly, '[a] major factor in the exodus from each town was the fall of and exodus from the previous town'. Morale was undermined and eventually terror spread and people fled their towns and villages when they heard about the fall of a neighbouring community: 'The "atrocities factor" certainly counted for something on the process of demoralisation.... [T]he massacre at Deir Yassin... undermined Arab morale throughout Palestine...' (p. 130).

Morris describes the different waves of flight from cities, towns and villages at different phases from the announcement of the Partition Resolution until the 'border clearing operations' of 1951.

Morris's assessment of the position of Jewish political and military leadership in Palestine is complex. They favoured the 'transfer' of the Palestinian population to areas outside the Jewish state, and their aim was facilitated by the spread of terror among Palestinians in the areas designated to become Israel:

[T]he phenomenon of spontaneous, panicky, mass Arab flight may have served to whet the appetite of local Haganah commanders and, perhaps, the General Staff as well. They, like Ben-Gurion, realised that a transfer of the prospective Arab minority out of the emergent Jewish State had begun and that with very little extra effort and nudging on the part of the Jewish forces, it could be expanded. The temptation proved very strong, for obvious military and political reasons (p. 131).

The local political and military leaders of the emergent Jewish state later ruled against the return of the Palestinian refugees. They later took over and 're-allocated' the lands and homes evacuated by Palestinians: 'the Jewish take-over of the Arab lands in Palestine began with the *ad hoc*, more or less spontaneous reaping of crops in abandoned Arab lands by Jewish settlements in the spring of 1948' (p. 170). The Zionist leaders set up settlements on the evacuated lands even during the war in 1948: 'Establishing settlements was a tool in the struggle' as Ben Gurion put it in February 1948 (quoted in Morris, 1987, p. 180). His plan was to establish Jewish settlements in areas earmarked for the Palestinian State in the UN Partition Plan to impose a different reality on the ground that would make the UN Partition Plan unworkable. Some local leaders of the agricultural settlements demanded the establishment of settlements in their areas 'as a means of freeing our land [from Arab farmers] and of preventing the return of beduins [sic] ... who had fled to Transjordan.' (p. 181).

In the second half of the war with the Arab states, from July 1948, the Jewish forces' offensives 'were characterised by far more expulsions and, indeed, brutality towards Arab civilians than the first half of the war' (p. 293). Later, 'the IDF [Israeli Defence Force] was authorised to clear Arab communities from Israel's long, winding and highly penetrable borders to a depth of 5-15 kilometres. One of the aims was to

prevent infiltration of refugees back to their homes. ... The following months and years saw other border areas cleared or partially cleared of Arab inhabitants.’ (p. 293).

Morris’s conclusion is as follows:

What happened in Palestine/Israel over 1947-9 was so complex and varied, the situation radically changing from date to date and place to place, that a single-cause explanation of the exodus from most sites is untenable. ... In general, in most cases the final and decisive precipitant to flight was Haganah, IZL [Irgun Zvai Leumi], LHI [Lohamei Herut Yisrael], or IDF [Israel Defense Forces] attack or the inhabitants’ fear of such attack. (p. 294)

Morris later said that had Ben Gurion been more decisive and had he followed a policy of ‘comprehensive transfer’ of all Palestinians out of the area of historical Palestine, rather than the partial transfer that he engineered, ‘Perhaps, had he gone the whole hog, today’s Middle East would be a healthier, less violent place, with a Jewish state between Jordan and the Mediterranean and a Palestinian Arab state in Transjordan.’ (*The Guardian*, 3 October 2002).

Palestinian scholar Nur Masalha disagrees with Benny Morris. In his book *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of Transfer in Zionist Political Thought, 1882-1948* (1992), Masalha argues that the notion of ‘transfer’, or the ‘radical ethno-religious-demographic transformation’ of Palestine, has been one of the fundamentals of Zionist political thought since Herzl. However, according to Masalha, from the outset Zionist leaders and ideologues realised that this issue would lead to violent Palestinian resistance, further Arab anger and the arousal of apprehension in Britain, which had issued the Balfour Declaration and ruled Palestine through the imposition of the British Mandate since 1922: ‘after all, in addition to promising a national home to the Jews, the Balfour Declaration, had promised not to prejudice the rights of the “non-Jewish communities existing in Palestine”’ (p. 15).

According to Masalha there was always an ‘ideological intent’ to expel the Palestinians or ‘shift’ them outside the desired Jewish state within Zionist thought and several plans were drawn and the issue was discussed at length. There was also resistance to it from within the Zionist movement but this resistance was inconsequential. Masalha discusses 8 different transfer plans and asserts: ‘[i]t should not be imagined that the concept of transfer was held only by maximalists of extremists within the Zionist movement. On the contrary, it was embraced by almost

all shades of opinion, from Revisionists right to the Labour left. Virtually every member of the Zionist pantheon of founding fathers and important leaders supported it and advocated it in one form or another...' (p. 2) Masalha contends that the lack of evidence for clear blanket orders to expel the Palestinians from the emergent Jewish state before, during and after the 1948 war was a deliberate strategy. This way Israeli politicians could afterwards block the return of the evacuees, wash their hands of the whole problem and not have to pay compensation or co-ordinate the re-settling the refugees in other countries:

The fact that no written blanket orders unambiguously calling for the wholesale expulsion of the Arab population have been found has been cited as indicating the absence of premeditated design; in similar vein, the inconsistencies in the behaviours of the various field commanders are given as proof that the exodus was born of the exigencies of war. But the exodus was no less the result of painstaking planning and an unswerving vision: if this volume has shown anything, it is the tenacity of a shared understanding, stated and restated with almost tedious repetitiveness for almost 50 years. The exodus is nothing if not testimony to the endurance of a vision that ran in an unbroken line from the early days of Zionist colonization to this day. (p. 208)

The responsibility for the creation of the insurmountable four-million-strong Palestinian refugee situation has bearing on who will eventually have to deal with the issue and how. This is also a debate about the values of Zionism and the principles of the Zionist leaders at the time. Hence, the academic debate and controversy around the issue. Studies reconstructing and analysing the events around the creation of the Israel and the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem are published regularly. Some historians still insist that Palestinians fled their homes in 1948 due to undocumented and untraceable orders from Arab leaders and continue the narrative of noble Zionists embarking on a utopian nationalist movement in the face of opposition from the greedy, cowardly Arabs. Ephraim Karsh's pamphlet *The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Palestine War 1948* (2002) is testament to the continuation of this line of writing. On the other hand, serious academic studies on the events of 1948 abound the most notable of which are Simha Flapan's *The Birth of Israel* (1988), a volume edited by Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (2001) which includes contributions by Rashid Khalidi, Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim and Edward Said and last but not least Ilan Pappé's *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006).

In *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* Pappe draws evidence from Palestinian sources, including oral history, as well as Israeli archives and Red Cross reports. He reaches the definitive conclusion that there was a 'master plan' for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. His approach is to posit 'the paradigm of ethnic cleansing' as 'the basis for the scholarly research of, and the public debate about, 1948' (p. xvi). He considers Morris's account on the Palestinian exodus 'partial' 'because Morris took the Israeli military reports he found in the archives at face value or even as absolute truth. Thus, he ignored such atrocities as the poisoning of the water supply into Acre with typhoid, numerous cases of rape and the dozens of massacres the Jews perpetrated' (p. xv). According to Pappe, the ethnic cleansing operations include Hebraising Palestine and transforming it beyond recognition:

The human geography of Palestine as a whole was forcibly transformed. The Arab character of the cities was effaced by the destruction of large sections, including the spacious park in Jaffa and community centres in Jerusalem. This transformation was driven by the desire to wipe out one nation's history and culture and replace it with a fabricated version of another, from which all traces of the indigenous population were elided. (p. 216)

The critical historiography of Zionism also encompasses discussion of the kibbutzim, the Jewish agricultural communes/settlements/colonies in Palestine, and their utopian ideals and socialist background. Zeev Sternhell's book *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State* (1998) analyses 'the way in which the ideology and actions of the labour movement molded the basic principles of Jewish society in Palestine (the Yishuv) and its patterns of development' (p. 3) and interrogates the proclaimed socialist credentials of the Yishuv. Sternhell states: 'If we wish to understand why Israelis have not yet succeeded in ending their hundred years' war with the Arabs, in drafting a liberal constitution and a bill of rights, we must examine the world of the founders and their legacy' (p. 6). Sternhell's first chapter explores the concept of the nation and nationalism, he then goes on to discuss the socialism of the different Jewish movements and groups in Palestine. Through examining various figures and movements in the Yishuv and in Israel he concludes that '[t]he special Jewish character of Eretz Israeli socialism was sufficient to make it a form of nationalist socialism' (p. 136).

Sternhell expounds, develops and contextualises the concept nationalist socialism. According to Sternhell, Zionist thought was born in the context of the ethnic nationalisms of Central and Eastern Europe:

Zionism was born into a world of violent and vociferous nationalities, a world with no national or religious tolerance, a world in which the distinction between religion and nation, or between religion, society, and the state, was unknown and perhaps inconceivable. Such distinctions were luxuries that only the Western European societies could afford. (p. 10)

The nationalism of ‘blood and soil’ was one based on biology where the nation was imagined as an extended family: ‘To the east of the River Rhine... the criteria for belonging to a nation were not political but cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious.’ (p. 10). This form of nationalism gave rise to nationalist socialism which was distinguished by ‘its acceptance of the principle of the nation’s primacy and its subjection of the values of socialism to the service of the nation’ (p. 7). In this way, Zionism sought political and economic power rather than social justice. ‘All moral considerations and universal values were subordinated to the great aim of building the nation. Socialism was never an aim in itself but a tool for the advancement of national objectives, an incomparably effective mobilising force’ (p. 177). Nationalist socialism empties socialism from its essential components of changing social and economic structures and the socialisation of the means of production to build an egalitarian society and is essentially hostile to democratic socialism.

In the Jewish settler community in Palestine, ethnic nationalism took precedence over socialism; Sternhell asserts that ‘the socialism of the labour movement was most of all a mobilizing myth – a ‘social myth’...’ (p. 20). Moreover, Sternhell reminds us that the founding fathers of Zionism always emphasised that ‘collective settlement was a pragmatic rather than an ideological choice.... The *kvutza* (small *kibbutz*) and the *moshav* resulted from old capitalist agriculture’s inability and unwillingness to give priority to national considerations and to take on Jewish workers in place of Arab ones’ (p. 32). An alliance between the labour movement and the World Zionist Organisation was forged so that the settlements became a tool for achieving Zionist goals rather than socialist ones. Nevertheless, the agricultural settlements ‘fired the imagination of millions of Jews throughout the diaspora and were a source of pride for the Tel Aviv bourgeoisie’ (p. 40):

Agricultural collectives were exhibited with great pride to all visitors from abroad, and all of them, Jews and non-Jews, socialists and members of the European nobility, were thrilled and excited at the sight of the egalitarian utopia coming to life in the land of the Bible. (p. 41)

The kibbutzim became a 'magnificent showcase, behind which a very different reality was taking shape' (p. 42). They served to lend legitimacy to the existing social order and avoid making structural changes in the larger society. Moreover, only a minority of people joined the agricultural settlements as labourers were at the bottom of the social scale in terms of living conditions, despite the carefully nurtured popular myth of the idealisation of physical labour and its transformative effect on the Jewish character.

Despite proving beyond doubt that Zionism is a variant of Eastern European romantic or ethnic nationalism, Sternhell asserts that '[i]t did not develop a sense of ethnic superiority to the Arabs, and that in itself was a considerable achievement' (p. 15). He does not dwell on this point and does not attempt to substantiate it. He attacks the orthodox religious and radical nationalist camps throughout for imposing colonialism on the Palestinians in 'Judea and Samaria' (the Occupied Territories), but does not critique the colonialism of the Zionist movement itself (pp. 318-345).

Sternhell critiques aspects of Labour Zionism from within the fold. For him Zionism built a democracy, albeit a flawed one, but the flaws could be redressed by aligning Israel with the Western European traditions of the Enlightenment and reaching a peace settlement with the Palestinians whereby eventually a two state solution to the conflict would be reached. In effect Sternhell wants to shift Zionism from an ethno-religious nationalism into a civic, liberal nationalism for Israeli Jews, a process, he says, which has already begun where 'the secular liberal Israeli Jew, looking towards the West and receptive to its values, has begun, in recent years, to forge for himself an "independent" identity detached from the mystical ramifications of his religion and the irrational side of his history' (p. 342).

Gershon Shafir's *Land, Labour and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (1989) was groundbreaking in that he placed Zionism within the context of European colonial movements of the 19th century, precisely what he calls

ethnic plantation settlement. According to Shafir, the small number of Jewish settlers/colonists who arrived to Palestine from 1904-1914 were important as they set the tone for the large scale colonial-settler movement that took place later: '[The] small stratum of organised Eastern European Jewish agricultural workers who reached Palestine in the Second Aliya ... between 1904-1914 shouldered the major burden of Israel's creation' (p. 1). Other scholars of Zionism maintain that the third wave of settlement or the Third *Aliya* (literally ascent) was the most decisive in Jewish state creation in Palestine. Shafir's book focuses on the First and Second Jewish settlement waves to Palestine between 1904-1914. The number of Jews emigrating from Europe to Palestine up until the British Mandate was minor. The 'second *Aliya*' especially consisted of a minor segment of Eastern European agricultural labourers whose endeavours to establish a Jewish colony in Palestine were only marginally successful. The reason relate to the circumstances of Palestine under Ottoman rule as well as due to the lack of nationalist feeling towards Palestine at that stage. Most Jews escaped from economic hardships and persecution in Eastern Europe by migrating to the USA rather than Palestine.

Shafir places the conflict with the Palestinians at the centre of his analysis of the early settlements and of Israeli nationalism and society. *Land, Labour and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* chronicles the momentous endeavours to build institutions by members of the first and second waves of Jewish colonists in Palestine. He traces the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the societal interaction between the European Jewish colonists and the Palestinians. The main crux of his project is to try to find the origins of the conflict within the interaction between the Palestinians and the settler communities in Palestine. For him, the conflict has socio-economic roots that can be found in the clash of interests between the two communities particularly between 1904 and 1914. The Jewish settlers' project of 'the conquest of labour' in Palestine, according to Shafir, precipitated Palestinian grievances and resistance leading to the full-scale eruption of the conflict at a later stage. Shafir's critique is focused on the aspects of the Zionist practice of the 'founding fathers', and later the Israeli state, that lead to the disadvantaging of certain communities and strata of Israeli society, such as women, the Mizrahim and the Palestinians who were given Israeli citizenship. He clearly

states that despite the flaws in both the ideology and practice of Zionism, there was no alternative course of action for the Jews in Palestine:

Reviewing the history of Israel's creation, the first stage of which is examined in this study, does not present us, even with the wisdom of hindsight, with a realistic alternative course to the pursuit of nationhood and sovereignty. (p. xxii)

Shafir analyses the different types of European colonisation following D. K. Fieldhouse and George Fredrickson's models. Fieldhouse (1981) and following him Fredrickson (1988) offered a typology of colonialism: military occupation, plantation/mining colonies, mixed settlement colonies, and pure settlement colonies. Shafir adds a new hybrid model to the above four-way typology which he calls 'the ethnic plantation settlement'. He places Zionism in this category which is based on European colonists' control of indigenous lands and employment of local labour but 'in distinction to the miscegenation prevalent in the mixed colony, it possessed a full-blown European national identity and opposed ethnic mixture' (p. 9). This formulation is unclear and undermined by the fact that the settlers came from different countries where they were excluded from the various ethnic Eastern European nationalisms (white and Christian) and Shafir's own argument that they arrived to Palestine as workers and developed nationalist ideologies only as a response to the competition with Palestinian labour.

Israeli sociological studies that examine the emergent Jewish state and nation in Palestine before the establishment of Israel in May 1948 are predominated primarily by the functionalist perspective and secondly by the elitist perspective. Shafir's own approach 'shares certain basic assumptions' with the elitist approach and complements it. He contributes to the study of early Zionism by demonstrating the formative effect that the Jewish-Palestinian relations had on the Israeli identity, economy and state. The impact of the conflict and the very nature of Israel as a colonial-settler state are 'rendered invisible' in mainstream Israeli academic studies whether in the humanities or the social sciences, according to Shafir. Thus, he successfully shows how the conflict led to a bifurcation of the economy of Palestine into a Jewish settlers' economy and native Palestinian one. Mainstream Israeli sociology deals with Israeli and Palestinian societies and economies separately

claiming they emerged and developed apart from each other and the Zionist enterprise was irrelevant to this bifurcation.

Functionalist and elite approaches analyse the development of the Israeli state and national identity as resulting from ideological positions and interaction among Jewish groups in the settlement colonies. These analytical approaches avoid referring to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and assume it had no direct impact on Israeli society. Shafir throws light on the centrality of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict and its consequences. Thus, the formative element of the nascent Israeli nation and state was this colonial ethos of the national movement.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict played a decisive role in the formation of Israeli society, state and nation. Shafir explains that ‘Palestinians still continue to pose a basic challenge to the resolve and identity of Jewish Israelis’ (p. xv). Shafir’s offers an ‘alternative theoretical perspective’ to the functionalist one which regards the period of the first and second colonisation waves as laying the ideological orientations and foundational ethos of the future society. He also challenges the elitist approach which maintains that the superior organisational skills of the Labour Movement led them to prevail in the numerous internal conflicts that existed in the *Yishuv*. The Elite approach theorists maintain that the Labour Movement was preeminent in the *Yishuv* because it took the initiative and dominated the settlement movement by establishing a sophisticated bureaucracy that served as a substitute state with a central authority. Both sociological approaches refuse to acknowledge the formative influence of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict in shaping the state. Rather they view the evolution of the Israeli nation and society as a result of the interaction amongs Jewish settler groups and ideologies in Palestine.

Shafir departs from the idea that the first two waves of Jewish settlement were ideologically driven and that ideology shaped all the policies, actions, tasks and institution-building of the settlers. Far from it, Shafir argues the situation on the ground, mainly the conflict with the Palestinians and the economic conditions, were the main force behind most of the political and organisational processes at the time as well as the practical activities of the colonists: ‘In fact, hardly has another period in Zionist history seen such a hiatus between “ideology” and “reality”’ (p. 3). Shafir

arugeus that 'what is unique about Israeli society emerged precisely in response to the conflict between the Jewish immigrant-settlers and the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the land' (p. 6).

Mainstream Israeli social scientists like Yosef Gorny and Israel Kollat have studied the 'conquest of labour' or 'Hebrew labour' strategy of Jewish settlers in Palestine as originating from Eastern Europe where Jews were excluded from industrial occupations and portrayed as parasites in society. This led to a Jewish drive for productivisation. Shafir dismisses this argument saying the two concepts are different as 'conquest of labour' was a struggle against Palestinian workers with the aim of displacing them by Jewish labourers. The 'conquest of labour' strategy emerged due to the economic situation of working class Jewish colonists, namely employment shortages due to competitive Palestinian wages. Thus, 'Hebrew labour' or the 'conquest of labour' was purely an economically expedient policy. Shafir also rejects the other mainstream interpretation that the conquest of labour strategy was a part of the national struggle between Palestinians and Jewish settlers in Palestine. For him, it was a purely economic policy without political implications: it was the material conditions on the ground that shaped Zionist ideology and not vice versa. Of course all economic policies are political in essence.

Although some Jewish colonist communities settled in Palestine between 1882-1914 which led to competition and conflict over resources between them and the local Palestinians, this did not constitute the bulk of the Zionist movement and nor did this constitute the nucleus of the Labour Zionist ideology. The earliest settlements were certainly not envisaged as an ethnic *state*; it was common knowledge that the Ottoman empire had flatly rejected any large scale European settlement that leads to autonomy in what was then the Ottoman province of Palestine. The early settlers were colonists but there is no evidence the sparse agricultural colonies in Palestine had any statist projects, and they did not constitute the beginning of the Labour Zionist ideology that later became hegemonic among Jewish settlers in Palestine and which marginalised and expunged all other strands of Zionism making them into mere historical curiosities. The shift in ideology from an ethnic community into an ethnic state with a Jewish demographic majority occurred later and became the crucial distinguishing element of mainstream Zionism.

Shafir claims that the settlers' intentions were transformed into ethnic nationalism as a response to conditions on the ground (p. 82). I would argue that the third wave of settlers had a different ideology, which was more ethnically exclusive and statist. Such a transformation marks a new colonial-nationalist movement distinct from the first waves of Jewish settlement in Palestine. Shafir compares the Zionist path to South African apartheid path and concludes that the Zionist movement, up to the events of the World War II, failed to attract the Jewish masses and 'remained dependent on massive outside financial subsidy' (p. xxiii). Thus, Labour Zionism was forced to seek economic segregation leading to territorial partition.

Shafir argues that Zionism was 'nourished and legitimated by idealist intentions' (p. xxiv). He hopes his book helps to facilitate the 'unlearning of mythical and ideological [Zionist] certainties' (p. xiv) and hence to contribute to an atmosphere that facilitates and promotes the efforts of the peace process (p. xiv). His exploration of the sociology of Israeli nation formation, the politics of institution foundation and the economic conditions of the Jewish settlements are deeply invested in the peace process between Israel and the PA that started with the Oslo accords of 1993. He clearly supports a two state solution where a 'partial decolonisation' would take place in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem (p. xv). His analysis is informed by and serves a vision of a resolution to the 'challenge' that the Palestinians pose to Israel.

Shafir's discussion of whether segregation was motivated by economic reasons or racist ones is redundant. The drive to establish a two tier economic system by displacing and dispossessing a population for the sake of protecting the settlers' 'higher European standard of living' (p. 82) is racist in itself. The founding of the settler-colonial society in Palestine took place against the wishes of the Palestinian population and was built on crushing their resistance to the Zionist movement's political, economic and other projects. For colonised societies, the founding of 'pure ethnic' colonial settlements are accompanied by the trauma of the destruction of the indigenous culture and way of life, loss of livelihoods and the breakdown of the economic order in addition to a loss of life. Shafir is keen to explain away any racist motives for early Zionist practices. He explains:

Jewish agricultural workers in Palestine developed a *militant nationalist* approach to Palestinians during their struggle to displace them and conquer their jobs in the Jewish Plantations. This strategy was militant but not racist – or effective. (p. 89)

I would argue that a militant nationalism based on ethnicity is essentially racist. In the ‘Introduction’ Shafir suggests that the motivations of the Zionist settlers were idealistic and that throwing light on this should contribute to a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Baruch Kimmerling identifies his book *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society, and the Military* (2001) as ‘a third-generation socio-historical analysis of Israel’ which treats the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as an integral social system (p. 7). Kimmerling argues that some Zionist academics are not capable of producing social science and historiography dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to their ethnocentric Zionist world-view (p. 12). Kimmerling’s insightful exploration finds the origins of the Israeli state in the nineteenth century reinterpretation of Jewish mythology and history. Zionism reinterprets ancient texts and religious myths in the mould of the nineteenth century European version of Jewish religion and identity. For Kimmerling, the Zionist project was ethnic from the start as it ‘required that a considerable portion of British Palestine be ethnically cleansed of its Arab inhabitants’ in order to establish a ‘nationally homogenous’ state (p. 5). Kimmerling insightfully analyses the invention of the Israeli identity during the Zionist period followed by the disintegration, fragmentation and decline of this construct in the contemporary period.

The sociology of the Israeli state is beyond the scope of this thesis; this section is concerned with Kimmerling’s authoritative analysis of the Zionist pre-state period. His work casts doubt on the Zionist historiography’s characterisation of the Eastern European immigration to Palestine in the 1880s as the ‘first *aliyah*’ or the first wave of Jewish settlement in Palestine due to the fact that the earliest migrants were not politically driven. Instead he credits the birth of Zionism to Theodore Herzl (pp. 23-33). He emphasises the importance of the British colonial regime in Palestine for the advancement of the Zionist movement: British colonialism enabled Zionists to establish pre-state institutions in Palestine by providing them with the security needed

to establish state institutions in the face of the opposition of the Palestinian majority (pp. 61-65). Kimmerling rejects the use of the expression 'British Mandate' in Palestine as he contends that the term blurs the colonial nature of the period from 1917-1948 (p. 89).

State-building in Palestine before the establishment of Israel was a vital part of the Zionist movement. The Zionist ideology and practice fed into each other in a cyclical movement. In some instances the ideology was the driving force behind the steps taken on the ground to establish institutions for the prospective state while on other occasions the needs and conditions on the ground dictated the policies of Zionist leaders and shifted the direction of the ideology. Kimmerling explains, in chapter 6, the Zionist colonial view of Palestine at a time when 'European colonialism was the dominant world order, and Eurocentrism was the hegemonic cultural approach' (p. 187). It is worth mentioning that many prominent figures including Ahad Ha'am and Hans Kohn repudiated their Zionist ideas when they witnessed the effect Zionism has on Palestinians and the Palestinian resistance to it while others, like Brit Shalom, advocated a bi-national state based upon the 'absolute political equality of two culturally autonomous peoples' (quoted in Mendes-Flohr 1983, p. 74).

Kimmerling's research is assiduous and thoroughly documented. His work is on a level of its own in terms of insight as well as breadth of research into both the political sociology of Israel as well as the realm of culture and ideology. His book *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of the Zionist Policies* (1983) was one of the first (if not the first) sustained critical interpretations of Zionist ideology in Israel. The book mainly engages with a sociological question: 'How did the absence of free land affect the building of a society of immigrant-settlers, and how did the society deal with this problem?' (p. 8) Kimmerling explores the crisis of legitimacy that has accompanied Zionism from the day the European settlers contemplated establishing a political entity for Jews in Palestine. The lack of legitimation, both internally and externally, during the conflict with the Palestinians over what Kimmerling calls 'low frontierity' led to the creation of a particular social structure and system that included mechanisms to deal with this crisis of legitimation. Society developed elaborate patterns of control to permit it to be 'very flexible in acquiring land and to be successful in maintaining [it]' (p. 233). Kimmerling's

conclusions include the possibility of establishing a settler society under conditions of low frontierity provided that on the theoretical level sentiments, perceptions, and ideologies serve as 'an integral part of the absorption of the space into the collectivity's self-image, which then reinforces control' (p. 235). Kimmerling's monumental account and discussion crystallises the moral questions at the heart of Zionism without assuming a defensive position or attempting to offer an exculpation or a justification for the effects of Zionism on the Palestinians. He states:

This study does not attempt to answer the question of the right of Jewish settlers to settle in Palestine and to transform its territory into an exclusivistic [sic] national territory. Questions such as these are in the realm of philosophy, international law, ideology, theology, or political science. The question raised here is a sociological one... (pp. 29-30)

Gershon Shafir collaborated with political scientist Yoav Peled to produce a new 'conceptualisation of Israel's social and political structure' that rests on colonialism, ethno-nationalism and democracy as political commitments and constituents of Zionism and later the State of Israel (2002, p. 2). *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* presents a comprehensive analysis of Israeli society from the 'critical perspective' and deals with the question of how the three political commitments above combined to build a state and incorporate disparate groups of settlers into it. The book also discusses the shifting balance between the three constituent elements of Zionism and the impact this shifting balance has on the peace process and other major political and social transformations. In discussing these issues, the concept of 'citizenship' is placed at the centre of the analysis, with emphasis on the differentiation between the concept of liberal citizenship as opposed to the republican and ethno-nationalist citizenship models. In the ethno-nationalist model, citizenship is inherent in ethnicity such as Jewishness; in the republican model, citizenship rights are related to contribution to the common good, for example military service (the French model), liberal citizenship rights inhere in the citizen as such by virtue of residence (the British model).

Incorporation into the pre-state Zionist project was based on Jewish ethnicity. The authors argue that this was due to economic considerations. They contend that liberal citizenship is on the ascendancy in Israel although it faces fierce competition

and an eventual confrontation with the ethno-nationalist discourse of citizenship, while republican citizenship as represented by Labour Zionism has declined considerably. Despite the considerable details and statistics, these findings can be disputed, especially with hindsight as developments since the publication of the book have not seen a considerable move towards the liberal citizenship model in Israel. According to the authors the ethno-nationalist citizenship discourse continued after the establishment of the State in combination with the other discourses. For example the Law of Return (5710-1950) is an example of ethno-nationalism par excellence. It grants Jewish immigrants Israeli citizenship upon arrival to Israel and grants them 'broader and more substantial rights than the Palestinian citizens' who stayed put within Israel's border's in the wake of the UN Partition resolution (usually referred to as the '1948 Palestinians') (p. 18). Some of the '1948 Palestinians' were granted Israeli citizenship 'albeit with a weak and formalistic liberal framework that made them into lesser citizens, others were entitled to it if they met certain conditions (p. 110). Moreover, most of the rights conveyed by this lesser citizenship were, in fact, suspended by the military government that was imposed on Israel's Palestinian citizens in 1948 and lasted until 1966 (p. 18). Ethno-nationalist citizenship gains precedence with the rise of the right in Israel and is exclusively concerned with the rights of Jewish citizens. Political citizenship in the republican sense is denied to Palestinian citizens of Israel. This is because in this model rights are tied to performance of military service which, as an administrative practice, is denied to Palestinians as 'the primary task of the Israeli army is to fight other Arabs' (p. 126).

The sections of the book where the authors deal with the Zionist project before the establishment of the state offer an analysis akin to Shafir's study *Land, Labour and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1881-1914*. The Eastern European Jewish workers of the second wave of immigration initially failed in their bid to conquer labour and force Palestinians out of the market until they sought the assistance of World Zionist Organisation (WZO) in 1905. Thus the WZO became directly involved through land purchase and myriad other forms of aid to the Jewish workers who became transformed from workers into colonial settlers. The authors interpret this transformation as a sort of coerced coloniser position, rather than colonisation being a direct choice. Once more, Shafir's argument in *Land Labour* that the settlers were forced to become militant nationalists to maintain their higher

European living standard is expounded here; ‘The Jewish agricultural workers in Palestine developed a militant nationalist approach to the Palestinians as a consequence of their failed struggle to displace them and take their jobs in the Jewish plantations’ (p. 41).

The trajectory of the Zionist citizen incorporation regime marks the development of Israeli citizenship. The authors divide this trajectory into four major phases that start with the onset of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine, then the achievement of statehood in 1948, while the third phase of citizen incorporation was a result of the conquests of the 1967 war when ‘massive Jewish colonisation was undertaken in these newly conquered areas [while] their Palestinian residents remained as non-citizens under Israel’s military rule’ (p. 19). The fourth phase opened around 1985 with the rise of the USA to a position of undisputed global hegemony and the arrival of Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union (p. 19). The insistence on careful societal analysis in *Being Israeli* does not detract from the fact that, on the whole, it is an optimistic and celebratory book. With the benefit of hindsight, Shafir and Peled’s view that liberal nationalism is on the ascent in Israel and their anticipation that it will eventually triumph (pp. 335-348) do not necessarily coincide the events subsequent to the publication of the book. For example, In July 2003 the Knesset passed the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order but regularly renewed) that prevents Palestinians from acquiring Israeli citizenship by marriage (unless the applicant or his/her family have co-operated with Israel) and in October 2010 the Israeli Cabinet passed an amendment to the Nationality Law 5712-1952 requiring non-Jews seeking Israeli citizenship to pledge loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state.

Critical scholarship on Zionism is concentrated in the fields of political sociology and history. Thus, the above books focus on the material base of Zionism: land, labour, demography, institutions, policies. Gabriel Piterberg’s book *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (2008) is closer to this thesis as its main material is ideology, scholarly knowledge, literary texts and the Bible. Piterberg uses Marxist terminology by calling these ‘the superstructure’ and his book considers a series of texts representing three main discursive fields: ‘the political-ideological, the literary and the scholarly’ (p. xiii). One of the book’s main

contributions is to show that ‘the Zionist Israeli superstructure, even though it has its distinguishing features, is nonetheless typical of a settler society and comparable to those of other settler societies’ (p. 54). The book starts by ‘challenging one of the foundations of Zionism’s hegemony: its ability to disseminate its world view as a self-evident, a priori truth rather than an ideological perspective’ (p. xiii). Piterberg uses and further develops the concept of the ‘conscious pariah’ which was introduced by the literary critic Bernard Lazare and developed by Hannah Arendt. He argues that ‘a viable, progressive and at the same time anti-assimilationist alternative to Zionism existed within modern secular Jewry, and that its appearance was not coincidentally concomitant with the birth of – and in opposition to – Herzl’s political Zionism’ (p. xiv). Piterberg presents the perspective of the conscious pariah as a morally and politically viable position even today.

The Returns of Zionism demonstrates that the academic field of comparative settler colonialism and nationalism is the most comprehensive and appropriate framework within which Zionism, Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ought to be understood. Chapter Two offers an exhaustive interpretation of an ‘almost unknown’ essay by the Zionist leader Haim Arlosoroff which clearly manifests the awareness of Zionist leaders and ideologues of their positions as colonial settlers. Arlosoroff finds that South Africa is the only other settlement to be compared to the situation in Palestine in the 1920s. Piterberg then goes on to consider the first generation of the ‘Jerusalem scholars’, the historians and philologists who founded the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1925: Yehezkel Kaufmann, UH Brenner, Boas Evron, Ben-Zion Dinur, Itzhak-Fritz Baer and Gershom-Gerhard Sholem. A whole chapter is devoted to the discussion of Sholem’s work simply because ‘his genius presents an irresistible challenge’ (p. 128). Sholem’s great achievement was ‘the placement of the study of mysticism at the core of the debate on Jewish history and religion’ (p. 163) so much that his oeuvre constitutes ‘nothing less than a Zionist theology’ (p. 160). An important contribution of Piterberg’s project is to show that Zionist colonisation, appropriation of land and conquest of labour was consolidated and bolstered by the realms of culture, literary imagination and consciousness (p. 193). Thus, some sections of the book consider the place of the Bible and religion in Zionism, laying special emphasis on Ben-Gurion’s appropriation of the Hebrew Bible for the legitimisation of colonial nation-state building.

Piterberg critiques some of the work of Labour Zionists in contemporary Israel that continue in what he calls the tradition of the ‘gatekeepers of Humanist Zionism’. Parts of this section are ironic – Piterberg refers to the foremost Zionist Israeli thinker and historian Anita Shapira as ‘the Princess of Zionism’ (p. 110). In the closing chapter, Piterberg lingers on some of the work of the internationally renowned novelist Amos Oz emphasising his immense political importance and the ‘enigmatic contrast between the acclaim he has garnered, and the quality of his writing’ (p. 227). Oz is described as a writer with a ‘remarkable propagandist prowess’ who has the singular ability ‘to compose all his texts so that they can be drawn on as speeches to diverse audiences, from potential donors to Israeli universities, to the American chapter of Peace Now, or as conversations with guilt-ridden liberal German intellectuals’ (p. 226). Amos Oz contributes effectively to Zionist Israeli ideology and the project of transforming a colony into a settler nation-state as a public speaker as well as in his novels and his non-fiction. Piterberg looks at a few of Oz’s works and concludes that, in the words of Perry Anderson, what Amos Oz offers is a ‘mixture of machismo and schmaltz’! (p. 227)

The literature on Zionism is extensive and most works judiciously weave primary material, secondary literature and historical commentaries to produce authoritative studies analysing different aspects of the movement from disparate perspectives and in various academic fields. Shafir’s analysis of Zionism puts the movement in the context of settler colonialism and the burgeoning academic field of comparative settler colonialism. For him, the Jewish conquest of labour policy in Palestine was a means for maintaining European standards of living in the face of cheap Palestinian labour. He maintains that the exclusion of Palestinian workers was not motivated by inherent racism, but was rather an economic necessity with idealistic motives (Shafir 1989, pp. 78-82). This process led to the bifurcation of the economy of Palestine. The analysis Shafir and Peled (2002) offer also resembles this, although in *Being Israeli* the main tool of analysis is the concept of ‘citizenship’ and the politics of inclusion in and exclusion from Zionism and Israel. They find that in their attempts to preserve their higher European standard of living Jewish immigrants to Palestine were forced to become colonial settlers and ‘the mantle of colonisation was thrust on their shoulders’ (Shafir and Peled 2002, p. 39). This led to their espousal of

militant nationalism against the Palestinians, but on the whole early Zionism is interpreted as a result of economic necessity.

Zeev Sternhell's (1998) analysis of Zionism offers a different view. He places Zionism in the context of Eastern European ethnic nationalism. For him Zionism was a nationalist movement par excellence. It had all the features of nationalist socialism despite its pretensions to socialism. Despite being an ethnic-nationalist movement, Sternhell asserts that Zionism 'did not develop a sense of ethnic superiority to the Arabs, and that in itself was a considerable achievement' (p. 15). He does not further elaborate on this idea nor does he substantiate it.

Nur Masalha's (1992) interpretation of Zionist thought traces the origins of the idea of the expulsion of the Palestinians and argues that expulsion has always been a central aspect of Zionist thought. He also identifies territorial expansion as another tenet of late Zionist politics in *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: The Politics of Expansion* (Masalha 2000). Kimmerling offers a rigorous sociological analysis of Zionism, especially the social structure it established as a response to the Zionist engagement in a territorial conflict with the Palestinians in a low frontierity settlement colony and the crisis of legitimation that ensues from such a situation.

These studies mostly deal with land, labour, demography and institutions. In the following pages, this thesis will analyse and offer a sustained interpretation of ideological, religious and scholarly Zionist discourses. Thus, my work is akin to Piterberg's *The Returns of Zionism* in that it engages with the superstructure of Zionism, to borrow Piterberg's term which he adopts from Marxist terminology. Pro-Zionist scholars have consistently privileged the intentions of the Zionist founding fathers and ideologues as idealistic, humanitarian and even ethical and universal. However, I show here that early Zionist theorists and ideologues were a product of their own times – the period of high European nationalism and late colonialism, a world order imposed by the imperial powers of the time. Zionism's uniqueness was in fusing Eastern European exclusivist ethnic nationalism and Western European settler colonialism. Many analysts dealing with Zionism use its partly successful nationalist project as a vindication for its effects and a justification for the contradiction within its ideological fabric. Nationalism is used in various ways as an extenuation for

discriminatory and supremacist elements within the ideology of Zionism, for example: ‘The clash in Palestine was not between natives and colonialists in the ordinary sense, but between two nationalist movements. Both were, in their own way, “right” and “natural”’ (Elon 1971, p. 26). Racist policies like the exclusion of an ethnic community from labour opportunities become acceptable as a form of ‘militant nationalism’.

Anti-Zionists rightly focus on the effects of Zionism. However, the ideology of Zionism itself, independently of its effects, calls for an analysis of its formulation, tenets, principles and attitudes. This is not just reflected in what Piterberg calls the material base, such as policies, land, labour, demography and institutions, but also in the superstructure or the realms of culture, ideology and the discursive fields. According to Baruch Kimmerling, one of the major methods Zionism developed in response to the crisis of legitimacy it faced, both internally and externally, was by limiting the Zionist-Palestinian dispute to the material plane while downplaying the political and primordial dimensions (Kimmerling 1983, p. 197). Exploring the political discourse of the theoreticians of Zionism will foreground the political and primordial dimensions of the Zionist project and thus throw light on some of the contradictions, fissures and problems within Zionist ideology. Working with the superstructure of the ideology and political discourse of Zionism necessitates crossing disciplinary borders. Thus an analysis of the superstructure of Zionism works on an interdisciplinary level.

Zionism is portrayed as a nationalist movement with an ethical dimension that sought to solve the ‘Jewish question’ in Europe and save European Jewish communities from ghettos, discrimination, pogroms and other form of anti-Semitism and ultimately from genocide. Pro-Zionist scholarship privileges the supposedly good nationalist intentions and consciousness of the settlers in pre-state Palestine. This thesis will examine these intentions and explore the discursive expression of the nationalist consciousness and the very notion of nationalism. Zionism is sometimes said to be an ethnic form of nationalism akin to the Eastern European romantic nationalisms as opposed to the liberal nationalism of Western Europe. This thesis argues that each kind of nationalism includes aspects that are ethnic, biological on the one hand and others that are legal and civic. The juxtaposition of these two forms of

nationalism and their portrayal as totally distinct and dichotomous regimes of nationalism is artificial and ignores ethnic aspects in liberal, civic nationalism and vice versa.

Zeev Sternhell urged readers to examine the world of the ‘founding fathers’ of Zionism if they wanted to understand why Israelis have not yet succeeded in ending their hundred years’ war with the Arabs, drafting a constitution or a bill of rights (1998, p. 6). However, he fails to see that the ethnic-nationalist-colonial character of the Zionist project is at the root of the problem. Sternhell is a consistent critic of the post-1967 Israeli Occupation of Palestinian territories and the illegal settlements project. His position typifies the position of liberal Zionism attack the Occupation but firmly espouse the Zionist idea: ‘Zionism was a stringent nationalism, a radical nationalism; but to claim that the arrivals were white settlers driven by a colonialist mind-set does not correspond to historical reality’ (Sternhell 2010, pp. 99-114). The next chapters will examine the ‘mind-set’ of some of the Zionist ideologues. In analysing Zionist discourse, the concept of exclusive colonial nationalism will be at the centre of the analysis as a category of colonialism and nationalism that most accurately describes the Zionist project.

Chapter III: Zionism and Religion

This chapter deals with the political discourse of Zionist Rabbis. I engage with the position of Zionist thinkers towards the Palestinian population and try to position it in the context of 19th century European imperial and nationalist discourses. The chapter deals with the early form that Zionism assumed which was incorporated into the movement since its inception, namely that of religious Zionist aspirations. Any attempt to engage with Zionist thought must perforce consider the religious aspect of Zionist ideology. The Jewish religion has a lasting imprint on Zionist thought and policy and on the present day Jewish State. It is imperative for any analysis of discussion of Israel and its origins to emphasise its unique character as a ‘Jewish State’.

The Biblical Narrative of Ancient Jewish History

Scholars dealing with Zionist thought have tended to emphasise the history of European Jewish communities, the oppressive conditions under which East European Jewry lived, the subtler indignities intrinsic to the condition of the emancipated and assimilated Jews of some Western European countries and later the near destruction of European Jewry. They then engage with the role Zionist ideology and the Zionist political movement played to liberate the oppressed and absorb the victims of World War II barbarism. Zionism is portrayed as a utopian dream that eventually became a reality. The Zionist movement is regarded simultaneously as a liberation movement and an expression of cultural and religious specificity of the first oppressed minority within Europe’s borders (Laqueur 1972; Vital 1975; Vital 1982; Vital 1987; Vital 1999).

Among other developments, the 19th century witnessed the rise of European nationalism and imperialism among other developments. The Jewish communities in both Eastern and Western Europe were about the only considerable ethnic/religious minority amongst the Christian, white populations – albeit different denominations and races were subsumed under the general definition of Christian-white. The phenomena of nationalism, imperialism and racial exclusivity were interconnected;

however, the specificity of the situation of European Jewry lay in the fact that they were citizens of the various European states but, nevertheless, had a particular culture which they were mostly unwilling to forgo, and even those integrated European Jews who were assimilated and had a strong sense of belonging to their mother countries were usually still considered outsiders. Jewish culture and/or religion, thus, marked them off from the rest of the population despite the fact that they were loyal citizens who had lived in their home countries for centuries or even millennia but, according to Biblical traditions, traced their origins to the twelve ancient tribes of Israel who once conquered the land of Canaan in Asia (today's Middle East) and founded a monarchy there on the principles of the Jewish religion (Goldberg and Rayner 1989).

This chapter engages with the problematic of modern political projects founded upon historical claims derived, for the most part, from religious texts. However, the ultimate authority and legitimacy of religious texts is an issue of faith – the faith of those who believe in these texts, in the particular interpretations that endorse certain political projects, and in the use as historical documents upon which political rights can be determined.

The Biblical history of the Jewish people narrates how they worshipped Yahweh and dedicated a great Temple to His praise. The ancient Jewish tribes, however, had Canaanite rivals and were divided into two, and at times more, kingdoms in frequent conflict with each other until the Romans took control over the whole of today's Middle East and eventually expelled most Jews in the aftermath of the anti-Roman Jewish Revolt of Bar Kochba (132-135 CE). This led to the emergence of the seeds of a body of liturgy reflecting the live memory of Jerusalem and the hope of an eventual 'return' to it. In 638 CE Muslims took control of the former Roman colony and allowed the Jews freedom to reside in the 'Holy Land'. Nevertheless, the various injunctions expressing the hope to 'return' to Jerusalem as promulgated by the rabbis became part of the Jewish daily life (Goldberg and Rayner 1989).

Jewish life was largely dominated by both the written and oral Torah. In addition 'the ritualist dimensions of Judaism evoked the Biblical accounts of Jerusalem and its Temple and there evolved since the destruction of the Temple [at the hands of the Romans in 70 CE] a liturgy reflecting the hope for its restoration, to

be invoked on occasions of joy and mourning, and more importantly, recited as part of the Grace after meals and the daily Amidah prayer' (Metzger and Coogan 1993, p. 353). Hence, since the destruction of the Temple of Solomon by the Roman army in 70 CE, Jewish mystics have expressed in their apocalyptic texts two dichotic visions of the Messianic age at the end of time. One of them is of 'the heavenly Jerusalem, fashioned by God, [that] would descend on earth', and *all humanity* would be summoned to live under its bliss. The other apocalyptic vision regards the renewal and return to Jerusalem as a reward to the pious and the righteous in the hereafter. Thus for the adherents of this view, Jerusalem is a symbol of the heavenly kingdom of God (Metzger and Coogan 1993).

Jerusalem had long been established as an important cultural and religious symbol, a spiritual centre that came to represent the fulcrum of Jewish rituals in every Jewish homeland. The nostalgic notion of 'Jerusalem', hence, symbolized a return to past glory, prosperity, spiritual regeneration and the bliss of Yahweh. It was also referred to as 'Zion', 'Eretz Israel' and the 'Holy Land' – all of which carry strong religious, but also political, connotations. The sons of Israel have a covenant with God and accordingly have a special mission as God's chosen people to guide and enlighten humanity (Goldberg and Rayner 1989, p. 58).

The Bible relates how Jews lived in the Land of Canaan, among other communities, where sometimes there was rivalry and friction between the different communities while at other times there was relative calm. Jewish communities voluntarily settled in various regions outside Biblical Canaan in search of wealth and stability. Given the often volatile and unsettled situation in Palestine, there is evidence that from 586 BCE the number of Jews in Jerusalem and its vicinities dwindled in the wake of the defeat against the Babylonians, so that the Jewish community in Palestine became much smaller and less significant than Jewish communities in, for example, Egypt, Babylon, Persia and Mesopotamia, and furthermore, large Jewish communities had settled in 'Antioch and Damascus, in the cities of Asia Minor, in mainland Greece, in the Balkans and on the shores of the Black Sea' (Goldberg and Rayner 1989, p. 66).

However, the ancient history of the land of Canaan has long been confined to the domain of Biblical studies or theology, this is partly because the study of ancient

Israelite history is considered crucial to understanding the Hebrew Bible which is a fundamental pillar of Christianity (Whitelam 2001b, pp. 2-3). Recent works by Neil Asher Silberman (1989), Philip Davies (1992), Keith Whitelam (Whitelam 2001a), and Silberman and Israel Finkelstein (2002) have shown that ‘the “ancient Israel” of Biblical studies is a scholarly construct based upon a misreading of the Biblical traditions and divorced from historical reality’ (Whitelam 2001, p. 3). Ancient Israelite history is an important event within the history of Palestine and the surrounding area which we today call the Middle East. However, Western Biblical scholarship has traditionally restricted its perspective to the Israelite community and the search for ancient Israel in order to trace and assert the genealogy of Christianity. Thus, the dominant discourse of the historical Israelites has marginalized and silenced the vast landscape of Palestinian history so that ‘a network of recurrent ideas and assumptions has functioned to provide a perception of the past which has resisted virtually all attempts to imagine alternative constructions of the past’ (Whitelam 2001a, p. 6).

In mainstream ‘Western’ historiography, the history of ancient Palestine is often represented as the history of Israel (the people) and its relation to the land of Palestine, whereas the broader history of the region before and after Israel’s encounter with it is eclipsed such that the histories of other peoples’ relation to Palestine are ignored. The symbolism evoked by terms like ‘the Holy Land’ and ‘Israel’ tend to be ones related to Biblical and Judeo-Christian concepts and motifs upon which modern Western culture is founded. Hence, the modern focus on the history of ancient Biblical Israel has its roots in the West’s definition of itself and its history.

As Edward Said has shown in the case of orientalism and literature, scholarship is usually heavily influenced and coloured, whether consciously or not, by the scholar’s affiliations and views in addition to his/her background and field of scholarship (Said 1994; Said 1995). Moreover, in her book *Narrating Our Pasts* (1992), Elizabeth Tonkin demonstrates that history and individual consciousness are closely related, perceptions and representations of the past are ‘socially formed’ and it is for this reason that human beings may ‘lie, forget or misremember as singular individuals and also socially, as part of a pattern’ (p. 131). Hence, the writing of history cannot be an objective, ‘scientific’, portrayal of ‘truth’. It is inevitably

influenced by the historian's background, milieu and affinities. This is true of the Biblical authors who wrote the history of Israel from their own perspectives, as well as the modern Biblical scholars who interpret and analyse their work; both produce their work under the influence of their respective environments. Biblical scholarship and the writing of ancient Israelite history have started to acquire their present form and importance in the 19th century with the emergence of European nationalism and imperialism. Thus, the history of ancient Israel, which is effectively a branch of Biblical studies, is researched from the perspective of Western scholarship. Its tendency to regard ancient Israel as a nation-state in the modern European sense reflects the perspective of those Western scholars who engage with it at the same time that it, inevitably, gives implicit legitimacy to the present state of Israel. Hence, Biblical scholarship is embroiled in a modern political dispute, and the Biblical scholar will, inadvertently or not, have to contribute to the ongoing debate about rights and injustices within the current situation in the Middle East. The Biblical narrative focuses on the Israelites and their spiritual journey as God's chosen people, but it is important to emphasise that historical representation has a 'literary aspect' to it and that: 'A narrative account is always a figurative account, an allegory' as Hayden White succinctly put it (White 1990, p. 48). A history of ancient Palestine from an alternative perspective would portray the region as a multi-ethnic community adhering to various cults and faiths.

Zionism and the Judaic Tradition

The modern Jewish State has its roots in the Zionist movement which started over a century ago with the publication of Herzl's pamphlet *The Jewish State* in 1896. However, some of the first written manifestos of Zionism were quasi-religious texts produced by rabbis in the 19th century, the century which witnessed the rise of imperialism and a surge in nationalist movements and sentiments.

The first rabbis who wrote about the need for a Jewish nationalist movement and the necessity of colonising the 'Holy Land' as the first stage of rebuilding the ancient glory of Zion as recorded in the Bible had to contend with classical religious opinion which essentially espoused a complete submission and trust in the divine wisdom and the fate accorded to the Jews as 'exiles'. Simultaneously, the rabbis lived in continuous expectation of the Messiah who would be sent by God to miraculously

accomplish the ingathering of the Israelite tribes from the four corners of the earth, rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, and usher in an age of universal peace. Jewish opinion also held that whilst waiting for the Messiah was the duty of all Jews; the gentiles were never protagonists in the Messianic tradition, even though they might have a minor role in this unfolding saga of the relationship between God and his chosen people. Redemption was to be achieved through the Messiah, and definitely not through political manoeuvres and other worldly endeavours.

Maimonides, the 12th century Jewish philosopher who is considered to be one of the greatest philosophers of Judaism and who lived in Muslim-ruled Spain and later in Egypt, where he became the personal physician of Saladin and the chief of all the Egyptian Jews, wrote an important letter to the Jews of Yemen almost 1000 years ago. In this letter he urged the Yemenite Jews to stay put in face of any adversity and not to try to violate the Biblical Three Oaths that King Solomon in the Song of Solomon adjured the 'daughters of Jerusalem' to take: 'I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, till he please' (The Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5, 8:4). The Talmud explains that 'Jews have been foresworn not to ascend to the Holy Land as a group using force, not to rebel against the government of countries in which [they] live, and not by [their] sins to prolong the coming of the Messiah, as is written in Tractate Kesubos 111a' . This position had been reiterated and adhered to throughout the centuries to the extent that in the 17th century the rabbi of Prague, Betzael Lowy, asserted that the prohibition of violating the Three Oaths applied even if the gentiles *force* the Jewish people to immigrate.

(<http://www.jewsagainstzionism.com/zionism/3strongoaths.cfm>)

Political Zionism, in contrast to Messianism, was a political ideology that did not involve God and His relation with His chosen people. The realisation of the Zionist goals and aspirations was the result of the collaboration of Jewish leaders with gentile authorities in addition to other endeavours, including publicity and marshalling all the means at the disposal of European Jews to strike deals and gain the support and favour of the powers of the day. Thus, the means of acquiring a territorial base for the nascent Jewish nationalist movement were radically different from those

of the traditional Messianic yearning to an age of Jewish glory and universal peace. Hence, not only was the concept and understanding of religious Messianism different from political Zionism as it emerged later, but also the values, goals, and the imagined future of Zionism was at odds with the traditional Messianic perception.

The Messianic tradition was carried forth to the modern age so that on 18th November 1825 Rabbis Hirschel and Meldola, the chief rabbis of London and Cologne, published an open letter in the French Newspaper *Journal des Debats Politiques et Littéraires*, responding to items in various English and French newspapers concerning a project by a Jewish entrepreneur to resettle less fortunate Jews in the North of the United States of America to cultivate his lands there. The letter makes clear that any such attempts contradict belief in the Messiah and the Jewish notion of Redemption:

We state that according to our religious teachings, only G-d Himself knows when the redemption of the Jewish People is to occur, and it is only G-d who will make His will known to the entire universe with unmistakable signs. Any attempt to gather together the Jewish People with political and nationalist goals is forbidden to us as a crime of the highest divine authority (Hirschel and Meldola 1825, pp. 2-3).

As late as 1897, when news reached the German Jewish community that the first Zionist congress was to be convened in Munich on 15th August of that same year, a united front of Liberal and Orthodox German rabbis led a strong campaign against the planned congress and against Zionism which led to the alteration of the congress venue to Basle, Switzerland. The Executive Committee of the Union of Rabbis in Germany issued a declaration stating that:

1. The efforts of so-called Zionists to create a Jewish National State in Palestine are antagonistic to the messianic promises of Judaism, as contained in the Holy Writ and in later religious sources.
2. Judaism obliges its followers to serve the country to which they belong with the utmost devotion...
3. There is no antagonism, however, between this duty and the noble efforts directed towards the colonisation of Palestine by Jewish agriculturists, as they have no relation whatsoever to the founding of a National State... (in Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz 1995, p. 428).

The Proto-Zionist Rabbis

In the rest of this chapter I shall analyse the discourse of Rabbis Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, Samuel Mohilever, Yehiel Pines, Abraham Kook and Judah Alkali to argue

that Judaism has been implicated in a contemporary political project that was born of the socio-political and economic conditions of the day. Another aim of this discourse analysis is to highlight the way in which discourse constructs reality. By digressing from the received religious opinion and promulgating a novel precept, the Zionist rabbis effected a transformation of Jewish aspirations, expectations as well as possibilities. Their intervention was essentially a political act of momentous consequences.

Rabbi Judah/Yehudah Alkalai

Rabbi Judah Alkalai (1798-1878) was leader of the Jewish community of Semlin in Serbia where he witnessed the rise of the Balkans against their Turkish rulers, before the demise of the Ottoman Empire. Greece won its independence from the disintegrating Empire prompting the rise of nationalist aspirations of other Balkan communities under Turkish rule. The Serbs struggled for their freedom from Turkish rule and nationalist sentiments were prevalent when Alkalai started campaigning for Jewish nationalism and the acquisition of Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine. It is important to note here that Palestine was another Turkish ruled province. Both David Goldberg (Goldberg 1996, pp. 6-7) and Arthur Hertzberg (1997, pp. 103-104) point out that an important incident that left an impact on Alkalai's life and thought was in 1840 when the blood libel, with which Jews were persecuted in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, was repeated against the Damascus Jewish community (The blood libel is the unfounded accusation that Jewish people performed ritual slaughter against a gentile and used his blood to bake their unleavened Passover bread.) The incident had repercussions all over Europe, and European Jews interceded on behalf of the Damascus community until the situation was eventually resolved (see Kalman 2007, pp. 35-58; Al-Qattan 2002, pp. 511-533).

In his first book in Hebrew *The Offering of Jehudah* (1845), Alkalai (in Hertzberg 1997, pp. 102-107, first published 1845) set the stage for the pattern that Zionists, whether political, religious or socialist, were to follow in relation to Palestine.² From the outset the Turkish Sultan was the authority European Jewry

² Alkalai's and Kalischer's works remain largely untranslated. The only available English translations are excerpts in Arthur Hertzberg's *The Zionist Idea* and various quotations in articles about religious

needed to consider in relation to Palestine, apart from the European powers that were to offer support and assistance to the Zionist aspirations, in return for various services and favours including the loyalty and allegiance of the would-be Jewish controlled province. The assumption went that the Turkish acquiescence would be won and Palestine would be given away in return for an annual rent to the ailing empire to help pay out its huge debts. Secondly, Alkalai posited that the poverty-stricken Jews of Eastern Europe would emigrate to the 'Holy Land' to establish agricultural colonies and prepare the land for the arrival of the more affluent Jews of Europe. The affluent Western European Jews would, in their turn, serve the cause of Zionism by negotiating the terms of Europe's support for the nascent Jewish centre and also by financing the colonisers (pp. 105-107).

Alkalai interpreted the Jewish tradition in the light of his political aspirations, another frequently occurring pattern within Zionist political discourse. He deviated from the mainstream interpretation of the Messianic tradition which professed redemption only through divine agency, and instead allowed the ideology of European nationalist movements to shape his religious discourse. Nonetheless, his scheme remained deeply rooted in a religious framework; he introduced some of his statements by 'the Lord desires that we...' and 'we are commanded to...' (p. 105). He contended that the 'return' to the 'Holy Land' was an instrument of redemption, to hasten the arrival of the Messiah by 'accepting the yoke of Heaven' and fulfilling the divine commandments (p. 106). Alkalai preached a mixture of both 'individual' return to the path of righteousness and ancestral traditions on the one hand, and 'collective return' to the Holy Land on the other. His plan was carefully thought and formulated, albeit his political judgements did not reflect a shrewd awareness of the political intricacies of Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire.

Alkalai's proposals foreshadow Herzl's secular Zionist project in numerous aspects, while maintaining a firm religious footing that Herzl would not have advocated. For Rabbi Alkalai the establishment of an international Jewish governing body drawn from an 'assembly of elders', chosen by what he describes as 'our greatest magnates, upon whose influence we all depend' (p. 107), is not only the first step of the project to attain the Holy Land but also the first stage for the redemption of

Zionism and messianism scattered in academic journals and, in the case of Kalischer, in Jody Meyers's book *Seeking Zion* (2003).

the Jewish people. He contends that out of this governing body shall come the First Messiah, son of Joseph, who will prepare and pave the way to the second and greatest Messiah. He furthermore proposes that poor Jews emigrate from their current homes to build and prepare the land for the reception of larger sections of world Jewry, but this too is justified within the bounds of religion. The Jews who remain in Europe should bear the responsibility to support the first settlers through raising funds and organising the means necessary for the success of this tremendous project, for he emphasises that ‘redemption must come slowly’ (p. 105).

Alkalai’s coupling of worldly political planning and a rigorously religious perspective is remarkable. He adds a political dimension to his religious and mystic thinking and bends both political and religious aspirations to suit each other in a fashion that also shows him to be the product of his own time and reflects the Kabbalistic strain in his thought. He wrote and preached his project of self-redemption through religious observance and immigration to the Holy Land and was a political activist as well, lobbying influential Jews in Europe to espouse the cause and support it practically. He was willing to negotiate a purchase of the Holy Land with those he perceived as its present masters, the Ottoman Turkish Empire, as inspired by the Biblical story of Jacob’s purchase of the parcel of ground in the Biblical city of Shechem on his journey to meet his father, Isaac. To Alkalai the point of this parable is to teach the descendants of Jacob that ‘the soil of the Holy Land must be purchased from its non-Jewish owners’ (p. 105).

To Alkalai and his supporters, the population of the ‘Land’ they consider holy are ‘Bedouins scattered all over the Holy Land’ to whose level, he warns, Jews should never sink. His attitude is typical of 19th century imperialist notions, especially the faith in the superiority of European culture and people and the notion that it is ‘the white man’s burden’ to enlighten the backward natives by bringing European civilisation to the less fortunate inhabitants of the non-European world. Hence, the issue of the indigenous population of Palestine is not one that deserves serious attention and consideration. The colonial ambience in Europe rekindled Jewish notions of the chosen-ness of the Jews to be ‘a light unto the nations’, the holiness of the land of Israel and the awaited Messianic Redemption, thus rendering any thought of an indigenous Palestinian population superfluous.

The Zionist contention was that the ancient Israelite tribes had conquered Palestine in ancient times and ruled it for many years, therefore European Jews have every right to re-possess it. Alkalai argued that it was divine commandment to return to Zion and an essential step towards the redemption of the Jews that will accelerate the arrival of the Messiah. The narrative thus sounds plausible in a certain Judaeo-Christian environment where Biblical stories and beliefs still had a grip over the consciousness of the masses in 19th century Europe and among some Orthodox Jewish communities who prayed daily for the return to Zion.

At the time, however, Western European Jews in particular, who were better off than their Eastern co-religionists, saw themselves as citizens of the countries where they lived and therefore did not consider the option of emigrating to Palestine except for the poverty-stricken Jewish masses. At the inception of the Zionist movement to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine, the majority of West European Jews rejected such an enterprise for myriad reasons, one of which was that a Jewish nationality would compromise their positions and rights in their countries of origin. As late as May 1917, during the negotiations culminating in the issuing of the Balfour declaration in November of that year, the Board of Deputies of British Jews (founded 1760) and the Anglo-Jewish Association (founded 1871) published a letter in the London *Times* registering their ‘grave objections’ and their ‘strong and earnest protest’ to the Zionist ‘theory’ ‘which regards all the Jewish communities of the world as constituting one homeless nationality, incapable of complete social and political identification...’ (in Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz 1995, p. 456). The letter stated that:

Emancipated Jews in this country regard themselves primarily as a religious community, and they have always based their claims to political equality with their fellow-citizens of other creeds on this assumption and on its corollary – that they have no separate national aspirations in a political sense. They hold Judaism to be a religious system, with which their political status has no concern... (in Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz 1995, p. 456).

The statement maintains that a nationality based upon and limited by religion ‘will be limited in the matter of freedom of conscience’ and specifically states that any alternative secular foundation for such a Jewish nationality in Palestine would be a ‘loose and obscure principle of race and ethnographic peculiarity; [which] would not be Jewish in any spiritual sense, and its establishment in Palestine would be a denial of all the ideals and hopes by which the revival of Jewish life in that country

commends itself to the Jewish consciousness and Jewish sympathy' (in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1995, p. 457). Hence the representative organization of British Jewry and the Anglo-Jewish Association (whose function was the protection of Jewish rights in 'backward' countries through diplomatic means) maintained that a nationality based on religion or ethnicity in Palestine was contrary to Jewish aspirations of revival and redemption. They also asserted that they rejected the injustice contained in the Zionist programme 'to invest the Jewish settlers in Palestine with certain special rights in excess of those enjoyed by the rest of the population' (in Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1995, p. 457). They argued that Jewish communities all over the world regard the principle of equal rights for all religious denominations as an important and vital one. Thus for some of those Jews who fought for equal rights in Europe, the idea of oppressing another population by means of the political and economic privileges of European Jewry and the influence they enjoyed over European governments was an abominable idea. Moreover, they considered a nationality based on religion, race or ethnicity to be not only un-Jewish but also contrary to the aspirations of Jewish revival in Palestine.

For religious Jews, Zionist proposals were a departure from traditional interpretations of redemption as a divine affair accomplished only with the miraculous advent of the Messiah without human interference. Thus, Alkalai's religio-political enterprise did not meet with enthusiasm from the majority of European Jews and therefore did not achieve any tangible success. In addition, both the religionists and the secularists thought it impossible that the Turkish Sultan would cede Palestine to European Jewry. Alkalai, however, believed the Sultan would give Palestine to the Jews for money, and in his writings he pledged Jewish loyalty to the Sultan, he also gave an interesting glimpse of the future relations between Jews and 'different religions' when he stated: 'the Sultan will not object [to give us Palestine], for His Majesty knows that the Jews are his loyal subjects. Difference of religion should not be an obstacle, for each nation will worship its own god and we will forever obey the Lord, our God' (Alkalai 1845). The statement is an advocacy of a kind of peaceful co-existence that he does not develop in detail, leaving its latent possibilities uninvestigated.

Rabbi Hirsch Kalischer

Like Alkalai, Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer (1795-1874) believed in redemption through the *gradual* 'return' of the children of Israel to the 'Holy Land', which, he believed, they had conquered by the grace of God around two millennia before and from which they had been dispersed as a test of their faith by the Almighty. He quoted from Isaiah (27:6& 12-13) to support his argument that the ingathering of the Israelites should happen the way 'the grain is slowly gathered from the beaten corn.' In *Seeking Zion* (1862), he advocated the emigration of some Jews who would inevitably be 'the root planted in the earth to produce many sprigs.' They would multiply 'until they cover the face of the earth with fruit' (Kalischer 1862, in Hertzberg 1997, pp. 108-114).

Kalischer also promoted the Jewish notion of the holiness of labour and the cultivation of Palestine by Jewish hands. He proposed the establishment of an organisation to facilitate and sponsor the agricultural colonisation of land in Palestine in order to fulfil the needs of its small community of pious Jews in addition to the future migrant colonists. He was passionate in his defence of the Orthodox communities who 'renounce home and fortune' (Kalischer 1862, p. 112) and devote themselves to serving the Lord by studying the Torah. The major influence on his thought was the nascent nationalist movements in Europe and the surge of imperialist ideology. Some scholars argue that, based on statements in the Talmud and the Zohar, the 'founding fathers of religious Zionism', like Kalischer, Alkalai and Moses Hess, were moved to Zionist campaigning due to a 'widespread anticipation in virtually every Jewish community throughout the world that the year 5600, or 1840, would mark the onset of the arrival of the Messiah' (Waxman 1987, pp. 176-181). However, the influence of political events and fervent nationalist sentiments at the time can not be overestimated. In his book *Seeking Zion* (1862), Kalischer cites examples of the nationalist struggles of different European nations as an incentive for the Jews to pursue nationalist aspirations,

Are we inferior to all other peoples...? Let us take to heart the examples of the Italians, Poles, and Hungarians, who laid down their lives and possessions in the struggle for national independence, while we, the children of Israel, who have the most glorious and holiest of lands as our inheritance, are spiritless and silent (p. 114).

Kalischer was rabbi in Posen, a disputed province between Poland and Prussia, on the border between Eastern and Western Europe with their two distinctive

types of Jewish existence: the Western European with its enlightenment ideals, reform movements, modernisation and advancing secularisation on the one hand, and the Eastern with its traditional cloistered values of piety, strict observance of religious commandments and resigned trust in divine providence, on the other. The impact of surrounding nationalist movements coupled with the threat of assimilation and secularisation coming from the West explain the urgency with which he addressed the issue of establishing Jewish colonies and reviving sacrificial worship in Palestine in *Seeking Zion*. This impact stirred up the notion that Palestine was the ‘inheritance’ of the Jews and the land of their ancestors. It is important to emphasise that Kalischer’s ambitions were for Jewish colonisation of Palestine and he did not refer clearly to a Jewish nation-state there, even though there was a certain level of ambivalence in his writing as to the nature of the national struggle he advocated. For the European national struggles, on which he modelled the Jewish aspirations, were seeking political independence as he stated, whereas his Jewish colonisation project did not refer openly to any such measures but rather focused on the value of labour and cultivation of the land along with the accompanying religious commandments pertaining to Palestine such as letting the soil lie fallow every seventh year, and other religious commandments.

Thus, both Alakalai and Kalischer had Jewish nationalist aspirations inspired by the milieu of nationalism and imperialism that pervaded 19th century Europe. European imperialism had a major impact on the work of both religious Zionists and the political Zionist movement instigated later by Herzl. Imperialism served, among other factors, to legitimise the Zionist colonisation of Palestine and the total disregard of the rights and desires of the indigenous population. Biblical commandments regarding the ‘Holy Land’ have always existed and many religious Jews settled in Palestine or emigrated there in their old age to devote their last days to a pious existence in the vicinity of Jerusalem. On the other hand, the nationalist aspirations emerged after the advent of European imperialism which served to make the notion of a Jewish ‘home’ or ‘colony’ in Palestine possible. European imperialism rendered it, in the words of John Stewart Mill, a ‘common and ... universal condition of the more backward populations, to be either held in direct subjection by the more advanced, or to be under their complete political ascendancy’ (Mill 1998, p. 454). It is significant that the advocates of Jewish nationalism based on religious messianic ideas/visions

have called for the establishment of companies that would facilitate the settlement, purchase of land and trade with Europe and the world as a first step to foster nationalism among the European Jewish masses. Alkalai's call for the establishment of a 'company' to purchase land from the Ottomans (p. 107), Kalischer's suggestion to establish an 'organisation' for similar purposes of settlement, purchase of land and agriculture, and Pines's call for the establishment of commercial companies for agriculture and export in Palestine (Salmon 1988, p. 70) were all modelled on the European colonial trading companies, like the English East India Company and the Dutch East India Company, among others.

Economic theorists of imperialism maintain that mercantilism, the early stage of capitalism, has been closely associated with nationalism and the formation of the nation-states in Europe. Thus, Lenin's analysis of imperialism in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1997, originally published 1917), which is informed and influenced by John A. Hobson's *Imperialism* of 1902, asserts that as a nation-state is industrialised and as its economy enters the mode of capitalist mass production, the class of capitalist producers and financiers exercise pressure on governments to acquire colonies. The colonies serve to supply raw materials and provide sites for profitable investments of excess capital, thus justifying imperialist ideology and colonialism (Ashcroft et al. 1998, pp. 122-127). Gellner also explains that as a society transitions from the 'agro-literate' stage to become an 'advanced industrial society' formal education disseminates a 'standardised high culture' which becomes 'the pervasive, operational culture of an entire society' and ensures a person's access to citizenship and all the accompanying duties and rights including employment and social participation. Thus, as nationalism surged in Eastern Europe, 'society [could] no longer tolerate a wild proliferation of internal subcultures, all of them context-bound and severely inhibited in their mutual intercommunication' (Gellner 1996, p. 107). 'Unassimilated' Jewish communities, including some orthodox Jewish groups, became an obstacle to the mono-cultural nation-state as it emerged in some 19th century Eastern Europe. The proto-Zionist rabbis realised that their communities' distinctiveness was both threatened and rejected by the heightened atmosphere of nationalism. Their answer was to further separate themselves, not within the increasingly nationalistic Eastern European 'nation-states', but by claiming 'Zion' as

the site of their own brand of nationalism where the Jewish religion would be the basis of culture and of life.

Postcolonial theory has shown that imperial discourse has legitimised and sustained colonialism. In the case of Jewish nationalism, as advocated by Alkalai and Kalischer, it is nationalism which legitimises and advocates colonialism. European representation of the colonised ‘Other’ provided the ideological grounds upon which the concept of imperialism was justified and practiced. Racial theory, supported by pseudo-science and a body of literary works, travelogues and various anthropological and sociological studies, which assumed canonical dimensions, professed the superiority of the European races over the populations of the non-Western world. Thus colonialism was thinly disguised in the garb of humanitarian and missionary zeal and a philanthropic willingness on the part of Western empires to impart some of their ideals and enlighten the underdeveloped indigenes. Edward Said observes that in the colonial metropolis,

There is a commitment to [imperialism and colonialism] over and above profit, a commitment in constant circulation and recirculation, which, on the one hand, allowed decent men and women to accept the notion that distant territories and their native peoples *should* be subjugated, and, on the other, replenished metropolitan energies so that these decent people could think of the *imperium* as a protracted, almost metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior, or less advanced peoples (Said 1994, p. 10).

For, as Said further notes, ‘the enterprise of empire depends upon the *idea* of *having an empire*’ (p. 10). The Jewish colonial enterprise was motivated by nationalist aspirations, which in their turn were integral elements of colonial attitudes and practices as applied by different imperial powers. Despite being regarded as outsiders and ‘unassimilated’ the leaders of the proto-Zionism shared the common European perceptions of the native others: ‘Bedouins scattered in tents all over the fields of the Holy Land’ as Alkalai put it (p. 105).

The intersection between capitalism, nationalism and imperialism is vital to any discussion of Zionism. The Zionist movement arose among the assurgent nationalisms of 19th century Europe and it also had a strong capitalist component to it, albeit in ways different from the role capitalism played in other European nationalisms. The first Jewish settlers were financed by the Jewish philanthropic magnates of Western Europe, like the Rothschilds and Montefiores. The first funds

they provided were for the establishment of religious endowments for the religious Jews who chose to emigrate to the ‘Holy Land’ so that they could single-mindedly pursue the study of the Torah. Their next role was financing the *kibbutzim* (the collectivist, agricultural colonies) in which young European Jews applied their socialist ideals by leading a communitarian lifestyle inspired by a ‘humanist’, ‘utopian’ ideology that strictly excluded the Palestinian population and served to ‘consolidate’ new territory into Jewish hands and keep the dispossessed Arab farmers at bay (Buber 1949, pp. 139-149; Peter Buch qtd. in Rodinson 1973, p. 21). Later with the rise of ‘official’ Zionism that sought to change the demography of Palestine through large-scale Jewish immigration, the first port-of-call for Zionists, whether Rabbis or political activists, was always European Jewish magnates who could offer not only financial support but could also influence the political and public opinion in the European metropolis (which had almost complete worldwide dominance and hegemony at this historical juncture).

Furthermore, religionists aspired to create a Jewish Palestine that would be a bastion of Jewish religious traditions. According to them, only in the ‘Holy Land’ can the commandment of letting the soil run fallow every seventh year be observed (although this commandment was ‘dispensed’ in 1909 by Rabbi Kook) and only there could Jews be safe from the prospects of integration with other cultures. Hence, the aspiration at the outset was for a territorial centre that would *enable* the rise of a Jewish national movement. As Kalischer pointed out, all over Europe, people were ready to die for their perceived ‘fatherland’, yet, from its inception European nationalism was in most cases exclusivist and parochial. It coincided with the rise of anti-Jewish racism, especially in Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1914. Accordingly, even though the majority of European Jewish citizens identified with their home countries, some saw salvation only in a separate, specifically Jewish version of nationalism that, although modelled on European examples, incorporated ancestral traditions. Thus, even though a combination of elements was involved in the production of Zionist ideology, it was modelled on European patterns of homogenous nationalism and was correspondingly exclusivist.

To recapitulate, religious Zionists had nationalist aspirations similar to these of other Europeans at the time; however, some of them also feared the prospect of

Jewish assimilation into the dominant secular culture and yearned for a Jewish-governed space where they could preserve their religious identity and lead a 'purely Jewish' way of life. Israeli scholar Israel Shahak points out that with the emancipation of the Jewish masses and their accession to unprecedented levels of citizenship and rights, especially in Western Europe, from around 1780; the Jewish communities, and especially the religious leadership, lost their powers to hold the individual Jew to account for violating religious commandments. In tracing the history of Jews in Europe, emphasis is usually laid on the oppression and discrimination against Jews by gentile societies. However, totalitarian and despotic conditions within the Ghetto are rarely explored. Shahak refers to these conditions as follows:

Since the time of the late Roman Empire, Jewish communities had considerable legal powers over their members. Not only powers which arise through voluntary mobilisation of social pressure (for example refusal to have any dealing whatsoever with an excommunicated Jew or even to bury his body), but a power of naked coercion: to flog, to imprison, to expel – all this could be inflicted quite legally on an individual Jew by the rabbinical courts for all kinds of offences. In many countries – Spain and Poland are notable examples – even capital punishment could be and was inflicted, sometimes using particularly cruel methods such as flogging to death (Shahak 2002, p. 14).

Hence, with the break up of the ghetto walls and the advent of the modern nation-state, Jewish religious authorities lost their powers of jurisdiction and much of their authority over Jewish communities diminished to the extent that the threat of assimilation became paramount. Thus, the motives behind the religious sanction for the colonisation of Palestine at this historical juncture are complex and diverse.

Rabbi Samuel Mohilever

Rabbi Samuel Mohilever (1824-1898) also played a part in shaping the nascent Zionist movement and in setting up its course of action. As Hertzberg (1997) put it, Mohilever, 'inevitably exercised constant pressure...on the national movement to be more responsive, at least in practice, to the demands of orthodox religion' (p. 400). Mohilever exhibited remarkable political and diplomatic shrewdness which reflected the role religion played in the nascent colonial-nationalist movement. In his address to the First Zionist Congress in 1897, he summarised in a religious 'discourse genre' what he thought were the priorities that the movement should consider. He emphasised the desirability, from a religious perspective, of not opposing the secular

governments of Europe that ruled over the Jewish populations and the strategic importance of gaining their favour; he also urged the delegates to direct their energies to prevail over the Turkish government, which ruled Palestine, to permit Jewish colonisation in the dependent province. A key point in his address was his call for disregarding the differences and disagreements between religious and secular Jews; in so doing he agreed to let religiously inspired Zionism take a subservient position to the political movement. He realised early enough that only political endeavours could bring about any concrete results in negotiating with the rulers of Palestine and the European powers; therefore, he conceded to work under the secularists and let them have the upper hand in order to reach the ultimate goal of acquiring Palestine. As we have established, the traditional Orthodox religious opinion was to oppose the Zionist project; hence Mohilever's address greatly contributed to adding a religious legitimacy and aura to an otherwise secular enterprise. He himself referred to this controversy in his address:

Of late certain Orthodox rabbis have arisen in Western Europe, among whom one has even declared that the promises of future bliss and consolation made by our seers were in the form of symbols and parables. The coming of the Messiah, they say, will be to establish the Kingdom of Heaven for all mankind, while Israel continues in exile as a light to the gentiles. Others of these rabbis assert, without qualification, that nationalism is contrary to our belief in the advent of the Messiah. I am therefore constrained to declare publicly that all this is not true (Mohilever 1897, p. 404).

Rabbi Mohilever thus placed his religious authority and expertise in the service of the Zionist political project. He considered Jewish colonisation of Palestine as 'one of the fundamental commandments' of Judaism (p. 402). In his address, which was delivered to the Congress by his delegate and grandson Dr. Joseph Mohilever, he considered governments and powers that ruled over Jewish communities in Europe, the Turkish authorities who were masters over Palestine, and world Jewry. The Rabbi also paid tribute to Baron Edmond de Rothschild, the Jewish magnate who financed the largest portion of Jewish colonisation in Palestine in order to 'bring to life the waste places of our land' (p. 403). He warned against jeopardising the 'Halukah' funds, which were 'the traditional alms collected throughout the Jewish world for the support of the pious in the Holy Land' (Hertzberg 1997, p. 641, n. 2); he was shrewd enough to realise that part of the opposition of the Jewish community already in Palestine to European Zionism stemmed from their fear of losing these alms to the

colonisers. In his speech, Palestine is described as a 'waste land'. For Mohilever, Palestine was decidedly 'our country' because God gave it to the sons of Israel; the only obstacle between God's chosen people and their God-given country came in the form of possibly reluctant world powers.

Political Zionism thus had in Mohilever a legitimising religious authority who could offer a blessing to their efforts and refute the protestations of Orthodox Rabbis who insisted that the brand of nationalism practiced in Europe and followed by the Jews was contrary to Messianism. He also aspired, albeit ambivalently, to found a Jewish *state* on the model of the European nation-state: 'we shall dwell in our own country as a nation, in the fullest sense of the word. Instead of being the contempt and mockery of the nations, we shall be honoured and respected by all the peoples of the earth' (p. 404). This statement echoes Rabbi Kalischer, who preached in favour of the establishment of agricultural colonies because, in his own words, '[it] would raise our dignity among the nations' (p. 114). Both Rabbis refer to a sense of inferiority (Kalischer 1862, p. 114) and of being the 'mockery and contempt' of other European nations (Mohilever 1897, p. 404). There is a sense that the acquisition of a territorial base or a colony would redeem the Jewish dignity *in Europe*.

Yehiel Michael Pines

The importance of Yehiel Michael Pines (1842-1912) is that early on he discerned and highlighted a very important element of Jewish nationalism when he said, 'the Jewish people did not...come into the world as a separate entity in the ordinary way, as a result of the combined influences of race and soil, but as a group professing a separate faith and bound in a mutual covenant to observe that faith' (Pines 1895, in Hertzberg 1997, pp. 411-412). He chastised secular Zionism for trying to impose upon the Jewish people a purely secular form of nationalism similar to those professed in Europe. For him the Jews were incommensurably different from any other group of people, they were 'the chosen people' that should aspire to be 'a light unto the nations' rather than aspire to emulate them. In 1895 Pines ironically wondered 'how is it possible to graft the idea of secular nationality onto the Jewish people when it lacks the two principle attributes of an ordinary nationality? The Jews do not live on one territory and do not speak one language' (p. 412). Hence, for Pines

‘the love of Zion’ was only one component of a larger Jewish religious tradition; without the religion, Jewish nationalism was devoid of meaning and cause.

The same themes that ran through other European proto-Zionists were present in Pine’s thinking. He called for the establishment of a Jewish company to aid the colonisation efforts and aspired to found a Jewish polity to rival the cities of Western Europe:

Like all those who subscribe to the political line, my heart yearns to see Jerusalem in all its beauty like one of those highly extolled European cities... not for the Arabs, but for her sons... (Pines cited in Salmon 1988, p. 70).

Pines’s main motivation seems to have been the status of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. At the outset of his public career, his efforts were to improve the conditions of Russian Jewry but he soon abandoned this enterprise when he felt that colonising Palestine would be a more radical, comprehensive and effective solution to the oppressive social and economic conditions confronting East European Jewry (Salmon 1988, pp. 65-82).

Even though the mainstream Rabbinic opinion in the 1800’s was against Zionism, the religious voices that emerged in support of Zionism were effective and were usually coupled with practical efforts to support the cause. Alkalai, besides writing and preaching in favour of Jewish mass emigration to the ‘Holy Land’, travelled tirelessly to European capitals to campaign for financial and practical support for the colonisation of Palestine and established a few small, short-lived circles to support those efforts in some European capitals including London (Hertzberg 1997, pp. 6-7). Rabbi Kalischer was ‘instrumental in getting a group to buy land for colonisation on the outskirts of Jaffa in 1866’ (Hertzberg 1997, p. 110) and led the efforts to found an agricultural school, also in Jaffa, in 1870, even though in Jerusalem his views were publicly denounced (Hertzberg 1997, p. 110). Samuel Mohilever was a key founder of the Hibbat Zion group, while Pines moved to Jerusalem in 1878 as director of the Moses Montefiore fund where he organised Jewish colonisation and became a sought-after expert in the area although he was known for his conservative religious views and his attack on religious reform and secularism in his first book *The Children of my Spirit* (Pines 1871).

In spite of the ideological motivation and the practical contribution of prominent religious Jewish figures, mainstream anti-Zionist opinion held sway in Europe and among the small Jewish community in Palestine. Some commentators, like Hertberg and Goldberg trace Palestinian Jewry's opposition as arising from the fear of losing large portions of the charity funds provided by rich Jewish magnates in Western Europe. Jewish opinion, and that of the super powers, decidedly shifted towards Zionism at the end of World War II with the exposure of the full horrors of the Holocaust. However, the intervention of one man, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), brought together traditionally antagonistic factions within the Jewish community.

Rabbi Abraham Kook

Rabbi Kook emigrated from Lithuania to Palestine in 1904. From 1921 till his death he served as chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jews in Palestine. Kook's foremost innovation and contribution was his interpretation of the Law to include secular Jews and political Zionism in his version of Zionism. He placed the interests and welfare of the Jewish colonial enterprise over all other considerations. In 1909 he permitted a dispensation on technical grounds of the Talmudic Law (based on Leviticus, 25) that Jewish land in Palestine must be left fallow every seventh ('sabbatical') year (Shahak 2002, p. 43; Hertzberg 1997, p. 418). Thinkers as diverse as Arthur Hertzberg – whose analysis of Zionism became a classic in the field soon after its publication in 1959 – and David Goldberg – whose volume, *To the Promised Land* (1996), professed to be 'the first full-length study of its kind' tracing the *theory* of Zionism in an analytic fashion as opposed to the treatises that sacrificed academic and intellectual integrity (Goldberg 1996, p. x) – portrayed Kook as a mystic who accepted secular, political Zionism as an unwitting instrument in the hands of God conducting directly to the ever more manifest Redemption of the Jews (Hertzberg 1997, p. 417; Goldberg 1996, p. x-xi).

However, Kook's thought was more complex than this would suggest.³ He applied his mystical philosophy of the nature of light and darkness to his perception of Zionism and the Jewish people, amongst other things. He believed that holiness, manifested as light, was concentrated in certain focal points surrounded by apparent darkness. However, he also posited that the darkness surrounding holiness comprised beams of light which flowed forth through a hidden maze to the centre of holiness where it was revealed. Kook established and elaborated on this philosophical insight proceeding then to apply it to realms of space and time and to humankind as a whole. In volume II of *Lights of Holiness (Orot HaKodesh)* (1963):

The holiness of man, revealed through the Jewish nation, lies hidden within Everyman, within the whole of humanity, in the depths of inviolate chambers, and it continually flows through a hidden labyrinth, until finally coming to light through the glow of the Jewish soul. (p. 303)

Thus, light is to be found deeply buried even within darkness, or within the secular, and it is the role of holiness to allow the secular to be externalised and to realise its potential; holiness illuminates the secular and brings forth the hidden light within it. Hence, there is a reciprocal relationship between the holy and the secular, but the holy in particular has a responsibility towards the secular to reflect its latent inner light. The Rabbi extends this metaphor to apply to secular Jews and political Zionism. He asserts that there is holiness in both secular and religious Zionism; the secular Zionists' endeavours to colonise Palestine serve to enhance the work of Orthodox Jews, while the religionists reflect the holiness involved in the secular endeavours and the holy ends to which they lead.

Kook, then, finds holiness in any Jewish attempt to colonise 'Zion' whether for religious or political ends. In his four volume commentary on the Aggada teaching of the Talmud entitled *Ein Ayah*, he writes:

Thus we learn how great is the merit of the one who yearns to settle the Land even for materialistic purposes, for the sake of the community. For what is done for the sake of the community will always transmute the material into the

³ Abraham Isaac Kook's extensive oeuvre remains largely untranslated from the Hebrew original. The two main English translations of his work are Bezalel Naor's 1993 translation of *Orot* and Ben Zion Bokser's *The Essential Writings of Abraham Isaac Kook* (2006). There are, however, several English language websites, mainly religious, dedicated to the teachings of Rabbi Kook which offer translations of some of his works, these include: <http://www.ravkooktorah.org/>, <http://www.vbm-torah.org> and www.orot.com.

spiritual, and the high and lofty aim will be attained by means of the linking of G-d's People with G-d's Land...

We must learn that it is necessary for us to strengthen the physical powers of the national community, and thus will come about the strengthening of the spiritual community (Kook n.d., 1:41b).

Kook had specific political aspirations pertaining to the Jews in Palestine; during World War I he clearly asserted that 'it will soon be possible for us to conduct a *state* of our own founded on goodness, wisdom, justice, and the clear Light of God' (Kook 1942, p. 422, my italics). His express aim was to have a Jewish state in Palestine, even though he, paradoxically enough, stated that 'it is not meet for Jacob to engage in political life at a time when statehood requires bloody ruthlessness and demands a talent for evil' (Kook 1942, p. 422). His hope was for a more peaceful and benevolent state of affairs in Europe that would permit the Jews to have a state of their own in Palestine. His perceived renewal of the spirit of the Jewish people would simultaneously bring peace and prosperity to the world. Once again Kook's thought reveals his sense of reciprocity: the Jews will engage in building themselves as a nation until world conditions become suitable for them to engage in state building whilst at the same time the building of the Jewish nation is indispensable to unifying the world and recovering it from the state of war and darkness.

Kook's unwavering belief in the chosenness of the Jewish people and their mission in the world is prophetic:

'All the civilizations of the world will be renewed by the renascence of our spirit. All quarrels will be resolved, and our revival will cause all life to become luminous with the joy of fresh birth...The active power of Abraham's blessing to all the peoples of the world will become manifest, and it will serve as the basis of our renewed creativity in Eretz Israel' (Kook 1942, p. 423).

However, Kook's faith in an impending universal Holy Light that would engulf the world is Eurocentric, to say the least (even though the term might seem anachronistic here). For the state he aspired to build was exclusive and founded on the dispossession of another people. He vowed that Jewish renewal would send light to the whole world, but failed to mention those who would be dispossessed during the course of state formation.

In *Course in General Linguistics* (1966), Ferdinand de Saussure explains that, ‘every means of expression used in society is based, in principle, on collective behaviour or – what amounts to the same thing – on convention’ (Saussure 1966, in Cahoon 1996, p. 180). In keeping with the same Saussurian linguistic theory, the signifier ‘Holy Land’, ‘Zion’ or ‘Eretz Israel’ refers to a signified (or a concept) not linked by any inner relationship to the succession of sounds which serve as its signifier. It merely relates to and rests upon a societal convention amongst a certain group of people with a shared history and culture. Thus, the use of language is a politics in itself, and when the Rabbis Alkalai, Kalischer, Mohilever and Kook or religious Zionists like Pines speak of a Holy Land, they are appealing to the shared, common understanding between Europeans (whether Jewish, Christian or otherwise) not of a territory but of a perception invested with crucial (and controversial) meanings and implications. Thus, the choice of nomenclature constitutes exclusion of an Other.

The position of religious Zionist thinkers and leaders towards the Palestinians is typical of 19th century colonial mentality. The lack of reference to the Palestinian population is telling in itself. However, it is also highly significant that when they are mentioned they are referred to as Arabs, Bedouins, or ‘hostile inhabitants’ and with an unmistakable tone of contempt. The Bedouins led a nomadic existence, contends Alkalai, which is a low state that the Jews should carefully avoid. Moreover, the land is ‘barren and forsaken’ due to the backwardness of its inhabitants, whereas the Jewish colonisers will revive it and in the process please and glorify the Lord Himself ‘who chose Zion’, as Kalischer put it. The position of the Palestinians towards their homeland is portrayed as tenuous; their existence on the land must be an accident or a mistake since Palestine is a Jewish ‘inheritance’ and ‘God’s portion on earth’. Like Plato’s artist, doubly removed from the Truth, scholars sympathetic to Zionism were doubly removed from understanding the extreme form of victimisation, oppression and dispossession inflicted upon the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab World as a result of the realisation of the Jewish dream.

The religious project to establish Jewish colonies in Palestine as advocated by early precursors of Zionist colonisation like Alkalai and Kalischer envisaged a strict

religious existence within these agricultural colonies with a revival of sacrificial worship and the acquisition of Jerusalem. Later Zionists like Mohilever and Kook aspired for a state in Palestine distinctively Jewish in religion, culture and ethnicity (even though the concept of Jewishness as an ethnicity is a controversial claim) with the inevitable influence of the European nation-state model to which they all belonged. The movement was purely European; there was no evidence to suggest that Jews from Africa or Asia were planning to establish agricultural colonies in Palestine or found a state there. The implications of a 'Jewish state' will be discussed later, but it is important to note here that such a state has to maintain a Jewish majority and therefore a demographic alteration is required since the Jewish community in Palestine as late as 1931 did not exceed 16% of the total population according to the British mandate census of that year (Courbage 1999, pp. 21-39).

The plans of even those religious Zionists who aspired only to establish agricultural colonies evidently excluded the large non-Jewish population. There is simply no space for another people. To deny the existence of a population is equivalent to wishing them to disappear, and when translated into political and military terms, the consequences can be dire. The writings of religious Zionists reveal their desire to exclude the indigenous population and to live in total isolation from the surrounding Arab countries and cultures. They wanted to buy as much land as possible and work the land themselves without recourse to hired Palestinian labour (Winer 1971, p. 35) and receive funds from Jewish magnates abroad to support them in the hope that they would be able to stop importing grains and food from neighbouring Arab countries. Kalischer hoped that if the Jewish colonists depend on their own labour 'God would bless our labour and there would be no need to import grain from Egypt and other neighbouring countries' (Kalischer 1862, p. 113).

According to some readings of Judaism, the strong emphasis on the chosenness of the Jews is an integral component of Judaism; some religious Jews believe they have a covenant with God which is a responsibility that cannot be relinquished. God entered into a Covenant with Abraham and his posterity that was transmitted to Jacob-Israel and from him to his son Isaac and was consummated at Sinai with the solemn pledge of collective commitment and loyalty to God and his commandments.

According to one contemporary rabbi, the Covenant, whose outward symbol is circumcision, means that 'the people are to be God's servants and witnesses, proclaiming His sovereignty, testifying to His unity, exemplifying His moral law, and so paving the way for the establishment of His kingdom, while He, on the condition of their continuing loyalty, will give them the instruction, the strength and the means (including a territorial base) to endure and to carry out their assignment' (Goldberg and Rayner 1989, pp. 247-275). Thus, God has conferred on the Jewish people their elected status in Biblical promises: 'ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all peoples: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:5-6). This concept of a collective 'peoplehood' can lead to different perceptions of the Other including an exclusivist one, especially when the Others are radically different and perceived to be 'less developed'. As Rabbi Kook made clear, the gentile is of inferior status to the Jew in the eyes of God and his people. Therefore, according to some kabbalistic interpretations, Biblical terms such as 'thy fellow', 'stranger' or 'neighbour', refer only to Jews or converts to Judaism.

Constructionist and historicist readings of the Hebrew Bible would yield different meanings and implications. According to Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, 'Even the primitive command to wipe out the peoples of Canaan was limited by the Bible itself to those particular people in that particular place, and thus declared no longer applicable by the rabbis of the Talmud' (2003, p. 100). Hence, any ethnocentric or supremacist tenets in rabbinic Judaism are 'facultative and dispensible [sic]' aspects of the cultural system, and certainly 'not necessary for its preservation or essential to its nature' so that a critical construction of cultural identity should aspire to 'purge it of elements of domination and oppression' (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 100).

In conclusion, I have argued that the assurgency of European nationalism and imperialism triggered Jewish ambitions to acquire a homeland that would be a spiritual and national base for world Jewry. At a time when Jewish tradition was increasingly challenged by so-called 'rational thought' and the assimilation of emancipated Jews, a few orthodox rabbis fearing the loss of Jewish identity sought to establish exclusivist Jewish colonies in Palestine where the Jewish tradition and

identity could survive, which, in their view, would pave the way for the arrival of the Messiah. The population of Palestine was not seriously considered due to prevailing colonial and imperial ideas, in addition to some readings of Jewish traditions which were used to relegate to the Jewish welfare and interests priority over those of non-Jews and lay emphasis on the chosen-ness of Jews and their mission to enlighten and lead the nations of the earth.

Chapter IV:

Official Zionism

This chapter examines the discourse of Moses Hess and Theodore Herzl, two early 20th century thinkers and political activists who instigated nationalist sentiments amongst the Jewish communities of Europe with the eventual aim of creating a Jewish state. The chapter attempts to define Zionism in its own right and in relation to nationalism on the one hand and imperialism on the other. Notwithstanding the fact that Zionism might have different and multiple meanings to different individuals and groups; as a modern political movement, Zionism has an essential core so that any given perception of it necessarily entails a certain political position. This chapter aims to consider the implications inherent in the Zionist position. I seek here to position Zionism firmly in relation to the emerging European nationalist movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and more particularly I shall focus on German nationalism as it has exercised more influence on Zionism.

The influence of German nationalism

The first major calls for pan-German nationalism were a response to and a reaction against the myriad local patriotisms of central Europe around 1800 which included over three hundred ecclesiastical principalities, free cities and imperial knights. However, '[such] territorial states appeared stifling to an educated middle class dedicated to the removal of the myriad princely privileges, corporate restrictions, or trade barriers that hampered the free development of individuals, public life and trade' (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 224). In 1815 the Austrian foreign minister, Clemens von Metternich, created a German Confederation, 'this loose confederation fell short of the hopes of bourgeois patriots because its protection of territorial sovereignty offered neither constitutional government at home nor effective military power abroad' (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 225). The local princes were unwilling to cede sovereignty to an overarching 'national union of the Germans'. The Protestant nationalist movement propounded an inclusive version of 'enlightened nationalism' in Germany which 'equated Protestantism with progress, reform, and

liberation [and] proved more accessible because any Catholic or Jew who was willing to jettison traditional religion could participate in this national community' (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 226). Prussia was considered 'the Protestant champion in the German [speaking] lands' even though the Hohenzollern dynasty was considered by German liberals and constitutionalists authoritarian and militaristic. In the latter half of the 19th century Emperor Bismarck established the Second German Empire using military force, 'offering the princes a federation led by the Prussian monarchy and the national movement a parliament elected by universal manhood suffrage' (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 227).

Thus the Third Reich comprised the inhabitants of thirty former states and Bismarck had to deal with the challenge of internal unification which 'required a complicated federal structure couched in medieval terminology and dynastic iconography, to make national allegiance appear superior as well as complementary to existing provincial loyalties' (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 228). Bismarck coerced his opponents into loyalty through ostracism and persecution of minorities and political dissenters. However, he also executed positive measures on the political and administrative levels aiming at fostering national ties and overcoming strict regional loyalties among German speakers such as 'the linking of regions with railroads, the creation of a national public through the postal service, the legitimising effect of *Reichstag* elections as well as ... the measures to produce fiscal, economic, and legal uniformity and the emergence of tourism' (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 228). Equally important are the cultural measures of unification aimed at creating a pan-German national bond like 'the use of imperial symbols by the Hohenzollern dynasty, the celebration of such new national holidays as Sedan's day, the service in the separate but joined armies, [and] the rewriting of textbooks in line with the Prusso-centric interpretation of history'. The federal nature of the German union, however, also promoted 'a culturalized form of regional loyalty' which helped overcome the resistance to the Prussian version of Protestant Germanness (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 229).

During the 19th century Germans radically modified their identities by introducing to their common linguistic and, to a lesser extent, cultural affiliation the

strain of a common citizenship in a national state. However, unification brought about a shift in the existing conflicts over identity so that ‘the prior conflicts over identity were transferred from external rivalries to internal contests in a common state, albeit under a changed power relationship which privileged that particular dynastic and educated middle class hybrid found in Prusso-German nationalism’ (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 229). This brand of nationalism identified Protestant, middle-class Prusso-German culture as the paragon of enlightenment and the quintessence of Germanness, and hence superior to other cultural identities subsumed within the Second German Empire.

The rise of the Third Reich was, ironically enough, triggered by what Jarausch and Geyer (2003) call ‘the incompleteness of the Second Reich’ (p. 229). The Second Reich was founded on ‘compromises’ and ‘losses’ inside and outside of Germany like ‘the exclusion of the German speaking Austrians’ from the national state. The existence of ‘language islands’ throughout east central Europe also encouraged demands for bringing these “Germans” home and for elaborating an ethnic conception of citizenship’ (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 230). Jarausch and Geyer also argue that on the domestic level,

the Empire contained numerous non-German minorities, some, like the Danes and the French speakers in Alsace-Lorraine, who looked to existing national states, and others, like the Poles, who hoped for the resurrection of their state. Their refusal to assimilate to the Prusso-German mold [sic.] triggered systematic Germanization policies that provoked much resistance and created fierce nationalities struggles within the Reich (2003, p. 230).

From the 1870’s onwards a brand of volkish nationalism with a distinctive intolerant sectarian edge spread in Germany supported by the neoromantic operas of Richard Wagner and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. A network of powerful pressure groups advocated this form of nationalism and sought to support ethnic Germans abroad and demanded a foreign policy of conquest and settlement, ‘these patriotic associations were financed by such special interests as arms manufacturers, large land owners, and colonial merchants, who stood to gain materially from their propaganda...’ (Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 231). World War I cemented the project of volkish nationalism in Germany and provided it with mass following ‘since the experience of the fighting created a militant sense of a national community’ (Jarausch

and Geyer 2003, p. 231) and as Jeffrey Verhy put it ‘the comradeship in the trenches and the solidarity of the home front seemed to validate a militant understanding of German superiority and separateness’ (cited in Jarausch and Geyer 2003, p. 231).

Nationalism, whether in theory or praxis has many faces and manifestations; German nationalism in the early 20th century became increasingly oppressive and exclusive towards minorities and anyone who did not conform to its notion of a perfect Aryan. The triumph of nationalists in ‘imagining’ and consolidating a national organic whole essentially entails the negation of minority rights, and threatens their identities. Anti-Semitism was one of the social diseases in many parts of Europe, however, the dangerous turn that occurred from the early 20th century onwards in Germany was a direct outcome of the exclusive and extreme form that German nationalism assumed.⁴

⁴ Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer explain the reconstruction and redefinition of German identities after 1945 in both the Eastern and Western states, they describe what they call ‘denationalizing the Germans’ as a gradual process to ‘Westernise’ the country, they also extol the economic miracle and the successful reconstruction process. Compensation for the holocaust is seen as a step in the right direction to atone for past sins and emerge anew onto the international scene, ‘as successor to the prior German national state, the FRG paid billions of deutsche Marks in restitution payments to Israel’ (p. 237). They emphasise how ‘the Federal Republic [of Germany] has magically transformed a tarnished legacy into a gleaming modernity’ (p. vii) and claim to offer postmodern view of German history. They proceed to invoke the contributions of post-colonial theorists to offer a history of the ‘other’ Germany that does not feature in mainstream historiography of modern and pre-war Germany. They put forward the suggestion that those who promulgated extreme nationalist sentiments and acted upon them in Germany before World War II were a very influential and powerful minority which eventually won the day, the example of the billions of deutsche Marks that Germany paid and still pays to the State of Israel to atone for the Holocaust and re-emerge respectably on the international scene is stated as proof of Germany’s ‘post-national democratic’ status where it has gone beyond nationalism and also made up for its wrongs.

This attitude is not unique to these two German historians; the position that paying billions to Israel and offering a host of other types of support and endorsement constitutes a kind of atonement for past European sins against the Jewish minorities is common amongst sections of Western intelligentsia and is accepted almost without reserve among politicians. This, however, has many implications including the assumption that the State of Israel is the legitimate heir of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust and that as a state it represents the Jewish people as a whole, an assumption that many Jews world-wide would dispute. This position is also one which necessarily corresponds to a stance against the local population of Palestine which claims to have been dispossessed by the State of Israel and has been engaged in a military and political conflict with it. Nevertheless Jarausch and Geyer seem to take for granted the notion that paying billions of Marks to the State of Israel is a step in the right direction for the FRG, not just to atone for its past sins but also to achieve acceptance on the international level. Thus, in order to atone for the crimes committed in the name of German nationalism and imperialism, Germans support Zionist nationalism and colonialism which essentially leads to German collaboration in the crimes committed in the name of Zionism.

One of the most insightful chroniclers of German nationalism, German-Jewish relations and European anti-Semitism, George L. Mosse, explains the German notion of nationhood:

"Volk" is one of those perplexing German terms which connotes far more than its specific meaning. "Volk" is a much more comprehensive term than "people," for to German thinkers ever since the birth of German romanticism in the late eighteenth century, "Volk" signified the union of a group of people with a transcendental "essence." This "essence" might be called "nature" or "cosmos" or "mythos," but in each instance it was fused to man's innermost nature, and represented the source of his creativity, his depth of feeling, his individuality, and his unity with other members of the "Volk". The essential element here is the linking of the human soul with its natural surroundings, with the "essence" of nature.... According to many Volkish theorists, the nature of the soul of a Volk is determined by the native landscape (1964, p. 4).

In *The Crisis of German Ideology* (1964) Mosse discusses the German 'utopias' or agricultural settlement movement founded by so-called 'romantic' nationalists in Germany in the 19th century which became more active in the early 20th century. Numerous agricultural settlements, or colonies, were founded away from urban life and shared the values of a 'return to soil', equal distribution of the fruits of labour and a rejection of capitalist exploitation. He explains that:

Basic to the Utopian movement was the urge to return to the land. It embodied an effort to root the Volk in the soil once more, to reconstruct surroundings that had a natural rhythm, that soothed the discord of urban life...It was spurred on by a double purpose: to escape the debilitating effects of city and industry and to reconstitute the Volk and the race...

As agrarian communities founded on the soil, the utopian settlements were to be not only compelling examples for the Volk, but also living indictments of modern capitalism (1964, p. 108).

The striking similarity between the purposes and, to a lesser extent, the ideological drive behind these German 'utopian' settlements and the Jewish agricultural colonies in Palestine, which started roughly at the same time, is not coincidental at all. One of the more popular colonial settlements at the time was founded by a Viennese journalist, Theodore Hertzka, who advocated settlement in Africa and published a novel entitled *Free Soil (Freiland)* in 1890 in which he weaves the story of a utopian existence where the colonists laboured the commonly owned land and had the profits distributed according to the amount of labour put in by members of the community.

Followers of the Free Land movements tried to implement their dream and actually reached Tanganyika in 1895 but, as Mosse put it rather diplomatically, ‘the British kept them waiting on the barren coast until the experiment had dissolved before it ever got started’ (1964, p. 110). Hertzka worked on the same newspaper as Theodore Herzl. Mosse clearly states that, ‘Herzl and “territorial Zionism” partook of the same urge to return to the soil and free themselves from capitalist entanglements as German utopian colonies’ (1964, p. 110).

Another major influence came from one of the pioneers of the German agricultural colonist movement; namely, Franz Oppenheimer who advocated the idealisation of the soil, or the land, and its ‘transcendent significance’ (Mosse 1964, p. 109). Oppenheimer was active in Eden, and was influential in establishing some *Kibbutzim* in Palestine; and at Theodore Herzl’s suggestion, he went to Palestine in 1911 (Mosse 1964, p. 332, n. 56). The Jewish colonists in Palestine and their supporters echoed those notions when they emphasised the sacredness of land and labour, and they also brought into play the European biblical heritage to attest to the holiness of the land of Palestine and their entitlement to it. German nationalism gave rise to the agricultural colonies, however the depth and breadth of the analysis and study of German nationalism by historians, political scientists and others are not paralleled by similar scholarly study of the agricultural movement. The influence of the German agricultural settlements movement on Zionism and the *kibbutzim* is also largely ignored by scholars and the academic community.

The German notion of the Volk was not just an exclusive imaginary of the ‘nation’, it also had characteristics specific to this particular form of nationalism. In addition to the ‘romantic’ notions of the ‘back to nature’ calls, the insistence on an organic connection between the Volk and its native soil, the rejection and vilification of urban existence, materialism and liberalism; there was an obsession with virility and the male body, muscular, blond exterior that reflects the supposed power and purity of its soul. The Volkish idea was racial, territorial and militaristic. It conflated race, nation and the nation-state. Jewish supporters of the Volk were divided into 2 main camps: the anti-Zionists who advocated a German Volk to include Jewish

Germans, and the Zionists, who were a minority and who promoted a separate Jewish Volk (Mosse 1971, pp. 77-115).

Rejection of excessive intellectualism, combined with a 'return' to the native soil, manual labour and exaltation of the 'true spirit' of the Volk-people-race. An important twist in the Volkish idea is its rejection of a certain urbanite stereotype represented by a large section of the German population, both Christian and Jewish. Volkish advocates reacted against this stereotype of the alienated, over-intellectual, urban citizen. Supporters of the Volk also particularly loathed the (racist) stereotype of the orthodox Jew. George L. Mosse traces this stereotypical image to 19th century German literature. This stereotype was a racist representation of Eastern European Jewry, especially Polish Jews. The Eastern European ghetto culture was described by German authors, both Jewish and Christian, as 'Asian'; the ghetto Jews were described as 'ugly as night' and inhabiting narrow, dirty streets and wearing (the much-maligned) kaftans (Mosse 1971, pp. 61-76).

German nationalism: a romantic movement?

The definition of 19th century German nationalism as 'romantic' and of the agricultural colonies as 'utopian' is not only misleading but also, I believe, mitigates the racist, exclusive and militant nature of these movements, at least on the discursive level. The nomenclature is also justificatory; it seeks to explain and justify unjust and oppressive ideologies and actions by accepting them as part of the 19th Romantic Movement in Europe. Mosse explains, 'like romanticism, Volkish ideas showed a distinct tendency toward the irrational and emotional...' (1964, p. 13) so that

instead of being encouraged to confront the problems cast up by urbanization and industrialisation, man was enticed to retreat into a rural nostalgia. Not within the city, but in the landscape, the countryside native to him, was man fated to merge with and become rooted in nature and the Volk. And only in this process, taking place in the native environment, would every man be able to find his self-expression and his individuality. (Mosse 1964, p. 15)

The essence of most forms of German nationalism became increasingly racial, militant and exclusive after the establishment of the Third Reich. To extend and stretch the concept of 'romanticism' to include this kind of patriotism seems to be a

far fetched application, or rather misapplication, of the term. The notion of organic unity with the fatherland and the deterministic notion of racial character being essentially formed according to the natural topography of the fatherland is not about unity with nature but about promoting a false and violent sense of ethnic superiority and exclusiveness that seeks to actively belittle and eventually demonise the image of its 'Others'.

The agricultural colonies were exclusive communes established upon ideas of racial purity and superiority and seeking to disseminate and promote these ideas. For example, the documents show that during the first celebration of 'the Free-Land Day' at the Settlement of Eden in 1916, it was officially announced that only 'Aryans' were fit to partake in the Volkish ideology, which, in turn, was a prerequisite for such a settlement. The editor of the Eden Settlement's official newspaper, Ernst Hunkel, asserted that 'Eden served as the training ground for the leaders of several smaller Volkish movements'. Hunkel also founded another colony, the Settlement of Sigfried, whose aim was 'to further a "spiritual aristocracy of the German blood" in order to protect the Volk from 'Asiatic and Welsh [i.e. French] hordes, not just with the sword but with the spade and above all through the furthering of armanish [secret Indian-Aryan] wisdom' (cited in Mosse 1964, p. 112).

Thus to call this movement 'utopian' is a facile acceptance of the claims of its adherents and their conception of the complex notion of utopia which portrays a utopia as a place forcibly cleansed of difference, a notion which they regarded with hostility and considered essentially inferior. Colonies which rested on notions of racial and cultural purity and foreign conquest can hardly be called utopian, except from the perspective of their extremist followers who seek to promote ethnic and racial cleansing and militancy. George Mosse readily accepts these epithets despite his condemnation of these movements. He seeks to distance these movements and ideologies from Zionism, albeit he acknowledges some direct influence and several similarities.

Even scholars who oppose this form of nationalism do not rigorously deconstruct the thought processes which produce it, nor do they try to analyse the

inherent contradictions in the discourse associated with these forms of nationalist expression. For example, Norman Finklestein, a vehement critic of both German nationalism and Zionism, does not attempt to deconstruct the use of the term 'romantic nationalism' in relation to ethnic, exclusivist forms of nationalism, and in his critique of Zionism, he labels it 'romantic nationalism'. However, it is crucial to point out that within the discourse of nationalism, language and terminology are of paramount importance. Nineteenth century German thinkers and activists of nationalism realised this and therefore were careful to use terminology that would secure the support of both the young, enthusiastic elements within the Youth Movement and the more experienced elements who had clear political agendas. This terminology served to vindicate ideals of racial purity, expansionist foreign policy and excessive militancy and portrayed these as heroic causes for protecting the 'nation' from ethnically foreign, and hence inferior, elements and bringing all 'ethnic' German speaking peoples into the fold of the nation.

Racist ideologies of the Volk appropriated romantic notions of organic unity. For example, theorists of the Volk like Paul de Lagarde and Julius Langbehn asserted that the nature of any race was determined by its native landscape so that the Germans, who originated in 'dark, mist-shrouded forests' were inevitably 'deep, mysterious and profound...[striving] toward the sun' as opposed to the Jews who, the Bible stated, came from the desert and were thus 'shallow, arid, dry people, devoid of profundity and totally lacking in creativity' (Mosse 1964, p. 5). The discourse of German nationalism, which took the form of the Volkish ideology, excluded and undermined German Jews by portraying them as having originated from foreign, inferior soil and therefore denied them the right to belong to the imagined German nation.

Similarly, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, one of the foremost German philosophers of politics and history in his time, had earlier explained his conceptions of 'Culture' and 'the State' in Europe and beyond. He delineates images reminiscent of the romantic spirit of organic attachment to nature and spiritual communication between Nature and the human soul in literature. Fichte portrays the Germanic people as 'mere Earth-born men, who recognise their Fatherland in the soil, the rivers, and the

mountains...they retain what they desire and what constitutes their happiness;-the Sun-like spirits, irresistibly attracted, will wing its way wherever there is Light and Liberty' (1999, p. 240). However, Fichte's notion of love of the Fatherland, which constitutes happiness for its people, and their heart's desire is typically exclusivist, racial and aggressive. He advocates building 'the new State' at the expense of other people who he defines as 'barbaric' by virtue of being non-Christian or being different either racially or culturally (1999, p. 219). Fichte's theorisation of European history, culture and the state might seem obsolete from a postmodern perspective which rejects meta-narratives that seek to offer universal interpretations and solutions; however the value of his work lies in its lucid expression of 19th century undisguised colonial outlook and attitudes which remain to this day (but are usually described in a different discursive turn):

Even after the general dominion of Culture has become so powerful that it has nothing to fear from outward Barbarism, ... it will nevertheless, be impelled by an inward necessity, to seek out those Barbarians who can no longer approach it, in order to appropriate to itself those products of their lands which they themselves do not employ, or those lands themselves; or it may be, to subdue to itself the powers of those Barbarians;-in part directly, by means of slavery ,-and in part indirectly, by means of unfair and overreaching commerce. However, unjust these purposes may appear in themselves, yet, by means of them, the first characteristic of the World Plan, *i.e.* the general diffusion of Culture, is gradually promoted. (Fichte 1999, p. 182)

Shortly afterwards, in the course of the same lecture by Fichte, we learn that 'the State regards itself as the exclusive realm of Culture, and in this character stands in natural warfare with Barbarism' (1999, p. 202). We are also told that the 'Germanic Races' in particular have national characteristics like 'a keen sense and love of Right and Freedom' and 'a delicate sense of honour' in addition to many other exquisite qualities that Fichte asserts 'had become natural to them by the usage of centuries' which leads him to conclude that 'they had been expressly reserved for this great purpose [of establishing the New State]' (1999, pp. 217-219). He further explains that the most favourable conditions for establishing a truly Christian state arose 'when religion attained a central point in external political power, and that power obtained an independent territorial possession. Not, as formerly, seating herself in authority within the Empire, and incessantly controlling the government...' (1999, p. 219). Variants of these notions and others were an integral part of German nationalism

The Romantic Movement in literature and the arts did not espouse chauvinist political principles. On the contrary, Romantic literary works, far from entertaining racist notions about non-Europeans, portrayed the 'East' as a place of prosperity, abundance, charm, passion and joy; Romantic poets preached equality in their works and repudiated European imperial projects, especially slavery: Wordsworth's poem 'To Toussaint L'Ouverture', Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, and P. B. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* where man is liberated from all restraints and walks 'free, uncircumscribed' (3.4. 1. 195) amongst other men 'Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, (3.4. 1.196), and Keats's ode 'To the Nile' with its memorable lines: 'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste/ Of all beyond itself' (ll. 10-11) are all cases at hand. Although many Romantic works of art may have exoticised the Other and some were orientalist in today's terms, they are a far cry from the parochialism and prejudice of an ethnic nationalism which hinged upon theories of a supposed racial inferiority, lack of creativity, barrenness of soul and intellectual incapacity of non-Europeans, including European Jews. Thus, the connection between Romanticism and politics is complex; exclusive forms of nationalism selectively appropriated certain aspects of the Romantic Movement and twisted them to suit particular political aims and orientations.

As mentioned above, different kinds of racism including anti-Semitism were an integral part of German nationalism. German anti-Semitic images of Jews were in many cases absorbed and internalised by the Jews themselves to the extent that a significant segment of the German Jewish community actually believed in the inherent vices of the Jews that the Volkish movement propagated and as a result set out to correct them. George Mosse quotes the Central Assembly of the Jewish Community of Vienna in 1882-1883 as an example of this. Although the assembly members recognised that anti-Semitism 'had attracted not just the half-cultured members of the population but even the highly cultured ones' (Mosse 1964, p. 141), it called upon its members to reform in the face of the Volkish movements accusations of Jewish 'immorality [and] lack of true ethical roots' (Mosse 1964, p. 144). The Assembly finally issued a resolution to discourage Jewish youths from entering trades. The response of the Assembly also reflects the implication of the Jewish

community in the nationalist ‘Germanic’ ideology of the time. Many German Jews believed in the Volkish ideology (barring anti-Semitism) and in the benign nature of its ideals and wished to disseminate those ideals amongst all sections of the German ‘nation’ including its Jewish members.

In a volume detailing the impact of Western nationalisms on Zionism edited by George Mosse and Jehuda Reinharz to celebrate the occasion of the 70th birthday of the political scientist and historian Walter Laqueur, Mosse describes how even the most liberal form of Zionism

entailed the belief in an ideal type – in the stereotype of rooted men and women. It is not astonishing that Zionism was concerned with creating a ‘new Jew’, for other national movements towards the turn of the century also wanted to create their own ‘new man’: a national stereotype, strong, filled with energy, well-proportioned according to Greek models. (Mosse 1992, p. 324)

Max Nordau’s address to the 2nd Zionist Congress in 1898 ‘set the tone for Zionism with its distinction between “muscle” and “coffee-house Jews”, the latter pale and stunted, the former deep-chested, sturdy and sharp-eyed men.’ The German Jewish communities started founding Gymnastic clubs to promote the ‘Aryan-style’ Jew: in 1898, after Nordau called for a virile Jew conforming to the European ideal of male beauty, the Bar Kochba Jewish Gymnastic Association was founded in Berlin (Mosse 1992, p. 324) and a year later the ‘Maccabees’ Gymnastic Association was founded with the professed aim to ‘develop a healthy Jewish people...and to offset the image of the “over-intellectualised” Jews engaged in study and conniving in trade’ (Mosse 1964, p. 145). The significance of the names ‘Bar Kochba’ and the ‘Maccabees’ cannot escape the observer; bar Kochba is the military hero in the biblical story of the armed Jewish revolt against the Roman rulers of Jerusalem under emperor Hadrian in 133-135 CE (Goldberg and Rayner 1989, p. 83). Thus, the modern German Jews were invoking their biblical history to awaken a sense of national pride and physical and military prowess. As Max Nordau, Herzl’s greatest ally and second important man in the nascent Zionist movement, put it in his address to the 2nd Zionist Congress, Zionism will rejuvenate and reinvent Judaism through two different routes ‘morally through the rejuvenation of the ideals of the Volk and corporeally through the physical rearing of one’s offspring, in order to create a lost muscle Jewry once again’ (cited in Presner 2003, pp. 269-296).

Nationalism and historiography

George Mosse's work on German nationalism and anti-Semitism especially interesting because of his insightful analysis into the form German nationalism assumed at the beginning of the twentieth century and his extensive research into the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe, especially in Germany, whilst being a Zionist himself. Mosse is not a unique case amongst European intellectuals. As a matter of fact, he offers a typical example of the European intellectual who analyses and critiques exclusive and ethnic forms of nationalism and rightly mounts scathing attacks on the inherent marginalisation and exclusion of segments of the 'imagined nation'. However, Mosse fails to register the oppression inflicted on victims of the Zionist movement and, more significantly, he valorises the movement in his academic work. He perceives the outcomes of Zionism as the establishment in Palestine of a Jewish state without considering the impact this might have on the indigenous population who were subsequently displaced and dispossessed. His chronicles of the Zionist movement portrayed a positive movement with almost no negative sides to it except perhaps what he perceived to be minor trends that only affected sections within the *Jewish* communities. It is worth quoting Mosse at length here:

Nervousness marked all those who stood outside or were marginalized by European society and the nation – Jews, the insane, habitual criminals, sexual deviants and gypsies by and large shared the same stereotype, counter-type to the normal, healthy, vigorous and self-controlled male as Max Nordau described him. Zionism was no exception in the way it marginalized those who did not conform to national ideals, in this case the ghetto and the coffee-house Jew. Here also it was the belief in a Jewish 'national character' which mattered, symbolised through outward appearance. The ideal of manly strength and beauty, represented through a well-proportioned, steeled and muscular body, was celebrated in much of Zionist literature and art, just as it was propagated, for example, in England and Germany as their national stereotype at the same time. (Mosse 1992, p. 325)

The above paragraph epitomises a segment of the problematic of Zionist nationalism. The generalisation in the first sentence refers to some major European nationalist movements, like the German one. However, anti-colonial nationalist movements are not considered or even mentioned. In short they do not exist within the scope of mainstream, liberal, humanist historians like Mosse. He registers the

marginalisation of the coffee-house and ghetto Jews as possible ‘victims’ of mainstream Zionism but Palestinians are not considered in work, not even in this essay written as late as 1992. He thus consistently and adamantly refuses to acknowledge the very existence of the non-Western Other and in doing so absolves the Zionist movement and himself, being a Zionist, of any responsibility towards the Other. Since the existence of the Other is overlooked, hence denied, then no allegation of oppression or dispossession could be made. Hence this very act of denial inflicts oppression and constitutes aggression.

Mosse commends and celebrates what he perceives to be the liberalism and tolerance of the State of Israel which he considers to be a legacy inherited from what he calls the ‘open and tolerant’ side of European nationalism. He cites Israel’s granting all Jews living abroad ‘their chance at citizenship’ (Mosse 1992, p. 327) passed unanimously by the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) on 5th July 1950 which grants every Jew in the world and every convert to Judaism the right of ‘return’ to the ‘ancestral’ land of Israel by issuing them with an ‘immigrant visa’ and/or an Israeli passport upon expressing the desire to settle in Israel or become Israeli citizens (Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz 1995, p. 481). Mosse thus gauges the impact of Zionist nationalism solely on the basis of its impact on the lives of different Jewish groups and assesses whether the movement is liberal or parochial accordingly, whilst he conveniently avoids mentioning Palestinians and others who were dispossessed by Zionism.

The historian, in this case Mosse, deliberately ignores a crucial and constituting element of his narrative. The problematic surrounding this historical narrative transcends the post-colonial debates surrounding historiography from the perspective of the victorious coloniser. The issue here is not merely about the need to perceive and write history from the perspective of previously silenced minorities; this is also about deliberately ignoring a fundamental and pivotal aspect within the narrative. Mosse discusses Zionism as a European national ‘liberation’ movement without indicating that it was to be based in Asia and amongst non-European peoples. He typically but conveniently avoids the inherent contradiction of how Jews, whom

he deems to be decidedly and unequivocally European, are to take over Palestine from its inhabitants and found a state for the Jews alone there.

Mosse, David Vital, and Walter Laqueur among others are able to simply overlook or disregard these fundamental issues in their writings because they appeal to a presumed consensus amongst fellow historians, political scientists, academics and intellectuals, a consensus which perceives history from a European perspective and considers the impact of historical events only on European subjects. The question of historiography has been extensively addressed by historians, especially since Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1975), and theorists of post-coloniality (most notably by Robert Young in *White Mythologies* (1990), however, my concern here relates to this question specifically with respect to Zionism. Every chapter/article in Reinhartz and Mosse's volume *The Impact of Western Nationalisms* (1992), in addition to Walter Laqueur's works *A History of Zionism* (1972) and *The Road to War: Origin and Aftermath of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1967-1968* (1969) and even his edited volume *The Arab-Israel Reader: A Documentary History of the Middle East Conflict* (Laqueur and Rubin 1984), as well as Gershon Winer's *Founding Fathers of Israel* (1971) and David Vital's *The Origins of Zionism* (1980) can be subsumed under the aegis of a certain tradition of 'inter-Zionist' writings. By this I mean a sort of tradition in which Zionist writers address the 'already converted', i.e. their fellow committed Zionists. They research and write asserting stereotypes and avoiding criticism of their shared cause, so that the scholar researching Zionism becomes aware of a certain linguistic manipulation, and discursive omissions and twists that call the establishment of the State of Israel the 'Declaration of Independence' and the 1948 war 'the War of Independence' without bothering to explain the nature of this independence, especially that the Jewish colonists have arrived from independent European states and have not been settled in the area prior to the British mandate. These writings tend to be minimally argumentative and generally appeal to a strong pre-existing consensus avoiding any 'controversial' issues that might raise questions – let alone objections – regarding the so-called 'Arab problem'. The more recent publications, for example Mosse's chapter at hand on 'the civic religion of nationalism' written in 1992, also systematically ignore the large opus of the Israeli post-Zionists, new-historians and critical sociologists.

To illustrate my point I quote an example from Mosse describing present day Israeli war memorials:

There are about 1000 war memorials and memorial sites all across Israel and from the vast majority any kind of aggressiveness, glorification of the nation or hero-worship are absent. The astonishing density of memorials and memorial sites (about one for every 16 fallen soldiers) does not mean, as it would have in Europe, an effort to make war acceptable through masking or disguising its horror. (Mosse 1992, pp. 319-329)

At first glance the above quote may seem ironic, but it is not. Although the idea of any war memorials that neither glorify the nation nor promote the cult of hero-worship is curious, Mosse does not need to qualify and explain, let alone prove his statement. One is left wondering what purpose these abundant war memorials serve, or why similar monuments in Europe would have the function of making war acceptable and disguising its horrors, but not in Israel. While the contradiction inherent in Mosse's position is typical, it should not pass unnoticed. Mosse is unable to perceive that the two forms of nationalism he compares are not that dissimilar, because he is unwilling to consider the effect of Zionism on the Palestinian population whereas European nationalism is seen through the prism of anti-Semitism and the holocaust. His own nationalist affiliations compel him to see Zionism as having inherited only the positive, liberal and individualistic tendencies from Western nationalism, while avoiding all its drawbacks like the racialisation of the 'nation', and the marginalisation and exclusion of certain segments of society. It is difficult however to see how this could escape him given the fact that the State of Israel is founded on the concept of retaining a Jewish demographic majority through legislation and a myriad other policies.

Hence, despite Mosse's assertions to the contrary and despite Laqueur, Vital, Ephraim Karsh, Gershom Winer, Alan Dershowitz and a host of other Zionist enthusiasts; the influence of European, particularly German, nationalism on Zionism included the strong racial and exclusivist components that were so central to this ideology. Amongst European nationalisms, however, Zionism was unique for its lack of territorial basis, a common language, and culture on which to base its claims. The

Jewish religious tradition proved to be an adequate substitute, and the German concept of the 'volk' provided a section of the German-speaking Jewry with the ideological basis on which they built the notion of a Jewish nation, and then proceeded into acquiring territorial basis, reviving the Hebrew language and founding a state.

It is important to emphasise that most European nationalisms were imperial in nature as succinctly expressed by Fichte's earlier quote. Thus like some European nationalist and imperialist movements, Zionism viewed Europe as *the* world. Those outside this designation were regarded as instruments to be manipulated for the benefit of Europe. It is ironic that the very victims of European racism who were marginalized and excluded from Europe's definition of itself perpetrated the same ideology and policies against the people they regarded as inferior.

Moses Hess

To examine Zionism closely, I am going to analyse and locate the work of Moses Hess as an example of secular proto-Zionist political thought. Hess had a large spectrum of interests and passionately espoused a variety of causes in succession, immersing himself with fresh enthusiasm into each one of them. He was strongly interested in philosophy, especially Spinoza and Hegel, and later espoused socialism with a humanistic tinge, in 1852 engaged himself in the study of natural sciences. A decade later in 1862, Hess began his book *Rome and Jerusalem* with the following statement: 'After twenty years of estrangement I have returned to my people' (Hess 1862; in Hertzberg 1997, p. 119), and set forth the notion of Jewish nationalism, hoping to find some resonance and success among the Jewish communities of Europe. On the basis of the historic success of the Zionist movement in establishing a Jewish State in Palestine, Hess's svelte volume promoting Jewish nationalism, is now considered a starting point to any linear history of Zionism. However, at the time of its publication in 1862, the leader of the German Reform movement typified the reaction of German Jewry when he reviewed Hess's book with a derisive tone saying: 'an almost complete outsider, who, after bankruptcy as a socialist, and all kinds of swindles, wants to make a hit with nationalism...and along

with the question of restoring Czech, Montenegrin and Szekler nationality...wants to revive that of the Jews' (cited in Goldberg 1996, p. 19).

The title of Hess's nationalist manifesto, *Rome and Jerusalem*, is significant; at the time of writing the monograph in 1862, Italy was trying to revive its ancient glory and re-establish its position in Europe and the world. The very title is an injunction for European Jews to follow suit. The relationship between Rome and Jerusalem is ambivalent and intricate; Europeans and Jews are bound together by ties that go beyond Jewish settlement in Europe. For Judaism represents the *origin* of Christianity and its foundation, notwithstanding Christianity's assertion to have superseded its original roots and evolved into a truer, more humane form of religion. The roots of Western culture emerged and remain firmly within the Judaeo-Christian traditions.

Rome and Jerusalem represents an early example of the work of thinkers who are only able to understand and fully empathise with the victims of oppression, whether it be political, economic, social, racial or religious, as long as those victims are within the parameters of 'the West', i.e. from within the fold. Hess's imaginative capabilities as a socialist and advocate of Jewish nationalism fail to extend to include the plight of people outside the scope of the Judaeo-Christian world. Hess's heart was filled with 'great pain' at the plight of the European proletariat and with agony at the suffering of his 'unfortunate, maligned, despised and dispersed' co-religionists as a result of racism (Hess 1862, p. 119). This ethically-minded socialist fails to consider the impact the Jewish colonisation of Palestine on the indigenous population, although he celebrates the emergence of nationalism amongst the 'oppressed races' of Greece, Rome, Poland and Hungary against their 'arrogant' rulers.

In his treatise, Hess touches upon the most important elements essential for the initiation of a Jewish national movement. His thought was later appropriated by Herzl and the 'official' Zionist movement as a precursor, and in his book *On Zion: The History of an Idea* (originally published 1952) the philosopher Martin Buber considers him 'the founder of the modern Zionist system of thought' (1997, p. 111).

Hess's book is written with such passion that the allusion in the title to the fable of Romeo and Juliet is justified. His immediate concern is to stir nationalist sentiments in the heart of the Jewish communities leading to the establishment of colonies and eventually a state. Conveniently, he does not at all engage with the question of the Palestinian population, nevertheless his position can be deduced from his general outlook crisply summed up in this sentence: '...in the midst of my endeavours in [sic.] behalf of the European proletariat. My messianic belief was then, as it is today, the belief in the rebirth of the world historic civilized peoples through the elevation of the lowly people to the level of those who are in a higher state'. (Hess 1958, pp. 34-35, originally published 1862).

Historians of Zionism including Arthur Hertzberg (1997, p. 118), David Goldberg (1996, p. 14), and Maurice Bloom (in the preface to his 1958 translation of *Rome and Jerusalem*) agree that the rift that occurred between Marx and Engels on the one hand and Moses Hess on the other was caused by Hess's early rejection of materialistic determinism (to which he later accedes in a letter to Marx in 1846) and his ethical socialism and romantic love of man. This, however, is an oversimplification of the intellectual disagreement between them, Martin Buber's analysis goes deeper into Hess's political and intellectual positions while emphasising Hess's spiritual brand of socialism. Buber's most remarkable insight, in my opinion, relates to Hess's project of fitting socialism and materialist determinism into a 'cosmic' context through subjective methods: 'He discovers the springs of the working of history in himself, in his nature, in his memory, in his connection with the generations which have produced him, with his own "race" and with his own "tradition"' (Buber 1997, p. 114).

Hess develops the notion of Judaism *as* nationalism: 'nationality [is] the foundation of the Jewish religion' (1997, p. 124). He contends that the demise of Christianity is looming because it 'had to withdraw from national life', whereas for him 'the sense of Jewish nationality' is what preserved the Jewish faith throughout the ages (1997, p. 124). He argues that those who present Judaism as a mere faith 'ignore the great hope which created [the Jewish] faith and has preserved it through all the tempests of history – the hope of the restoration of the Jewish *nation*' (1997, p. 123,

my italics). He mounts a vociferous attack on the 'enlightened' and assimilated Jews of Europe, especially Germany, for attempting to undermine what he perceives to be the nationalistic character of Judaism.

Hess's most remarkable accomplishment is his vision and his analysis of the relationship between Judaism, nationalism and the state in any future Jewish dominion. He departs from the dominant and standard model of 'modern' statehood and nationality of his time which continues to inform political thought today. He postulates that the division and total separation of Church and State is a condition specific to Western Christendom but is alien to the Jewish religious doctrine. Therefore, in relation to a Jewish state, he rejects what is today called the 'secular' world view, which is the product of Enlightenment thought. He recognises that classical liberal political philosophy sought to establish a new social calculus that excludes traditional religion with its accompanying worldview and commitments. Thus when Hess speaks about 'the historical ideal of our people, an ideal which is neither more nor less than the reign of God upon earth' (Hess 1958, p. 1; Buber 1997, p. 117) he is affecting a departure from the dominant European paradigm and in the process professes to draw upon Jewish tradition where 'religion and politics, Church and State were intimately fused...' (Buber 1997, p. 114). However for a socialist who seeks to combine his spiritual and political ideology, Hess fails to identify the relation between secularism and capitalism.

The model of nationalism Hess proposes is typical in its utilisation of 'woman' as symbol of the 'nation', as well as the progenitor and bearer of the nation's 'honour': 'for it has truly been said that, as the Jews owe their redemption from Egypt to the moral purity of their women, so will they also be indebted to them for their final redemption' (Hess 1958, p. 13). Nationalist movements have traditionally adhered special significance to the role attributed to women in sustaining national consciousness, and have laid upon women's shoulders the responsibility of preserving traditions against the perceived onslaught of external influences. *Rome and Jerusalem* is written in the form of twelve letters addressed to an unnamed Jewess. In the First Letter, Hess declares, 'only when I saw you in your agony did my dormant national feelings reappear in my heart' (1958, p. 13). This is a common phenomenon within

nationalist discourse where women are postulated as the sustenance of the nationalist struggle and the protectors of nationalist values. Hess stipulates that ‘only a Jewish heart’ can feel intense family love that ‘springs from the blood, and yet is as pure as the spirit of God (1958, p. 14). The family is the nucleus of the Jewish ‘patriotism’ that Hess seeks to instil into European Jews; a form of nationalism that relies on blood ties, and racial bonds, yet is spiritual and divine in essence, for he maintains that ‘Judaism never separates the individual from the family, the family from the nation, the nation from humanity...nor these from the Creator’ (1958, p. 19). Every nationalist and colonialist movement has tended to view itself as unique, and it is thus for its adherents. However, it is possible to trace various affinities between, for example, the discourse of Indian nationalism, Rastafarianism, and Afrikaner nationalism.

Hess’s concepts of nationalism, race, and tradition are derived from the German nationalist movement of his time so that for him, ‘race struggle is primary, class struggle is secondary’ (1958, p. 9). His contribution lies in the application of this notion to a Jewish context. As far as Hess is concerned a nation consists of a single racial entity. He thus advances the notion of a single Jewish race: ‘the Jewish race is a primary race which, despite climactic influences, accommodates to all conditions and retains its integrity. The Jewish type has always remained indelibly the same throughout the centuries’ (1958, p. 26). He goes on to give anthropological and archaeological evidence of the distinctiveness of the ‘Jewish race’ and concludes that, ‘later Egyptian monuments also show us Jews whose resemblance to our present co-religionist [sic.] is striking’ (1958, p. 26).

For Hess, as for many other Zionist theorists, the need to gain the respect of Western Europe is paramount, ‘We will always remain strangers among the nations which might well emancipate us out of humanitarianism and a feeling of justice but will never, never respect us as long as we ignore our great national tradition...In spite of all enlightenment and emancipation, the Jew of the Diaspora who denies his nationalism will still not win the respect of the nations’ (1958, p. 34). Like the nationalist rabbis before him and ‘official’ Zionism afterwards, Hess seeks equality with white, Christian Europe whilst simultaneously desiring to maintain the

distinctiveness of the Jewish tradition. He maintains that if confronted by the painful choice between ‘Emancipation’ on the one hand, and the emergence of Jewish nationalism on the other, he would ‘sacrifice’ emancipation for the sake of awakening and preserving a Jewish nationalist movement and establishing a strong sense of belonging among the Jewish people to their shared history and religion (Hess 1958).

Hess develops a version of historical determinism in which social and racial evolution would lead to the establishment of a messianic state on earth. He predicts an inevitable strife between the various ‘original tribes’ of the human race that will finally be resolved as humanity reaches a stage of harmonious cooperation between the ‘civilized nations’ under the guidance of the people of Israel and according to their model, for ‘the holy spirit rests upon Israel whenever the life of humanity is faced with a new historical development’ (Hess 1958, p. 45). The significance Hess ascribes to the concept of ‘race’ is directly related to his notion of nationalism. He maintains an over-simplified equivalence between race and nation that leads to the conclusion that Jews cannot belong to any European nation, but must perforce be a nation of themselves and therefore require a ‘native soil’. He also upholds a hierarchical taxonomy of races where what he perceives to be a ‘Jewish race’ is positioned at the top as bearers of divine revelation and guidance. The special Jewish relationship with divinity renders the Jews an instrument for the realisation of divine ends:

‘It was only by means of the religious genius of the Jews and its revelation that we have an unbroken and uniform, sacred, historical development which like the development of the cosmic and organic life is in itself the final proof for the divine rule in nature and history.’ (Hess 1958, p. 45)

Hess’s position on racial hierarchy, colonisation and nationalism is typical of the era of European imperialism and expansionism.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer of Thorn is quoted at length in the 12th letter of *Rome and Jerusalem* as evidence of the support of religious authorities to the establishment of Jewish settlements or colonies in Palestine. Hess finds inspiration in Kalischer’s practicality and his willingness to furnish religious evidence and extend a helping hand from the ‘the pious Jews’ to the ‘enlightened Jews’. Such statements offer glimpses into Hess’s own position as an emancipated German Jew, who settled in France and immersed himself in its culture. The enterprise of Jewish nationalism is

clearly modelled on the pattern of European colonial projects and he plans it as follows:

The acquisition of a common native soil, the aiming toward legal conditions under whose protection work can prosper, the founding of Jewish organisations for agriculture, industry and commerce in accordance with Mosaic, i.e. socialist, principles, these are the foundations on which the flickering fire of ancient Jewish patriotism will burst forth again, through which the whole of Judaism will become revitalised. (Hess 1958, p. 85)

The contradiction inherent in Hess's position is to afflict the Zionist movement from its 'official' inception at the hands of Herzl to the present: a movement initiated by secular, assimilated European Jews that seeks to make a 'nation' out of a religious community; a movement to create a European-style secular state on the basis of a religion; a movement that seeks to emphasise the distinctive culture and history of the Jews from the rest of Europe, but asserts its mission as an outpost of European civilisation in Asia; a movement that emphasises the European oppression of the Jews, yet depends on the support of the 'civilized nations' of Europe and the 'great powers' for its survival and success. In short, in their 'departure' from Europe (whether physical or by mere embracing of Zionist ideology), the Zionists sought to perform an act by which they assert their belonging and their parity with Europe. In *Rome and Jerusalem*, Moses Hess suggested that after the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine the time will be ripe to change the Law.

Hess cites the example of Ernst Laharanne's book *The New Oriental Question* (1860) as proof that 'not only Jews of different lands and degrees of culture but also the many Christian denominations and civilized nations join in the desire to assist our people again to its national inheritance; and what is most remarkable about this is that they all agree in [sic.] the methods which they propose toward this goal' (Hess 1958, p. 87). The method he refers to is described as the gradual acquisition of land, through establishing agricultural colonies, and a 'Society' or 'Fund' to finance these and other large scale projects in Palestine. Towards the end of *Rome and Jerusalem*, Hess outlines his vision of a Jewish state in more detail;

When political conditions in the Orient shape themselves so as to permit the organisation of a beginning of the restoration of a Jewish state, this beginning

will express itself in the founding of Jewish colonies in the land of their ancestors, to which enterprise France will undoubtedly lend a hand. France, beloved friend is the saviour who will restore our people to its place in universal history. (in Hertzberg 1997, p. 133)

Hess clearly understands that what he assigns as the Jewish ‘national inheritance’ is populated by another people who, he deems, are decidedly not of the ‘civilized nations’. He explains that the country is in conditions of poverty and subjugation which need to be remedied before it is fit to be a Jewish homeland (Hess 1862). He is optimistic, however, that the international political milieu, as well as fate and divinity, are on the Jewish side: ‘is not the road of civilization being laid in the desert by the digging of the Suez Canal, and by the work on a railroad which will connect Europe and Asia? To be sure, none of this reflects any intention to re-establish our nation, but you know the proverb: Man proposes and God disposes’. The high hopes he pins on France include support to ‘found colonies which may extend from Suez to Jerusalem and from the banks of the Jordan to the coast of the Mediterranean’ (Hess 1862 in Hertzberg 1997, p. 133).⁵ Hess quotes a few pages from Ernst Laharanne’s *The New Oriental Question*, most significant is Laharanne’s assertion that,

You [the Jews] shall be the bearers of civilization to peoples who are still inexperienced and their teachers in the European sciences, to which your race has contributed so much. You shall be the mediators between Europe and far Asia, opening the roads that lead to India and China – those unknown regions which must ultimately be thrown open to civilization. You will come to the land of your fathers decorated with the crown of age-long martyrdom, and there finally, you will be completely healed from all you ills! (Hess 1862 in Hertzberg 1997, p. 134)

Laharanne’s quote crystallises the Zionist attitude; he shares the anti-Semitic notion, prevalent at the time, that the Jews generally suffer from a sort of ‘malaise of the spirit’ that causes them to be different from the rest of the European population. However, by penetrating the virgin lands of Asia and laying them open to European colonisation, and by bearing the white man’s burden of ‘enlightening’ the savages of Asia they will have crowned their centuries-old martyrdom in the cause of European ‘civilization’. By committing the final and ultimate act of conquering the earth on behalf of Europe, thus becoming an integral part of the European colonial enterprise

⁵ The 1958 translation of *Rome and Jerusalem* by Rabbi Maurice Bloom does not include this excerpt and does not put ellipsis in place of the omitted text.

(and in consequence dissolve that difference that kept them apart from Europe) the Jews would henceforth be healed from their malaise – that of ‘difference’.

Hess’s version of historical determinism signals ‘the end of history’ (in a sense not dissimilar to Francis Fukuyama’s):

After our critical era, the last crisis in world history, will have passed away ...then the Reformists, the Rabbinic Jews, and the Chasidism will also disappear without leaving a trace as did the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes in antiquity. (1958, p. 43)

All factions will disappear, prophesies Hess, leaving only ‘mainstream’ Judaism, as he conceives of it, and the nations which ‘owe their historic faith to Judaism’ after having awakened to a new life (1958, p. 43). Hess’s attack on the Reform movement caricatures it as simply an attempt to eradicate Judaism and assimilate it into the prevalent and hegemonic European culture,

The threatening danger to Judaism comes only from those religious reformers... [who] have sucked the marrow out of Judaism and have left only a shadowy skeleton of this most magnificent of all historical phenomena... They cultivated a religious reform that was not in keeping with the spirit of the age, that was fashioned in imitation of Christian models, and that was, therefore, a stillborn notion... (Hess in Hertzberg 1997, p. 123-124)

This attack, which is sustained throughout *Rome and Jerusalem*, does not specify any particular reformists or their publications other than a vague notion of Reform Judaism as undermining what he perceives to be the ‘essentially national character of Judaism’ (Hess 1997, p. 124). Hess’s perception of Judaism as first and foremost a nationalistic and tribal religion can itself be considered a reinterpretation of classical Judaism or an attempt to impede its evolution and transform it to a political nationalist movement instead of a religion.

The essentially paradoxical state of Hess’s notion of a Jewish ‘nationality’ forces him to reduce Judaism to a patriotic sentiment. He attacks what he perceives to be the modernising tendencies, whereas the nation-state model he is seeking for the Jewish people is a modern development which started in Latin America by the creoles and proceeded in Europe and other parts in the world as Benedict Anderson amply explains (see Chapter I). The short blueprint of a Jewish state that Hess presents in the

11th letter in *Rome and Jerusalem* reflects a typical colonial pattern and enlists the support of the ‘great powers’ of the day especially France. He advocates the founding of Jewish colonies extending from Suez Egypt to Jerusalem in Palestine and from the banks of the River Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea accompanied by supporting Jewish institutions and eventually the establishment of a Jewish state adhering to what he calls ‘Mosaic’ principles. Extraordinarily enough, with a stroke of his pen he equated these principles with Judaism, which in turn is re-incarnated as socialism in one fraught sentence.

It is important to note that, albeit he does not state this expressly, Hess was aware that his project is the extortion of a land from its inhabitants and would essentially involve conflict; he maintains that the Jewish people are one race, the direct descendent of the ancient Jewish tribes, and this race is appointed for a ‘historical mission’ ‘to dare claim its ancient fatherland, not only from God in its prayers, as hitherto, but also from men’ (Hess 1997, p. 138). He invokes the biblical narratives of the ancient heroic Jewish fighters

who took up the struggle with the mightiest peoples of the ancient world, with Egypt and Assyria, with Greece and Rome, and fought through until the end of that world, which they alone survived, as children of the same tribe who like no other people in world history have endured steadfastly a two thousand years martyrdom and ever carried aloft and held sacred the banner of its nationality, the Scroll of the Law, for whose sake it was persecuted. (1958, p. 85)

The above is a narrative that can be contested. However, the important point to make here is that Hess regards the ‘Jewish race’ the only one which is worthy of being considered alive at all from amongst all the groups he mentions. This, along with other covert statements, reflect his attitude to any indigenous group which might inhabit the land he aspires to possess. He easily dismisses any society which is not a part of the Western European countries which constituted the ‘great powers’ of his time, Western Europe alone is worthy of serious consideration. Even when he discusses the Jewish people, he makes a clear distinction between the ‘enlightened’ Jews of Western Europe and their poor ‘unfortunate brethren’ of East Europe (Hess 1997, p. 138). The Jewish communities of Africa or Asia do not prefigure in the course of his treatise on Jewish nationalism.

In his version of Judaism as patriotism (he alternates the two terms), Hess finds a solution not only to what in Europe was called ‘the Jewish problem’, but also to the ailments of the world. He places Judaism above all creeds, though he, very facilely, equates it with his political creed of socialism. He considers both Christianity and Islam inferior and both have ultimately failed to bring about universal brotherhood and civilization, ‘Christianity and Islam are both only inscriptions on the tombstones which barbaric oppression erected upon the graves of the nations.’ (Hess 1997, p. 122) ⁶

Hess’s version of Judaism is, to say the least, debatable as the previous chapter on religious Zionism illustrates. He defends his ‘nationalist’ project against assimilated European Jews and what he calls the ‘educated parvenus’ of Europe who advocate a stronger Jewish sense of belonging to their European heritage and larger participation in the affairs of their countries, especially in the light of the relatively newly-gained emancipation. On the other hand, he deliberately construes the Jewish prayers for the return to Jerusalem as a desire for a Jewish *state* and uses these as proof that the pious Jews are ‘on his side’, as it were. He quotes Rabbi Kalischer at length to assert that ‘the pious Jews of East Europe would extend their hand to the enlightened Jews on the common basis of our nationalism’ (Hess 1958, p. 87). Curiously enough, he does not engage with anti-nationalism from the ranks of the pious; no Talmudic objections to the creation of a state before the advent of the Messiah are presented or dealt with.

It is easy to dismiss Moses Hess as an old-fashioned nationalist or imperialist. After all he was only urging the European Jews to take part in the expansionist ideology of the time on a more independent basis. However, his vision is in fact ahead of its time in that even though he was a socialist and one of those ‘enlightened’ Jews (often the subject of his attacks), he still manages to forge a nationalist vision which combines, on the one hand, elements of the modern, secular, European nation-state model and on the other, elements of the religious Jewish Messianic state dream in

⁶ This paragraph, in addition to a few others, are not in the 1958 translation of *Rome and Jerusalem* by Rabbi Maurice J. Bloom. It would appear to me that the Rabbi strategically neglected to translate those passages he thought could be related to the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict.

which political and religious ‘commandments’ become one. Hess’s project is vague; his tone is simultaneously mystic and socialist so that Buber’s description of him as ‘the first religious socialist in the history of Zionism’ is most ample (Buber 1997, p. 119). Perhaps his most remarkable achievement lies in his notion of Judaism as primarily nationalism. Although this is a notion that is contested by many, it is one that Hess explores and develops in *Rome and Jerusalem* more than any other Zionist thinker of his time. Dogmatic faith, he passionately argues, is threatened by ‘intellectual progress’ and the ‘nationalistic and humanistic aspirations of our time’ (1997, p. 125). Thus, Christianity is a ‘religion of death’ and ‘its mission is ended the moment the nations reawaken to life’ (Hess 1997, p. 122). This insight proves him, again, ahead of his time as Judaism develops into a form of nationalism and a sense of belonging to the Jewish State as religion recedes to the background and periphery of modern life leaving its space to nationalist and cultural allegiances.

Official Zionism and political campaigning: Herzl

Official Zionism was launched with the advent of the extraordinary Herzelian phenomenon on the international political scene. The expression ‘official Zionism’ is a re-working of the title ‘Official Nationalism and Imperialism’ which Benedict Anderson gives to Chapter Six in his *Imagined Communities* (originally published in 1983). My perception and definition of Zionism is that it comprises elements of both nationalism and imperialism and it is essentially also a movement of colonialism. Anderson explains what he dubs ‘the character of official nationalism’ as follows:

An anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalisation or exclusion from the emerging nationally-imagined community. (Anderson 1991, p. 101)

This definition also applies to Zionism where European Jews not only anticipated, but also witnessed their marginalisation and exclusion from the various emerging European nationalist movements. The German case and its developments during World War II offer an extreme example. Jews responded by creating their own official nationalist movement modelled on the European style. However, the lack of an actual territorial base led them to use the Bible as an officially accepted history to rediscover the land of their perceived ancient glory. The choice of Palestine offered

them an essential ingredient of nationalism – namely, that of antiquity. Theorists of nationalism have shown that in the process of forging a national community a nation almost always imagines itself to have ancient roots. The most succinct, but probably truest, description of nationhood is that it is ‘the expression of a radically changed form of consciousness’ (Anderson 1991, p. xiv) which entails forgetting a part of the older consciousness, its banishment and expulsion from the collective memory of the nation, and the subsequent ‘creation’ of an alternative genealogical narrative (Anderson 1991, pp. 187-207).

The official version of Zionism set out on its path which necessitated the creation of a Jewish nation rather than separate and heterogeneous German Jewry, Russian Jewry and English or Polish Jewish communities, etc. Where I think Zionism differs slightly from Benedict Anderson’s definition is in his notion about ‘power groups’ or ‘dominant groups’ (Anderson 1991, pp. 109, 101) initiating official nationalism as a strategic response for survival. For Anderson, official nationalism is started primarily by power elites, primarily dynastic and aristocratic, who are in most cases conservative (Anderson 1991, p. 83-111). Zionist ideologues and activists were not a dominant power in Europe, albeit their interests coincided with those of ruling European power groups as well as anti-Semitic nationalists. However, among the Jewish communities in Europe, Zionists came to represent a dominant group. They were also powerful in relation to the Palestinians who were under Ottoman rule then the British mandate while Zionism was appropriating their lands for its national aspirations through colonial settlement inspired by nationalist aspirations.

Herzl and the proto- and early Zionists regarded Zionism as the saviour of the Jewish people from European anti-Semitism and the harbinger of modernity and prosperity to backward Asia. When the colonisation movement in Palestine began to grow stronger and enjoy the support and prestige of being a wing in an organised international political movement, Zionist thinkers and activists expressed the moral superiority of their position as resting on the superior modern agricultural methods they were able to implement in Palestine. They purported to have more ‘right’ to Palestine due to their ability to realise what they regarded as the maximum potential

of the land, in contrast to the age-old Arab agricultural methods which, they insisted, were backward and thus deserved to be superseded and replaced.

Such claims are over-used in imperial and colonial discourse and rarely materialise. In the Zionist instance in particular such claims were belied by the fact that the colonial settlements were for Jews only and that the eventual rejection of Palestinian labour was an ideology promoted by Zionist leaders and a policy applied throughout the kibbutzim. In a significant 1916 publication compiled by Harry Sacher called *Zionism and the Jewish Future*, which outlined Zionist colonial efforts, hopes and aspirations at that early stage, an article entitled 'The Jews and the Economic Development of Palestine' by S. Tolkowsky, who introduces himself as an agricultural engineer in Jaffa, states:

[T]he Arabs for centuries have practised a system of tillage which has seriously impoverished the soil; moreover, the yield of their crops is very meagre... The Jews have succeeded in increasing the productive qualities of the soil to a marked degree; while, at the same time, the employment of adequate machinery has introduced modern methods of cultivation and has enabled them to raise the produce of various crops to quite remarkable proportions. (1916, pp. 144-145)

Tolkowsky goes on to catalogue the commercial enterprises, the services and schooling offered to the Jewish colonists in order for them to master modern agricultural and commercial techniques. He cites the 'cheap and comfortable homes' given to Jewish families and singles as well as various other remarkable welfare services that the Zionist organisations provide to the Jewish colonial settlers. Such modernisation measures and ways of life were considered virtuous in themselves and therefore had the right to supplant not just the indigenous way of life but also the indigenous population itself, since it was perceived to have failed to lead a modern, prosperous way of life. The success that Zionism enjoyed in its early years enabled this position.

Herzl's life and work has been probed and examined by many: Zionist historians, ideologues, critics and anti-Zionist commentators alike. Some writers, of the Zionist conviction, erect a heroic monument and censor Herzl's own remarks that they find out of fashion. Anti-Zionists are keen on quoting those Herzlian statements

that contradict the romantic, heroic figure that Zionism seeks to portray in order to reveal manipulative and cunning strategies for wresting a Jewish homeland. It is symptomatic of the Zionist debate that both Zionist and anti-Zionists strive to assume the moral high ground and load their respective positions with high ethical values and moral standards.

It was Herzl's contributions to Zionism which gave it a confident start. His achievements were crystallised in his initiation of the official Zionist movement by convening high profile Zionist Congresses where Jews of all nationalities, political and ideological convictions were invited to buttress his efforts to found a home for the Jews in order to circumvent anti-Semitism and relieve Jewish poverty in Eastern Europe. Herzl's ideals, strategies and policies were at times ruthless and at others deceiving and often egotistic. Some writers seek to explain, justify, or excuse Herzl by going as far as claiming he was under such strain as to render him mentally unstable in 1895 during writing his major work *The State of the Jews* (Goldberg 1996, p. 35, 40), a pamphlet whose publication can be taken as roughly the date of the launch of the official Zionist movement. In any case a treatise that purports to contribute to the understanding of Zionism has to engage with Herzl's contributions and his legacy.

Herzl's Jewish state project was an attempt to offer a solution to the so-called 'Jewish problem'. The narrative he subscribed to was one where Jews were continuously persecuted everywhere and as such, by some bizarre twist, it was they (rather than their persecutors) who constituted a problem that urgently needs to be addressed to the satisfaction of their adversaries and themselves. Herzl maintained that the sole means by which to deal with this problem was to establish a nation-state of the Jews, where poverty-stricken Jews could commence the efforts of building a state that would, at a later stage, accommodate the 'assimilated' and 'enlightened' Jews of Western Europe if the need arose. The project assumed a certain degree of truth in the totality of anti-Semitic charges levelled against the Jewish people to the extent that Herzl appeared at times to be the anti-Semitic par excellence. He was shrewd enough to realise that 'the movement cannot even be carried out without the friendly co-operation of interested governments, who would derive considerable

benefit from it' (Herzl 1993, p. 20). He asserted that the Jewish question was one of the dark problems of 'humanity' that 'exists wherever the Jews live in perceptible numbers. [And] where it does not exist, it is carried by Jews in the course of their migrations' (1993, pp. 14-15).⁷ According to Herzl, the Jews as such have a distinct 'nationality' that cannot be destroyed because 'external enemies consolidate it' (Herzl 1993, p. 18). He thus denies Jewish communities any form of 'agency' and declares the Jewish 'nationality' and 'peoplehood' a mere response to anti-Semitism. On the other hand, he portrays anti-Semitism as vibrant and influential. Herzl invokes the assistance of the anti-Semites to help solve the 'problem' which, he insists, 'can only be solved by making it a political world-question to be discussed and settled by the civilised nations of the world in council' (Herzl 1993, p. 15). Such penetrating discernment reflects Herzl's faculty for political perspicacity, his understanding of the international political scene of his time and his insight into the possible future political prospects for Jews. His vision establishes *The Jewish State* (or *The State of the Jews*) as the first Zionist political manifesto, a manifesto that prescribes a programme of action that Herzl tirelessly pursues until his death in 1904.

In proposing to solve the Jewish problem by evacuating Jews from their prosperous countries of residence into a sort of 'virgin land' (Argentina and Palestine are suggested as possible destinations at this stage), Herzl is also rejecting the principles of democracy and citizenship that were the premises of the French Revolutionary liberal idea. He thus aligns himself with the so-called German 'Romantic' nationalists such as Fichte, Herder and Wagner against the French 'liberal, democratic' values as promulgated by the Rousseauvian 'contract' between citizen and state (Avineri 1999, pp. 1-46).

Critics suggested that Herzl's Zionism was not just a response to a particular anti-Semitic incident in France, namely the Dreyfus affair, but was born out of careful

⁷ Herzl was a political conservative and a classicist who confessed in his diaries that 'if there is one thing I should like to be, it is a member of the old Prussian nobility.' Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Raphael Patai, 5 vols. (New York and London: Herzl Press and Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), p. 196. He, therefore, conceived of his enterprise in those class terms: 'we shall not revert to a lower stage, we shall rise to a higher one... We shall not leave an old home before the new one is prepared for us... Thus, the exodus [from current Jewish abodes] will be at the same time an ascent of the classes.' Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State: An Attempt at a Modern Solution of the Jewish Question*, trans. Sylvie D'avigdor (London: Henry Pordes, 1993), p. 20.

consideration of the political situation of Europe at the time. Avineri sums up Herzl's perception of the situation as follows:

[The solution to the Jewish question] had to be political and immediate... The Jewish question was an expression of the deep crisis of European society, and this society was unable to solve it: hence a solution had to be found outside of Europe through the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth. (Avineri 1999, pp. 12-13)

Herzl's reference to the Dreyfus affair was much more complex than just his revulsion at the Anti-Semitism involved, but it transcended this to a general disgust towards the failure of the French judicial system, the intrigues, the corruption, and the chauvinism that engulfed the official sections of French society (Avineri 1999, p. 4). By extension, he is also disappointed with notions of liberal democracy and inclusive nationhood on which this society claimed to be founded. He makes his own position and national belonging clear when he says,

I am a German Jew from Hungary and can never be anything but a German. At present I am not recognised as a German. But that will come when we are over there. And so let everyone keep his acquired nationality and speak the language which has become the beloved homeland of his thoughts. (1960, p. 171; Avineri 1999, p. 23)

Herzl yearns to be accepted as a German but realises that it is very difficult for him to be fully accepted as a 'true' German due to complex political, social, and even racial reasons. For despite the 'emancipation' of the Jews from the ghettos, many European societies continued to be anti-Semitic in more subtle ways. For example, a particular form of Protestantism became an integral part of the German self-image and identity. Herzl witnessed the rise of anti-Semitism in Eastern and Central Europe as well as German speaking lands such as the Austro-Hungarian empire, including Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, Galicia, Bukovina and Transylvania. Conflicting national claims within the Austro-Hungarian Empire placed the Jewish communities in the difficult position of having to identify or side with one party against the other while risking rejection from both. Many Jews who identified with the leading German culture were met by the introduction of 'Aryan clauses' in their statutes banning Jews from joining them.

Herzl's diaries reflect his conviction that the threat of disintegration facing the Habsburg Dual Monarchy was a threat to the Jewish stable position within this Empire. The Austro-Hungarian treaty of 1867 established a fragile constitutional compromise between Hungarian aspirations for independence and Emperor Francis Joseph's desire for a strong, centralized empire as a source of power after Austria's defeat in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. The unequal treatment accorded the different minorities within the Empire left many groups disaffected and inflamed nationalist and separatist sentiments, especially amongst the Czechs and the Serbs. Furthermore, Hungarian nationalists desired total independence and Austrian Pan-Germans advocated the union of German-speaking Austria with Germany (Herzl 1960, vol. 2, pp. 658-670; Avineri 1999, pp. 8-13).

Thus, amongst such an exceedingly powerful nationalist ambience, Herzl's proposition of a 'nationalist' solution to what he envisaged as the 'Jewish problem' in Europe should not come as a surprise, nor should the significant influence of German nationalism, despite the accompanying anti-Semitism. The Jewish sense of belonging to German culture and the subsequent rejection of the Jewish population under the pretext of racial and cultural reasons was a blow to Herzl and to other German speaking Jews. The national pride that Germany created and heavily promoted could not find an outlet in the Jewish case, but was met by rejection. Herzl's statements relating to Germany strongly reflect the yearning to be accepted, the disappointment at rejection and contempt, and the need for an alternative nationalist ideal that would not replace Germany but would probably prove Jewish worth and eventually lead to acceptance of Jews as *equals* even if in a different space.

Various ethnic groups in Europe were struggling for their autonomy and in many cases independence and the Jews, as evidenced from the countless pronouncements of Zionists at the outset of the movement, aspired to similar status but were not able to claim any European territory as their own. Therefore, Herzl flirted with the options of Argentinean regions in South America, Uganda in Africa, Sinai in Egypt (al-Arish project) and Palestine. Palestine, however, carried a special significance due to the history associated with it and its special place in the Jewish religion. It is important to emphasise that for Herzl any good location was acceptable

as a State for the Jews. However, the adamant attachment of the religious Eastern European Jews to Palestine eventually carried the day as evidenced by the events of the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basle in 1903.

Herzl's attitude towards Palestine

Herzl's intervention in European Jewish affairs succeeded in achieving what he initially aspired to in *The Jewish State*, his efforts on behalf of the Zionist cause are chronicled in Zionist History books. His own stature rose from being an anonymous Vienna journalist into a political leader negotiating on behalf of the Jewish population of Europe. Despite setbacks, like the deep division with the Russian Jews over the Uganda project proposal, Herzl initiated the Zionist movement and inscribed the path for his followers. Herzl visited Palestine in 1898 and his attitude to the country, along with the position he makes evident in his novel *Old New Land* (1997, originally published 1902), are of crucial importance to consideration of his Zionism. His view of Palestine resembles that of many Western European tourists and travellers of the time. This is important in as far as it modifies and qualifies his Zionism as a national movement and re-positions it as a colonial one.

The encounter with Palestine reveals Herzl's to be the typical 19th century European tourist with a decidedly orientalist perspective. His description of Jerusalem reflects his delight by the bright colours of the Orient and his disgust at the poverty, typified by swarms of beggars and what he calls the dirtiness, and 'humiliation' of the country. He talks of 'poverty and misery and heat in gay colours' and the 'neglected Arab countryside' and 'the foul-smelling alleys' (Avineri 1999, p. 19). His immediate plan is to clean up the city of Jerusalem and renovate it, and transfer the population outside its borders building European-style neighbourhoods instead. Interestingly, he hopes the European immigrants will build residential quarters identical to the architectural styles of their previous countries of residence. His colonial 'gaze' regards with contempt the Palestinian landscape which he simultaneously seeks to possess and radically transform into an identical image of the European self.

Herzl's attitude towards Palestine is imperial par excellence. He takes it for granted that the Palestinians cannot rule themselves but must be lorded over by European masters, and, in addition, expects them to be content to submit to their new masters' ambitions regarding their own lands: 'all Palestine talks about our nationalist plan. Afterall, we are the hereditary lords of the land. The Turkish occupation forces of Jerusalem are weak at present – about 600 men' (Herzl 1960, vol. 2, p. 517). In his first letter to Ahmed Midhat Effendi, one of Sultan Abdul Hamid's favourite courtiers, he promises handsome financial rewards to stabilise the rapidly disintegrating financial conditions of the Turkish Empire in return for overlooking any questions regarding the rights of the indigenous population of Palestine:

The necessary land purchases would be made entirely without constraint. It cannot be a question of "dispossessing" anyone at all. Ownership is a private right and cannot be violated. The Sultan's private domains could be paid for in cash according to their value, if he desires to sell. (Herzl 1960, vol. 2, p. 551)

Scrupulous qualms about dispossessing the indigenous population and about their rights are brushed aside by the luring monetary prize he is offering to buy any ethical reservations the Ottoman Sultan may have: 'As regards the questions of "people's rights" in the arrangement, the equivalent produced by the Jews would be an annual tribute paid to His Majesty' (Herzl 1960, vol. 2, p. 551). He presupposes that any ethical reservations on the part of the Turkish Sultan are only raised in order to bargain for a higher price; the typical 'orientalist' attitude that regards 'orientals' as greedy and corrupt. It is true that the Ottoman empire was in a state of intense decline and was ruled by an archaic, obsolete system that hastened its disintegration. It is also true that some of the officials of the 'Sublime Porte' were liable to bribery. However, historical records show that the Sultan rejected Herzl's alluring offer in a graceful, dignified fashion that reflected leadership and loyalty to the interests of his empire:

We will ... cover [the Empire] with our blood before we allow it to be wrested away from us. The men of two of my regiments from Syria and Palestine let themselves be killed one by one at Plevna. Not one of them yielded; they all gave their lives on that battlefield. The Turkish Empire belongs not to me, but to the Turkish people. I cannot give away any part of it. Let the Jews save their billions.' (cited in Herzl 1960, vol. 1, p. 378)

Easily moved by gallantry and passionate nationalistic gestures, Herzl was overwhelmed by the vehemence of the Sultan's response,

I was touched and shaken by the truly lofty words of the Sultan, although for the time being they dashed all my hopes. There is tragic beauty in this fatalism which will bear death and dismemberment, yet will fight to the last breath, even if only through passive resistance. (Herzl 1960, vol. 1, pp. 378-379)

However, Herzl's visit to Constantinople from 17th till 28th June 1896 was not a total failure. In the Ottoman Empire, legal and societal organisation of communities was defined along a number of criteria including family vocational category, local belonging and language but above all religious affiliation (Özdemir 2008, pp. 20-21). The Jewish minority in the Ottoman Empire was considered a separate and distinct religious community and was granted a certain amount of autonomy. Thus, the Turks dealt with Herzl as a representative of the 'Jewish people', without questioning the legitimacy of his leadership, wherein lay Herzl's greatest achievement for the cause of Zionism. Before him Jewish notables, thinkers or religious leaders purported to represent certain interests of some Jews in any given country, but he was the first to claim to represent the interests of the Jewish people as a 'nation'. Zionist scholars like David Vital, especially in *The Origins of Zionism*, and Shlomo Avineri (1999, pp. 1-46) drawing on Vital's voluminous work, emphasise Herzl's 'negotiation' on behalf of 'the Jewish people' acting as a *statesman*, which was 'qualitatively different' from the old-style 'intercession and petitioning' on behalf of some Jewish groups as an expression of a 'notable Jew's private moral duty' (Vital 1975, p. 297). Herzl also manipulated stereo-typical images of Jews to his own advantage, sometimes invoking fear of Jewish power while at other times luring his adversaries with hyperbolic Jewish influence: 'the energy and importance of Jews in commerce and finance are well known. It is a river of gold, of progress, of vitality which the Sultan will admit into his Empire with the Jews', he wrote to Ahmed Midhat Effendi (1960, vol. 2, p. 552).

As was an assimilated secular Jew, Herzl did not speak any Hebrew and knew very little about Jewish life and culture. Until the publication of his *State of the Jews* he had not read any of the religious precursors of Zionism discussed earlier and had no idea about the existence of the Hibbat Zion movement in Russia. However, he was later guided by those who followed the movement he launched. Along the way he learnt to reconcile those aspects of Jewish life which were alien to him with his own secularist convictions and way of life. He was decidedly the diplomatic and political

pioneer and the one who unified and integrated the different strands of Zionist activity and thrust them into the world stage with unprecedented assertive confidence and prowess.

Zionism and ‘the Other’

Like other colonial movements, Zionism sought to justify itself through what Edward Said described as ‘culture’ or a formidable and discursively consistent body of knowledge that supports and reinforces it. Zionism, thus, discursively denied the existence of the indigenous population, perfectly summarised in the Zionist adage: ‘a land without a people for a people without a land’. Herzl and many other political or official Zionists after him avoided a direct, open and fair discussion of what they mutely referred to as ‘the Arab problem’, namely the fact that the land they aspired to make an exclusive state of the Jews was populated by other people. In their world-wide propaganda campaign, Zionists deliberately portrayed their movement as a nationalist one seeking to liberate Jews from European domination, and although they openly referred to their colonial endeavours by their name, Zionist discourse generally regarded the dispossession of a non-European population as a commendable achievement. The Palestinians were generally either entirely ignored or outrightly denied, or at best were considered a hindrance to the accomplishment of the benign Zionist nationalist goals. In their discourse, Zionist activists and ideologues brushed aside any reservations and suppressed questions raised by the existence of a population settled in Palestine by hastening to assert that the Arabs of Palestine will benefit enormously from Zionist colonial settlement of their land. The character Raschid Bey, in Herzl’s novel *Old New Land*, represents the mouthpiece of the indigenous population; he is portrayed as welcoming Zionist efforts for the sake of financial gain. In the 2nd Volume of Herzl’s *Diaries*, he talks of Palestinians accepting European Jews as the rightful inheritors of their lands.

Although clearly there were internal factors at work in the political economy of Palestine, the discourses of diplomacy and ‘Western’ style international political campaigning were ultimately the deciding factors that enabled the eventual Zionist achievement of statehood. However, the Palestinian population did not have access to that hegemonic discourse and were therefore divested of the means to defend

themselves in the international political arena. The Levantine regions were under Ottoman rule and experienced a radically different existence from that of Herzl and his fellow Zionists, and also from the Russian colonists in Palestine who were either supported by wealthy Jewish philanthropists or became under Herzl's wing. The Palestinian officials who worked for the Ottomans strove to restrict Jewish hegemony over Palestine and Zionist annexation of land but their influence was far from decisive.

In the Herzlian form of Zionism, nationalism and colonialism coincided perfectly. Colonial appropriation of land was of major pillar upon which the realisation of Jewish statehood rested. At this stage, the project rested upon the shoulders of European Jews. Non-European Jews from different regions, including Arabic-speaking regions, the Levant and others, were later brought in to assist with performing different jobs, including cultivating the land, and to shift the demographic nature of Palestine in favour of the Jewish settlers. The ethno-nationalist sense of superiority the settlers exhibited, the exclusive character of the institutions they established and, above all, the rejection of Palestinian labour led to violent resistance from the indigenous Palestinians. A most decisive factor was, of course, the interests of world powers in Europe, North America and Russia.

The position of the Arab Jews who were brought into the Zionist fold in the early stages of the Zionist enterprise is interesting. In 1917, European colonists organised for Arab Jews to emigrate to Palestine despite the fact that according to Tolkowsky: 'For a long time the Jews of Arabia had led a happy and prosperous life' (1916, p. 154). The Arabic speaking Jews had no Zionist ideological convictions at the outset; they espoused Zionist ideals at a later stage. These people represented a valuable labour force in the light of two important assets they enjoyed; firstly, they were a 'completely Arabised tribe, accustomed to the climate', and secondly, this community was 'very modest in its requirements' (Tolkowsky 1916, pp. 154-155). Tolkowsky explains that the Jewish National Fund sent representatives to Yemen 'in order to preach and organise the return of Jews to Zion'. The JNF then endowed them with benefits: 'the Jewish National Fund settles them in the immediate neighbourhood of the great Jewish agricultural centres, each family receiving a small house with a bit

of good agricultural soil (Tolkowsky 1916, p. 155). Needless to say, the 'Arabised Jews' were deemed inferior to European Jews; they were mere tools for the realisation of Zionist objectives. Their value lay in their labour and their low cost, but above all in the fact that they were Jewish and therefore they fitted the ethnic profile of Zionism and could be easily converted to the ideological cause.

That such endeavours constituted a colonial enterprise was undisputed by Zionist proponents, ideologues and activists. The core of the Zionist project was to be exclusively Jewish. If the benefits and services that Zionist organisers distributed were offered to a more diverse range of Palestinian communities as well as Jewish settlers, the meaning, definition and significance of Zionism would have been entirely different from the ethnically exclusive, colonial-nationalist shape the movement assumed. The discourse of Zionist organisers like Tolkowsky reflected a clear understanding of the tentative nature of the colonial claim to the land; terms like 'return to Zion' and 'restoration' were used to counter the effect of terms like 'colonial settlement'. Zionist nationalists were not prepared to see themselves, and be considered by the rest of the world, as mere colonists; they portrayed themselves as having a further claim to Palestine by virtue of the biblical account of the Israelite conquest and settlement in ancient times.

The significance that statehood assumes in modern times relates to a hegemonic, international world order rather than people's subjectivities and their self-definitions and affiliations: 'In this new context, communitarian forms of belonging...were replaced by principles of identity and forms of political subjectivity constructed in/by the West' (Özdemir 2009, p. 3). Borders of belonging have always been fluid cutting across political and territorial borders. The Zionist insistence on possessing statehood in a territorially defined 'fatherland' as a focal point for defining one's identity was informed by the emerging global order of nation-states with its specific conception of nationalism that evolved in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

Through the governing principles of this new [liberal order of nation-states], old forms of communitarian belonging were silenced by the dominant voice of nationhood. Ultimately... the silencing of the contending expressions of the self and the community, and the expropriation of the basic rights to life

including the choosing of one's own living confine, is the condition and not the exception of a world order based on the regulation of nationalized subjectivities. (Özdemir 2009, p. 1)

One of the major defining principles of the Zionist movement is the notion of the superiority of Europe and European ideas and politics. This led to a Zionist discourse which is uniformly laudatory of an ethnic definition of nationality that excludes large swathes of the resident Palestinian population and directly leads to their victimisation. At no point is the inclusion of the Palestinians in the definition of the 'nation' seriously considered.

Zionism then is a European colonial movement supported by a strong imperial and ethno-centric ideology that sought to establish a state which strives to always maintain a demographic Jewish majority. Zionism grants myriad privileges to Jews wherever they are by allowing them to 'return' to Israel and become citizens at any given point by virtue of their 'Jewishness', whether by birth or conversion. It grants these 'national rights' to Jews whilst constantly seeking to exclude or marginalise the indigenous population. The Jewish 'claim to the land' stems from the biblical narratives of ancient Israel and hence from the position of the Bible as a formative text of 'Western' identity. A contradiction lies in the heart of Zionism due to the fact that the religious traverses the nationalist constituent of the ideology and they intersect in the Zionist appropriation of the biblical texts to lay claim to a modern form of statehood that aspires to be secular. The weaving of these three strands: ethno-nationalism, settler-colonialism, and the use of the religious tradition to legitimise the movement, constitute the concept this thesis calls 'colonising nationalism' in order to analyse and explain Zionism.

Recent scholarship has tended to redress the balance against Zionist historiography and its constituent assumptions, such as the inherent inferiority of Palestinians, the 'nationhood' of all Jews, the continuity of anti-Semitism in Jewish history from biblical times to the present, etc. The work of Israeli 'post-Zionists' has had a crucial influence. Post-Zionist scholarship has manifested the influence of postmodernism and post-colonial theory. This relatively recent scholarship started to consider the Palestinian 'narrative' and, perhaps less discursively, the positions and

reactions of the Palestinian side with all the complexity and intricacy of its existence, its political experience and praxis and its social fabric. Israeli academics such as Avi Shlaim, Benny Morris (despite his tentative positions and recent justifications), Sternhell and Ilan Pappé have greatly contributed to this wave of scholarship. The work of Edward Said and a host of other Palestinian and Arab academics and intellectuals translated the Palestinian situation into a discursive medium that the powerful 'western' centres of intellectual production and political hegemony could understand and thus 'listen' to, in the manner of Gayatri Spivak's famous phrase.

Palestinian positions towards the Zionist endeavours ranged from rejection to collaboration but from the outset of the project was a clear and vigorous resistance to Zionist colonisation as documented in works like *From Haven to Conquest* (Khalidi 1971), *Blaming the Victims* (Said and Hitchens 1988), *The Iron Wall* (Shlaim 2001), to name but a few. The position of the international community including what was then called the League of Nations is also documented. The so-called 'great powers' of the early twentieth century and the League of Nations imposed their wish to establish an 'outpost of European civilisation in Asia' upon the 'uncivilised natives' for strategic political reasons which included having control over and access to the Levant. Another major reason behind the great powers' support for a Jewish state was the highly sophisticated campaigning of Zionist intellectuals, politicians and activists. The powerful players on the world stage only listened and responded to those who shared their own language, i.e. those who are able to appropriate the hegemonic discourse of Western politics and diplomacy.

This constitutes an instance of what Jean-Francois Lyotard calls the *differend*, 'A case of *differend* between two parties takes place when the "regulation" of the conflict that opposes them is done in the idiom of one of the parties while the wrong suffered by the other is not signalled in that idiom' (Lyotard 1989, p. 9). Therefore, at the earliest stage of the inception of Zionism, Palestinian agency existed despite the laborious efforts of Zionism to deny and negate the very existence of the Palestinian population and despite the support of powerful governments and institutions. The resistance to dispossession and colonialism assumed radically different forms. The 'Palestinian narrative' refers to a perspective on events and a discursive practise that

‘translates’ the ‘subaltern’ discourse into the hegemonic one by explaining the Palestinian position in the ‘idiom’ of Western discourse. This is not to say that ‘intellectuals’ have ‘spoken for’ or granted a ‘voice’ to victimised subjects, rather they used hegemonic ‘discourse genres’ as tools to narrativise the Palestinian position so that it concords with Western discourse genres and can thus be listened to.

Chapter V:

Buber and the Bi-national State Proposal

This chapter deals with the bi-national state thesis and its evolution in Zionist discourse through discussing the work of Martin Buber. Although bi-nationalism became marginalised and regarded as non-, if not anti-, Zionist by mainstream political Zionism, the bi-national state option was espoused by many liberal, Labour Zionists who rejected the notion of ethnic nationalism. Binationalism attests to a liberal, multi-faceted Zionist ideology at the earlier stages of the movement, which was later expunged by the hegemonic mainstream 'statist' form of political Zionism. As Zionist political ideology and practice were consolidated, other forms of Zionism, whether spiritual or political, became a 'historical curiosity' devoid of any meaningful political value (Nimni 2003, p. 121). Mainstream, statist Zionist ideologues and supporters, especially Labour Zionists, excluded discourses which had alternative visions so that Zionists who espoused notions like bi-nationalism felt compelled to either reject the movement altogether or give up their vision and embrace the concept of an ethnic nation-state. In this chapter, I shall use Martin Buber as a case study of a Zionist who eventually espoused ethnic, statist nationalism.

Martin Buber is one of the earlier philosophers of 'Otherness' preceding Levinas and Derrida and perhaps paving the way for their groundbreaking theories of alterity. In his Introduction to Buber's *I and Thou* (originally published 1923) Walter Kaufman wrote that Buber 'succeeds in endowing the social sphere with a religious dimension' (1970, p. 30). Buber's work is firmly grounded in Judaism, albeit a 'poetic' and philosophical hue of it. The philosophical discourse he produces as a result is appealing to religious philosophers, as well as humanists, serving as it does as a discourse of humanism and peaceful relations. His work transfers religion from the bounds of practice and commitment into the realm of meaningful encounters, social relations and the relationship between the human and the Divine, which he personifies and humanises.

The latter stage of Buber's Zionism incarnates Labour Zionist ideology. It is an adamant form of ethnic nationalism based on colonisation. As evidenced in the following pages, Buber felt a sense of allegiance to the Jewish people as a collectivity,

hence an ethnicity or a group of people who share a history and a culture in the form of a shared history and ritual practices or religion. The desire to establish a nation-state for the Jewish ethnicity involves a colonial project that seeks to radically transform a country on the levels of demography, geography, culture, and even history. This can only be achieved through erasing all traces of the indigenous population's history and replacing it with an invented Jewish historical narrative.

Within the context of Zionism, Buber is known as much for his staunch Zionism as for his advocacy of dialogue and peace with the Arabic speaking peoples. He worked tirelessly for the cause of Zionism, as he imagined it, and tried to establish dialogue and peace with the Palestinians. For him, 'genuine dialogue between men of different kinds and convictions' was a valuable human ideal as those 'renewing' dialogue between men, will be directly engaged in an act of encounter and reconciliation with God (Buber 1957, pp. 222, 229). He advocated that 'men belonging to opposing political camps and those with clashing national interests' should negotiate not only to represent the needs of their peoples, but 'they will also turn understandingly to the true needs of other people, [and] will know in both cases how to extract the true needs from the exaggerations' (Buber 1957, p. 228). Although one might question the politics of representation and the position of the intellectual who professes to speak for a community; following Buber's own logic, if political dialogue is espoused, the question remains as to why it has to be based on such an abstract concept as 'needs'.

Before the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948, Buber's Zionism tended to include a mixture of a strong politico-nationalist component akin to Herzlian territorial Zionism on the one hand and a spiritual strand similar to Ahad Ha'am's concept of Zion as a 'spiritual centre'. Buber espoused Zionism early on as a student at Leipzig University. Like other German students at the time, he was influenced by the atmosphere of ultra-nationalism and founded a Zionist organisation and the Association of Jewish students at the University of Leipzig. He visited Palestine for the first time in 1927, and immigrated in 1938. He was more sympathetic to Ahad Ha'am's ideology but he confessed to having been 'dazzled' by Herzl's charisma during the Sixth Zionist Congress in Basle (Buber 1973, pp. 34-37).

With the marked increase in Zionist political campaigning for the establishment of an ethnic Jewish state in Palestine, Buber deviated from this near-consensus and supported *Brit Shalom* and later *Ihud* (sometimes spelt *Ichud*), organisations which sought the establishment of a bi-national state in Palestine. His political positions shifted after the establishment of Israel as he embraced the ethnic state as the 'new Jewish community' and 'the factual shape which Jewish independence has taken' (cited in Hodes 1971, p. 99). He consequently assumed the position of majoritarian hegemony, although he continued to encourage benevolence towards 'our Arabs', the Palestinians who remained in their homes after Israel won the war which broke out on the eve of the establishment of the Jewish State in 1948.

Buber's 1938 letter of response to Gandhi is his clearest statement of his belief in the moral and ethical viability of Zionism, in addition to what he regards as its political, social, economic and religious importance. The letter to Gandhi is a valuable resource as it outlines the defence against some of the major objections against the Zionist colonisation of Palestine that have been voiced since the inception of the movement. According to Buber, composing the letter was an arduous task that took him a considerable amount of time; he received counsel from some of his most trusted friends:

Day and night I took myself to task, searching whether I had not in any one point overstepped the measure of self-preservation allotted and even prescribed by God to a human community, and whether I had not fallen into grievous error of collective egotism. (1991, p. 186)

At the outset Buber admonishes Gandhi for what he sees as an unjust position towards the Zionist Jews. He takes great pains trying to refute Gandhi's comparison between the oppression of the Jews in Europe and the Indians in South Africa and under British colonialism. He argues for a special place for Jewish suffering on the grounds that Jews in Germany have had their religious symbols and sacred property desecrated and burnt down and various other outrages committed against them. His tone is religious and metaphysical, he professes to justify and passionately defend Zionism as a political creed and a colonial enterprise.

One of the initial points Buber deals with in his epistle is Gandhi's suggestion to keep Jerusalem in the Jewish heart. Buber's rejection of this notion is particularly

significant in its avowed departure from and negation of the idea and the position espoused by Jewish rabbis for millennia: 'that which is merely an idea and nothing more cannot become holy, but a piece of earth can become holy just as a mother's womb can become holy' (Buber 1991, p. 479). The analogy between the holiness of land in Judaism and the holiness of Mary's womb in Christianity reflects the typical nationalist trope which implicates women as a symbol of the national home. The deeply religious tone of the whole piece is symptomatic of the Zionist discourse of East European Jews at the time.

Buber makes sweeping pronouncements and truth claims that foreclose further dialogue between his position and those who seek to interrogate it. He informs his political position by his spiritual convictions. He justifies the creation of a modern ethnocracy, which would inevitably dispossess and displace the Palestinians, on the grounds of his Jewish messianic conviction. However, his position is vitiated by the fact that the religious and mystical justifications of Zionism are simply not recognised by those who do not profess the Judaeo-Christian systems of belief, those who regard neither the womb nor the land holy. His invocation of the holiness of the land of Palestine in Judaism, as compared to the womb of Mary in Christianity, is simply not shared by his addressee and some of those who oppose Zionism. This is an instance of Jean-Francois Lyotard's 'differend', where the object under question, in this case Palestine, has a significance attached to it by each of the parties of a dispute that is not recognised by the other (Lyotard 1989).

Buber's endowment of the social and political spheres with a religious mystical dimension surrounds his position with a halo of spirituality and 'divine justice'. However, his attitude towards the Palestinian population reflects the typical imperial perception which regards the colonised 'Other' as an inferior species unable to utilise the natural resources of his/her habitat, 'the present, helplessly primitive state of the fellah agriculture' as he put it, and therefore ought to be expropriated by the 'civilised' coloniser. Armed by 'Western progress and civilisation', in addition to their highly developed weaponry, Buber proposes that the European Jews will bring out the full potential of the Palestinian land. These claims were reiterated by Zionists on both the left and right of the political spectrum, albeit in discourse not as mystic, sophisticated and articulate as Buber's. The typical Zionist formula, crystallised in the

phrase 'a people without a land for a land without a people' is reproduced in Buber's formula of Palestine as 'a piece of free land'.

The synthesis of Jewish mysticism, European socialism, imperialism, and 19th century racism in the case of Buber produces a poetic discourse. Buber had a genuine desire for peace but his dilemma lay in the fact that the Palestinian population rejected Zionist colonisation and statism. He wanted a Jewish state that would be in peace with its less 'developed' neighbours and would act as a fatherly influence to enlighten them and deliver them of their backwardness. His position was typical of mainstream European imperialist thought of the time, which, however, was never accepted by the majority of the population of Palestine and other colonised populations. Buber's call to exercise control in response to Palestinian riots/uprising against Zionism in the 1920s might have been a sign of his revulsion from violence, but it is not qualitatively different from mainstream Zionism. He counselled self-restraint on the short term in order not to harm the Jewish cause of possessing Palestine on the long term. His methodology was one of shrewd and judicious diplomacy rather than repressive power display.

Buber thought that possessing Palestine could reap benefit on some Palestinians, however, his main concern was for Jewish interests at the expense of morality, justice, equality, and the rest of his own cherished ethical and humane values. He made it quite clear that the responsibility of the I to the Thou, to God and to humanity, can only be exercised by the individual on the level of his own immediate community. Aubrey Hodes pays tribute to Buber as follows: 'he showed me that my love for humanity was too diffuse, and that it had to be focused in a way which would spring from my own particular form of giving' (1971, p. 8). In hindsight we know that Buber's goals and his nationalist bias, which he dubbed 'collective egotism', led to one of the most bitter disputes humanity has ever known. He thought that the Jewish people were special, that on account of what he perceived as their unique suffering, they would not oppress and subjugate another people. The extent of Buber's national, racial and religious passion coloured his judgement and his political positions throughout.

In his letter to Gandhi, Buber personifies the 'soil' and the 'land' of Palestine: 'Ask the soil what the Arabs have done for her in 13 hundred years and what we have done for her in fifty! Would her answer not be weighty testimony in a just discussion as to whom this land 'belongs'?' (1991, p. 483). The feminine pronoun emphasises the notion of the soil as the mother whose womb begot the nation. The gendered and sexual imagery is fraught. The soil of Palestine is imagined as a passive feminine vessel awaiting its virile Jewish children to impregnate it, 'I believe in the great marriage between man (adam) and earth (adama)' (1991, p. 484). The Jewish colonists represent the husband/ child of the land and they carry the proverbial imperial white man's burden to civilize the natives. Thus, in a few successive, charged and highly suggestive sentences, Buber renders the Jewish colonists as the natural, legitimate children of Palestine; and the virile, fertile inseminators whose fruits the land shall carry, as opposed to the backward, helpless, infertile indigenes who failed to impregnate the land and are therefore 'unrecognised' by the land, for 'the land recognises us [Jews] for it is fruitful through us, and through its bearing for us it recognises us' (1991, p. 484).

Buber attempts to distance Zionism from other Western movements of colonisation on the grounds that 'colonists from the Occident [let] natives do their work for them' Jewish settlers, on the other hand, 'spend their strength and their blood to make the land fruitful' (1991, p. 484). Of course, colonial regimes implement various methods of colonisation and exploitation of the indigenous populations, so that it is viable to speak of 'colonialisms'. Unlike other colonial movements, colonial nationalism is not interested in securing the resources of Palestine for the benefit of an imperial country of origin. Zionist strategists advocated the concept of the 'conquest of labour' in order to transform the demographic reality in Palestine and to settle permanently, thereby transforming Palestine into a Jewish state. Some revisionist historians and critical sociologists argue that the conquest of labour was more theoretical than actual as Palestinian labour remained in place for low-skilled jobs.

Gandhi's force of argument elicited a passionate response from Buber. In an unprecedented discursive leap, he set forth to re-write the history of Palestine along distorted lines. His words are worth quoting in full:

By what means did the Arabs attain the right of ownership in Palestine? Surely, by conquest and, in fact, conquest by settlement. You therefore admit that, this being so, it constitutes for them an exclusive right of possession. (1991, p. 482)

His reply to his own rhetorical question equated the Palestinian 'right' to the land to that of the modern European Jews. He further insists that although the methods of the Jewish settlement of Palestine 'do not always do full justice to Arab ways of life', they are 'far removed' from conquest.

Whether Buber was unclear about the meaning and usage of the term 'Arab', or whether he actually imagined the existence of an Arab 'race' is redundant. What is clear is that he used the term vaguely to refer to the Palestinians. However, his subsequent reference to the Mamelukes and Turks suggests that he conflates the socio-political constructs of race, nationality, ethnicity, culture and religious affiliation. He seems to paint the traditional Zionist picture of an empty land conquered by some 'Arabs', presumably from the Arabian Peninsula, but he uses the term carelessly and randomly. The abridged historical narrative he speedily relates is bizarre for the historical moment of his writing for he seems to assume the Palestinians are a racially pure and homogenous progeny of the conquering Arabs of the 7th century AD, just as he equally assumes that modern European Jews are the direct descendents of the biblical Jews. The Arabic speaking peoples of the Middle East and North Africa cannot be regarded as one 'race'. The concept of 'race' neatly categorises people into imagined, narrow biological compartments. The term of course has various usages and shades of meaning attached to it today.

Typically, Buber's imperialist attitudes had an ethical twist. The use of the familiar Zionist trope of a 'thinly populated' Palestine or a country 'free' of inhabitants was meant as another discursive tool to negate or undermine Palestinian identity. The narrative then posits an empty land where Palestinians and Jews are both newly arrived conquerors who have equal rights and responsibilities (towards each other). What is needed then is not a recognition of the rights of the indigenous population against the more powerful, better-equipped and organised Zionist colonists, but a vague 'genuine peace' between European Jewish settlers and the Palestinians 'on the basis of a fair adjustment as to what they would really make use

of and what might be admitted to satisfy our [Jewish] requirements' (1991, p. 483). Two lines later we get to know that the fellah (peasant) conducts a 'helplessly primitive' style of agriculture that has become 'meaningless' in the modern world. Therefore, European Jews with their superior methods essentially deserve the land because, according to Buber's logic, they would serve it better. For Buber, God 'loans' a certain people a land to test them as to how much they will modernise and utilise it. With this Darwinist logic, European Jews are certain to win Palestine, thus attaining the 'moral right' to displace the Palestinians, as he so vividly puts it, 'Ask the soil what the Arabs have done for her in thirteen hundred years and what we have done for her in fifty' (1991, p. 483).

Buber claims a divine right over Palestine that neither Gandhi, whom he addresses, nor the Palestinians share. He assumes the moral high grounds by asserting this mystical and divine claim over the land, as opposed to political claims which he denounces:

The Jewish and Arab claims to the land are turned through the serpent's influence into claims of principle and politics, and are represented with all the ruthlessness that politics instils into those who are led by it...The serpent conquers not only the spirit but also life. Who would wrestle with it? (1991, p. 484)

Thus Buber holds that his activism to establish a Jewish state is not political, but is a crusade for Truth, justice and peace. He then passionately proclaims his love to Gandhi for advocating the use of force to free India from the claws of British imperialism. He threatens, 'I do not want force. But if there is not other way of preventing the evil destroying the good, I trust I shall use force and give myself up into God's hands' (1991, p. 486).

Buber's defence of Zionism thus far is contradictory in its ethical claims that disregard the expropriation of the rights of the Palestinians. His representation of the Zionists as 'the good' as opposed to the 'the evil', presumably those who opposed the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, is a far cry from his writings on the ethics of dialogue. In his commitment to an ethnocracy, Buber has committed a primal

injustice that renders his avowed position as proponent of peace between Arabs and Jews simply untenable.

The establishment of the State of Israel on 15 May 1948 on Palestinian land came against the wishes of the original inhabitants and the neighbours of this state. However, the main internal fissure and contradiction lies in the exclusive ethnic nature of this state. Israel declared itself the haven for Jews oppressed by the white, Christian majority in Europe Jews everywhere in the world, and therefore created an ethnic state for them as evidenced by the Law of Return 5710-1950, the Law of Absentee Property 5710-1950, the Law of the State's Property 5711-1951, The Law of Nationality 5712-1952, the Personal Status Law (1952), the Israel Lands Administration Law 5720-1960, the Planning and Building Law 5725-1965, the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law (Temporary Order 5763 passed by the Knesset in 2003 and regularly renewed, upheld by the Israeli Supreme Court in January 2012), and the 2010 amendment to the Nationality Law 5712-1952 requiring non-Jews seeking Israeli citizenship to pledge loyalty to Israel as a Jewish state. This is certainly a contradiction in terms, as instead of striving for egalitarianism between different ethnicities, religions and cultures, the Zionist project sought to emulate the oppressive pre-war European discriminatory system in its worst forms. By establishing a state where the Jews sought to constitute and retain demographic majority through mass migration, the Zionist movement and its proponents understood only too well that they would be involved in various atrocities and injustices. Zionism did not propose a state for all inhabitants of the land of Palestine, and the state they established did not propose equality between its citizens, but rather reproduced the discriminatory mechanisms, which were used to oppress Jewish communities, in a state modelled on the European nation-states.

Buber conflates nationality, ethnicity, territorial belonging and control. He espoused Zionist policies that produced ethnic tensions amongst the Jewish communities in Palestine and between Jews and Palestinians and other Arabs. His declaration after the establishment of the State in 1948 is unequivocal: 'I have accepted as mine the State of Israel... the form of the new Jewish community that has arisen from the war [of 1948]. I have nothing in common with those Jews who imagine that they may contest the factual shape which Jewish independence has

taken' (cited in Hodes 1971, p. 99). Ethnocracy then was embraced and blessed. Buber openly acknowledged that Zionism based its territorial control against the wishes of the local population and on the ruins of their lives and livelihoods, 'Our historical re-entry into the our land took place through a false gateway' (cited in Hodes 1971, p. 95). Contrary to some Zionists who refused to acknowledge the Palestinian existence, Buber seems to have understood the Palestinian rights, and the injustices committed in the name of Zionism but to have embraced them, which reflects a level of political opportunism.

He acknowledged that 'the Arab peoples received the mass immigration [of European Jews] as a threat and the Zionist movement as a "hireling of imperialism"', but declared this to be an error of judgement on the part of Arab peoples (cited in Hodes 1971, p. 95). To create in Palestine a State that stipulates by force of law a Jewish demographic majority as its *raison d'être*, such a political entity essentially needs to commit injustice and violence against the original inhabitants and keep those who remain as 2nd class citizens. This is the ethical and moral question at the heart of Zionism, which has never been adequately answered by its adherents and supporters. Buber, however, advocated dialogue, trust, co-operation and peace between the Zionist occupiers and their victims. He sometimes stood alone in the face of the Israeli establishment advocating more humane positions towards the Palestinians and more peaceful negotiations with the Arab neighbours, as evidenced by his opposition to the 'military rule' imposed on the Palestinians who remained within the 'green line' after the establishment of the State.

The importance of Buber's positions vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in his image as a symbol of peaceful liberal Zionism and an example to be followed by Israeli peace activists and ideologues. His position does not solve the moral predicament at the heart of Zionism, rather the Zionist ethical question tarnishes him with its moral dilemma. For Buber's position is 'differentially subversive' towards the Jewish State (Lyotard 1993, p. 145). It is a form of minor resistance that confronts the Israeli establishment and public opinion in order for the system to rethink its positions, thereby improving itself and the efficacy of its functioning, and guaranteeing its continuity and sustenance. In his 'intimate portrait' of Buber, Aubrey Hodes reminisces his regular meetings with his mentor and spiritual guide. He cites

Buber's reasoning behind his political positions and protestations against Israeli actions and policies as 'a means of moderating the policies of the majority and rendering them more tolerant and less rigid.' However, he asserted that he was a political realist and his ultimate aim was to 'improve the nature of democracy ...in Israel' and 'an important influence in the life of the party and the state' (Hodes 1971, p. 14).

The inadequacy of Buber's position is thrown into relief when his statement is put in its original context, which was that Hodes was discussing the Kafr Qassem 'massacre' on the eve of the 1956 Israeli participation in the tripartite attack against the Suez. Hodes's description of the incident is worth quoting in full:

On October 28 of that year forty-six Arab [sic.] villagers, citizens of Israel, returning home after the day's work in their fields, were shot down in cold blood by Israel's border policemen. While they were out in the field a curfew had been imposed because of the war with Egypt which was to begin the next day. The Arabs did not know about the curfew. At the briefing session before the incident, the Israeli officer in charge had been asked what was to be done about any villagers who returned from the field after curfew time. He replied, "May Allah have mercy on their souls." This officer later gave the order to fire which cost the lives of men, women, and children who were unaware of any change in the normal routine of the village. (1971, p. 28)

Hodes asserts that Buber applauded the one officer at the village of Kafr Qassem who refused to open fire on innocents as a 'true democrat' but he also believed that such individual actions *could not become official policy*. What is surprising here is that Buber is not supposed to be a mere liberal citizen or left leaning political activist, but an icon of sublime spirituality and the ethical face of utopian Zionism. However, his positions suggest his endeavours for dialogue and peace with the Palestinians have as underlying political motive the goal of supporting the State, so that for example his commendation of the Israeli soldier who refused to shoot innocent civilians is an act of responsibility to the State, to It rather than to Thou, as it were. He, therefore, condemns Israeli oppression of the Palestinians because of its negative effects on the Israeli psyche, as oppression inevitably corrupts the oppressor in addition to its effects on its recipients.

By insisting on an ethnic Jewish state and Jewish demographic majority, Zionism sought, and succeeded, to transform the landscape, culture, economy and society in Palestine. In so doing, it corrupts the psyche of both the Jewish colonists and the colonised. Zionist supremacist attitudes towards Palestinians and Arabs generally are a direct result of the Zionist sense of belonging and affiliation with European imperialism and hegemony. The policies put in place by Zionism produce racism, and ethnic exclusivity between Jews and Palestinians and between European Jews and other Jews as a result of Zionist territorial, statist, majoritarian thinking. Buber's advocacy of dialogue between Zionists, and later Israelis on the one side, and Palestinians and other Arabic speaking peoples on the other, was mainly rejected from both sides. The Palestinians insisted upon their 'right' to reject Israeli ethnic statehood, which sought to displace and exclude them. Thus there is a tension inherent in Buber's position as a prototype and inspiration to many Zionist peaceful movements.

The bi-national state proposal

On the Jewish side, the traditional position espoused by the majority of Jews in Palestine favoured an ethnic Jewish state, the Zionist Congresses had pursued this aim and it officially became the Zionist movement's stated policy in 1942. Different Palestinian factions adopted numerous political positions, but the majority of the Palestinian population wanted an Arab state in Palestine. A number of intellectuals and activists on both sides favoured a state in the whole of Palestine composed of two equal nationalities of Jews and 'Arabs'.

The importance of the bi-national state thesis springs from its departure from the classic European model of the nation-state and the mainstream Zionist insistence on an ethnic one, albeit depending on the policies and frameworks such a state would eventually choose to implement. As early as 1921 a number of German-Jewish intellectuals decided to espouse the bi-national state thesis and refused to build the 'Jewish national home' on ethnocentric basis akin to what they saw as the increasing chauvinism and racism that German nationalism was already exhibiting by the early twentieth century, and also as a response to growing Arab nationalism and resistance to Zionism.

The Palestinians had mounted a 'rioting' campaign all over Palestine and their leaders presented the British mandate authorities with demands to limit Jewish immigration in Palestine as a reaction to the Zionist concept of the 'conquest of labour' and particularly Zionist demonstrations celebrating May Day 1921. The 'conquest of labour' meant that Jews replaced Palestinians in all possible jobs in order to reach self-sufficiency within the Jewish community. This was seen as the route to acquiring the 'moral right' to Palestine and disempowering the Palestinian workers to avoid the threat of rebellion on their part and to strip them of any agency that might constitute a bargaining card.

Israel Kolatt summarises the Zionist motives for implementing a policy of political, economic and social segregation between the two societies as protective and self-preservative measures. The 'flow of Jewish capital to Palestine was liable to reach the Arab sector and accelerate its development;' in addition, the size of the Jewish population in relation to the Arab one were both elements that might have led the Jewish colonists to assimilate within the native population, thus exercising a detrimental effect on the Zionist project as a whole. Hence, 'the first decade of the [20th] century saw the implementation of an economic policy aimed at creating a closed Jewish economy in which accumulated capital would go to further internal expansion rather than flowing outward' (Kolatt 1996, pp. 617-647).

The British Military Court of Inquiry published a large report on the 'Arab riots', the most relevant points being that '[t]he Zionist Commission was responsible for the present crisis' as they assumed the role of an 'independent administration' in the country. Through political campaigning and other pressures in London and in Palestine, members of the Zionist Commission demanded 'preferential treatment' on a host of issues, especially in matters pertaining to 'land ordinance', effectively forcing the British mandate authorities to contravene the Hague convention on 'the laws and usages of war' by which an occupied territory administration was bound (Tibawi 1978, pp. 418-419).

The 'riots' that started in Jaffa and spread all over Palestine firmly threw the Arab-Jewish relations into relief, prompting the 12th Zionist Congress in Carlsbad

(September 1921) to officially discuss the issue which has been hitherto alternatively de-emphasised or evaded. The Congress almost unanimously endorsed the suggestion put forth by Jabotinsky, the right-wing revisionist leader, to re-establish a Jewish Legion for armed struggle and the appropriate resolution was passed.

As a reaction to what they saw as a hard-line adopted by the Zionist Congress, Buber, Robert Weltsch, Hans Kohn and Hugo Bergman proposed the bi-national state idea, thus relinquishing the Zionist claim to the exclusive possession of Palestine: 'Palestine can not be a nation state, not only because this is not a step forward, but also because it is impractical. It must be binational rather than Eretz Israel' (cited in Lavsky 1996, p. 652).

Brit Shalom was formally established in Palestine in 1925 as an Association promoting Arab-Jewish rapprochement and understanding. Although Brit Shalom's establishment was precipitated by the ascent of Ze'ev Jabotinsky's Revisionist Zionism on the world stage at the founding convention of the Zionist Revisionist Party in Paris in April 1925, Bit Shalom did not enjoy any of the assertiveness and popular support the Revisionist Party boasted among Jewry in Europe and Palestine. Brit Shalom's statutory assembly on 30th November 1925 did not get a mention in the press (Lavsky 1996, pp. 648-670).

Brit Shalom members were strongly influenced by Ahad Ha'am's teachings on Hebrew humanism and Zion as a spiritual centre. The members collectively rejected colonial nationalism and accepted living with a Palestinian Arab majority 'for a few decades' rather than alienating the Palestinian population by mass immigration. In 1922 Kohn warned, 'we have been the slaves of yesteryear, let us not become the imperialists of tomorrow.' Most Brit Shalom members gradually became disillusioned by the Zionist movement, as early as 1925, Weltsch describes the aspirations of Palestinian Jewry as follows: 'the people all just want one more thing: power. ... That is why they are even in favour of such an increase in the Jewish population: they do not care about anything else.'

Eventually Kohn emigrated to the USA and broke away from Zionism, including liberal and bi-national Zionism because he strongly believed that the

movement can only be legitimate if it were able to co-operate with the Arabs, otherwise Zionism could not preserve its ethical claims. Kohn's resignation from the World Zionist Organisation constituted a challenge to Buber's as well as Weltsch's Zionism. His letters to both offered a sharp critique of Zionism and laid emphasis on the fact that the Jews were the more powerful side in this conflict; he expressed the voice of conscience within Zionism and a rejection of what Fanon calls the colonial 'narcissistic perspective'. Kohn reminded his fellow Zionists that theirs is the position of the colonial oppressor rather than a national liberation movement:

I cannot concur with the [official Zionist] policy when the Arab national movement is being portrayed as the wanton agitation of a few big landowners. I know all too well that frequently the most reactionary imperialist press in England and France portrays the national movements in India, Egypt and China in a similar fashion – in short whenever the national movements of oppressed peoples threaten the interests of the colonial power. I know how false and hypocritical this portrayal is. ... (1983, pp. 98-99)

Kohn's eventual resignation marks the narrow, parochial bounds that Zionism assumed. Robert Weltsch, on the other hand, remained a member of the movement until 1948 when he moved to London. In Weltsch's case the hegemonic mainstream Labour Zionist discourse marginalised and eventually expunged his brand of inclusive, bi-national Zionism. However, the line of dissident voices that began with Ahad Ha'am's critique at the inception of the Zionist movement continued unabated until the advent of post-Zionism.

The birth of the political party, *Ihud* (Union), occurred in the midst of a difficult situation in Palestine. In 1936 the Palestinian population mounted a general strike where they boycotted the British mandate government and the Jewish sector in protest against what they saw as an increasingly threatening Hebraisation of Palestine under the protection of the British mandate. Zionists were steadily founding Jewish state institutions which, together with the influx of Jewish immigrants, were already transforming Palestine into an exclusive Jewish state. The general strike evolved into what is termed the 'Arab revolt' and involved guerrilla attacks on both British and Zionist targets. This armed resistance to the Zionist endeavours continued until the British finally responded to their demands by issuing the White Paper of May 1939, which marked a sharp shift from the previous British policy in Palestine, it promised a curb on Jewish

immigration and land acquisition and an abrogation of Britain's commitment of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine as outlined in the Balfour declaration of 1917.

The Palestinian leadership clearly had less aptitude and sophistication in the political international arena than the increasingly successful Zionist leadership. However, Palestinian armed campaign at this stage led the British mandate government to curtail its pledged support for the establishment of 'a national home' for Jews in Palestine and eventually the publication of the White Paper of 1939.

The White Paper was generally considered favourable to the Palestinian population while the Zionist masses and leadership were dismayed by what they saw as Britain's abrogation of its promises to the Jews in response to Palestinian violent resistance to the Zionist enterprise. The Zionists in turn mounted a campaign of armed violence against the British mandate and the Palestinian population. In the memoranda submitted to the UN Special Committee on Palestine, the Jewish Agency for Palestine described the armed action as follows: 'a "Resistance Movement" sprang up in the Yishuv, which demonstrated its defiance of the White Paper policy in word and deed' (Jewish Agency for Palestine 1947, p. 22). According to Mendes-Flohr, it was during this period that the Irgun 'greatly expanded its ranks and activities' bombing British government buildings in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, assassinating British officials and attacking Palestinians. The Irgun used biblical allusions invoking the figures of Samson and the Maccabees in their armed campaign for the survival of the Zionist project. The use of religious traditions and imagery in national endeavours is a familiar trope in the modern world. Martin Buber attacked those in the Yishuv who cloaked their armed struggle for a Zionist state in biblical tradition by refuting the analogy they sought to draw between their actions and those of ancient Jewish fighters in the biblical tradition:

Jewish terrorist gangs have perpetrated acts that our youth regarded as Samson-like deeds. Perhaps there were those among the terrorists who saw themselves as contemporary Samsons, that is, if they knew anything of Samson. The question of whom they regard as the contemporary Philistines invading the country, the British or the Jews, requires no reply. I assume they mean both... The Samsons of old fought face to face against a well-armed group that outnumbered them, because terrorism is not legitimate warfare. (1983, p. 132)

The two significant developments to highlight here are, firstly, the relation between violence and political objectives, and secondly, the use of religious heritage to bolster colonial-nationalist objectives within the Zionist struggle. The Zionist fighters used biblical imagery to create a sense of historical continuity with the biblical tradition and in so doing legitimise their actions and appeal to an 'imagined' sense of 'nationhood' among the Jewish residents in Palestine. Buber's shrewd remark above offers a deconstruction of this use of biblical imagery. By asking who they regard as the contemporary Philistines, Buber subtly points to the fact that the Irgun fighters redefined the symbolism and context of the fable of Samson and attached new meanings to it in order to justify and glorify acts like 'the placing of mines in the path of vehicles bearing innocent, defenceless non-Jews, or attacking the homes of innocent, defenceless non-Jews...' (Buber 1983, p. 131). This reinterpretation of the biblical parable and its context is manufactured by a selective reading of the past by which Yishuv members discursively placed themselves amongst a long line of Jewish warriors fighting for the 'Holy Land'. This is one of many cases where new meanings and significance are attached to ancient traditions so that the Jewish 'nation' is imagined as engaged in a timeless struggle against its enemies that extends from its ancient history to the present.

An impasse was reached in the early 1940s between the two sides with Britain and the United Nations in the position of judge and arbiter of the dispute. The situation was complex as Palestine and the Palestinians were under British rule and had no autonomy or power of self-determination. Meanwhile Zionist endeavour in Palestine was carried out by a community which was fleeing European persecution and eventually Nazi genocide. Zionist activists were able to establish state institutions before the establishment of the State because both the British and the Palestinians allowed them to, for very different reasons. Buber criticises the Palestinian reception of Zionism as follows:

When we returned to our land after many hundreds of years, we behaved as though the land were empty of inhabitants... as if they didn't see us. But they did see us. They saw us not with the same clarity with which we would have seen them had we been veteran denizens of the land and another people came to settle in it in increasing numbers...(1983, pp. 131-132)

The emerging situation in the 1940s attests to both the power and success of the Zionist movement and the resilience and steadfastness of Palestinian agency, but above all it points out to the inadequacy of traditional politics in the face of such a complex situation. Zionist goals revolved around the realisation of a state where the Jewish population would not be a demographic minority under non-Jewish majority rule. An ethnic Jewish state was seen as the only guarantee against the repetition of the Jewish persecution in Europe. After World War II the struggle to create a Jewish state assumed a new urgency so that Zionism was portrayed as the struggle of the Jewish people not only for autonomy and ‘liberation’ from European rule but also a struggle for survival in the wake of the Nazi genocide. When the extent of the Nazi genocide was revealed, a sense of shock, shame and guilt prevailed in Europe and gradually part of European identity which sought to portray anti-Semitism, culminating in the Holocaust as a singular, unique event in an otherwise peaceful, inclusive European history. Zionist leaders portrayed Zionism as the official mouthpiece of the Jewish people and, more importantly, as the inheritor of the Holocaust victims and survivors. Zionist campaigners portrayed the movement as the natural progression of *Jewish* history from persecution and genocide at the hands of Europe to self-determination and autonomy in the ancient land, where, according to biblical narrative, the Jews first became settled, built the Temple and realised their own polity.

The Palestinian and Zionist narratives seemed irreconcilable because they were both subject to the hegemonic political structures, frameworks and thought. Mainstream political Zionism was seeking to reproduce precisely the political structure which European Jews were fleeing. Both sides failed to transcend the hegemonic political structure of the ‘Western’ nation-state that seeks to homogenise the nation and sublate any differences on the level of ethnicity, culture, religion, or any other affiliation into one dominant national identity. As such, Zionism is perhaps an exaggerated example of modern national identity which is manufactured by a highly selective reading of the past and ruthlessly expunging those threatening the aspirations of the dominant Zionist strategists. Zionism started off from the premise of a common Jewish ethnicity or race and proceeded to acquire land, consciously manufacture a homogenous culture through imposing a particular interpretation of aspects of Jewish history and the biblical narratives and erasing others. However, the

limitations of this politico-economic structure led to the territorialisation of Jewish identity and the persistent denial of Palestinian rights drawing upon Judaeo-Christian notions of Jewish nationhood and statehood. The image of Martin Buber, the old professor sitting at his desk in Jerusalem with a large map of the *ancient* city on the wall behind him is symbolic of the territorial twist that Buber's brand of Zionism had assumed. This form of national identity utilises the concept of 'ethnic ties' and develops this into a national project that essentially relies on colonising a land and excluding another community from this political project. This project is what I refer to as colonial nationalism or colonising nationalism. Colonising nationalism comprises several elements: ethno-cultural or perceived racial ties used as an incorporation mechanism into a political nationhood that colonises space excludes those it perceives as Other.

The only other Zionist movement that advocated a non-ethnocracy was the Ihud. Like Brit Shalom before it, the Ihud members differed among themselves as to what is the ideal shape the emergent state in Palestine should assume within the framework of bi-nationalism in order to avoid 'any form of constitution [for independent] Palestine in which a mere numerical majority is decisive, since it is precisely the struggle for numerical majority which bedevils Arab-Jewish relations' (Magnes et al. 1947, p. 10) The organisation was Zionist in essence as it essentially called for Jewish immigration and the establishment of a state in which Jews would have a 'nationality' of their own, in which they would be represented by Jewish politicians and especially one which Jews would have a Jewish representative in world forums speaking for the Jewish nation of Palestine without compromising the political rights of the Palestinian Arab population.

The Jewish – Arab relations, however, were complicated by a host of different other issues, including establishing exclusive, closed pre-state Jewish institutions that were the proclaimed nuclei for a Jewish state, the concept and policy of 'conquest of labour', the Jewish acquisition of land, the closed Jewish economy, the contempt towards Palestinian culture and way of life, and the refusal to engage with the Palestinians on any meaningful political level, in addition of course to the proclaimed goal of Hebraising Palestine and the race for a Jewish demographic majority. Thus the Ihud proposals manifest the fissures and contradictions of Zionist political thought

when in the proposals document the members recommend allowing Jewish immigrants into Palestine rapidly to enable the Jewish population to reach 'numerical parity' with the Palestinians and then entering into negotiations with them at that stage to decide how to deal with the issue of immigration (Magnes et al. 1947, p. 55).

It is important to note here that upon their arrival Jewish immigrants underwent a process of 'recruitment by institutions of the state-in-the-making' (Ghanem 2003, pp. 103-104). The new settlers were subjected to intensive educational programmes where they learnt Hebrew and 'Zionist ideals' (Dahan-Kalev 2003, pp. 168-181). In Zionist discourse the Palestinian population is an 'obstacle' or 'the Arab problem' like the Palestinian climate, lack of modern technology, etc. Palestinian way of life, of cultivating the land, Palestinian culture, religions (Islam, Christianity, Druze, and others), language (Arabic) were regarded as inferior, backward and 'hopelessly primitive' as Buber put it. There is no evidence that remotely suggest that Zionist colonists, campaigners, and certainly not politicians had on their agendas Palestinian culture, Arabic language, co-operation, and interaction with 'the Arabs'. When Hans Kohn left the Zionist movement and decided to become anti-Zionist he said it was because even liberal Zionists struggled to extort as much as they could get from the Arabs. Naturally, the Zionist leaders had a tremendous task at hand to educate and integrate new Jewish immigrants from vastly different backgrounds, and they clearly saw that the Palestinian leadership did not have a clear agenda, were divided and either powerless or unwilling to engage with them, let alone stop their growing grip over Palestine the British empire.

Binational state proposals emphasised co-operation between the two nationalities in all walks of life, advocated close ties with the neighbours of Palestine and supported the neutrality of the religious sites considered holy by the three 'Abrahamic' religions. The value of the bi-national thesis lies in its ability to transcend parochial nationalist, statist chauvinism, to overcome ethnocentric politics and ethnic supremacist ideologies and ethocracy that draw upon the most fanatic ideas of 'romantic' nationalism. By establishing a state that comprises two nationalities in the whole of Palestine, the national aspirations of both peoples could be satisfied to a high extent, and the mutual interests and common goals could evolve into a successful state that would offer an alternative to the nation-state structure.

The superpowers of the first half of the 20th century and the United Nations set up around 20 committees to investigate the issue of Palestine where the World Zionist Organisation had established strong pre-state Jewish institutions and won support from the great powers for the establishment of a Jewish state (Pappe 2001). The Zionist leaders were Europeans, based or brought up in the hegemonic metropolitan centres of the day and had mastered the hegemonic discourse of the West and mounted highly sophisticated diplomatic campaigns and manoeuvres. This was at a time when imperialism and colonialism were at their height and the indigenous populations of colonised countries were treated as objects to be exploited and used, they were not only denied self-determination, but also not allowed full and meaningful participation in administering lands and resources for the benefit of their imperial oppressors. Objections, strikes, uprisings, and other forms of resistance to imperialism and occupation were usually met with either violent repression or other forms of ‘managing’ the situation, while attempting to preserve the fundamental structure, i.e. imperialism. Suffice it to look at the terms and provisions the League of Nations granted Britain for the Mandate over Palestine.

The British government issuance of the Balfour declaration in 1917 promising the creation in of a ‘Jewish national home’ in Palestine occurred without consulting the indigenous population. This was before the considerable wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine. Whereas the British mandate authorities tried to contain the situation in Palestine, they never regarded the indigenous Palestinians as equal to the Jewish immigrants. The Balfour declaration and other British and ‘international’ guarantees of a Jewish state in Palestine, like the Churchill White Paper of 1922, rested upon the Jewish people’s ‘ancient historic connection’ to Palestine. This ancient connection, in turn, is based on the modern reading of the Judaeo-Christian traditions and is forcibly imposed on those who do not share this reading as an objective historical Truth claim.

In the wake of World War II and the revelation of the extent of Nazi atrocities against the European Jewish population, the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry into Palestine was formed with the dual purpose of inquiring into the situation of the survivors of the Nazi genocide and the Arab-Zionist relations in Palestine. This

agenda, put forward by Harry S. Truman's administration already marks an achievement of associating the two issues. The Committee recommended the establishment of a bi-national state in all of Palestine and the immediate permission of a number of Jewish war refugees into Palestine. Although the British government rejected these recommendations, the Committee marked a shift in Western public opinion linking the issue of Palestine with the Holocaust (Pappe 2001). The Zionist leaders and campaigners advocated linking the fate of the Jewish refugees in Europe to Palestine and portraying a Jewish state in Palestine as a 'liberation' of Jewish communities from European oppression. The World Zionist Organisation also maintained that the establishment of Jewish state was a debt the Western world owed the Jewish people after the destruction of a third of their population at the hands of the Nazis. Israel was portrayed as the official inheritor of the Holocaust survivors and the culmination of Jewish history. In the wake of the war the Zionist World Organisation endeavoured to win over world public opinion so that the history of the Jewish people was portrayed as culminating in the creation of a Jewish state rather than in the Nazi genocide.

Zionist delegates from the Jewish community in Palestine visited the 'displaced persons' camps ahead of the Anglo-American committee members and persuaded the Holocaust survivors to adopt a pro-Zionist view. The refugees consequently informed the Committee of their wishes to emigrate to Palestine. This resulted in the Committee's acceptance of the Zionist contention that mass Jewish immigration to Palestine should be taken into consideration when assessing the situation and the 'needs' of both communities, rather than the actual size of the Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine at the time (Pappe 2001).

The positions of the United Nations and the world powers at the time were crucial in putting an end to the bi-national state proposals and in determining the fate and future of Palestine, its inhabitants and its neighbours. The wars that have taken place and conditions on the ground are a direct result of the positions and decisions of these powers. This thesis seeks to contribute to the analysis of Zionism by placing the movement in a category which I call colonial or colonising nationalism – a form of ethnic nationalism that uses colonialism as its method to build a nation-state and expand it. This concept and the Zionist discourse analysis thus far have thrown light

on the movement from the perspective of its adherents who regard it as their national revival and salvation. In short, Zionism in thesis has been analysed from the perspective of Zionist ideologues who directly benefited from its project. In the following section, an example of the Zionist convictions of someone who does not directly benefit from the nationalist project will be examined. The Zionist convictions of non-Jewish people are different from Zionists who proposed to build a nation-state for themselves. Zionism is a colonial-nationalist ideology and movement that thought to build an ethnic state on another people's land and employed an elaborate methodology for this project to transform the human geography of the target land, Palestine, by aggressive ethnic colonisation, displacement and expulsion of the indigenes in order to 'wipe out one nation's history and culture and replace it with a fabricated version of another, from which all traces of the indigenous population were elided' (Pappe 2006, p. 216). Apart from the strategic interest of some countries, certain groups and individuals have become staunch and influential allies of the Zionist project and ideology, albeit the nationalist aspect of the project is not directly applicable to these cases. This then becomes a stark position of colonial oppression towards a group and support towards another and it deserves a separate study. However, the final example of Zionist discourse this thesis will discuss will be that of an official who presided over the UN and superpowers' decision to partition Palestine.

The UN and superpowers positions are complex and contested issues. The UN vote reflected the strategic interests of the countries involved, as well the results of the political campaigning and diplomatic manoeuvres of the two sides of the conflict. Ilan Pappé's *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1947-1951* (2001, first published 1992) unearths the diplomatic battles over Palestine fought in the annals of the UN. He also discusses controversies surrounding the negotiations including accusations of bribery and intimidation. This thesis focuses on the discourse of Zionism as a primary source. Thus, the most relevant material in this regard is the pronouncements of those in positions of authority to influence the political decision in their countries and in international institutions. To continue with the same methodology, rather than studying the discourse of politicians whose positions are informed by strategic interests, power alliances and other politico-economic considerations beyond the scope of this work, the focus here is on the content of political discourse informed by ideology and political convictions. The books were published by the officials directly

involved in the investigation and eventual decision to partition Palestine: *The Birth of Israel: The Drama As I Saw It* (1948) by Jorge Garcia-Granados, who represented Guatemala in the eleven-member United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), records Garcia-Granados' experience in the UNSCOP, his political convictions, and his position towards Palestine and justifications for his pro-Zionist stance. His position and his eventual vote in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question, which was to present recommendations to the UN General Assembly for the final vote on Partition on 29th November 1947, were ultimately dictated by the Guatemalan Government which he represented.

Another individual assigned to investigate, report back to his government and offer advice and recommendations on whether a Palestinian Arab state with two nationalities enjoying equal in rights and responsibilities or the partition of Palestine into two ethnic states is Bartley Crum. His book *Behind the Silken Curtain: A Personal Account of Anglo-American Diplomacy in Palestine and the Middle East* (1947) explains his pro-Zionist position and his motivations for espousing the Zionist cause. Crum was not a career diplomat, he was chosen on the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry to represent the 'average American' citizen. This is significant as his positions presage future US public opinion. His book also foreshadows Garcia-Granados' in many aspects, for example they both proclaim themselves to be freedom fighters and supporters of the rights of oppressed peoples, which they claim informs their belief in Zionism, both were highly shaken and influenced by the atrocities of World war II especially the Holocaust, and both had prejudiced ideas about different 'races' and cultures that shaped their ideologies and political positions.

Crum decided to depart from the position of the majority of the members of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine, which recommended a binational state in Palestine. He sent a separate document to his government detailing his reservations and explaining his position to support the partition of Palestine. His discourse is worth analysing closely as it throws light on non-nationalist Zionism and especially the positions of the USA towards Zionism and the State of Israel. This chapter is about the binational state proposal and its ultimate failure. The importance of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry is that after thorough investigation and meetings with parties, they recommended binationalism as the ideal solution to the

problem of Palestine, and the importance of Bartley Crum is that he departed from the majority position and felt compelled to write to his government and to write a book detailing why he thought the partition of Palestine is most suitable to deal with the crisis there. Binationalism, had it been implemented, would have been an entirely different model from colonial nationalism. The defeat of binationalism registers the triumph of colonising nationalism. The following section discusses Crum's text as an example of Zionism and an example of the rejection of binationalism.

The Anglo-American Committee was composed of six 'non-official' citizens of each country, thus reflecting the attitudes of random members of the public in the two countries. The fact that these two countries had the power to make recommendations that would decide the fates of other peoples are symptomatic of the dominance imperial nations had over the colonised. Bartley Crum was a West Coast Republican corporate lawyer and self styled 'freedom fighter' who was appointed after indicating his interest in the role. Crum's account gives us a valuable glimpse into the feelings, motivation and affinities of an American Zionist.

Crum identified with the European Jewish colonists in Palestine as the bearers of the 'higher civilisation' of the West, similar to the white pioneers in the New World before them: 'What our American forebears fought for in the 18th century, the Jewish pioneers are fighting for today' (Crum 1947, p. 9). Crum considered that 'Western civilization' had a debt to pay to the Jewish people; for him the question of Palestine 'touched not only upon international politics, it touched upon international morality, upon the meaning of democracy – and even more fundamentally, on the meaning and scope of Christianity' (Crum 1947, p. 128). The combination of a sense of guilt towards the Jewish people and sensibilities regarding Christianity, morality, progress, Western civilisation and the 'Holy Land' informed Crum's Zionism. He characterises the Zionist project as one based on the 'philosophy of Western civilisation' and Palestine as a Judaeo-Christian religious symbol, even before he travelled there: 'When I began I had the usual American ignorance of Palestine. The word had had its magical connotations through my youth. It was the Holy Land, of course. But when I thought of it, it was in terms of stained glass windows and pilgrimages' (Crum 1947, p. 8). Thus, from the outset, Crum's mind is made up;

modern Palestine is the same a-historical biblical entity that belongs exclusively to the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

Thus, the ‘evidence’ delivered by Arab representatives before the Anglo-American Committee is significant in many aspects. In the USA, Dr. Phillip Hitti explained to the Committee that the current geographic division of the Arab world is the product of imperial administrations and that the modern borders and divisions did not exist earlier so that Palestine was earlier part of ‘greater Syria’ and that its association with the Jews in the minds of the average American or Englishman was due to the influence of Sunday schools and biblical narratives which can not constitute an accurate account of the history of Palestine. He demonstrated that the land of Palestine had been home to different peoples before the biblical narrative of the Jewish conquest, and that different communities existed alongside the ancient Jewish tribes and after the Roman expulsion of the Jews from there.

In London, the Committee met with an Arab delegation consisting of officials from Egyptian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Saudi and Syrian officials. Each one of these started by expressing his sympathy towards the ‘Jewish plight’, however, all the Arab delegates agreed that ‘they were not responsible for it. The world was not justified in forcing them to “pay” for the Jewish tragedy’ (Crum 1947, p. 60). They said the Balfour Declaration was ‘nothing more than a piece of British imperialism.’ They foresaw that ‘a Jewish state in Palestine would be backed by all the Jews in the world, and thus become a vast imperialistic power threatening the security of the entire Arab world.’ Addressing the head of the American delegation, Judge Hutcheson of Houston, Texas, one Arab delegate asked, ‘why don’t you give the Jews a part of Texas?’ (Crum 1947, p. 60). Paradoxically, the American members of the Committee maintained that the Jewish refugees could not be absorbed into the US due to immigration regulations.

The Arab delegates who addressed the Anglo-American Committee rejected the authority that Britain exercised over their collective fates and pointed out that the ‘problem’ of Palestine was imposed upon them by European powers, that imperialism placed them in a situation where they were dispossessed of the very lands on which they lived. The secretary-general of the League of Arab States succinctly put the Arab

view, 'our old cousin,' the Jew, was returning to the Middle East 'with imperialistic ideas' (Crum 1947, p. 114). The 'new Jews' arriving to Palestine were bearers of an imperialist project who regarded their Arab neighbours with the usual contempt the West reserved for them.

The statements presented before the Anglo-American Committee in Cairo, the Seat of the League of Arab States, expressed vehement rejection of Western imperialism and the aggressive imposition of Western culture, politics and capitalism on the Arab world. Bartley Cum ponders these testimonials and eventually denounces them:

As the roll call of witnesses continued, it was evident that their antipathy was towards Westernism [sic]: that was the encroachment they fought. Was this perhaps the basic tragedy of the Middle East? ...
...The Jewish ideal based upon the philosophy of the European West seeks a way of life in which man achieves dignity and a measure of fulfilment of his deepest needs. . . (1947, p. 115)

Crum, thus, decided not to listen. For him, and the rest of the Committee members, 'the Arabs' were a mass of a-historical, monolithic 'race'. He conflated their linguistic unity with a vague idea of racial origin. He applied racial ideologies on both the Jewish people and the Arabic speaking people in order to classify and stratify them. The Anglo-American attitude betrays the discourse on Arab 'culture' as opposed to 'Westernism' as only a very thin veneer that hardly disguises outright classification and stratification of people into higher and lower races, a discourse that transpired in the course of the Committee's investigations. Crum's perspective on the Jewish culture and nationalist/colonial project is related to their racial and ethnic origin, so that Zionism, built as it is on 'Westernism' is even leading to the Jewish advancement on the racial hierarchy, as Crum approvingly observed:

As we drove through [Palestine] I became aware of a strange physical phenomenon. Many of the Jewish children I saw were blond and blue-eyed, a mass mutation that, I was told, is yet to be explained. It is the more remarkable because the majority of the Jews of Palestine are of East European stock... one might almost assert that a new Jewish folk is being created in Palestine: the vast majority almost a head taller than their parents ... (1947, p. 143)

In supporting Zionism, Crum was advocating the 'transformation' of the Jews into the vague concept, 'Westerners', an extension of the self and a negation of the Jewish Other. The Zionist notion of creating a Jewish state, modelled on the Western concept

of the nation-state, is for Crum the height of dissipating Jewish difference, rejecting the diasporic component of Jewish identity and becoming 'Western', eventually leading to a racial transmutation. Crum's attitude confirms Haim Weizmann's (later to become President of Israel) statement before the Committee in Jerusalem, he stated, 'Hitler may have lost the war, but as far as the Jews are concerned, he won a complete victory' (Crum 1947, p. 128). Jewish difference is eradicated and 'assimilation' achieved, albeit in a different place of the world.

The Arabs, on the other hand, were caught in an impasse. The educated Arabs the Committee met in the Arab world were distrusted because they were deemed 'unrepresentative' of the illiterate majority, this especially applied to those they met in the USA and in Europe who had access to Western discursive tools and could partake of the hegemonic Western political system to a certain extent. Crum also distrusted all the Arab leaders they met because they were not democratically elected, although he realised that the majority of the population were illiterate and democracy was almost an alien concept. The popular leaders who came from the masses and who could not partake of Western discourse of diplomacy were seen as baffling and Crum found it impossible to comprehend their discourse. Although he did not understand them on any level, Crum deemed himself capable of judging their unspoken attitudes and feelings through his ethnocentric universalistic yardstick: 'Prince Faisal spoke in Arabic, making gentle gestures and somehow giving me the impression of indifference, a sort of regal boredom towards the entire hearing' (Crum 1947, p. 60). The representatives who announced their rejection but refused to be questioned by the Committee (e.g. the chief of the Sufi orders) were deemed 'evasive' and lacking 'any real desire ... to come to grips with *our* problem' (Crum 1947, p. 117, my italics). When the Committee spoke of anti-Semitism the Tunisian representative, Habib Bourkeiba, suggested that Europeans 'reform and change themselves' rather than establish an ethnic state in Palestine as the only way of avoiding anti-Semitism.

The voice of the Arabs, thus, could not be expressed by those who professed to represent them; the 'subalterns' that Crum repeatedly refers to as the illiterate masses, could not speak for themselves either, and were deemed incapable of knowing what was best for them: 'we are faced with a state of mind which had been imposed on the over-worked, uneducated and illiterate Palestinian Arabs' (Crum

1947, p. 199). The Palestinian rejection of Zionism was, therefore, the result of ‘bad Arabs’ at the ‘top levels’ brainwashing the ‘plain Arab’. Confronted with this (invented) muteness of the ‘plain Arab’, Crum deemed himself best suited to think and decide for them. The testimonials of any Arab could not be representative of the Arab opinion. A Jewish state was beneficial to the Palestinians, despite their protestations. The Arab testimonials represented a challenge to the European Enlightenment ideals as they insisted, ‘we do not want to live as Americans live in New York or Chicago’ (cited in Crum 1947, p. 116). However, as Crum was overwhelmed by contempt towards the Arabs, their poverty, their way of life and their sense of dress; he believed they did not deserve the right to self-determination.

In contrast to the extremely sympathetic attitude towards the Jewish refugees and their plight in the Displaced Persons camps in Europe, and the concern of the Committee members over the fate of the German people and their anger at the anti-German policies and attitudes in some European countries after the war, this human empathy did not extend to a more radical Other. Crum found conditions under which some Arabs lived much more oppressive than the condition of the Jewish refugees in Europe. Although the Arab areas he visited were under European imperial rule, Arabs were blamed for their poverty and humiliation:

Here in this hot, sun-baked city [Cairo] I saw the Arab in his native habitat and native dress – incredible numbers, wearing their long, single piece, nightgown-like robes, representing a degree of poverty and a level of subsistence I had seen nowhere in the Western world. (Crum 1947, p. 111)

The elegant hotel in which the Committee members stayed and conducted their interviews was pronounced ‘no more characteristic of the real Egypt than was the Arab delegation in San Francisco’ (Crum 1947, p. 111). The *real* Arabs are the despised natives; those who mastered Western discourse were an abrogation, just as elegant buildings were designed to deceive the Westerner into thinking the Arab was equally human. Crum saw the Arab world before through the writings of Willkie Wendell (who was not there for very long either), he sought to confirm Willkie’s perceptions and portrayal while simultaneously using Willkie’s orientalist, imperialist perspective to interpret the Arab world. For him the state of ‘underdevelopment’ that he found exceedingly revolting amongst the Arabs was not the result of a combination of ruthless Western imperialism and military occupation, global capitalism, and an

elite local collaboration with the earlier two, but rather the Arabs ‘were the products of a cruel physical environment where Nature sapped strength and vitality’ (Crum 1947, p. 116). Thus Arabs were dehumanised, and therefore their possessions, lives and livelihoods could easily be seized for the benefit of those who espoused European ideals and enjoyed the Western way of life, made possible precisely because of colonialism, imperialism and other kinds of exploitation.

The Arabic speaking people of Palestine did not deserve the ‘Holy Land’, those who bear the tidings of Western culture should have it. The ‘state of the Arabs’ under British occupation was justification enough to dispossess and displace them for the benefit of a new extension to Western ‘civilisation’. The Zionist colonists, by contrast, deserved to replace and succeed them to the ‘Holy Land’:

During the train’s interminable pauses in Egypt [from Cairo to Jerusalem] I had my fill of its desert scenes: mud hovels; the faceless children – for so they appeared, wrapped up in the same nondescript robes as their parents – the slow, painful, miserable existence. But once in Palestine the tempo and colour of life changed sharply... [Jewish] children suddenly were no longer tiny bundles of rags, but youngsters wearing shorts ... alert and *human again*. The Egyptians shielded themselves as much as they could from the sun; the Jews, as though revelling in it after the drab ghetto years, seemed unable to soak in enough of it... That was my first impression of the Holy Land. (Crum 1947, p. 120, my italics)

Crum’s position as member of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry gave him the power to arbitrate over the subject of his orientalist vision. His ethnocentric universalism sets up its own authorial way of life as a referent by which to interpret, represent and judge its others. The Arab rejection of Zionist insistence on giving the cartography of the Judaeo-Christian texts the status of geopolitical history is ridiculed and rejected because Western ethnocentric universalism was impervious to their voices. Crum remained a committed Zionist and obtained the permission of the Committee to ‘inform [the British and American] Governments fully as to our favourable views on partition’ (Crum 1947, p. 201). He believed Palestine should be partitioned and the Jewish people should be allowed to establish a state on Palestinian land against Palestinian wishes. When Haim Weizmann gave evidence for the Jewish case before the Anglo-American Committee, he was asked whether creating an ethnic state and evacuating European Jews was an admission of the failure of democracy, he

replied, 'it would be an admission that Europeans are sick' (cited in Crum 1947, p. 128). This however, did not register with Crum and the other Committee members.

The British government, which occupied Palestine, rejected the recommendations of the Committee, and the question of Palestine was put before the United Nations where the onus of representing the Palestinian case was on politicians from the different Arab states rather than community leaders and representatives. However, the struggle for power amongst Arab states and competition over control of Palestine to gain influence and authority over the Arab world took precedence. On 29 November 1947 the UN General Assembly voted in favour of partitioning Palestine into 2 separate entities and the Jewish State of Israel was established in 1948. The Palestinians along with the Arab states announced their rejection of partition and their intention to go to war against the newly formed Jewish state in order to regain Palestinian lands. The UN resolution was against the wishes of the *majority* of the population of Palestine. The international-Arab-Zionist negotiations leading up to partition have been documented and analysed in English by Walid Khalidi, Ilan Pappé, and Avi Shalim among others. However, the bi-national state proposal did not appear pragmatic nor was it supported by any of the two sides. The Arab leadership failed spectacularly to negotiate a compromise, let alone a favourable result for their people, in fact they could be said to have failed to negotiate at all. The Arab delegates to the UN displayed 'diplomatic incompetence' and indifference to the political consequences of their inefficiency (Pappé 2001, p. 42).

Chapter VI:

Conclusion

The discursive practice of Zionism is an exercise of power. Zionist discourse and historiography offer a representation, hence, necessarily, an interpretation of history that has a continuing effect on the present. The terminology and expressions of Zionist historiography mark it as a selective teleological representation. This teleological reading of the history of European Jews sets up a neat narrative: expulsion from Roman controlled Palestine, suffering and systematic oppression and discrimination in Europe, genocide followed by a war of ‘liberation’ and ultimately restoration to the Promised Land. The Zionist narrative, in effect, de-contextualises Zionism from the history of the Middle East and excludes several groups from the national mythology. It is also a narrative that functions through a binary system of irreconcilable ‘dual hierarchical oppositions’ (Jews/non-Jews, civilised/uncivilised) where one set of objects is superior to the other and therefore maintains mastery over the other.

Zionist representations have attempted to shift the roots of the Zionist movement from the context of European colonialism and nationalism towards the context of Third World national liberation movements or, more recently, to situate the movement in a position that falls between colonial, anti-colonial and post-colonial discourse and practice (see for example Adelman 2008; Penslar 2003, pp. 82-98). This entails the use of ‘carefully constructed terminology’, for example ‘independence from the British (*Azma’ut*) and “liberation” from the yoke of the Diaspora (*Shihrur*)’ (Pappe 1997, p. 31). However, these attempts to portray Zionism as a chapter in the book of national liberation movements reflect a misreading of both Third World liberation movements and Zionism. Firstly, nationalism and national liberation movements are two distinct phenomena (Young 2001, pp. 171-172). Secondly, many Zionist theorists, activists and ideologues have acknowledged the colonial nature of the Zionist project, while denying the oppressive connotations of colonialism in relation to the Palestinians and other groups.

Whereas most nationalist movements involve the suppression of difference within the newly-imagined 'nation', the rule of a nationalist elite over the masses and the construction of an 'immemorial' history; Zionism is unique in that it involved mass migration into a territory and the persistent exclusion of the original inhabitants of the territory from the newly formed 'nation' and the identity of the colonial-settler state through various representational, legal and military methods. Although the creation of white colonial-settler states like the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand has involved the oppression and exclusion (and sometimes genocide) of the indigenous populations, none of these states has remained ethnic in its constitution. With the possible exception of Apartheid South Africa until the early 1990s, Israel has the distinction of being the only colonial settler-state where the exclusion of the indigenous population from the national narrative and identity is enshrined in the law. The ethnic character of Israel is clearly manifested in the Jewish symbols of the state – the flag, the national anthem – as well as a host of citizenship and property laws that favour Jews (see Chapter 5 above, p. 153), especially the Israeli insistence on the demographic Jewish majority as its *raison d'être* (leading to a deadlock in peace negotiations with the Palestinians due to Israel's absolute rejection of the Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees) (Rouhana 1998, pp. 277-296; Ghanem 2000, pp. 87-104; Rouhana and Sultany 2003, pp. 5-22; Zreik 2003, pp. 42-54).

Zionist discourse has constructed Israeli nationhood and identity in terms of Jewish ethnicity and religion and in opposition to the image it constructed of the Palestinians, or what it has called 'the Arabs'. This has also served to entwine Jewish (and later Israeli) identity within the Biblical narratives of the Jewish conquest of Palestine and the perceived divine promises regarding the 'Holy Land' to such an extent that Jewish identity became territorialized. The Jewish religion, culture and ethnicity have been summarised and reduced into a colonialist nationalism that represents itself as the culmination of and the legitimate heir to Jewishness. The multiple meanings, facets, and manifestations in terms of religious faith and practice, culture, history and the myriad Jewish ways of life have become transmuted and transposed into Zionist nationalism. The resultant identity became firmly territorialized, hence the Zionist marginalisation of the Jewish diasporic identity and culture.

The Zionist narrative portrayed the establishment of the Jewish state as both the culmination and resolution of Jewish history. The Zionist project, which culminated in the establishment of the Jewish State, is represented as the renaissance of the Jewish people after years of subjugation in foreign lands; and the resolution of their long suffering in 'exile' that ended with the fulfilment of divine promises of statehood. By representing Zionism as the legitimate heir of Jewish experience, and especially Jewish suffering, Israel portrays itself as the voice of Holocaust victims and the official representative of the Jews everywhere (this is manifested in Israel's intervention in any international situation involving Jewish people from other countries). The Zionist mythology enabled the Jewish State to act as the guardian of world Jewry regardless of their citizenship. In short, Zionism became the voice of 'Jewishness' so that Zionist discourse is able to delegitimise those who reject it and portray them as anti-Semites or self-loathing Jews. The construction of Zionism as an expression of Jewish identity and nationhood represents those who reject the Zionist project as anti-Semites on par with the Nazis no less.

By portraying Zionism as a 'virtuous' nationalist project that should be embraced and supported by all Jews, Zionist discourse renders residents of the state as necessarily in a privileged moral position vis-à-vis 'diaspora' Jews, who then are expected to bear the responsibility of offering unconditional support for the defenders of the 'nation', and Jewish identity generally. In a world where nationalism reigns supreme as a virtue and a moral obligation, the above situation in relation to Zionism results in obscuring reality and creates what Edward Said calls 'a crisis of consciousness' (Said 2001).

It is important to remember that the territorial nation-state is a modern development that (re)frames identities in the international political arena. However, this political framework is not a sacred absolute that can not be legitimately questioned, developed, adjusted and perhaps eventually transformed. The territorial nation-state is not a 'natural' expression of subjectivity, identity or communitarian belonging; rather it is a political framework that has sought to re-define identities since the eighteenth century. This is especially clear in the case of Zionism, as evidenced in this study. Furthermore, as Partha Chatterjee has convincingly argued, post-colonial nationalism is a 'derivative discourse'. It is a discourse derived from the

hegemonic West and has evolved as a suitable manifestation of the West's (mainly economic) needs and interests. Thus, it is not viable for a discourse derived from a colonial system or, in the case of Zionism, the dominant and discriminatory European nation-state paradigm, to be a tool to 'liberate' the victims of this very oppression, whether these be colonised peoples, or European Jews who suffer persecution and discrimination under the auspices of the European liberal nation-state.

The endurance of Jewish cultures and religion for almost two millennia was proof of the timelessness of the Jews even in the face of persecution amongst hegemonic or hostile majority cultures. The subsuming and erasure of 'diasporic' Jewish culture by dominant cultures and various kinds of persecution has failed until the advent of Zionism. The Zionist pursuit of, in the words of Homi Bhabha, a 'white but not quite' Jewish nation which would live in a 'Western-style' nation-state as a hegemonic majority may have led to the reduction of the diverse and rich Jewish cultures into an ethno-nationalist creed, so that a Jewish person can see him or herself as part of the hegemonic majority of the 'white' citizens of the world but with a link to the motherland, Israel, that obligates him/her to support it unconditionally as a matter of moral duty towards the 'nation', which is portrayed as continuously facing a perennial existential threat.

The colonial-ethno-nationalist character of Zionism makes it a distinctive political movement whose discourse varies from one theorist to another, from one situation to another, and from one perspective to another. Ashis Nandy's model of colonialism in his book *The Intimate Enemy* (1983) as a 'mental state' of both the coloniser and colonised offers a useful insight and methodology of analysing the Zionist project and its discourse. For Nandy, colonialism is a 'psychological state rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both the coloniser and the colonised. It represents a certain cultural continuity and carries a certain cultural baggage' (Nandy 1983, p. 2). The colonial consciousness, then, represents the dynamics of asymmetrical relations of power between coloniser and colonised. According to Nandy, the coloniser or the 'white sahib' is not defined by skin colour but by social and political choices. Thus, by choosing to espouse Zionist nationalism-colonialism, the Zionist subject becomes Nandy's archetypal coloniser/white sahib. He or she also becomes 'a self-destructive co-victim with a reified life-style and a parochial culture,

caught in the hinges of the history he swears by' (Nandy 1983, p. xv). Thus in trying to create a 'Western style' nation-state, the Zionist engages in a 'battle between his dehumanised self and the objectified enemy, the technologised bureaucrat and his reified victim, [are] pseudo-rulers and their fearsome other selves projected on to their 'subjects' (Nandy 1983, p. xvi). Thus, not only does Zionism victimise some groups through marginalisation and exclusion, but its advocates are also its joint-casualties.

Although Zionism laid claim to Palestine based on the Jewish right to possess a nation-state in their 'historical home' as per the biblical tradition, Zionist discourse also emphasised the contribution to the development of services and institutions for Jews since their arrival to Palestine. Zionists frequently highlighted the prosperity enjoyed by the Zionist-administered areas of Jewish population (Tolkowsky 1916, pp. 138-189; Jewish Agency for Palestine 1947). The values of progress and increased productivity almost automatically granted the Zionists in Palestine a superior status. Zionism espoused the 'ethic of progress', an ethic which may not particularly be Western, but the West gave it a particular emphasis and made of it an absolute virtue. The ethic of progress as a higher virtue had been given credence by Western scientists and philosophers, notably since the Enlightenment. Jonathan Boyarin traces this ethic of progress to the early Church fathers' idea of the progression from Judaism to Christianity (1992, p. xv). Thus, when Zionist writers claimed that Zionism will be the agent of Western progress in the backward East, they played on the 'the hegemony of empathy as an ethic of obliteration of otherness' (Boyarin 1992, p. 86). The empathy and support offered to Zionism stemmed from its ability to portray itself as an agent and an outpost of the West. Hence, in most of its aspects, Zionist discourse represents an off-shoot of the hegemonic Western meta-narrative of history, progress and development.

The Zionist self-image of a Jewish nation as hyper-masculine, over-developed and employing omnipotent technology to increase land productivity endows hard work with a mantle of holiness and assumes the moral high ground. One trend within Zionism has attempted to legitimise the project morally through the doctrine of progress and social Darwinism; on the other hand it also constructs an image of Palestinian incompetence and under-development in order to undermine their claim to Palestine. The master-narrative of war-like Zionism attempts to exclude and

denigrate the (admittedly stereotypical) intellectuality and speculation that Max Nordau and others describe as characteristic of Jewish culture in Western Europe, characteristics that have traditionally given this culture a quality which Daniel Boyarin calls 'non-hegemony'. Zionist discourse thus, establishes an authoritative image of Jewish culture and the ideal Jewish type as Ashkenazi, masculine and 'modern'.

In order to legitimise the dispossession and oppression of the indigenous population, Zionist discourse seeks to dehumanise and objectify them. In so doing, Zionists have projected their own fears and insecurities onto their Other, in this case the Palestinians; the Palestinians have been – and are – portrayed as backward, primitive and inferior just as the Jews have been represented in Europe. For example in *The Jewish Plan for Palestine*, the Jewish Agency's statements to the UN Special Committee on Palestine in 1947, the authors present their ambitious plans to increase the productivity of the soil and blame the 'native' population for under-developing the land over centuries. As in other colonial discourses, the qualities of the Other are all incompatible with the coloniser's image of himself as masculine, rational, civilised, developed and preferably European. The enterprise of colonising Palestine and developing it using modern technology to join the European mass producing, technocratic nation-states becomes a duty entrusted by the divine to the agents of progress to execute, as Buber maintains. Nevertheless, the Other typically constitutes a disquieting presence for Zionism, a constant reminder of the injustice it has inflicted on the Palestinians and, in a different way, a host of other groups Jewish and otherwise. In order to protect itself from a sense of illegitimacy and moral inferiority, Zionism has tried to regulate the national narrative and to police dissent thus marginalising the voices of Ahad Ha'am, Kohn, among others in order to establish a monolithic narrative of ethnic nationalism.

According to Nandy's model of colonialism as a state of mind, the Palestinians possess certain legitimacy derived from their indigeneity to the land which most Zionists have not failed to notice. Zionist discourse relied for its legitimation and justification of the national-colonial project on the supposed superiority of the Zionists on various levels: cultural, religious, racial and technological. The Zionist project thus created a hierarchical culture that rejected notions of mercy and

compassion for the sake of an image of the efficient, techno-industrial, achievement-oriented society; 'colonialism encouraged the colonisers to impute to themselves magical feelings of omnipotence and permanence' (Nandy 1983, p. 35). The Jewish subjects of this colonial society inevitably become alienated from important aspects of themselves.

Zionist discourse seems to me to be symptomatic of a political ideology that seeks to police and eventually negate aspects of Jewish history, culture and the Jewish self for the sake of constructing a 'nation' modelled on their previous oppressors. The diligence with which Laqueur, Vital and co. have written the history of Zionism in itself represents an attempt to forge a history of national liberation that, like Lady Macbeth, attempts to wash away the guilt of colonialism, dispossession and oppression in a carefully structured narrative that fantastically omits to mention some important aspects of the tale. Zionists, thus, are caught in the 'culture of oppression' that they have implemented. They cannot liberate their minds from colonialism to the extent that they fail to see a 'way out' of the vicious cycle of oppression. Meanwhile, as a condition to self-determination, Zionists and other imperial powers typically expect the colonised to improve themselves, to prove that they deserve the Israeli 'concessions', that they can rise above themselves to become as un-Palestinian as possible, just as most of Africa and Asia were expected to civilise themselves into the image of their European colonisers before gaining their independence. The paternalistic world view has persisted in Zionism and later in Israeli discourse (Pappe 1997, pp. 29-41; Pappe 2003, pp. 42-97).

The diverse character of Zionism as an ethnic colonial-nationalist movement with religious sanction is compounded by its arrival on the world stage at a time when colonialisms were dying out and 'Third World' liberation movements were thriving led to an anachronistic ideology. Zionists viewed themselves as nationalists whilst Palestinians and Arabs viewed them as imperial colonialists. The incompatible perceptions are key to understanding the Palestine-Israel conflict today. Zionists narrate and read their history in relation to Jewish experiences in Europe prior to the establishment of Israel. Palestinians (and Arabs) do not share this history. Zionism, and by extension Israel, for them is a chapter from the narrative of modern imperialism that has shaped their identities and their perceptions of world politics. For

many, 'resisting' Zionism is an attempt to overthrow an imperialist project. The two incommensurable historical narratives lead to incommensurable discourses and perceptions of the situation on the ground, and of the history, politics and geography of the Middle East.

Other narratives attempt to vindicate Zionism by portraying the present-day conflict as a natural continuation of an age-old war between Islam and Judaism. Such discourse attempts to simultaneously deny the violence of Zionist colonialism, normalise the conflict as a historical one that need not be dealt with urgently and portray the dispute as an ideological/religious one (Kolatt 1996, pp. 617-647). Thus modern colonialism, nationalism and international politics all at once are blamed on women's silliness as exemplified by Hagar and Sarah, biblical Abraham's co-wives. Such obscuring of the roots of this most bitter of international conflicts that has ramifications all over the globe is a cynical attempt to place the two parties on equal footing as bickering wives of the same land/warring groups over a territory, in order to avoid laying the blame at the door of the Zionist project.

The nationalist liberation movements of the Third World were essentially 'liberation movements' to end the colonial/imperial rule of Western powers and transfer power to nationalist groups, in many cases elites, and in some cases populist groups. These movements have usually suppressed non-dominant and minority groups in the act of imagining a homogenous, monolithic national entity. In many cases, post-colonial nationalist elites suppressed the majority of their populations under the pretext of the national interest, and the good of the 'people-state' (Chatterjee 1986, pp. 168-169). Zionism, on the other hand, totally excluded the indigenous population from the national community due to its characterisation of the polity as a Jewish state, rather than a state for all its citizens. Apartheid South Africa would be the closest comparison with Israel, although the African population in South Africa had a clear, if exploitative, economic function to perform in the state. The Zionist movement envisaged a Jewish State that relied exclusively upon Jewish labour. Different branches of the movement, most notably Jabotinski and the Revisionists but also Labour Zionists and the religious wings (Mizrahi and Hapoel Hamizrahi), considered the Jewish communities world-wide to be their reservoir for the nascent state. Initially, the ultimate Zionist objective was for a majority of world Jewry to emigrate

to Israel at some future point in history, hence the Law of Return. As such, the Palestinian population had no function or place in the envisaged Jewish polity. By virtue of the ethnic character of Zionist nationalism, the Palestinian population in the Jewish state is excluded from the national imagination. The Palestinians are imagined and represented as the 'enemy within', rather than a component within a diverse society.

My contention, however, is that colonial and national states have much in common. Both projects seek to control and redefine subjectivities, allegiances and identities. Although Zionism is compounded by its colonial trajectory, the predicaments faced by the inheritors of the Zionist project are not dissimilar to those confronting other nation-states. For the vast majority of nation-states are not really comprised of homogeneous nations. The state legitimises itself by the public enactment of ritualistic 'invented traditions' as well as by what has become accepted as natural state functions such as registering, counting, certifying, classifying and documenting, etc. These seemingly harmless, normalised state activities institute and, crucially, officiate hierarchical organisation within societies. However, these seemingly neutral state activities will be seen in a different light if carried out by colonial powers. As a matter of fact, some of the fundamental activities of the national state were first devised to control colonised populations, for example: 'Finger printing, which has come to be used worldwide as the "scientific" means of identifying an individual, was first utilised for this purpose in India by the colonial government in Bengal' (Dirks 1989, p. 43). Thus, to varying degrees, the Zionist nation-state was to many of its Jewish subjects akin to a colonial authority. Zionism categorised society itself according to a slightly modified version of the colonial concept of racial hierarchy. According to Henriette Dahan-Kalev, Zionism and later Israeli society sought to erase the Arab Jewish culture because Arab Jews were regarded as a threat to the Zionist enterprise which sought to impose cultural homogeneity on the imagined nation (2003, pp. 177-178).

As the positions of Bartley Crum and Jorge Garcia-Granados had shown, the diplomatic elite of global politics that constituted the UN officers who represented their nation-states in the UN and other institutions and committees have manifestly failed to do justice to the Palestinians because they believed in Western superiority.

The different UN committees which sought to assess the situation and eventually adjudicate and make recommendations as to the ideal line of action with regards to Palestine purported to be objective and working towards achieving ‘world peace’. However, this process is inherently contradictory as it operates within a political and epistemological framework whose structure and discursive practice corresponded to the British mandate authorities in Palestine at the time, and the political structure and discourse of one of the two ‘claimants’ – the Zionist leadership. The United Nations is an organisation dominated by powerful states and its structure mirrors the framework of representative politics that forms the basis of Western democracy and the nation-state. This structure imposed upon the rest of the world as the only viable structure to represent peoples in the international arena and organise their political, economic and other affairs. In the wake of colonialism, the framework of the nation-state became the de facto arbiter of the political affairs of people in the post-colonial world. Liberation movements used nationalist discourse to theorise its ideologies and acquire local and international legitimacy. Examples of this abound, from liberation movements across Africa from Kenya and Nigeria to Algeria and Egypt as well as India and Indo-China, among others. Although some of these states were founding-members of the UN, this did not preclude the fact that their influence with the institution is incomparable to and incompatible with that of the powerful nations of Western Europe and the US. In short, the politico-cultural set-up of the UN since its inception is firmly anchored in Western political culture and clearly privileges it.

Thus when Bartley Crum or Jorge Garcia-Granados express their disgust with the Palestinian way of life and deduce that these people do not deserve equal rights, this is because they both equally partake of the hegemonic colonial discourse of their time, regardless of their backgrounds. Colonial discourse and the concomitant discourse of cultural hierarchies, with implicit or explicit racial premises, have dominated and outlived the era of colonialism. Some of those who were represented as inferior came to accept the basic terms of reference of colonial discourse and were convinced of the validity and relevance of hierarchical and stereotypical representations. For example, in *The Birth of Israel* Garcia-Granados’ view of UNSCOP members as merely reflecting their national and ethnic temperaments is a reminder of the colonial taxonomies of Homo Americanus, Homo Asiaticus, Homo Europaeus and Homo Afer (Garcia-Granados 1948, p. 16). But it is important to

emphasise that this does not occur solely within the colonial context. Even within an independent, civic nation-state such hierarchical representations continue to exert influence. The nation-state is constantly engaged in a process of realigning subjectivities to coincide with its territorial borders and the perceived shared past of its imagined nation.

On the other hand, the experience of colonialism and the different independence movements in the Arab Middle East left a historical mark on people's identities and self-definitions. Just as Europe was forever marked by the experience of World War I and World War II, the Arab populations were scarred by the experience of colonialism. Colonialism became the trauma of the Arabs to such an extent that they came to define their identities through their positions of 'resistance' to colonialism and imperialism. After the end of World War II, the expectations of the colonised peoples all over the globe peaked in waves of nationalist liberation movements. The 'great powers' of the olden times were unable to sustain their stance in the face of strong and increasingly violent liberation movements and a fast changing world order and difficult economic conditions. At the time when the old colonial powers were dismantling their rule and departing their colonies and liberation struggles were burning fiercely, the Zionist movement succeeded to establish a colonial settler state. The creation of the State of Israel at a time when Third World nationalist liberation discourse was gaining special prominence in the Arab Middle East contributed to its image as arm of the imperial powers. Jews were traumatised by the Holocaust and failed to address, let alone redress, this image. Thus, for many Arabs, Israel became the enduring symbol that 'liberation' from European colonialism would always remain incomplete in the Arab Middle East.

'Official' Zionist discourse from Herzl onwards attempts to construct a homogeneous Jewish 'nation'. This is to confer legitimacy upon the state. The state, in turn, becomes the expression and the 'vessel' of the nation's identity (Butler and Spivak 2007, pp. 30-35). Such a nation-state, by definition, polices difference so that the manufactured consensus of a homogenous nation controls the abstract legal and institutional structure, which is the state. Jewish history and traditions, instead, can provide the basis for alternative models of communal belonging. Indeed,

Zionism – that is Jewish state hegemony...- seems to us the subversion of Jewish culture and not its culmination. It represents the substitution of a European, Western cultural-political formation for a traditional Jewish one that has been based on a sharing, at best, of political power with others and that takes on entirely other meanings when combined with political hegemony. (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 101)

Furhtermore, '[t]he state is not always the nation-state' (Butler and Spivak 2007, p. 1). In other words, the state does not always have to be national, as Spivak put it, 'we want to keep the abstract structures of the states free of the prejudice of nationalism' (Butler and Spivak 2007, p. 97). The expression of communal belonging and identity are not necessarily expressed in or by the nation-state.

Expressions of self and community can take several forms. The nation-state model silences contending expressions of identity and belonging through regulating the subjectivities and loyalties of the constituent populations. This model requires the construction of a homogeneous, dominant nation and the peripheralisation or exclusion of 'minorities'. In the case of Zionism, the construction of the 'nation' involved the silencing of diasporic Jewish identity, the marginalisation of Arab-Jewish identity and above all the dispossession of the Palestinians. It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a solution to the crises and the violence in the Middle East. But this study concludes by throwing light on some forms of communitarian belonging that have continued in the Meddle East despite the prevalence of the ethno-national state model.

Diasporic Jewish identity

Judaism was a key signifier of identity for Jewish communities throughout the world prior to the Zionist movement. It was the celebration of Jewish festivals and Jewish shared historical memory which created unique communities that were part of their greater milieu but also retained a communitarian distinctiveness that held them together and which they shared with other Jewish communities in remote places of the world. The historical experience of the Jewish people offers us highly successful models of the theory and practice of 'diasporic identity' (Boyarin 1994; Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, pp. 85-118). The practice of particularism and genealogical pride in 'ancestor-centred systems of lineages' by dominant, powerful groups lead to racism

and violence (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 105). ‘Powerful’ and ‘dominant’ are the key terms in this formulation. When a group in a position of power and dominance over others practises exclusivism and emphasises genealogical descent, this is oppressive and chauvinist. This is not necessarily true in the case of minority groups trying to maintain their distinctiveness and preserve their identity (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 102). The practice of particularism has historically enabled the Jewish communities to retain their difference in the face of hegemonic groups. However, transposing this theory and practice to a situation of dominance, as in the Jewish State, yields parochial ethno-centrism (as is evident in the current situation in the Middle East): ‘The inequities – and worse – in Israeli political, economic, and social practice are not aberrations but inevitable consequences of the inappropriate application of a form of discourse from one historical situation to another’ (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 102).

Thus, a theory and practice of identity, communal belonging and specificity devoid of power and dominance would accomplish a number of achievements, for example: ‘respect the irreducibility and the positive value of cultural differences, address the harmfulness, not of abolishing frontiers but of dissolution of uniqueness, and encourage the mutual fructification of different lifestyles and traditions’ (Boyarin 1994, p. 249). The value of unique and distinct cultural traditions and historical memory and people’s desire to retain them cannot be overestimated, but these identity markers, when professed and advocated by groups which hold political power and economic dominance, lead to sense of superiority that causes dominant groups to despise and oppress others. Therefore, in order for the model of the ancestor-based identity or genealogical identity not to become oppressive to other groups it has to forfeit hegemony, or be in a position of subalternity (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 107). In this way, (imagined) genealogical kinship can be freed from its association with racism.

An alternative history of ‘the people of Israel’ (as opposed to the now-hegemonic one produced by Zionist historiographers) champions the experience of Judaism as it has been lived for the past two thousand years, one that ‘begins with a people forever unconnected with a particular land, a people that calls into question the idea that a people must have a land in order to be a people’ (Boyarin and Boyarin

2003, p. 106; Boyarin 1994, p. 255). The Jewish people have historically viewed their identity as the children of Israel and the descendants of Abraham so that, whether religious or not, a Jewish person is still Jewish by virtue of his/her descent from a Jewish mother. Furthermore, the early rabbis 'invented' Diaspora as a condition of the Jewish people even when they were not forced out of their homes. An important 'displacement of loyalty' occurred within Judaism and amongst the early Jewish communities and had significant political implications. The 'displacement of loyalty from place to memory of place' was 'invented' by the Pharisaic Rabbis as a necessary strategy to *enable* the loss of the Holy Land and thus resist the Pauline, Christian universalising mission (Boyarin 1994, p. 256; Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 107). Thus they rejected political possession of the Land for the sake of memory of the Land as a strategy to preserve Jewish identity in an increasingly encroaching Christian milieu (Boyarin 1994, p. 258).

The universalism advocated by St. Paul and the Church fathers was coercive and sought to obliterate Jewish difference and particularism. The ancient rabbis responded by renouncing Jewish domination and chose to be 'perpetually out of power' (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, p. 110). Jews thus insisted on their right to reject the Christian gospel and remain different. Henceforth, Jewish identity was marked by a diasporic outlook. Diasporic identity, as such, is a 'disaggregated identity' that disrupts the national, genealogical, and religious categories of identity, precisely because it is all of these in 'dialectical tension' with one another (Boyarin and Boyarin 2003, pp. 108-109). Jewish identity then comprises different categories of collective consciousness, loyalty and belonging, including culture, historical memory, territorial memory, genealogical descent and religious faith.

The 'diasporic identity' model is thus informed by Jewish historical experience. The theories of Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin offer alternative readings and interpretations of some of the foundational texts of Judaism. The Zionist reading of Jewish history and experience is informed by modern political realities and objectives. Zionist discourse has retroactively applied the modern concept of nationhood to Jewish history. A 'diasporic identity' is not one of literal diaspora but rather a way of experiencing subjectivity, identity and belonging that does not necessarily have to occur in an actual place of 'exile'. A diasporic identity is a mode

of being, a social and political choice that can be exercised in any situation and under any circumstances.

Arab identity and the state

Like other groups, the communal identities of Arabic-speaking Middle Eastern people have been redefined along nationalist lines in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With the demise of the Ottoman Empire, different Arab, including Palestinian, nationalisms evolved through different phases. Thus the Arab sense of identity is an intersection of national identity as defined by Sykes-Picot and other state borders in the region on the one hand, and the larger Arab 'umma' on the other, giving rise to complex identity politics. But the fact remains that the current Arab states are an extension of the colonial orders and borders. The state attempts to gain legitimacy by the invention and celebration of national shrines, myths and symbols. Pilgrimage centres are erected to commemorate and honour the Arab 'nation' in such a way that the limits of the imagined nation, the state and the regime are all blurred so that the nation becomes a mystified concept that signifies everything and nothing. And, again following Ashis Nandy's model, these nation-states need their enemies to survive: the 'colonial powers' provide the 'nation' with the opportunity to pontificate over its anti-colonial heroics whilst disregarding and excusing internal colonialism. Additionally, the modern Arab state needs to refer to the whole Arab umma in order to gain legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens (Al-Barghouti 2008, pp. 204-209). The citizen of the modern Arab state manoeuvres a number of identities which include a statist one and a larger pan-Arab identity. Thus, people in Morocco, Tunisia or Egypt will react to events in Palestine, Iraq or Kuwait as if directly affected by them, precisely because people's sense of identity is defined not only by the borders of the modern nation-state, but by the whole of the imagined Arab 'umma'. This can be compared to the 'diasporic' Jewish identity discussed above.

This notion of the Arab 'umma' is a direct development from the Islamic concept of the 'umma'. Within the vast and diverse corpus of Islamic traditions, the concept of the 'umma' has been theorised, debated and developed over centuries as part of a rich field of political philosophy. A brief outline of the concept of 'umma' will offer a theory of communal belonging distinct from the nation-state. The

Islamic concept of the ‘umma’ refers to a group of people who agree to come into the fold; in other words it is a non-racial, non-territorial ‘imagined’ community.⁸ It is inaccurate to translate ‘umma’ to English as ‘nation’; ‘umma’ has a distinct meaning and entirely different implications from the modern nation, nation-state and associated nationalisms.

Etymologically, theoretically and historically, the ‘umma’ was the community of followers who followed a guide (Imam) the guide could be textual, the Qur’an and the Prophet’s Sunna⁹, or human, the Prophet or any other executive power (Al-Barghouti 2008, p. 38). The umma is the pursuit of an ideal which can manifest itself in different ways. The Muslim ‘umma’ is defined by its following of the Islamic teachings as embodied in the texts of the Quran and the Sunna; ‘the collective then is defined by the very action of pursuing’ an ideal, not in *being* something but by ‘doing things in certain ways’, and by subscribing to the pursuit of an ideal (Al-Barghouti 2008, pp. 38-39). This ideal is contained in texts open for interpretation. Texts, including the Islamic foundational texts of the Qur’an and the Sunna, are essentially boundless and surpassing signs and signifiers. Although Islam means different things to different people, to those who follow it, it represents an ideal to be pursued within the parameters of the Qur’an. It is what Sayyid calls an abstract ‘master signifier’ because it ‘permeates all other discourses’ due to the relation of Muslims to it (Sayyid 2003, p. 45).

Historically, in the Muslim context, the state or government (dawla) has referred to ‘a temporary [authoritative] political arrangement whose function is to guarantee the protection and welfare of the Umma, regardless of its local boundaries’ (Al-Barghouti 2008, p. 60). Until the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the site of communitarian belonging, loyalty and even legitimacy lay within the umma rather than the governing state. Accordingly, the umma as a way of envisaging the collective, or an imagined community, is different from racially and territorially based forms of nationhood. The umma has historically served to legitimise the executive authority. The umma is a collective agreement to pursue certain ideals whilst fully

⁸ The Arabic term means ‘destination, purpose, pursuit, aim, goal and end.’ (Bargouti, p. 37)

⁹ The Prophet died leaving a number of texts including everything he said or did that was recorded in textual form, all this is considered his ‘sunna’.

aware of the diversity of locations, communities, languages, and genealogies and also interpretations of the textual traditions. It is important to note here that this system is the outcome of a form of communitarian belonging and subjectivity that revolves around textual exegesis and hermeneutics.

The rise of Arab nationalism against the backdrop of an ailing Ottoman rule was precipitated by nationalists who rejected the religious definition of identity. Their vision was predicated upon a linguistic community and sometimes a vague ethnicity (itself a socio-political construct). Nevertheless, they borrowed the vocabulary of the religious community, for example the Arab umma, and retained its major features. Hence the nation-state paradigm is only one of the signifiers of belonging in the contemporary Arab Middle East. Identities are imagined on multiple levels so that there are consecutive circles of subjectivity and identity including religion, culture, location (town, village) and family or even tribal background (Abu-Lughod, p. 202).

The above theories and practices of subjectivity and identity are tentative visions. Historically they have inflicted their own brands of oppression and exclusion on many groups. But the state of justice is an ideal to be pursued, rather than deferred. It is a project that involves imaginative capabilities that go beyond universalised models such as the nation-state. Rather than engage in a constant attempt to preserve the status quo, theories of political organisation and communitarian belonging can transgress the national borders to envision alternatives modes and models in a process of pursuing justice however elusive it is.

This thesis has analysed the discourse of some Zionist thinkers from the religious tradition and the liberal one. It has sought to avoid the over-researched Labour Zionist figures focusing instead on texts reflecting the colonial-nationalist character of Zionism. The thesis interpreted Zionism through the discursive practice of some of its ideologues and advocates concentrating on the superstructure of Zionism, to use the Marxist terminology employed by Piterberg. The analysis of Zionist discourse shows Zionism to be an ethno-nationalist movement that employs European settler colonial models and relies heavily on appropriating rituals, traditions, symbols and a redefined version of history to legitimise itself and lay claim to an uninterrupted historical tradition.

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