



MEDIATING MODERNITY

Challenges and Trends in the Jewish
Encounter with the Modern World

Essays in Honor of Michael A. Meyer

EDITED BY Lauren B. Strauss AND Michael Brenner



WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS DETROIT

Simon Rawidowicz on the Arab Question

*A Prescient Gaze into
the "New History"*

DAVID N. MYERS

Few contemporary historians of modern Jewry have had as deep and enduring an impact as Michael Meyer. From the appearance of his first book, *The Origins of the Modern Jew*, some forty years ago (1967), Professor Meyer has had a major hand in shaping the categories and analytical framework by which we measure the modern Jewish experience. *Origins* laid out in characteristically meticulous and elegant fashion the core ideals and tensions that shaped German Jews at the crossroads between the Enlightenment and Romanticist eras. Comparable in significance to Jacob Katz's *Out of the Ghetto* and George Mosse's *German Jews beyond Judaism*, Meyer's text made a compelling argument that German Jews, in their confrontation with the new philosophical ideas (including modern notions of historical causality) of the *Aufklärung*, modeled the broader encounter of Jews with modernity itself. Though scholars have since attempted to move beyond the perceived Germano-centrism of this perspective, it is owing to the manifold scholarly virtues of Michael Meyer that German Jewry received as vivid, textured, and consequential a portrait as it did.

One of the qualities that distinguishes Meyer over the course of some four decades of scholarly labor is his ability to synthesize large bodies of historical material into clear, but not reductionist, lines. This

skill is evident already in *Origins*, in which each chapter ranges widely across a rich array of sources and personalities without losing sight of the narrative thread. It is perhaps even more obviously present in Meyer's second book, the encyclopedic *Response to Modernity* (1988), which exhaustively chronicles the life history of the Reform movement from its German origins to its American fulfillment. Moreover, Meyer's work as editor (along with Michael Brenner) of the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* (1996–98) attests to his boldness in conceiving a sweeping and polychromatic analysis of German Jews. And yet it may well be that the most synthetic piece of work he ever wrote was his brief but classic essay from 1975, "Where Does the Modern Period of Jewish History Begin?" Here Meyer drew on his superb grasp of competing ideological and generational currents in modern Jewish historiography to summarize and critique existing schemes of periodization of the Jewish past.¹ He was especially attentive, good historian that he is, to the difficulties of producing a single temporal framework for such a geographically and cultural expansive entity as the Jews.

That said, we would be reducing Michael Meyer to a one-dimensional portrait as an antiquarian scholar if we simply noted his commitment to excavating the past. As an entire generation of graduate students in modern Jewish history knows well, he is an exceptionally generous and incisive reader of research in progress. I recall with great fondness and deep gratitude that every piece of my work that I sent to Michael, including an unwieldy dissertation, was significantly improved by his suggestions, large and small; conversely, work that I neglected to send him suffered. What makes his thorough and famously rapid reading of the work of so many of my generation so impressive is that he was not formally our *Doktorvater*. Without any official institutional obligation, Michael Meyer contributed and continues to contribute to the formation and growth of junior scholars for the best of reasons: a genuine and deep-seated sense of collegiality.

There is a related quality of Professor Meyer's that merits our attention, and conclusively undermines the image of a cloistered scholar frozen in the past, namely, his deep engagement with questions of contemporary Jewish identity (to wit, his books *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* [1990] and *Judaism within Modernity* [2001]), as well as his profound commitments to the Reform movement, Zionism, and the State of Israel. It is precisely Meyer's willingness to allow the past to inform our choices in the present that brings us to the subject of this essay: Simon Rawidowicz (1896–1957). With characteristic insight, Michael Meyer introduced a collection of writings written by this seminal, though underappreciated, Jewish thinker on the occa-

skill is evident already in *Origins*, in which each chapter ranges widely across a rich array of sources and personalities without losing sight of the narrative thread. It is perhaps even more obviously present in Meyer's second book, the encyclopedic *Response to Modernity* (1988), which exhaustively chronicles the life history of the Reform movement from its German origins to its American fulfillment. Moreover, Meyer's work as editor (along with Michael Brenner) of the four-volume *German-Jewish History in Modern Times* (1996–98) attests to his boldness in conceiving a sweeping and polychromatic analysis of German Jews. And yet it may well be that the most synthetic piece of work he ever wrote was his brief but classic essay from 1975, "Where Does the Modern Period of Jewish History Begin?" Here Meyer drew on his superb grasp of competing ideological and generational currents in modern Jewish historiography to summarize and critique existing schemes of periodization of the Jewish past.¹ He was especially attentive, good historian that he is, to the difficulties of producing a single temporal framework for such a geographically and cultural expansive entity as the Jews.

That said, we would be reducing Michael Meyer to a one-dimensional portrait as an antiquarian scholar if we simply noted his commitment to excavating the past. As an entire generation of graduate students in modern Jewish history knows well, he is an exceptionally generous and incisive reader of research in progress. I recall with great fondness and deep gratitude that every piece of my work that I sent to Michael, including an unwieldy dissertation, was significantly improved by his suggestions, large and small; conversely, work that I neglected to send him suffered. What makes his thorough and famously rapid reading of the work of so many of my generation so impressive is that he was not formally our *Doktorvater*. Without any official institutional obligation, Michael Meyer contributed and continues to contribute to the formation and growth of junior scholars for the best of reasons: a genuine and deep-seated sense of collegiality.

There is a related quality of Professor Meyer's that merits our attention, and conclusively undermines the image of a cloistered scholar frozen in the past, namely, his deep engagement with questions of contemporary Jewish identity (to wit, his books *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* [1990] and *Judaism within Modernity* [2001]), as well as his profound commitments to the Reform movement, Zionism, and the State of Israel. It is precisely Meyer's willingness to allow the past to inform our choices in the present that brings us to the subject of this essay: Simon Rawidowicz (1896–1957). With characteristic insight, Michael Meyer introduced a collection of writings written by this seminal, though underappreciated, Jewish thinker on the occa-

sion of the fortieth anniversary of his death. In the introduction, he noted that Rawidowicz attracted few followers to his vision of a dual-centered Jewish nationalism whose cultural capitals were located not in the Diaspora or the Land of Israel, but rather in *both*. It was not merely this iconoclastic vision that consigned him to obscurity; it was also the fact, Meyer noted, that Rawidowicz insisted on Hebrew as his primary written language while living his entire life in the Diaspora.

And yet Meyer was able to see the intuitive genius of Rawidowicz through the ideological and linguistic haze. In particular, it was Rawidowicz's insistence on a genuine partnership between Diaspora and the Land of Israel—a *shutafut* according to his recurring Hebrew phrase—that caught Meyer's attention. This idea reflected an undeniable demographic reality, namely, that the Diaspora contained a critical mass of Jews (the overwhelming majority of the global Jewish population when Rawidowicz was active, and about half today), and was not likely to disappear. Meyer observed that the concern for a mutually respectful partnership that was a hallmark of Rawidowicz's thought "has become common coin of the seemingly endless dialogues that have taken places between the two 'sides.'"² He went on to point to other aspects of Rawidowicz's thought that, while relatively marginal in his day, had assumed new significance in the present: for example, Rawidowicz's invocation of the language of Jewish continuity, as well as his insistence that the Jewish people, though dispersed in different locales, was an indivisible unity. Even more provocatively, Meyer observed that Rawidowicz's gnawing concerns about Zionism—its desire for hegemony in the Jewish world vis-à-vis the Diaspora, set against its drive to establish a "normal" political state—had not been allayed a half-century after the State of Israel was created.

Michael Meyer's appreciation for Rawidowicz's prescience did not—indeed could not—take note of one unknown feature of his thought. In the course of writing the nine-hundred-page book that encapsulated his distinctive philosophy and ideology, *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim* (1957), Rawidowicz authored a thirty-three-page chapter that was planned as an appendix but never saw the light of day.³ The chapter, titled "Between Jew and Arab," dealt with an issue that Rawidowicz had vowed never to speak about in public but evidently felt compelled to address at the time: the relationship of Zionism and the State of Israel to the Arab population of historic Palestine. It remains something of a literary mystery why this chapter was not included in the published version of *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim*. What is known is that sometime between 1955 and 1957, a decision was made not to include the chapter, already in galley, in the published version of the book. The reason for this exclusion is not known, though one can certainly understand why

Rawidowicz or his printer, one Jacob Fink in Paris, might have chosen to withhold such a potentially explosive chapter from publication.

The chapter rested on the claim that the age-old debates over the status and location of the Jews, comprising what is known as the Jewish question, must now give way to questions about the desired status and location of Palestinian Arabs. This is not to say that Rawidowicz was motivated by a deep sense of identification with the Arabs of Palestine. Nor did he believe that the creation of the State of Israel had conclusively resolved all lingering issues of *Jewish* identity (e.g., by “proving” the superfluity of the Diaspora). On the contrary, the seminal events of 1948 raised, for Rawidowicz, the troubling specter that political sovereignty might require an unwelcome descent into the abyss of immorality of the gentile nations.

In reflecting on this fundamental question of power, Rawidowicz came to believe that the Arab question—the status of Arabs in Israel and refugees outside of it—was, in fact, a Jewish question, one that posed a formidable challenge to the political sagacity and ethical norms of Israel (as Rawidowicz preferred to refer to the Jewish people, refusing to surrender that name to the newly created state).⁴ The fact that he spoke so bluntly and sharply about this challenge may be surprising, though there were others Jewish thinkers in Israel and beyond—Hannah Arendt, Hans Kohn, and Yeshayahu Leibowitz come to mind—who voiced similar concerns about the relation between power and morality in this period. What makes Rawidowicz’s chapter especially bracing is the counsel he offered in “Between Jew and Arab.” For the State of Israel’s own sake, he argued, it was an urgent task not only to end all forms of discrimination against Arab residents within its borders but to consider *the repatriation of Arab refugees* outside of them.

Written in the first half of the 1950s, Rawidowicz’s chapter reminds us that it was not the so-called New Historians in Israel during the late 1980s and 1990s who first brought to public attention the status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel and the fate of the refugees. There can be little doubt that this cadre of scholars who came to public prominence over the past two decades, figures such as Benny Morris, Ilan Pappé, Tom Segev, and Avi Shlaim, introduced a new critical spirit into the historiography of 1948.⁵ Drawing on a large trove of newly available archival material, this cohort quite consciously sought to undermine a number of key tenets of Israeli collective memory. These included the belief that (1) the British decisively favored the Arab side in the terminal stages of its Mandate over Palestine; (2) the Jewish/Israeli side was at a distinct military disadvantage versus the Arab side when hostilities broke out in late fall 1947 through 1948; (3)

the Jewish/Israeli side was in constant search of peaceful options to resolve the conflict; and (4) the hundreds of thousands of Arabs who took flight from Palestine/Israel in 1948 did so largely of their own accord.⁶ This last claim generated the most controversy, with debate raging over whether the flight of Palestinian refugees was driven by Jewish expulsions or the fear of them or by the calls of Arab leaders abroad to take temporary leave of Palestine before returning in the wake of a victorious Arab army.⁷

Unlike the New Historians, Simon Rawidowicz did not engage in serious archival research into the various aspects of the War of 1948. But his chapter "Between Jew and Arab" did rest on an assumption that seemed to stand at odds with Israeli popular memory up to the time of the New Historians, namely, that the Jewish/Israeli side bore a measure of responsibility for the Arab refugee problem and should take steps to acknowledge and act on that responsibility.⁸ In fact, his chapter bristles with prophetic indignation at what he perceived to be a lapse in Jewish ethical and political judgment in treatment of Arabs in the midst of and after the War of Independence.

The aim of this essay is to shed light on Rawidowicz's unique perspective on this exceptionally sensitive issue. Notwithstanding the fact that his chapter was not included in *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim* and thus dwelt in obscurity for a half-century, it contains the kind of prescience that few in Rawidowicz's day recognized, though which Michael Meyer, with his keen historical sensors, aptly saw as characteristic of him. Before turning to Rawidowicz and his chapter, though, we must first recall a number of voices that pierced the veil of silence in which the Arab question was often cloaked in Jewish circles in Israel and the Diaspora.

The controversy generated by the New Historians in Israel derived, to a great extent, from their self-conscious attempt to "de-idealize Zionist history" through a mix of "an interdisciplinary approach, healthy skepticism, and a thorough understanding of the other side's historical narrative."⁹ And yet, the assertion of a historiographical revolution—in this case, coming as much from their opponents as from the New Historians themselves—is often somewhat exaggerated. While some of the New Historians trumpeted bold methodological or evidentiary breakthroughs, others acknowledged that they were not the first to happen onto controversial conclusions. For example, both Avi Shlaim and Benny Morris point to the 1959 work of the Iraqi-born Israeli political scientist Rony Gabbay, *A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict: The Arab Refugee Problem*, as an adumbration of the New Historians' work on the Palestinian refugee question. While acknowl-

edging Gabbay's limited archival pool, Morris nonetheless lauded his book as "a remarkable achievement."¹⁰ Gabbay had no access to the rich trove of archival materials (e.g., Haganah, IDF) that Morris used in his 1988 book *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*. Rather, he relied on an extensive network of interviews with Middle Eastern and European officials, UN and government documents, and newspapers to trace the origin, unfolding, and scope of the Arab refugee problem. He sought to strike a judicious balance in producing a careful, stage-by-stage account of the refugee problem that took stock of both Arab and Jewish sides. Ultimately, Gabbay placed a good deal more responsibility for the initiation of hostilities—and the creation of the refugee problem—on the Arab than on the Jewish side. And yet, he did notice a shift in Israeli attitudes and behavior toward Arab residents of Palestine in the late spring and summer of 1948. In addition to "the great use by the Jews of psychological warfare," there were also cases, he noted, in which "reluctant Arabs were forced to flee into Arab country [*sic*]."¹¹ Gabbay added that following the evacuation of Arab villages, "looting and pillaging of Arab properties, and the commandeering of goats, sheep, and mules by the Israelis were not uncommon features."¹²

Gabbay's assertion that both psychological pressure and forced expulsions by the Jewish side contributed to the Palestinian refugee problem directly challenges David Ben-Gurion's oft-expressed view that "the State of Israel expelled nobody and will never do it."¹³ It appears that by the time Gabbay published his dissertation in 1959, Israeli public memory had consolidated around Ben-Gurion's view of the events. But that process of consolidation took a number of years following the events themselves. One of the most detailed analyses of this process is Anita Shapira's comprehensive study of the reception of "Hirbet Hizah," the long story published in 1949 by the author S. Yizhar. Yizhar's extraordinary story revealed the moral qualms of the narrator, an Israeli soldier, who watched with a mix of powerlessness and dismay as his comrades expelled Arab women, children, and the elderly from their village in the late stages of the War of Independence.¹⁴ Throughout the story, the narrator struggles to justify the actions of his comrades, at one point asking: "Do we really have to expel them? What can they do to us? What evil can they cause? What's the purpose?"¹⁵

Shapira traces in considerable detail the waves of public attention and controversy stirred up by Yizhar's story, beginning with one in the immediate aftermath of its publication. She notes that critics from 1949 to 1951 largely concurred on the literary merit of Yizhar's work, a landmark of Hebrew fiction in his generation. But they dif-

ferred widely on the lessons of "Hirbet Hizah." While one critic declared, not surprisingly, that the story abetted the enemies of Israel, others believed that Yizhar represented a voice of conscience that was often drowned out in the quest for military victory and political sovereignty.¹⁶ One reader who admired Yizhar's courage lamented the fact that "the tortured victim of yesterday turns into the torturer the moment he picks up the whip, and the exile of yesterday now banishes others. Overnight, those who suffered injustice over centuries become themselves its perpetrators."¹⁷ Here the assumption of power entailed not only an erasure of the Jewish past but also, this critic implied, a serious erosion of the ethical consciousness borne of the Jews' long historical experience.

Interestingly, while there were competing opinions about the virtue of publicizing the act of expulsion described in "Hirbet Hizah," the debate seemed not to focus on whether expulsions did or did not take place. Many assumed that they did and proceeded either to justify or condemn them. Shapira notes that Israeli intellectuals "apparently did not hesitate to openly address the expulsion issue" in this period. And they were not alone. Israeli political activists, especially those associated with the Communist Party (MaKI) or the Marxist-inspired Zionist Mapam, expressed clear knowledge of and condemnation for acts of expulsion. In early May 1948, Mapam's resident expert on Arab affairs, Aharon Cohen, declared that "a deliberate eviction (of the Arabs) is taking place. Others may rejoice—I, as a socialist, am ashamed and afraid."¹⁸ A month later, Mapam's political committee announced its opposition to "the objective of expelling the Arabs from the areas of the emergent Jewish state."¹⁹ Subsequently, debate ensued within the party over the question of whether the expelled Arab refugees should be permitted to return to their homes in Israel.

The interrelated questions of expulsion and return were not restricted to party deliberations behind closed doors. *Al ha-mishmar*, the Mapam-affiliated paper, carried articles from party leaders discussing them, especially after the Israel Defense Force actions in Ramla and Lydda in which some scores of thousands of Arabs—estimates range between forty and seventy thousand—were expelled from their homes.²⁰ For example, Meir Ya'ari, in a published version of a speech from July 30, 1948, recalled the view of some comrades who said, "We did not expel them [the Arabs]. They left of their own accord." He countered that while "it is true that hundreds of thousands fled, they did not always do so of their own accord."²¹ The next day, Alexander Pereg wrote a lengthy article in the paper that challenged the impression that the expelled refugees constituted a grave danger to the state: "The vast majority of the villages did not collaborate with the invaders

[i.e., the invading Arab armies], and we should accept these residents back into our State as citizens with full rights."²²

It would, of course, be a vast overstatement to claim that these views were universally shared across the political spectrum. In fact, they occupied a clearly identifiable but unmistakably small place in Israeli public opinion of the time. To wit, although Yitzhak Rabin recalled that David Ben-Gurion himself seemed to authorize the expulsion of Arab residents of Ramle and Lydda, Ben-Gurion and many of his colleagues in the dominant Labor Zionist party, Mapai, held to the line that Arabs left Palestine in 1948 of their own volition or because they were encouraged to do so by local or neighboring Arab leaders.²³ Consequently, one finds few mentions of expulsion in the pages of the Mapai-affiliated paper, *Davar*.²⁴

But that is not to say that Mapam or *Al ha-mishmar* were the only sources attesting to Israeli awareness of acts of expulsion. Others included MaKI and its organs *Kol ha-'am* and *Al-Ittihad, Ha-'olam hazeh*, edited by Uri Avnery, and the less well known *Ner*. This last publication was the fortnightly journal of the Ihud Association, which was the latest incarnation of the Jewish peace camp whose roots lay in Brit Shalom (founded in 1925). The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 had dashed the long-held hopes of this circle for a binational polity in which Jews and Arabs share power. Nevertheless, both Ihud and *Ner* continued to be animated by a Jewishly grounded moral commitment to improve relations between Jews and Arabs. Moreover, from its opening issue in February 1950, the journal was replete with reports of expulsion, displacement, and discrimination against Arabs, many of which were sprinkled with appeals to Jewish conscience and references to classical Jewish sources. *Ner's* editor, Rabbi Binyamin (Yehoshua Radler-Feldmann), used the journal—and a variety of pseudonyms—to challenge Israeli society to assume responsibility for the expulsions of Arab residents and to accept their right to return to Israel.²⁵ In this respect, as well as in the traditionalist Hebrew idiom in which he wrote, Rabbi Binyamin recalls his fellow eastern European Jew Simón Rawidowicz though the two men appear not to have been in touch at all in this period. Meanwhile, some of Rabbi Binyamin's old colleagues from the Brit Shalom days, most notably the Hebrew University philosopher Shmuel Hugo Bergmann, felt that the winds of history had swept past the Ihud/*Ner* crowd—indeed, that it no longer had the moral right or obligation to criticize a society of which its members were part.²⁶ Still, the journal stuck to its guns up to the mid-1950s, maintaining focus on the refugee question and entertaining a variety of proposals on how to resolve it (e.g., through either a partial or full right of return) in a relative public vacuum.

To be sure, there were periodic, and at times quite passionate, debates in Israeli Jewish society regarding the status of Arab residents who remained within the boundaries of the new state. One such debate arose in the midst of and after Knesset deliberations over the Nationality Law (passed on April 1, 1952), which established a different and more difficult path toward citizenship for Arabs (as against Jews, who received automatic Israeli nationality under the Law of Return).²⁷ There were also intense, if episodic, discussions in Israel over the morality of force, especially after the Qibya (1953) and Kafr Kasem (1956) events in which scores of Arab civilians were killed by the Israeli army in the midst of its campaign to combat violent infiltrators across Israel's borders.²⁸

And yet, public debate over expulsions undertaken by Jewish-Israeli forces in 1948 seemed to wane by the time of the Nationality Law and the Qibya episode in 1952–53. Indeed, Anita Shapira notes in her essay on the reception of "Hirbet Hizah" that "the expulsion, which at the beginning of the 1950s had been acknowledged as an obvious fact of the war, was now transformed into a virtual 'state secret'—of course, with many 'confidants.'"²⁹

In explaining this process, Shapira suggests that "the suppression of the expulsion's memory" resembled to some extent another therapeutic forgetting: the suppression of memory by Holocaust survivors. In fact, there may be more than a mere resemblance. According to Shapira, this suppression resulted from a variety of factors: the absence of contact with and knowledge about one-time Arab neighbors, the continuing enmity of the surrounding Arab world toward the State of Israel, and the addition of hundreds of thousands of new immigrants to the State of Israel (doubling its population within three years) who did not share a common memory with those who had passed through the war.³⁰ But to these factors we might add another causal explanation drawn from the admittedly speculative domain of collective psychology. That is to say, the tale of Arab dispossession, or at least the pieces of a tale that were visible in public discussions mentioned earlier and elsewhere, were dislodged in Israeli public memory by a much larger tale of dispossession: that of the Jews themselves during the Holocaust. Certainly, in chronological terms, the transformation of the memory of expulsions from "obvious fact" to "state secret" coincides with the major efforts at institutionalizing the place of the memory of the Holocaust in Israel. The bill to create Yad Vashem and Israel's Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority passed the Knesset on May 18, 1953. This legislative act reflected not only a significant attempt to memorialize the Holocaust in Israel but also, as Tom Segev has argued, a broader endeavor to mold popular conscious-

ness of the State of Israel as the custodian of the Jewish people—and consequently, as the repository of public memory of the Holocaust, as well as the clear antithesis to Diaspora passivity.³¹ Although it is difficult to prove a direct causal link, it remains a striking—and thoroughly understandable—feature of the evolving Israeli-Jewish public consciousness that attention to the plight of Arab refugees and the memory of expulsions by Jews diminished as attention to the plight of Jewish refugees (mainly, but not exclusively from Europe) and the memory of the extermination of Jews increased.

Against the backdrop of the tectonic shifts of memory hinted at here, we turn at last to the intriguing legacy of Simon Rawidowicz. Rawidowicz led a peripatetic career as scholar and ideologue that carried him from his native Lithuania to Germany, England, and finally the United States. Toward the end of his life, in 1951, he realized a lifelong dream by being appointed to the faculty of Brandeis University, precisely the kind of Jewish institution of higher learning that he once dreamt of as a latter day Sura or Pumbedita.³² It was in his Brandeis years that Rawidowicz began to pull together the strands of his distinctive philosophy of Jewish life into the two volume *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim*; it was also in this period, between 1951 and 1955, that he wrote “Between Jew and Arab,” intended, as we noted at the outset, for inclusion in *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim* but withheld from the final version.

Both geographically and politically, Rawidowicz was at a remove from the public debate that ensued in the State of Israel regarding the treatment of Arabs during and after the war. And yet, he was remarkably well informed about Israel’s political, cultural, and literary scene, due in no small part to the regular newspaper clippings sent to him from Tel Aviv by his brother, Avraham Ravid. Moreover, he was deeply consumed by the consequences, political and moral, of the Jews’ assumption of sovereignty for Jewish history and the history of Palestine. This prompted him, at the outset of “Between Jew and Arab,” to break his long-standing vow not to discuss the Arab question in public. The result was one of the most trenchant and gripping accounts of that question by a Jew, in Israel or outside.

According to Rawidowicz, the conflict between Jews and Arabs after 1948, “is no longer about ‘two people holding on to a garment,’ both of whom claim to the master watching over them that the garment is all theirs. Rather, one has grabbed hold of it, dominates, and leads, while the other is led. The first rules as a decisive majority, as a nation-state. The other is dominated as a minority. And domination is in the hands of Israel [i.e., the Jewish people].”³³

While Rawidowicz placed the blame for initiating the hostilities of 1948 on the Arab side, he nonetheless noticed a dramatic reversal of fortune, in which the Jews became a national majority and the Arabs a national minority. This, to his mind, reflected the new burden of sovereignty and the attendant demand for a clear ethics of power. "Arabs," Rawidowicz wrote, "dwell in the State of Israel by right, not sufferance—just like any minority in the world, including the Jewish minority which dwells where it dwells by right, not sufferance" (3). There are a number of features of this sentence worthy of our attention. First, Rawidowicz was expressing support for the right of Arabs to live in freedom and equality on their land as a matter of principle, consistent with the recently approved Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which he alludes to in his text (4).³⁴ Second, he was using a formulation "by right, not sufferance" that should have resonated in the ears of Jews, having been invoked by a young Winston Churchill in 1922 in a British government document that discussed the Jewish presence in Palestine.³⁵ And third, he was constantly mindful, given his own unyielding commitment to a vibrant Jewish presence in the Diaspora, of the possible linkage between the State of Israel's treatment of its Arab minority and the treatment of Jews by host countries the world over.

For this combination of reasons, Rawidowicz watched the early steps of the Knesset, Israel's Parliament, with alarm. He did *not* consider the Law of Return (1950), which accorded Jewish immigrants a nearly automatic path to citizenship, as especially dangerous. However, the 1952 Nationality Law was another story. In order to qualify for Israeli citizenship, non-Jews (the overwhelming majority of whom were Arabs) had to satisfy a number of conditions, the most important of which were that (a) they be registered with the state by the time of the enactment of this law (July 14, 1952) and (b) they were to have been continually present in the state from 1948 until the enactment of the law. The law excluded those who left the boundaries of what would become the State of Israel during the hostilities, including both refugees who remained permanently outside of the State of Israel and those who subsequently returned to their homes or to another place in Israel. Rawidowicz felt that those thousands of Arabs who had left and returned (including the vast majority of the so-called infiltrators [*mistanenim*] who had no violent intentions), or those who had not yet registered with the state, were unfairly precluded from citizenship in the state of their residence.³⁶ "Neither the ingathering of the exiles nor the security needs of the State," he declared, "require these discriminatory clauses." After all, "discrimination is discrimination, even when it serves the security needs of a state" (4).

It was a mix of ethical and pragmatic political considerations that prompted Rawidowicz's intervention. On one hand, he wrote that "morality itself protests against these discriminatory clauses" (4). On the other hand, he was concerned, as we have seen, that Jews would replicate some of the discriminatory laws that had been inflicted upon them in the Diaspora. This would not only increase the enmity of the gentile world toward the new State of Israel; it could also pose new risks to the well-being of Jewish communities outside of Israel.

In light of these concerns, Rawidowicz was disturbed that Jews were not more vocal in protest. He was especially irate that the Jewish press in the Diaspora, with a measure of critical distance from the events unfolding, did not raise its voice but instead chose the path of silence. If only Diaspora journalists had "protested as they should have, they would have earned a reward for their protest, as would have the State of Israel itself" (5). By contrast, Rawidowicz observed with admiration those in Israel who voice their criticism "even if they are not many in number, even if their voices do not always carry like a trumpet" (6).

Indeed, this circle was powerless to prevent further discriminatory acts. On the heels of the Nationality Law came, in March 1953, the Land Acquisition Law by which the Knesset authorized the state to claim for its use property that (a) was currently "not in the possession of its owners" and (b) was required for "purposes of essential development, settlement, or security."³⁷ The wide latitude of these clauses, especially the second, effectively denied the property claims of those Arab residents who had left their homes during the war-time hostilities but resettled elsewhere in Israel—a group known by the deadly bureaucratic oxymoron "present absentees" (*nokhehim nifkadim*). While present in the State of Israel as legal residents and, ultimately, citizens, the "absentees" were prevented from reclaiming, or even visiting, their homes.³⁸

Rawidowicz knew that this curious discriminatory status of the "present absentees" was justified as a function of Israel's security concerns. But he refused to accept it. Shifting the focus from the legal regulations of the State of Israel to the legal ethics of the Bible, he declared that "it is forbidden for the Jewish people to adopt the laws of the Gentiles and expropriate the property of an enemy or combatant who was vanquished on the battlefield."³⁹ Moreover, "it is not advisable for a weak and poor people, weak and poor even with the crown of statehood on its head, to pillage and plunder" (7).⁴⁰ The state's haughtiness, he feared, would only strengthen the hand of Israel's enemies.

Rawidowicz found few allies among his compatriots in the Diaspora, whose press, he felt, assumed an unprincipled posture of si-

lent consent vis-à-vis the government's treatment of Arabs. More admirable in this regard was the press in Israel, which was willing to open its pages to voices "that are bitter over the discrimination against Arabs." And these voices provided a window to some restrained optimism on Rawidowicz's part. "There will arise among the Jews," he predicted, "those who will protest and struggle to eradicate the evil in their midst." Ultimately, he hoped that these voices of conscience in Israel would be able to "rectify any wrong within its borders, either by choice or coercion" (7).

Rawidowicz proved far less sanguine about another matter that, in his view, stood at the heart of the enmity between Jew and Arab: "the denial of repatriation that was imposed upon the Arabs who left Palestine—or took flight from it—with the outbreak of war between the State of Israel and the Arab countries, or more accurately, with the attack of the Arab countries" (7). The brashness of this formulation almost takes the breath away. Here, after all, was a Jew who regarded himself as a proud and loyal member of his people. Not only had he never manifested interest in the fate of Palestinian Arabs prior to this point. Despite his concerns about Zionism's impulse to negate the Diaspora, he shared the goal of Jews' reclaiming the Land of Israel and reviving Hebrew culture there. To call, then, for the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs in the early 1950s was an extraordinary act, one that placed Rawidowicz among a very small number of Jews.⁴¹

For Rawidowicz, the fateful "decree of the refugees" (*gezerat hapelitim*), as he called it, was one of the most important political and moral issues facing the State of Israel and world Jewry.⁴² Indeed, "the question of these refugees," he argued, "is not an Arab question: it is a *Jewish question*, a question that 1948 placed upon the Jewish people" (28).

Limitations of space prevent a full unpacking of Rawidowicz's chapter. But it is important to give a flavor here of the blend of perspectives—that of the admonishing prophet and the hard-core realist, the compassionate universalist and the proudly parochial nationalist—that gives force to his extraordinary text. We should also mention in this context that Rawidowicz was himself uprooted, along with his family, from their Polish-Lithuanian hometown of Grayevo by the outbreak of World War I; this experience may well have played a role in his sensitivity to the plight of those displaced by the hostilities of 1948.

In any event, Rawidowicz did not dwell at great length on the causes of the flight of Arab refugees:

It matters little whether they left because their Arab brothers and British friends incited them to do so by promising them a quick return to a Palestine in which there would be no State of Israel, or whether they fled out of fear of the Jews (and the Deir Yassin massacre, for example, certainly could have frightened the Arabs of this country), or out of the chaos of war which uproots people from their place of residence and sweeps them beyond the borders, or out of political naïveté and “technical” ignorance (it is told that a night rain storm once drove the Arabs from their homes in Safed, and they believed that it was a “secret weapon” of the Jews that triggered the storm). (7–8)

From this last sentence, it is obvious that Rawidowicz was not smitten with the “Arab-Oriental romanticism” of some fellow Jews; nor did he count himself among “those who bestow glory on the Arabs either in the past or the present” (31). His motivation in addressing the question of the refugees was almost entirely to advance the welfare and good name of his fellow Jews. But here too, as in the case of the earlier discussion of Israeli Arabs, his analysis followed the intersecting paths of practical politics and ethical propriety.

Thus, Rawidowicz reiterated his concern that the mistreatment of Arabs—in this instance, avoidance of the refugee problem—would have a negative effect on the State of Israel. Not only would it fortify the resolve of neighboring Arab countries in “refus(ing) to come to terms with the existence of the State of Israel” (10); it would also encourage them to continue their economic boycott of Israel. Rawidowicz advanced yet another, and rather novel, economic argument in discussing the plight of the refugees, one that presaged claims that have been made in more recent debates on the place of immigrants in the West. That is, he insisted that the State of Israel’s economy would benefit greatly from the refugees’ return: “The rates of food and agricultural production would be much improved if the Arabs were able to return and perform their work.” On the whole, the returning refugees could serve as a vital tool “in improving political relations between Jews and Arabs in the world, but also in strengthening the economic position of the State of Israel” (10).

At almost every turn, Rawidowicz invoked the principle that harm done to the refugees could be turned back upon the Jews. That harm would not only result from the ongoing hostility of the Arab and Muslim worlds; it would also issue from the West, though not in the most obvious of ways. Rawidowicz was aware that in the wake of the Holocaust, the Western world, burdened by its own guilt, “hesitated to

come . . . and preach to us about morality" (11). In fact, that world—the very world “that accepted Hitler and his ilk”—“now understands the State of Israel when it locks its gates to the refugees.”

Rawidowicz sensed grave danger in this “understanding,” as he made clear from the following biblical allusion: “Jacob [i.e., the Jews] was ‘not understandable’ to Esau [i.e., the gentiles] during his whole life. In this very ‘lack of understanding’ lurks one of the sources of Esau’s hatred for Jacob. When Esau does not comprehend the language of Jacob, ‘have no fear, Jacob my servant’ [Jeremiah 46:28]. When Esau begins to comprehend the language of Jacob, woe unto Jacob. . . . I fear that from 1948 onward, Esau has been defiling Jacob through this ‘understanding’—the two have become alike. The twins are no longer struggling with one another. They have begun to understand one another” (12).

The fact that Jacob and Esau—the State of Israel and the nations of the world—now “understood” each other meant they had come to inhabit the same immoral universe. In haunting biblical language, Rawidowicz lamented this descent of the Jewish state “into the valley of the shadow of death” (Psalm 23:4) (9). From the time of the Hasmonean kingdom until the present, he added, “there was not a single solid complaint in the arsenal of the haters of Israel” (12). But 1948 signaled a dramatic change. The Jews not only assumed political power but also the ethical norms of the surrounding world. This was an occasion for antisemites to celebrate. But even more worrisome was that “intellectuals and historical scholars” who were not antisemites were now beginning to sense that the Jews had lost their age-old moral compass, itself the source of their uniqueness in the world (13).

Rawidowicz’s concern here was an extension of his lengthy discussion and critique of 1948 in *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim*, comprising nearly four hundred pages and the entirety of part 2. The return of the Jews to sovereignty after two millennia, greeted with joy and even messianic anticipation by many Jews, was the cause of sober reflection for him. He feared that the dizzying triumphalism of the day would only embolden those Zionists who were intent on “negating the Diaspora.” It would also enshrine political power, rather than cultural vitality, as the defining feature of the Jewish nation. In the process, the Jews’ finely tuned moral antennae would be dulled.

This critique of Jewish power made Rawidowicz vulnerable to the charge of being a pie-in-the-sky utopian, and he was well aware of it. He countered by challenging the “imagined realism” of those who refused to consider the return of the refugees. Hurling back the charge against his putative accusers, he observed, “But in fact what is ‘utopian’ is the total avoidance of the question of the refugees, de-

laying its resolution from year to year. It is dangerous to transfer the resolution to the U.N. or to the Arabs. There is no other way than the elimination (of this problem)—and by Jews themselves” (30–31).

Despite the fact that Rawidowicz had once taken on the literary persona of “Ish Boded”—Lonely Man—he did not revel in being a solitary voice on the plight of the refugees. He was bitterly disappointed that the leaders of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel had neglected their erstwhile ethical imperative as Jews. “If one had said to David Ben-Gurion, Chaim Weizmann, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, and their friends before 1948,” he surmised, “that they were soon to stand as the leaders of a State of Israel that did not permit Arab refugees—men, women, and children—to return to their possessions, and *uprooted* them from their roots and rendered them homeless—would they not see in this claim a contemptible libel of the haters of Israel and Zion who aimed to desecrate the name of Israel and besmirch Zionism in the world?” (24). Zionists of all ideological stripes had promised to pursue a peaceful path with the Arabs of Palestine, but Rawidowicz was especially dismayed by the failure of the Labor Zionists to act on their rhetoric. In fact, he noticed a wide gap between “the lovely declarations . . . about peaceful co-existence” and their actual behavior.

Although Rawidowicz repeatedly refers here, as in *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim*, to 1948 as a caesura, he also intimates that the gap between word and deed may well extend back before 1948. In a lengthy footnote, he singled out the legendary “prophet of the religion of labor,” Labor Zionist leader A. D. Gordon (1856–1922), and wondered how deep and sincere his commitment to equitable relations with Arabs in Palestine ran (25). Did Gordon actually believe his own rhetoric that the Jewish side could act according to “humane and cosmic ideals” in its dealings with the Arabs? How would he have responded to the specter of hundreds of thousands of displaced Arab refugees or to the fact that Jews lived in “expropriated and conquered homes?” Indeed, would Gordon have “blurted out like his friends and disciples at Degania, Nahalal, and elsewhere that ‘we have no stain on our hands, we are righteous and have not sinned?’” (25). It was precisely this sense of self-virtue, especially among those socialist Zionists committed in name to equality, that most agitated Rawidowicz.

His doubts about the sincerity of this strand of Zionist rhetoric did not carry over to one prominent Labor Zionist of the 1948 generation, S. Yizhar, whom Rawidowicz admired deeply. Yizhar was, to his mind, “the one writer who salvaged the honor of our Hebrew literature in the State of Israel when he protested in his stories (‘Hirbet Hiz‘ah’ and ‘Ha-shavui’) the injustice done to the Arabs” (17). Rawidowicz quoted extensively from a discussion Yizhar conducted with Zionist

youth after the War in which he contrasted the earlier rhetoric of coexistence with the Arabs to the later practices of exclusion of discrimination. Once upon a time, Yizhar noted, we used to speak of “ourselves and our neighbors” in benign terms, alluding to the title of Ben-Gurion’s collected essays on the Arab question. But now, the Arabs are referred to as “not trustworthy,” a “fifth column,” and “hav[ing] no place in this country.”⁴³ This abrupt reversal of rhetoric, Yizhar insisted, was a “breach of faith” by Zionist leaders, political parties, and, above all, educators once loyal to humanist values. For Rawidowicz too, 1948 indeed marked a bold new turning point in many regards. Nevertheless, the troubling rhetoric and action that he observed were not creations *ex nihilo*. They were the logical culmination of the dominant, though not sole, Zionist path, one that combined disregard for the Diaspora with disregard for the non-Jewish residents of Palestine/Israel—and that was aptly summarized by one unabashed advocate as “cruel Zionism.”⁴⁴

The inescapable conclusion toward which Rawidowicz’s chapter, “Between Jew and Arab,” moved was that the State of Israel must take decisive and painful steps to redress the refugee question. To his mind, it should have done so already in the aftermath of the 1949 armistice agreements into which Israel entered with its Arab neighbors. Failing that, it should now boldly proceed to “open the gates of the State to Arab refugees after the Arab countries have arrived at a peace treaty with it—excluding those Arabs who endanger the security of the State” (28). In fact, the question of sequence—whether to repatriate the refugees before or after a peace treaty—was the subject of intense debate in the midst of the armistice agreements. The Arab side insisted that any discussion of a peace agreement must follow an agreement by Israel to accept the return of at least some of the refugees. Meanwhile, the Israeli side, principally Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett, was prepared to discuss, if only for tactical reasons, some form of return of Arab refugees, but only as part of a comprehensive peace plan.⁴⁵

The idea of repatriation, either before or after a peace agreement, did not last long on the agenda of Israeli diplomacy. No politician of the ruling Mapai party would have accepted Rawidowicz’s argument that “five or six hundred refugees from the State of Israel outside of its borders are much more dangerous to the State than five or six hundred thousand additional Arab citizens within its borders” (29). And few resonated to his claim that the fate of Jewish morality hinged on the resolution of the Arab question, even when Rawidowicz emphasized: “It is not for their honor that I am anxious; it is for *our honor*. I am concerned for *our soul*, for the cleansing of the garment of Israel!”

(31). Notwithstanding this expression of self-interest, one could readily imagine Israeli political and military leaders dismissing this kind of talk, insisting that they did not have the luxury of caring for the Jewish soul when the Jewish body was faced with daily challenges to its physical well-being.

As we have seen, there was in the years immediately after the 1948 war some discussion of a complex of sensitive issues relating to the Arab question: statutory discrimination, expulsions, and even the prospect of return. And there were a number of Israeli intellectuals in this period who persisted beyond the immediate postwar period in expressing concern over the relationship between Jewish power and morality (e.g., Martin Buber, Ernst Simon, Rabbi Binyamin, Yeshayahu Leibowitz).⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the harsh economic and social realities of sustaining a fledgling state filled to the brim with new immigrants—alongside the ongoing enmity of Israel's neighbors and, we speculated earlier, the entry of Holocaust in Israeli collective consciousness—virtually assured that Rawidowicz's chapter would find a very limited receptive audience.

Of course, this chapter found no audience at all, for "Between Jew and Arab" was never published. As we noted at the outset, someone, most likely Rawidowicz or his printer in Paris, Jacob Fink, decided to exclude it from the final version of *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim*. Perhaps Rawidowicz, after pouring so much of his passion into the chapter, had achieved the emotional catharsis he needed. Perhaps he feared that the chapter would altogether undo any positive reception that *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim* might otherwise have received. Perhaps he simply did not want to face the wrath of his fellow Jews. Or perhaps the lingering hostility between Israel and her Arab neighbors, as well as the persistent fear of a "second round" of war, modified his view of Jewish responsibility for the Arab question.

Whatever the case may be, the chapter stands out for its prescience fifty years later. In fact, prescience was a distinguishing feature of Rawidowicz's thought, as Michael Meyer reminds us in recalling his insistence on a meaningful partnership between Israel and the Diaspora. To be sure, there is in Rawidowicz's thought a certain air of the unreal at times—as in his unceasing belief in a vibrant Hebrew culture in the Diaspora. In the case we have discussed here, was it really practicable to repatriate hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees in the 1950s? Did he really understand the logistics, not to mention the politics and symbolism, involved in such an act? Could he not have predicted how difficult it would be then, not to mention now?

But before dismissing Rawidowicz as starry-eyed academic, cloistered in the comfortable if distant environs of Waltham, we should recall that the question of the refugees has, in fact, not disappeared. It emerged as a significant bone of contention in the late stages of the Oslo peace process in 2000–2001, revealing a deep—and, at least from one side, previously unacknowledged—divide in self-perception between Israeli and Palestinian camps. Likewise, Rawidowicz's concern about discrimination against Arabs within the boundaries of Israel has been periodically echoed by various public officials and government ministers, most recently by the government-sponsored Orr Commission of 2003 that investigated the deaths of thirteen Arab citizens in November 2000.

More globally, Simon Rawidowicz's reflections on the modern Jewish experiment with political power have had their own interesting reiterations of late, and not just by those well known for their opposition to Zionism. Writing some three years after the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2003, Avraham Burg, the former speaker of the Knesset, wrote: "The Zionist revolution has always rested on two pillars: a just path and an ethical leadership. Neither of these is operative any longer. The Israeli nation today rests on a scaffolding of corruption, and on foundations of oppression and injustice. As such, the end of the Zionist enterprise is already on our doorstep."⁴⁷

This harsh epitaph, emanating from a respected Israeli political leader, resonates with Simon Rawidowicz's powerful admonition from a half-century earlier. Whereas Burg was driven to despair by those he called the "corrupt lawbreakers" who settled the West Bank and Gaza after 1967, Rawidowicz was unnerved by the indifference of Jews to the flight of Palestinian Arabs in 1948. Neither Burg nor Rawidowicz drew comfort or joy from what they saw as the precipitous decline in ethical behavior among Jews in their respective day. Nor, for that matter, did their criticism win them wide acclaim from fellow Jews. Many would see them as naïve, even dangerously so, about the harsh world of modern politics. But one could also see them as beacons of conscience who, while swimming against the current, held to the belief that the success or failure of Zionism hinged on its successful negotiation of the newfound power of sovereignty, as well as on its attitude and behavior toward its non-Jewish neighbors. In this, as in so many other matters, Simon Rawidowicz exhibited uncommon wisdom and clairvoyance, rare qualities that we would do well to acknowledge fifty years after his death.

NOTES

This article emerges out of a forthcoming book, *Israel, Jewish Power, and the Arab Question*, which analyzes (and translates into English) a chapter written by the distinguished Jewish thinker Simon Rawidowicz. Titled "Ben 'ever le-'arav," the chapter was intended for, but never published in, Rawidowicz's two-volume work *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim* (London: Ararat, 1957). I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Benjamin Ravid for his many kindnesses and assistance in enabling my study of his father, including his providing me with a copy of the text in question. I would also like to thank my teacher and colleague Arnold J. Band, who joined me in translating the chapter, which is here rendered into English as "Between Jew and Arab." (Page numbers in parentheses throughout the text refer to the Hebrew original.) I would also like to thank Arnie Band, Derek Penslar, and Nomi Stolzenberg for their helpful readings of this paper, as well as Hillel Eyal for his excellent research assistance.

1. Michael A. Meyer, "Where Does the Modern Period of Jewish History Begin?" *Judaism* (Summer 1975): 329–38.
2. See Meyer's foreword to the reissued volume of Rawidowicz's writing, *State of Israel, Diaspora, and Jewish Continuity*, ed. Benjamin C. I. Ravid (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1998), 6.
3. Among the few to have read and commented on the chapter are Ravid, *State of Israel*, 43–44; Avraham Greenbaum, "Rawidowicz at Brandeis University (A Memoir)," *A History of the Ararat Publishing Society* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1998), 50; and Noam F. Pianko, "Diaspora Jewish Nationalism and Identity in America, 1914–1967" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2004), 193–95.
4. Indeed, this became the topic of a well-known exchange of letters Rawidowicz had with David Ben-Gurion in 1954, excerpted in Ravid, *State of Israel*, 194–204. The full exchange can be seen in Simon Rawidowicz, *Bavel vi-Yerushalayim* (London: Ararat, 1957), 2:872–909.
5. Among the significant titles are Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Ilan Pappé, *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948–51* (London: Basingstoke, 1988); Avi Shlaim, *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); and Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis* (New York: Free Press, 1986). This new Israeli research has generated its own scholarly scrutiny. See, e.g., the largely sympathetic treatment of Laurence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999); or the highly critical account of Efraim Karsh, *Fabricating Israeli History: The New Historians* (New York: Frank Cass, 1997). We should be careful to note, as have several of those mentioned earlier, that it was not they who uncovered the refugee problem. Earlier Palestinian historians, while relying on fragmentary sources, nonetheless wrote extensively about the refugees, most signifi-

- cantly, 'Arif al-'Arif, author of a six-volume history of 1948 titled *Al-Nakba* (The catastrophe) that was published from 1956 to 1960. For a brief discussion of Palestinian literature on the subject, see the preface to *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), xv–xvi.
6. See the enumeration of the key issues at stake in Benny Morris, "The New Historiography: Israel and Its Past," in *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians*, 1–34 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); and Avi Shlaim, "The Debate about 1948," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (1995): 287–304.
 7. Inflamed passions arose among politicians who, in the early years of this century, began to call into question the way in which Israeli historical textbooks had been rewritten in the latter half of the 1990s (e.g., to account for some of the conclusions of the New Historians). Former Education Minister Limor Livnat, in particular, took a strong stand against revised textbooks, including those that made reference to Jewish acts of expulsion, arguing that "no nation studies its history from the point of view of its enemy or the point of view of the United Nations." Her letter in *Ma'ariv* from March 7, 2001, is quoted in Majid al-Haj, "National Ethos, Multicultural Education, and the New History Textbooks in Israel," *Curriculum Inquiry* 35, no. 1 (2005): 55. Interestingly, even Israeli scholars who are critical of the New Historians no longer claim that the flight of Palestinian Arabs was exclusively the result of instructions from neighboring Arab countries. See, e.g., Yoav Gelber's discussion of expulsions in Ramle/Lod and during Operation Hiram in his *Komemiyut ve-Nakba: Yisra'el, ha-falestinim umedinot 'Arav, 1948* (Or Yehuda: Devir, 2004), 246–47 and 350–51. Indeed, Derek Penslar observes: "Twenty years after the appearance of the first fruits of the new history, many of its arguments have been accepted into the Israeli historiographical mainstream. It is now conventional wisdom that, as Benny Morris argued back in 1987, substantial numbers of Palestinians were expelled from their homes in 1948, and the Arab states' military capabilities were far less, and those of the Zionists far greater, than raw numbers would suggest." See Derek J. Penslar, *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 44–45. For a more traditional account that focuses exclusively on the claim that Palestinian Arabs were encouraged by Arab leaders to take flight, see Shabtai Tevet's rebuttal of Benny Morris, "Charging Israel with Original Sin," *Commentary* (September 1989): 24–33.
 8. On the question of Israeli responsibility, see Ian Lustick's interesting chapter "Negotiating Truth: The Holocaust, *Lehavdil*, and al-Nakba," in *Exile and Return: Predicaments of Palestinians and Jews*, ed. Ann M. Lesch and Ian S. Lustick, 106–32 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).
 9. Ilan Pappé, "Critique and Agenda: The Post-Zionist Scholars in Israel,"

- History and Memory* 7, no. 1 (1995): 82, 85.
10. See Morris, "New Historiography," 16–17; as well as Shlaim, "Debate about 1948," 289.
 11. Rony Gabbay, *A Political Study of the Arab-Jewish Conflict: The Arab Refugee Problem* (Geneva: E. Droz, 1959), 109–10.
 12. *Ibid.*, 110n158.
 13. This was Ben-Gurion's statement to Claude de Boisanger, the Frenchman who chaired the UN's Palestine Conciliation Commission on April 7, 1949. Qtd. in Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 260. More than a decade and a half later, Ben-Gurion repeated the claim that "the Arab refugees fled of their own free will" in a conversation in 1966 with Israeli Arab member of Knesset Tewfik Toubi. See the transcript of their conversation in Zaki Shalom, "Ben-Gurion and Tewfik Toubi Finally Meet, October 28, 1966," *Israel Studies* 8, no. 2 (2003): 57. However, Morris recalls that various scholars, including Ben-Gurion's own biographer Michael Bar-Zohar, asserted that it was Ben-Gurion himself who issued an expulsion order for Ramle and Lydda (Lod). See Morris, "New Historiography," 4.
 14. S. Yizhar, "Hirbet Hizah," in *Shiv'ah Sipurim*, 37–88. See also Anita Shapira, "Between Remembrance and Forgetting," *Jewish Social Studies* 7, no. 1 (2000): 3.
 15. Yizhar, "Hirbet Hizah," 74.
 16. Shapira, "Between Remembrance and Forgetting," 23.
 17. M. Roshuld's article in *Be-terem* (12–13 [November–December 1949]: 75) is quoted in *ibid.*, 13.
 18. Cohen's memorandum of May 6, 1948, is quoted in Benny Morris, "Mapai, Mapam, and the Arab Problem in 1948," in Morris, *1948 and After*, 46. See also Joel Beinin, *Was the Red Flag Flying There? Marxist Politics and the Arab-Israeli Conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948–1965* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 33.
 19. Qtd. in Morris, "Mapai, Mapam, and the Arab Problem," 52.
 20. Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 423–36.
 21. Meir Ya'ari, "Ki tetsu le-milhamah," *Al ha-mishmar*, July 30, 1948.
 22. Alexander Pereg, "Medinat Yisrael vеха-kefar ha-'aravi," *Al ha-mishmar*, August 1, 1948.
 23. The claim that Ben-Gurion ordered the expulsion of Arabs from Ramle and Lydda emerges out of the testimony by Yitzhak Rabin to Michael Bar-Zohar, author of a three-volume biography of Ben-Gurion. Benny Morris describes the encounter as follows: "Someone, possibly (Yitzhak) Allon, after hearing of the outbreak in Lydda, proposed expelling the inhabitants of the two towns (Lydda and Ramle). Ben-Gurion said nothing, and no decision was taken. Then Ben-Gurion, Allon and Rabin stepped outside for a cigarette. Allon reportedly asked: 'What shall we do with the Arabs?' Ben-Gurion responded with a dismissive, energetic gesture with his hand and said: 'Expel them [garesh otam].'" What remains unclear to scholars is whether Ben-Gurion actually uttered the

- words or Allon and Rabin understood his hand gesture to mean that. See Morris's discussion in *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 429, 454n88.
24. It was also rather common, on the right end of the Zionist spectrum, to resist the claim of Jewish expulsions by insisting that the exodus was the result of orders issuing from the Arab world. Instructive in this regard is the work of the American historian Joseph B. Schechtman, who authored a biography of Vladimir Zev Jabotinsky and was closely aligned with the Revisionist Zionist movement. Schechtman's 1952 book, *The Arab Refugee Problem*, posits that the "mass flight of the Palestinian Arabs is a phenomenon for which no single explanation suffices." While placing the onus of responsibility on Arab leaders (those of the Arab Higher Committee and later leaders of neighboring countries), he does not include among his explanations expulsions by Jewish forces, with the exception of Deir Yassin, which he calls the "unfortunate single incident of the war." See Joseph B. Schechtman, *The Arab Refugee Problem* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1952), 4, 11.
 25. See, e.g., his articles in *Ner* 2, nos. 1–2 (1950): 3–4; and 2, nos. 3–4 (1950): 3–6, 13. By 1952 Rabbi Binyamin had modified his call for a return of Arab refugees without preconditions to a partial return based on a mix of realism and idealism. Cf. *Ner* 3, nos. 5–6 (1951–52): 2–3.
 26. See Shmuel Hugo Bergmann, "Sefekot," *Ner* 1, no. 4 (1950): 3–4. "It is true that there are many sins that lie at the foot of the foundation of our state. But these sins—we must see and assess them in light of our history since 1933. If there was a sin in the expulsion of Arabs from certain places, and in our malevolent attitude toward them, then we all took part in that sin, in that malevolent attitude. We must not place ourselves above responsibility for this, as if we were better than others."
 27. See, e.g., "Vikuah so'er 'al hok ha-'ezrahut" [Stormy debate on the nationality law], *Ha-arets*, March 27, 1952, or the report several days after the law was implemented, "Shevitat maha'a kelalit shel ha-ukhlyusyah ha-'aravit neged hok ha-'ezrahut ha-giz'ani" [General protest strike of the Arab population against the racist citizenship law], *Kol ha-'am*, July 15, 1952. For a fundamental legal discussion of the law, see David Kretzmer, *The Legal Status of the Arabs in Israel* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990), 35–48. More recently, Shira Robinson has offered a probing analysis of the extension of citizenship to Arabs in Israel, regarding this act as much as a means of regulation and *exclusion* (i.e., of former residents of Palestine) as of *inclusion*. See Shira Nomi Robinson, "Occupied Citizens in a Liberal State: Palestinians Under Military Rule and the Colonial Formation of Israeli Society, 1948–1966" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2005).
 28. Benny Morris has chronicled the public debate over Qibiya, noting that the mainstream press accepted Ben-Gurion's fallacious account that the IDF was not responsible for the episode while a smaller number (*Ha-arets*, *'Al ha-mishmar*, and *Kol ha-'am*) rejected his claims. See "Ha-

- 'itonut ha-yisre'elit be-farashat Qibiya," in his *Tikun ta'ut: Yehudim ve-'aravim be-erets-Yisra'el*, 1936–1956 (Tel Aviv, 2000), 175–97.
29. Shapira, "Between Remembrance and Forgetting," 25.
 30. *Ibid.*, 26. To these explanations, we must add the concerted efforts of Israeli politicians, government officials, and researchers to count and categorize the refugees and then to rebut their claims to return to their homes. See the study of this effort during the years 1948–52 by Haya Bombaji-Sasportas, "Kolo shel mi nishma/kolo shel mi mushtak: havnayat ha-siah 'al 'be'ayat ha-pelitim ha-falastininim' ba-mimsad ha-Yisre'eli" (master's thesis, Ben-Gurion University, 2000).
 31. Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), esp. 421–45.
 32. See the comments of Rawidowicz's alter-ego, Ish Boded, "Shivre de-varim," *Metsudah* 5–6 (1948): 560.
 33. The reference to the struggle over the garment is to Baba Metzia 11:1. Also, Rawidowicz always used the term "Israel" in the sense of "Klal Yisrael," and never to mean the State of Israel.
 34. The declaration expressly mentions in article 15 that "everyone has the right to a nationality" and that "no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality." See www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.
 35. As British secretary of state for the colonies, Churchill actually sought to dilute somewhat Zionist expectations over the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The resulting White Paper of 1922 expressly declared that His Majesty's government's aim is *not* to make Palestine "as Jewish as England is English." At the same time, Churchill did want to clarify that "it is essential that it [the Jewish people] know that it is in Palestine as of right and not on the sufferance." See www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/mideast/brwh1922.html.
 36. Rawidowicz estimates the number of those excluded by this law at 15,000 out of some 180,000 Arabs in Israel in 1953.
 37. Israel Land Acquisition (Validation of Acts and Compensation) Law, 5713-1953.
 38. This group has generated a good deal of scholarly attention, but among the most interesting accounts is the series of interviews conducted by the Israeli author David Grossman in *Sleeping on a Wire: Conversations with Palestinians in Israel* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993).
 39. The accusation of expropriation recalls the case of the ancient Ahab, king of Samaria, who expropriated the land of Naboth, his neighbor, and then put him to death (1 Kings 21). This series of actions enraged God, who enjoined Elijah to confront Ahab and ask, "Have you murdered and also taken possession?" (1 Kings 21:19).
 40. Rawidowicz's phrase "a weak and poor people" (am halash ve-dal) recalls a similar phrase in Zephaniah 3:12 ("an afflicted and weak people"—am ani ve-dal). Also, the phrase "pillage and plunder" appears in a number of places in the prophetic writings (e.g., Isaiah 10:6, Ezekiel 38:12).

41. Naturally, the call would be much more commonly sounded among the Arab refugees themselves, as well as among their supporters in the Arab and Muslim worlds, especially in the midst of negotiations with Israel (from the armistice talks in 1949 to the Oslo peace process of the 1990s).
42. The term *gezerah* reflects both the richness and the traditional bent of Rawidowicz's Hebrew. The term can be translated variously as "plight," "decree" (especially an *evil* decree), or "catastrophe" (as in *gezerot ta'h ve-ta't*, referring to the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49). Rawidowicz's usage contains elements of all three of these English words.
43. "Between Jew and Arab," 18. Yizhar's conversation is found in *Divre siah: hartsa'ot ve-diyune haverim* (Tel Aviv: Mifleget po'ale Eretz Yisra'el, 1951), 2:52–53.
44. The term is the title of a small pamphlet by the Hebrew writer and collector Avraham Sharon (né Schwadron), *Torat ha-Tsiyonut ha-akhzarit* (Tel Aviv: Sifriyat De'ot, 1943–44). Rawidowicz found Sharon's views distasteful in two regards: first, in his advocacy for a Zionism that severed its connections to the Diaspora and, second, in his advocacy of the "transfer" of Arabs from Israel.
45. For a discussion of the various proposals considered by Israel and often advanced by Sharett—e.g., the "Gaza plan" and the "100,000 offer"—see Morris, *Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, 549–80.
46. Perhaps most interesting in this regard is Yeschayahu Leibowitz, who in an essay written shortly after Qibiyah excoriated those who had placed the veil of divine sanctity upon the State of Israel: "If the nation and its welfare and the country and its security are holy . . . then Kibiyeh [*sic*] is possible and permissible." At the same time, Leibowitz, in contrast to Rawidowicz, Buber, or Simon, was altogether skeptical that there was a Jewish morality to speak of, arguing that "morality does not admit a modifying attribute and cannot be 'Jewish' or 'not Jewish.'" Leibowitz's essay, originally published in the Israeli journal *Be-terem*, was included as "After Kibiyeh," in his English collection *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 189–90. See also the discussion by Ehud Luz, "'Jewish Ethics' as an Argument in the Public Debate over the Israeli Reaction to Palestinian Terror," *Israel Studies* 7 (2002): 134–56.
47. Avraham Burg, "The End of Zionism," *Guardian*, September 15, 2003. This essay was completed before the appearance of Burg's book *Le-nat-seah et Hitler* (Tel Aviv: Yedi'ot aharonot, 2007) and his controversial interview with Ari Shavit in *Ha-arets* on June 6, 2007. In the book and interview, Burg went a good deal further than he had earlier, questioning the wisdom of Zionism and of Israel as a Jewish state.