**The Destruction of the Yiddish Language and the Formation of the Israeli State
Or "How Yiddish Was Murdered"**

By Reuben Roth, Ph.D. Laurentian University, Sudbury, Canada

Paper presented to the American Sociological Association Annual Conference, 2013

NOTE: This is a working paper, please do not quote.
© 2015 Reuben Roth

Abstract
For almost 1,000 years the Judeo-German language Yiddish was "the authentic language of Jews in Europe" (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992) and was spoken by as many as 11 million Jews until its demise after the Second World War. In this paper I contend that the destruction of Yiddish was not accidental and is linked directly to the rise of modern Zionism (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992; Wheatcroft, 1996; Katz, 2004). Yiddish represented the antithesis of the 'new' Zionist philosophy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whose proponents viewed the language as an unwanted tie to European Jewish history, and an impediment to the transition to a Zionist state in Palestine. Here I will trace the roots of Yiddish, including an examination of how it thrived in the "diasporic" European and North American communities of Ashkenazi Jews for almost a millennium, then I will examine the proponents of the early Zionist movement, who viewed the death of Yiddish and the rise of modern Hebrew as a necessity given their desire to create an indisputable historic tie rooting the fledgling state of modern Israel to the biblical Old Testament.

Standpoint

I am the child of holocaust survivors who identifies both ethnically and culturally as a Jew. My mother's family largely survived World War II, but the bulk of my father's family did not. My parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles fled the town of Chelm, Poland in September of 1939 and my grandmother's cousin, a member of the Polish Communist Party, arranged for a caravan of the town's Jews to travel to Siberia, where over a million Jews were sheltered during the war. After several years in a 'Displaced Persons' camp, my family moved to Canada. One of my uncles was a shop-floor, labour activist in the rag trade, and my grandfather was an unrepentant 'Bundist' – a late 19th and early 20th century Jewish nationalist branch of socialism centred in Eastern Europe. And so, a nonreligious secular thread ran though some members of my family. My father's family was much more religious and did not fare the holocaust nearly as well. The only living relative who survived the Holocaust was his

brother, an orthodox Jew who lived the remainder of his postwar life in Brooklyn. He and my father were the only two members of their family to have survived the war.

I grew up in Montreal's postwar Jewish ghetto, Cote Des Neiges. We attended the Orthodox synagogue Shomrim Laboker, where my father was a long-serving gabbe (usher). I attended *Lubavetche Yeshiva* from kindergarten until I was ten, when I was transferred to the less religious *Jewish Peretz School* for the remainder of my primary education. Growing up, my mother tongue was Yiddish, with English following closely behind. At that time Yiddish trumped Hebrew in our neighbourhood. But with the rise of Zionism, especially after the Six-Day War, I wondered what anyone could do with Yiddish, at the cusp of being a dead language by then. Until my late teens, I participated in a multitude of Jewish cultural events where the only people who spoke Yiddish were a half-century older than me. As a secular teenager, I was an active member of Habonim – a socialist and Labour-Zionist youth group with deep ties to Israel. I was a member of Habonim throughout my teens, selling trees to be planted in Israel, attending weekly meetings, youth dances, planning fundraisers for Israel, listening to lectures about the joys of the kibbutz movement and listening to guest speakers extolling the virtues of life in Israel. At one time I couldn't wait to go to Israel and do my 'aliyah' – which is the relatively recent rite of moving to Israel under the law of the 'right of return', which allows anyone who is deemed Jewish the "right" to establish Israeli residence and citizenship based only on one's religious-ethnic Jewish background. In short, my family had a long history of both socialist politics and deep religious traditions.

Growing up with the laws of *kashrut* (keeping kosher) was always a daily burden for me, as well as a mystery. No mixing milk with meat; if you ate meat, you couldn't have a milk product for eight hours; if you ate a milk product, you couldn't eat meat for two hours. It was a rigorous, needless chore, and I wanted to experience the taste of bacon or drink a milkshake with my hamburger. The Orthodox Jewish laws of kashrut were a yoke I would wear until I was almost eighteen. I strongly identified with author Shalom Auslander (2007) when he wrote the following in his memoir:

> *I was raised like a veal in the Orthodox Jewish town of Monsey, New York, where it was forbidden to eat veal together with dairy. Having eaten veal, one was forbidden to eat dairy for six hours; having eaten dairy, one was forbidden to eat veal for three hours. One was forbidden to eat pig forever, or at least until the Messiah arrived; it was then, Rabbi Napier had taught us in the fourth grade, that the wicked would be punished, the dead would be resurrected, and pigs would become kosher.*
> *—Yay! I said, high-fiving my best friend, Dov.*
> *— You should be so excited, said Rabbi Napier, peering with disgust over the top of his thick horn-rimmed glasses, — on the Day of God's Judgment (Auslander, 2007: 2)*

Like Auslander, I was schooled in the intricacies of *kashrut*,[1] but I had never really understood why these laws were necessary, and the usual explanation of 'adherence to God's commandments' never really satisfied me. By the time I had reached my teens, author Herman Wouk (1959) finally answered the question that I had always harboured: why were kosher dietary laws necessary in this day and age?

> The kosher rules are on the side of cleanliness and purity, even if "kosher means pure" is less than the whole story. But the most important thing seems to be that a pattern exists in the daily act of eating, a pattern that Jews have shared since Sinai. It is a community bond and a reminder of personal identity that comes whenever a man gets hungry. It is a daily commitment in action to one's faith, a formal choice, a quiet self-discipline. The Jew who travels undergoes inconvenience, and with it a forcible reminder of who he is and what his home ties are. There is no doubt that the food laws work. They are *social instruments* [my emphasis] for keeping the Jewish nation alive, and psychological instruments for preserving the identity of individuals (Wouk, 1959: 139).

Within the context of my religious education, this explanation made sense to me. I understood that assimilation was viewed as the greatest threat to Judaism and I could see that the ritual of *kashrut* was one ritual in a set of practices that was intended to remind Jews – not daily or hourly, but in *minute* increments – that they were different from the populations among whom they lived. Beit-Hallahmi (1992) reaffirms this when he writes:

> Rabbinical Judaism ... is a religion of practice and ritual, not of confessed or professed faith. There is little theology in it, and no required credo or dogma. There are only the required practices, making daily life into a continuous ritual. It was these which created the Jewish community ... and Jewish identity [...]. In the case of Judaism, secularization meant a change in everyday behaviour, not some abstract theological decision. No longer covering your head became the symbol of leaving orthodox practice behind; after you stopped practicing the rituals, there was nothing religious left, no abstract faith. Jewish identity was still there, because the world defined you as Jewish, but Judaism had gone from your life (Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, 1992:23).

This was the essence of the Judaism that I grew up with; we were Jews in the diaspora, always wandering, never in a home nation of our own because this is what God had commanded. Not until the Messiah returned would Jews ever be spiritually 'home'; and the dietary laws, the Torah study, the *Shabbot* services, the ritual holidays, the *yarmulke*, and the *Yiddish language* would always mark us as 'strangers in a strange land'. This, according to Wouk, would serve us as a constant reminder of our own difference while we dwelled amongst 'the other' – among

---

[1] *Kashrut* is defined as Jewish dietary laws.

other things, this made Jews excellent sociologists. But the goal was not sociological training, but the *yoke of distinction*, in the name of avoiding assimilation with those among whom we had settled. It seemed to have worked for around 3,000 years[2] – or so we were assured. Being burdened with the mother tongue of Yiddish[3] was another daily reminder that assimilation was going to be difficult or unlikely.

When the principal of the then-mostly Yiddish *Jewish Peretz School* announced that Hebrew was to displace Yiddish in all lessons after our class of 1970 graduated, I took exception to the invasion, but this phenomenon, the '*Israelization*' of North American curriculum, was taking place across North America during the 1950s and 60s. As Katz (2004) explains:

> The effect of the Holocaust was to galvanize support for the new State of Israel […] the American Jewish establishment, working closely with the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization, rushed ahead with a program to "Israelicize" American Jewish culture too. Synagogue after synagogue and school after school, whose members and pupils were often almost all of East European heritage, switched to Israeli ("Sephardic") Hebrew, labeling the Ashkenazic rendition of Hebrew and Aramaic "wrong," "ghetto drone," or "bastardized." The successful Hebrew day school systems that rose in America not only excluded Yiddish as a subject but developed a curriculum that deprived the American Jewish child of any knowledge of the literary and cultural achievements of Yiddish and its literature. To this day, textbooks in these schools often include Yiddish stories by Sholem Aleichem and other Yiddish writers translated into Hebrew, with no mention of the fact that they are translations (Katz, 2004: 344).

As one of my two simultaneously-learned languages, Yiddish came easily to me, but Hebrew was a foreign invasion into my life. While I was familiar with the Hebrew in my Sabbath services *siddur* (Hebrew prayer book), but I stumbled over the modern Hebrew that was adopted from the ancient texts and drummed into my brain at *Jewish Peretz School*. Moreover, I deeply resented having my second language displaced.

Today I understand that the teaching of Hebrew as an everyday *lingua franca* was a political necessity, a rationale for the claim to the land of Palestine, an historical pretext to rationalize the colonization of what was not labeled "the land of Israel" until the New Testament's book of Matthew (see Sand, 2012: 26-27), a binding agent which would unite a disparate Jewish peoples from across the globe, and give them a home to which they had only the most tenuous of claims.

---

[2] For an argument that the continual span of the Jewish people reaching back 3,000 years or more is little more than a myth, see Sand (2009).

[3] Or at the very least, having a dual set of mother tongues; both English and Yiddish.

Introduction

> *The Hebrew language has played a crucial role in creating an Israeli identity. The first generation of natives, in the 1880s, was educated in Hebrew as a matter of course. The new identity of Zionists Jews in Palestine was first proclaimed around 1900, and it was labelled Hebrew. ... The terms 'Hebrew', which appears in the Bible, was never used by Diaspora Jews for labeling themselves. It designed the separate identity for Palestine Jews and appeared in thousands of names and expressions. When Jews in Palestine demonstrated against the British, the cry was always for a 'Hebrew state'* (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992: 126).

> *Yiddish is Judeo-German, one of the Jewish languages of the Diaspora, like Spanish-Jewish or Jewish-Arabic. It was the authentic spoken language of Jews in Europe but it was despised by Zionism as symbolizing ignorance and oppression. Many well-educated Jews in the nineteenth century considered it not a real language but a 'jargon', an inferior dialect used by the uneducated masses. The Haskalah movement, and later Zionism, rejected Diaspora culture. This rejection covered not only the traditions of rabbinical Judaism, but also the language spoken by European Jews for at least 500 years — Yiddish* (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992:121).

In this paper, I argue that the Yiddish language did not – as is widely believed – simply perish in the Nazi concentration camps of World War II, but was in fact *systematically and deliberately* eliminated via the use of state regulatory procedures, intimidation and acts of gang violence against publishers, printers, journalists, writers, academics and theatre operators, among others. I contend that the proponents of 19th century Zionism and their present-day successors were and remain ideologically wedded to the path to establishing and maintaining a national-Jewish state that bears less resemblance to Judaism than one would assume. This modern Zionist State – Israel – was established at the expense of those peoples who occupied the territory of British Mandate Palestine, as well as key cultural and political elements of Judaism, including the Yiddish language. According to both Rabkin (2006) and Beit Hallahemi (1992), this post-Holocaust nationalist fervor was aimed at the creation of a vastly different Jew; one which could not be rejected by 'other' nations, and one in which the Jew would no longer be viewed as meekly accepting their fate.[4] In their attempt to remake the supposedly-meek Jew, Zionist ideology (as characterized by Jabotinsky, below) was aimed at remaking a stronger, more manual-labour-capable, less-bookish, more nationalistic and more militaristic Jew; a Jew who was capable of fending off enemies with force, for the purpose of retaining a piece of territory.

---

[4] For ample evidence to demonstrate that Jews were over-characterized as meek, see Beit-Hallahemi (1992); Atzman (2011); Finkelstein (2005); or Rabkin (2006). This myth was aimed at fostering support for the State of Israel.

The acts of linguistic genocide against the Yiddish language were carried out by Jews, with great determination and premeditation, in order to bring into daily use a language which was not used in this way for millennia, but rather considered sacred and recited aloud only during biblical study or daily prayer. The groups that carried out these acts of violent suppression of Yiddish had names like *The Union for the Imposition of Hebrew, the Union for the Enforcement of Hebrew, the Battalion for the Defense of the Language, and the Battalion of the Defenders of the Language* (Katz, 312-317). As I show below, these highly-nationalistic Zionist organizations were brutal and near-fascistic in their often-violent suppression of the Yiddish language, whether spoken on the street, published in book and periodicals, or taught at schools and universities.

I also discuss the pretext for the imposition of Hebrew, which was, by and large, an attempt to create a biblical rationalization to colonize the land of Palestine, which Jews had abandoned thousands of years earlier.[5] Indeed, there are those who argue that today's Jewish people have no genetic connection to the Jews of biblical times, but are descendants of the Hussars (see for example, Sand, 2009; Ostrer, 2012; Sachar, 1977).

With a few exceptions the three traditional lines of Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform have, by and large, lent their unremitting support to Zionism and the State of Israel. But there are cracks, discussed below, which have appeared among both nonreligious-cultural-progressive Jews, and some small pockets of Orthodox (*Hasidic* or *Haredi*) Jewry, notably the Orthodox sects *Neturei Karta* and *True Torah Jews*, who – loudly and publicly – oppose the State of Israel on *Biblical* or *Talmudic* grounds. In what seems like a paradox to some, Orthodox Jews who were initially highly resistant to any attempts to establish Jewish State – Zion – prior to the coming of the Messiah. To some Hassidim, the establishment of Israel in 1948 was viewed as yet another false idol – and the second commandment prohibits the worship of false idols. Alongside the emergence of many false prophets, calls to return to the 'land of Zion' were repeated throughout Jewish history, and were always scorned as tantamount to a rejection of the Torah and God.

Even *The Balfour Declaration*[6], an offer by the British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour of a "national home for the Jewish people" in November 1917, was rebuffed by orthodox Jews as

---

[5] While the Old Testament recounts that Jews were cast out of biblical Israel because of their moral corruption and lack of faith (see Jeremiah, 29:1 and I Baruch, "A Confession for the Palestinian Remnant"), however, modern scholars (see Sand, 2009; 2012) have more recently argued that there was no infrastructure for thousands, much less hundreds of thousands or millions, to transport Jews to Europe and environs, and such an exodus from Jerusalem would have been impossible.

[6] The Balfour Declaration reads: "His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of

tantamount to the rejection of God's will that Jews be exiled until the return of the Messiah, as the Old Testament book of *Jeremiah* recounts that Jews were exiled from Jerusalem[7] for their sinful lifestyle, to wit: "Not for good faith have they grown strong in the land, for they go forth from evil to evil (Jeremiah, 9:2) […] I shall scatter them among nations that neither they nor their fathers have known (Jeremiah, 9:15) (Scherman, 2012: 1093-1095). Moreover, Jeremiah's secretary Baruch[8] wrote in clearer terms:

> … [W]e did not listen to the voice of the Lord our God as found in the words of the prophets whom he sent to us. But we strayed, each following the dictates of his own wicked heart, serving other Gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord our God. So the Lord carried out his threat which he had made against us – against our judges who ruled Israel, and against our kings and nobles, and against the men of Israel and Judah (I Baruch, 1:21-2:1 in Moore, 1977: 276).

In a similar, but more modern, example of a Baruch-like denunciation, Rabbi Mordechai Rottenberg, the Rabbi of Antwerp Belgium from 1872-1944, echoes Jeremiah in his statement on the British offer to partition Palestine and provide a homeland for the Jewish people:

> How are we to know whether this decision of Britain to give a piece of Eretz Yisroel [i.e. the biblical land of Israel] to the Jews is for good or for evil? […] we must fear that if we accept this gift from Britain, we will be considered like the Jews who brazenly ascended the mountain to conquer Eretz Yisroel against the will of Hashem [i.e. God] […] In any case, we must proclaim to the world leaders that although we long to see our scattered people gathered to Zion and Jerusalem, we are waiting for moshiach [i.e. messiah] to do the the job […] it is the moshiach's job to bring all of Israel up together from the exile, and if, G-d forbid, they do this on their own, they will lose the redemption of the moshiach (True Torah Jews, [undated, but assumed to be 1937]).

The offer to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, made by the British Peel Commission in 1936-37, saw a divide among orthodox Jews. Rabbi Rottenberg represented

---

existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

[7] Chaver (2004) notes that the word "Israel" never appears in the bible as a plot of land, but more is often used as a descriptor for the Jewish people, as in "people of Israel." Regarding the word "*Zion*" Chaver writes: "This biblical synonym for Jerusalem became expanded metonymically ["a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute or with which it is associated
(as "crown" in "lands belonging to the crown")" Merriam-Webster] to designate the entire land. It was appropriated by the Jewish national movement and provided its name (Chaver, 2004: 3 *ff2)*."

[8] In the spirit of full disclosure, Moore (1977) notes that "… Baruch was excluded ultimately from the Jewish canon (but not until it, like so many other Jewish works, had established itself in the Christian canon (Moore, 1977: 256)."

those who opposed 'return' to Palestine, while a major proponent of accepting the British offer of a state was Rabbi Zirelson of Kishinev, who advocated strongly in favour of a state, writing: "Let's not let such an opportunity slip through our hands, for even if Moshe was punished for missing an opportunity, all the more so will we (True Torah Jews, undated)."[9]

What motivated the successful colonization of Palestine in 1948 was post-Holocaust guilt, a desire to colonize a valuable corner of the former Ottoman Empire with like-minded, white, European westerners, and the settling of the 'Jewish question' once and for all – these and more were among the actual motives to displace innocent Palestinians, who had co-existed peacefully alongside the few Jews that resided there for thousands of years. In the Zionist psyche, language had served the role that territory typically did (Chaver, 2004), and so the Yiddish language was essentially colonized prior to, as well as during, the so-called 'language wars' (i.e. the movement to revive Hebrew as a daily language) that took place from the end of the nineteenth century into the middle of the twentieth.

In my view, the political character of political Zionism is so single-minded and so rigidly ideological, that its adherents likely had little problem in planning and executing the calculated annihilation of a rich, thriving language which had been in use for over a thousand years. Selectively using those elements of postcolonial theory that are grounded in material relations (Said, 1979 [1994], 1983, 1985, 1986, 1993), and Marxist theories of class and power (Lenin, 1905; Gramsci, 1971), I conclude that the early political-national Zionist movement, and its successors, were so won over by their ideological convictions and nation-building, that nothing would stand in their way on the path to establishing a Zionist State – *not even the extinguishing of their own native tongue* and the artificial establishment of a long-dead language, spoken only in prayer.

While Said's major thesis may seem counter-intuitive on first glance, his schema in *Orientalism* (1978) can indeed be applied to the 'rebranding' of European Jews into a people whose 'home' is in the Middle-East. He writes

> … *Orientalism* is very much a book tied to the tumultuous dynamics of contemporary history. I emphasize in it accordingly that neither the term Orient nor the concept of the West has any ontological stability; each is made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the Other. That these supreme fictions lend themselves easily to manipulation and the organization of collective passion has never been more evident than in our time … (Said, 1978: xvii)

---

[9] Kishinev also noted: "[w]e need not fear that the irreligious will rule over us and persecute us (True Torah Jews)," a line of reasoning that held fast for 65 years, but appears to have been overturned with the repeal of the Tal Law (Harel, 2012) – the prohibition of mandatory conscription for orthodox Jewish students – in the summer of 2013 (Harkov, 2013).

Likewise, the actions of the national-political Zionist movement as we know it today, in the form of various governments of the state of Israel, equally ideological in its treatment both of the indigenous Palestinian population, and those critics – Jewish or otherwise – who are quickly dispatched as 'anti-Semitic'. As Rabkin states "[t]he story of modern Hebrew is another facet of the historical debate about the place of Zionism and the state of Israel in world history (Rabkin, 2010: 144)." I actually want to go further than Rabkin here, and assert that in the case of the establishment of the modern Israeli state, *language was deliberately used as an important tool of colonization*.

There is ample documented historical evidence which demonstrates that during the late nineteen and early twentieth century – almost fifty years prior to the conclusion of World War II – there was a movement specifically designated with the eradication of the Yiddish language (which was still very much alive at the time) in order to strengthen the case for a connection to the territory of Palestine. Beit-Hallahmi claims that "the Israeli school system treats the Bible not as a religious document, but as a historical source which validates exclusive Jewish rights in the territory of ancient Palestine (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992: 118)." By creating an artificial link to this particular territory via the conversion of the biblical language of Hebrew into a modern, everyday language, early Zionists might legitimize their case for the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.[10]

Recalling Emile Durkheim's dichotomous schema of the sacred and the profane (Durkheim, 1965 [1915]: 52), early Zionists can be accurately depicted as deliberately blaspheming a holy language – Hebrew – when they ushered Modern Hebrew into daily use. As Durkheim notes

> All known religious beliefs, whether simple or complex, present one common characteristic: the presuppose a classification of all the things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups, generally designated by two distinct terms which are translated well enough by the words *profane* and *sacred (profane, sacre)* (Durkheim, 1965 [1915]: 52).

This can be aptly applied to the conversion of Hebrew from the Jewish language of prayer to the everyday language of the streets, from the 'superior' of the sacred, to the 'inferior', the everyday. The revival of biblical Hebrew was more than a question of language – it was a makeover of the Jewish people, from a supposed meekness to a people characterized by strength. According to Chaver:

---

[10] University of Tel Aviv historian Shlomo Sand (2012) notes the multitude of former names for this land "… some of which were no less accepted in Jewish tradition, such as the Holy Land, the Land of Canaan, the Land of Zion, or the Land of the Gazelle – the term "the Land of Israel" was a later Christian and rabbinical invention that was theological, and by no means political in nature (Sand, 2012: 27)."

The revolutionary makeover was embodied in Hebrew – the ancient, sacred language common to all Jews and a fundamental component of their culture, which the founders of Zionism sought to adopt for everyday use (Chaver, 2004: 7).

Conversely, the strategy used to transform Hebrew into the daily language of the modern land of Israel was achieved not only by an almost-rabid endorsement and advancement of Hebrew, but also via the degradation and denunciation of Yiddish. This correlative phenomenon almost begs a question to be answered: "why did the proponents of modern Hebrew not simply 'grow' their modern adaptation of the ancient tongue, while allowing the Yiddish language to continue undisturbed?" Why was the thousand-year old Yiddish language tampered with? Moreover, why was Yiddish deliberately, effectively, and unnecessarily murdered?

(1) Since the language of the diaspora was Yiddish, many early Zionists felt that it had to be destroyed, and Hebrew refashioned as the 'legitimate' – and ages-old – language of the Jewish people. (2) Yiddish was thus derided as a bastardized quasi-language – a 'jargon' – and, because of the class character of those who spoke the language, Yiddish was viewed as *low-culture* in juxtaposition to Hebrew's scholarly *high-culture*. In this interaction, Yiddish was viewed as a proletarian tongue in contrast to Hebrew's scholarly, literally bookish roots. (3) Lastly, Yiddish was viewed as feminine, in contrast to Hebrew's masculinity (Chaver, 2004).

Secondarily, I assert that the inability of early Zionist leaders to accept two languages is problematic at best and rooted in race-based rationales at worst. I believe this phenomenon parallels the apparent unacceptability of a single, unified, and democratic Israeli-Palestinian state, and reflects the inability to accept the other. It also reflects a thread of superiority that runs through the Zionist movement. There still exists among even non-religious Jews, the belief that they are indeed 'the chosen people' even in a post-Enlightenment world.[11]

Lastly, I agree with scholars such as Beit-Hallahmi (1992), who write that the deliberate revision (Anderson (1991: 149 *ff.16*) has labeled it a "reimagining") of the Hebrew Old Testament was cynically carried out by Jewish nationalists in the late 19th century, with the aim of colonizing the land held by Palestinians in the Ottoman Empire. This revision continues today, using biblical scholarship, history, and archeology in order to rationalize the forcible removal and holding of an illegally-held territory; moreover, this is done in direct contravention of the strictly religious Jewish tradition. As Beit Hallahmi noted:

… [T]he historization of the bible is a national enterprise in Israel, carried out by hundreds of scholars at all universities. […] Claiming this ancient mythology is an

---

[11] In a reversal of roles, see Saletan's (2007) article "Jewgenics: Jewish intelligence, Jewish genes, and Jewish values."

essential part Zionist secular nationalism, in its attempt to create a coherent account of the genesis of the Jewish people in ancient West Asia. It provides a focus of identification to *counter* [my emphasis] the rabbinical, Diaspora traditions (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992: 119).

Worth noting is the scholarship that has emerged among the so-called 'new Israeli historians,' such as Sand (2009; 2010), who authored *The Invention of the Jewish People,* and who has concluded that there is, and never was, an unbroken line of 5,000 years of Jewish ancestry. This is a simply myth that has helped to fend off assimilation and greatly benefits the work of laying claim to, and colonizing, Palestine with the historic claim that the 'promised land' "belongs" to the Jewish "people."

Rabkin (2007) reaffirms this when he reports that:

> … [T]he Zionist narrative also resorts to using history for its own ends, appropriating the Maccabees or Bar Kokhba (15-135), whom they transform into romantic resistance fighters against the foreign invader. The Zionist use of history is at the same time a rejection of the rabbinical interpretations, which remain the focal point of Torah [based] anti-Zionism. The Zionist moral of the story is also opposed to the Jewish tradition: the Jews should have fought harder and better. […] It should be remembered, though, that Jewish Law allows Jews to expose themselves to mortal danger in only three situations: if they are required, under threat of death, to practice idolatry, kill another human being or engage in sexual relations forbidden by the Torah (Rabkin, 2007: 69).

To reaffirm, Zionism's use of the Torah tradition is actually *a severe rewriting of the biblical tradition and biblical laws of Judaism.* While some might suggest that it is hypocritical to cite biblical tradition to counter Modern Zionism, as I do below, it is no less disingenuous than the cynical use of the Torah traditions of the Zionists themselves.

The "Towering Accomplishment" of the Hebrew Language

> *When Zionism got started, the Jews did not have a common language – modern Hebrew did not exist. They still have no common language, since millions of Jews speak not a word of Hebrew (Neumann, 2005: 22).*

Early Zionists were almost giddy at the notion that resurrecting Hebrew would be the glue that binds the Jewish people to each other and to an Israeli state. As Sachar (1977) wrote in his telling of Jewish history:

Another towering accomplishment of the embryonic settlement in Palestine was the transformation of the Hebrew language into a living vernacular. It was a transformation which took place only after a bitter *Kulturkampf*. The struggle resulted partly from the fact that Hebrew was, for most of the settlers, an alien tongue (Sachar, 1977: 281).

But there were detractors who rejected Hebrew, as pointed out by Winnipeg Rabbi Aron Horowitz (1979), who decried the lack of respect accorded to Hebrew in a 1967 article titled "The Place of the Hebrew Language in the Education of the Adolescent in America":

It is an open secret that the prevailing attitude toward Hebrew is one which regards it as a foreign language. […] Attending a farewell gathering for a *shaliach*[12] who had been working with young people in Canada, I did not hear so much as one word of Hebrew, not even from the Consul General of the State of Israel, who saw fit to end his speech with "au revoir" rather than "shalom" (Horowitz, 1979: 392-393).

Sachar (1977) noted that Hebrew's detractors were simply trying to be 'sensible' and ensure the success of the state, its economy and people. He wrote:

Accordingly, the German and French Jews, who administered the best-equipped schools in Palestine, argued that it was necessary for youngsters to be taught a practical langauge [sic]. German or French – even Yiddish – were practical languages; Hebrew was not, for it could not be used in business or professional life (Sachar, 1977: 281).

But many like Horowitz (1979), an enthusiastic advocate of Hebrew education among North American Jews, believed they had the solution, and it was a complete immersion in a Hebrew *linguistic* education, rather than a religious, philosophical or business education. For many it pained them to carry out the 'war of the languages' and was viewed, once again, as a sign of Jewish weakness in the face of the apparent strength and cohesiveness seen in other nations. Horowitz (1979) compared the rejection of the Hebrew language to other national groupings this way:

Would it occur to any other people to question the importance of imparting its national language to a particular age group? […] We are confronting a problem which, in my opinion, basically affects our national survival in the diaspora. This problem is rooted in the prevailing attitude and approach toward our national language, an approach which is itself one of the causes of the unnatural state of affairs that necessitates discussing a question which members of another people would consider absurd, just as

---

[12] According to Wikipedia, "a shaliach (Hebrew: שליח, pl. שלוחים/שליחים, shlichim/shluchim) is a member of the Chabad Hasidic movement who is sent out to promulgate Judaism and Hasidism in locations around the world (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaliach_(Chabad), accessed November 5, 2012).

absurd as questioning the place of speech as such in the education of the adolescent. […] Our subject is the adolescent, but we cannot discuss the place of the Hebrew language in the education of the teenager without touching upon the question of the place of Hebrew in our life in the diaspora – just as one cannot consider the cultivation of a tree without giving attention to the health of the roots (Horowitz, 1979: 392).

However, Hebrew was not the obvious choice of a language for Jews who chose to settle Palestine. Avneri (1971) wrote that the founder of modern Zionism, Theodore Hertzel in fact assumed that German would be the language of settlement in the Jewish colonies he would establish. He never imagined that there would be an effort to revive the language of Hebrew as a modern, living language of the Jews in Palestine. Avneri notes that Hertzel:

… did not believe in the extraordinary experiment of resurrecting the Hebrew language, dead for two thousand years; that miracle, no part of the Zionist plan, became a major ingredient of the movement only when the new settlers in Palestine, Israelites, shed their old languages, including Yiddish, which symbolized life in the Diaspora. Hebrew, the language born in the country, so similar to the Arabic spoken there, was the ideal symbol of all they were striving for… (1971: 65)."

Hertzel, was positive in the belief that a Zionist state would give the German Kaiser "the prospect of a European community established in Palestine at the crossroads of the Orient as an outpost of German interests and culture … (Avneri, 1971: 64)." The Kaiser was also apparently pleased at this prospect, noting that "Your movement … is based on a sound idea (1971: 64)," although he eventually passed on the notion of acceding to Hertzel's request to put his program to establish a Jewish state in Palestine "… at the disposal of the German government (Avneri, 1971: 64)." Paying homage to the German government in his correspondence to the Kaiser in 1895, Hertzel added: "May it use it when it sees fit to do so (Avneri, 1971: 64)."

Yiddish and "the Gaelic moment"

Today the 'war of the languages' is a forgotten moment. It is a nearly unquestioned assumption that Hebrew is, and has always been the 'real' language of the Jewish people and that Yiddish was by comparison a relatively recent language, spoken only in the 'shtetls' of Eastern Europe and often dismissed as a 'jargon' or dialect, and killed off during the Nazi Holocaust. Evidence of this belief can be seen in tangential references like this one, on the demise of Gaelic:

Nova Scotia Gaelic is facing its "Yiddish moment." Yiddish was, for generations, the language of the shtetl, the small Jewish communities of central and eastern Europe whose culture was dealt its final blow by the Holocaust, just as Gaelic was once the

language of the Highlands and was dealt its near-death blow by the Highland Clearances.

> Both Yiddish and Gaelic made it over to the New World and, for a while, did fairly well; Yiddish was once very strong indeed in New York (where the Yiddish edition of the newspaper The Forward is still published) and Montreal, just as Gaelic was once an inescapable part of the life of Cape Breton. And both languages have declined very sharply. Both have some fluent speakers left, but with Yiddish as with Gaelic, most are elderly. Younger people who consider either language part of their identity rarely (not never, but rarely) know enough to hold down a conversation. It's more typical for them to know snatches: songs, little sayings, a few words and phrases. Nobody who spends any time getting to know either Gaelic or Yiddish can avoid seeing that reality (White, "Gaelic at the crossroads," *Chronicle-Herald*, October 27, 2012).

But during the period immediately following World War II, the Yiddish language remained intact, with approximately five million speakers throughout the world. Although Yiddish survived in a diminished capacity, it survived nevertheless. Another typical statement is illustrated by Wheatcroft (1996), who writes that Hitler

> […] had killed more than millions of people, he had destroyed an entire community, not to say a culture and a language. In 1939, Yiddish had been spoken by more than ten million people, more than spoke Danish and Swedish combined. Yiddish effectively perished in the death camps (Wheatcroft, 1996, 222).

By Wheatcroft's (1996) estimate sixty percent of Yiddish speakers were killed in Nazi concentration camps, but the Yiddish language did not "perish in the death camps," given that there were still approximately five million Yiddish-speakers who survived the Nazi attempts at genocide. Yiddish survived as a living language among the millions who escaped the Holocaust in Europe and abroad, and revival efforts continue even today[13]. If contrary to the prevailing myths, the 1,000-year old language had survived the Holocaust, then what did kill the Yiddish language?

Dovid Katz reminds us that Jewish immigrants to America (and presumably Canada) were largely viewed as illiterates and 'money grubbers'. In fact, Katz should note that these were working-class Jews without a strong formal religious education – but they were the majority in

---

[13] For example see the organization YUNG YiDiSH at: http://yiddish.co.il "Founded in 1993 by Mendy Cahan, YUNG YiDiSH is a non-profit organization that set for itself the purpose of preserving and transmitting Yiddish culture, as well as encouraging contemporary Yiddish creativity in its various forms. The organization's members and friends consider Yiddish a language alive, an essential ingredient of our cultural heritage to be fostered by looking both back and forward. ייִדיש & עברית"

Eastern Europe. Thus, an additional blow against the Yiddish language is that it was spoken by largely (though not exclusively) working-class Jews who were derided as being semi-illiterate, and Yiddish was derided along with them, as a 'jargon' and not a 'true' language. 00000000000.This particular attack against Yiddish is intimately linked to the degradation of eastern European Jews who emigrated to Palestine, and after 1899 and mass immigration to North America, Jewish working-class immigration to North America. Gilad Atzmon (2011) adds that

> The Zionist hijacking of the Bible was in fact a desperate Jewish answer to German Early Romanticism. However, as much as 19th century German philosophers, poets, architects and artists were ideologically and aesthetically excited about pre-Socratic Greece, they knew very well that they were not Hellenism's (biological) sons and daughters. The Jewish nationalists took their project one step further, binding themselves into a blood chain with their mythical forefathers; Hebrew, formerly a sacred tongue, became an everyday spoken language. German Early Romantics never went that far (Atzmon, 2011: 140).

As I claimed earlier, a key plank of the Zionist program to use the Hebrew language – and the displacement of Yiddish – as an ideological tool to ease the colonization of lands which belonged to a non-white, non-European indigenous people. ***

Ben-Yehuda's Frenzied Pursuit of Modern Hebrew

In 1880, the Jews in Palestine numbered about 20,000 (Kaplan and Penslar, 2011). Only one year earlier, in 1879, Leyzerke Perlman, a Litvak Jew published an article under the adopted Hebrew name Ben-Yehuda, promoting the building of a Hebrew-based culture in the land of Israel (Katz, 236). It is worth noting that the convention of adopting a 'purely Hebrew' name and the shucking of one's Ashkenazi, European, and distinctly Yiddish name, began with Perlman/Ben-Yehuda. Ben-Yehuda and his wife arrived in Palestine in 1881 and he announced to her that "they and their future children would speak only Hebrew (Katz, 236)."

> Ben-Yehuda established a miniature Hebrew-speaking community in Jerusalem by pretending to be pious, donning the clothes of an Ultraorthodox Jew and tgrowing his earlocks to encourage Hebrew speech among East European origin traditionalists [Chassidim] who were the only ones who really had enough Hebrew to "play" with him. When he had enough new immigrants in his circle to drop the religious front, he did. (Katz, 2004: 237).

This audience contained the only Jews who, because of their biblical study – had enough Hebrew to use in a conversation. Remember, that Hertzel's vision of Zionism would have

included only German-speakers. But to press his campaign against Yiddish, Ben-Yehuda also worked to spread "an intense revulsion at Yiddish (Katz, 237)" as well as Yiddish-speakers themselves. Katz reminds us that the "loathing of Yiddish among Eastern European native Yiddish-speaking Zionists in Palestine … was incalculably more bitter than anything seen in the Mendelssohnian circle in late-eighteenth-century Germany, or their followers in the nineteenth (237)."

As the right-wing revisionist Zionist leader Lev Jabotinsky (1880-1940) was quoted by Borokhov in a 1913 pamphlet as follows: "If *Zhargon* becomes the language of study in Jewish elementary schools, it will be a death blow to Hebrew (Katz, 2004: 275)." By the twentieth-century, immigrants to Palestine, and later Israel, were urged to change their Ashkenazi-Yiddish names to Sephardic-Hebrew equivalents. Yiddish names were derided as "ugly," a word that was bandied about a good deal, and had allusions that were reminiscent of Nazi imagery in describing Jews. For example, as Jabotinsky wrote as late as 1942:

> Our starting point is to take the typical Yid of today and to imagine his diametrical opposite ... because the Yid is ugly, sickly, and lacks decorum, we shall endow the ideal image of the Hebrew with masculine beauty. The Yid is trodden upon and easily frightened and, therefore, the Hebrew ought to be proud and independent. The Yid is despised by all and, therefore, the Hebrew ought to charm all. The Yid has accepted submission and, therefore, the Hebrew ought to learn how to command. The Yid wants to conceal his identity from strangers and, therefore, the Hebrew should look the world straight in the eye and declare: "I am a Hebrew!" (Jabotinsky quoted in Rubinstein, 2000).

Jabotinsky is often heralded as the founder of the right-wing movement in the State of Israel and the Likud Party.[14] However, Jabotinsky epitomizes the Zionist ideology that Rabkin (2006, 2010, 2012) and some among Orthodox Jewery, consider to be betrayers of biblical Judaism.

Among the more egregious anti-Yiddish incidents that have been catalogued by Dovid Katz (2004) was the repeated beating of audience members by "Hebraist thugs" at the 1914 lecture tour of non-Zionist, Yiddish philosopher Chaim Zhitlovsky. Katz calls this period "the Zionist war on Yiddish in Palestine (2004: 312)," and he provides us with several examples of attacks on the use of Yiddish in pre-1948 Palestine:

> The main gang that was organized to beat up Yiddish writers, firebomb kiosks and disrupt literary and cultural events was called [… The] Battalion of the Defenders of

---

[14] Current Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu's father, Benzion Netanyahu, was a senior aide to Jabotinsky. As noted in his obituary: "In 1940, Mr. Netanyahu went to the United States to be secretary to Mr. Jabotinsky, who was seeking to build American support for his militant New Zionists (Martin, 2012)."

the Language. Shimon Shor traces the origins of the first battalion to spring up in 1923, though gangs 'without that name' had been doing similar work for years. Although the group's dedication to hooligan tactics was widely known, it was enthusiastically embraced by the Zionist establishment in Palestine. Its founding proclamation was featured in the journal […] In Our Generation. It included some famous phrases that were used for decades, most famously "Hebrew person! Speak Hebrew!" (Katz, 2004: 312)

Although the evidence suggests a history of prejudice, intimidation and violence, according to Watzman's (2012) chronicle of Tel Aviv's early days, the activities of the *Hebrew Language Defenders* was fairly benign:

In the 1920s, a branch of the Hebrew Language Defenders' Battalion operated in the city. This was a group of determined teenagers who fought for Hebrew dominance. Members of the Battalion would approach people they heard speaking in another language and demand that they speak in Hebrew. The activists distributed ribbons bearing the slogan "Hebrew [person], speak Hebrew." They also pasted up posters that called on the public to use its national language, and badgered institutions and companies by denouncing their use of other languages. When word reached the members that a Yiddish film would be screened in one of the city's cinemas, they reacted with fury. Yiddish the vernacular tongue of Eastern European Jews, was seen as the main threat to the national language. The Battalion told the cinema's manager to cancel the show, but he refused. Dozens of the city's inhabitants signed a petition against the film, on the grounds that it would be "hugely detrimental to the Hebrew language." Yet a large audience wanted to see the Yiddish film anyway. When it was finally shown despite the protests, a loud demonstration amassed, and Mayor Dizengoff ordered the police to prevent a second screening (Watzman, 2012: 33).

Note the use of 'vernacular' to describe Yiddish and the relatively benign language used to describe the work of the Battalion, as well as the complicity of the Mayor of Tel Aviv in enforcing the imposition of Hebrew at the direct expense of Yiddish. Watzman (2012) also noted that:

In the decade that followed, German replaced Yiddish as Hebrew's major nemesis. Even though German was only one of many languages heard on Tel Aviv's streets, it became more common in the 1930s with the arrival of refugees fleeing the Nazi regime. Their mother tongue was received with particular hostility. The cultural distinctiveness of the German immigrants, who were derisively referred to as "Yekkes," stood out more than the traits of residents from Eastern European lands. Some Jews of Eastern European origin identified everything German with the Nazi regime and, in turn, they

referred to German as "the Nazi language" and found its use on the streets, in the stores, and at cafes infuriating. The Yekkes [sic] who settled in Tel Aviv were treated coldly and even antagonistically by the city's veteran Eastern European inhabitants, and the linguistic pressure placed on them was particularly aggressive. A public mock trial was held in Tel Aviv in 1935 to highlight the evils [sic] of using the German language in the land of Israel. A pamphlet published at this time that called for the use of Hebrew referred explicitly to the German immigrants as a "foreign" element, accusing them harshly of "scorning our national language" and of lacking any connection "to our labors of construction and creation in our homeland." (Watzman, 2012: 33).

What unusual language, describing the German and Yiddish as a "nemesis." Odder still is the fact that despite Israel's reputation as a haven for Jews fleeing Nazi Germany, Israelis themselves (they wouldn't actually be Israelis until the establishment of the state in 1948, of course) harassed, defamed, accused and attacked German-Jews who had emigrated to 1930s Palestine as a haven from oppression.

In the quest for linguistic purity, not even the operation of a university language program in Yiddish was spared:

> When the new [Hebrew] university was founded in Jerusalem [in the 1920s], the editors and publishers of the Yiddish Tog in New York […] [created] a chair in Yiddish literature [in the hope that] [i]ts establishment would ease Hebraist-Yiddishist tensions […]. The Battalion for the Defense of the Language incited rioting in Jerusalem, roughed up professors and members of the relevant committees, and pasted the city with posters condemning the plan to put an abomination in the sanctuary of Hebrew purity (Katz, 2004: 314).

Jerusalem's Hebrew University played a pivotal role in the struggle over the languages. In 1927, "the editors and publishers of the Yiddish *Tog*" in New York and the university's chancellor "agreed on an endowment to establish a Yiddish studies chair." But the "*Battalion for the Defense of the Language*":

[…] incited rioting in Jerusalem, roughed up professors and members of the relevant [university] committees, and pasted the city with posters condemning the plan to put an abomination in the sanctuary of Hebrew purity. […] The university's governors wired [Chancellor] Magnes […] as follows: "As friend University and yourself beg you relinquish Yiddish chair whatever the conditions. Huge outburst being organized severer than Hilfsverein [an earlier dispute about German language instruction]. Whoever triumphs University ruin certain. Withdraw prior kindling battle (Katz, 314)."

Yiddish as a subject, taught in Hebrew, was not established at Hebrew University until 24 years later, in 1951. According to Katz (2004), Yiddish writers who established themselves in 1920s Palestine attempted to set up a Yiddish school, but for all of their efforts they were "met with violence. Katz explains that:

> Printers in Tel Aviv and its environs were warned of being firebombed if they 'touched' a new Yiddish magazine that was currently in the works. […] they put out a first issue … in August 1928." The event celebrating the magazine's publication "was stormed by Hebraists who demolished the writers' modest Tel Aviv clubhouse (Katz, 2004: 315).

In the 1920s, the various 'Battalions' would also enjoy the cooperation of the colonial British Mandate authorities, who required licenses for the operation of all printing presses:

> Working in tandem with the British Mandate authorities on the laws governing periodicals, Hebraists saw that it was made illegal in fact if not in name to produce a Yiddish periodical in the late 1920s (it was illegal to produce a periodical without a license, and submissions for Yiddish were rejected) (Katz, 2004: 315).

Documented acts of revenge included the disbarment of Dr. Nokhem Rafalkes from the union of attorneys as punishment for editing a Yiddish periodical (2004: 316). In the mid-30s, the *Union for the Enforcement of Hebrew* sent a letter to a Tel Aviv printing company. The letter cautioned the company to reject clients wishing to print periodicals in Yiddish, with a plainly-stated threat of violence and police action. It read as follows:

> We have just been informed that you are preparing to publish or to print a newspaper in Yiddish … We warn you, not to do this thing, and not to assist those who dishonor the Hebrew language, which would lead to conflict and unrest and bring about the involvement of the police. The responsibility for the consequences will be yours. Stop the typesetting of the newspaper immediately (Katz, 2004: 317).

This was far from an isolated incident. Katz described another letter sent by the *Union for the Imposition of Hebrew*, which in 1935 issued a strong cautionary letter "to the Horev printing house in Jerusalem, after the banned Yiddish literary magazine Nayvelt ['New World'] mischievously reappeared as Anshtot nayvelt ['Instead of Nayvelt']. Their letter read:

> A copy of Anshtot Nayvelt, printed at your press, has reached us. It was hard for us to believe what our eyes saw, that in the holy city of Jerusalem a newspaper appears in Yiddish … We feel certain that you did not properly evaluate the seriousness of your actions, and that you have acted in error. We therefore ask you to rapidly make good that which you have committed, and to stop publishing the above-mentioned paper,

which brings grave damage to the interests of our life. We await your rapid reply. With greetings in the Hebrew language. (Katz, 2004: 317).

[<mark>Link and expand</mark>] Beit-Hallahmi (1992) notes that:

> The first generation of natives, in the 1880s, was educated in Hebrew as a matter of course. The new identity of Zionist Jews in Palestine was first proclaimed around 1900, and it was labelled Hebrew. Zionists in Palestine referred to themselves as Hebrew because they spoke Hebrew (or were supposed to) and lived in the homeland (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992: 126).

Sachar's (1977) version of the movement to Hebrew in the crucial years between the early 1900s and the Balfour Declaration notes the resistance to the Hebraist movement:

> Another towering accomplishment of the embryonic settlement in Palestine was the transformation of the Hebrew language into a living vernacular. It was a transformation which took place which took place only after a bitter Kulturkampf [culture clash]. The struggle resulted partly from the fact that Hebrew was, for most of the settlers, an alien tongue. Accordingly, the German and French Jews who administered the best-equipped schools in Palestine, argued that it was necessary for youngsters to be taught a practical language. German or French – even Yiddish – were practical languages; Hebrew was not, for it could not be used or professional life. Why therefore, must children be compelled to study a language which was valuable only for reading the Bible or the Talmud? (Sachar, 1977: 281)

French and German colonialist settlers had established strong educational institutions in Palestine for the patriotic citizens of their own homelands and not Palestine, after all, when Western European Jews "… thought of nationalism, they meant the greater glory of France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, or England, and there was no identification with a Jewish nation (1977: 282)." But despite their attempts, Jews who had fled the pogroms of Eastern Europe had a stronger incentive to establish a separate homeland than their Western counterparts.

Zionist intellectuals and institutions, many of which originated from Eastern Europe, encouraged the waves of settlers who entered Palestine in those early years of colonization: the academic Ben Yehudah spent thirty years working on a massive Hebrew dictionary, which became the basis for the return of modern Hebrew, aided by a collection of writers and poets whose contributions created an early canon of nationalistic works.

But the turn away from Yiddish was a refutation of a thousand years of Jewish culture and history. The biblical scholar was viewed as anything but the farmer needed to till the fields of

the new homeland in Palestine. The qualities that were traditionally associated with Jewish identity were cast as negatives. Biblical study was seen as too bookish and submissive; the traditional Jew was viewed as too passive and unlikely to make a good defender of the land. This traditional view had to be torn down in order to make way for a defender, a combatant, and a farmer with a strong back and an aggressive stance.

Sadly, this image is reminiscent of the Nazi posters and articles which stereotyped Jews in the 1930s and 1940s. Beit-Hallahmi (1992) echoes the view that among the chief aims of the early Zionists was an intense desire to "… come about as the result of objective conditions: living on the land, productive, physical work, closeness to nature. Manual labour will be a great therapeutic exercise. […] Both wings [left and right] of the movements agreed that the new Jew should be strong and non-intellectual, not pale like the eternal Talmudic student (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992: 125)."

use Beit-Hallahmi quote re: poster images here

1880-1947: Eliminating Yiddish and Building the 'New Human Being'

> *Beyond all the deliberate ideological commitments to rejecting the past and creating a new culture and a new identity, it was the new existence in Palestine which led to the new consciousness. The new, separate Israeli identity grew out of a new reality and a separate language. The conscious decision to create a new culture was not enough to create a new identity. What created the new identity was the reality of Palestine and Zionism in action. It was clear very early on that the Zionist experience was different.*
> *– Beit-Hallahmi, 1992: 126*

Like Beit-Hallahmi (1992) above, I maintain that the blame for extinguishing the language of Yiddish rests *largely* with the proponents of the modern political Zionist movement, who strove to shuck themselves of the typical Eastern European Jew in favour of 'building' the "New Jew." Beit Hallahami (1992) noted further that:

> One declared aim of the Zionist revolution was to create a new human being, the opposite of the old Jew in the Diaspora. Jewish sovereignty, and even just the struggle for sovereignty, will create this new type: in touch with nature, working on the land, a productive, physical worker, renewed by the Hebrew language and the encounter with pre-Diaspora geography — in short, the anti-Jew (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992:121).

The intent to create a 'New Jew' was no accident, but was custom-made for the colonization of a land much more rugged than the villages and cities of Old Europe. As Katz (2004) put it: "Zionism set out to create a new Jew who would resemble the ancient Israelites far more than

modern European Jews (Katz, 2004: 310)." This contrived effort to shuck the skin of the historic image of the European Jew, bookish, in business, peddling, a money-lender, was brought about by the restrictions in the eastern European countries to which they lived. For example, Jews were prohibited from land-ownership in many nations.

> Israeli identity is largely the result of a deliberate attempt to reject traits which were traditionally associated with Jewish identity. Jews were always seen as passive, noncombatant, bookish and physically weak. Israelis are aggressive, outstanding fighters and farmers, practical and physically strong. That is how they see themselves and how they want to be seen. The new Jew, the Israeli, had to be the exact opposite of the old Jew. Zionism was at one with European anti-Semitism in rejecting the traditional Jewish Image (Beit-Hallahmi. 1992: 124).

Even my old grade school Jewish history reader, published only three years after the establishment of the state of Israel, claims the myth that Jews have been historically weak.

> So the Israelites came into Canaan and occupied it bit by bit. They came with their memories, and their memories held them together and made them a strong people. When they let their memories slip away, they became weak and were often conquered by the people who surrounded them (Pessin, 1951: 19).

As Katz (2004) writes:

> The fire in the bellies of those who left their families and town and headed for a life of physical and economic hardship, facing bitter enemies and a much increased chance of unnatural death, was kindled by a complex of feelings. One of these feelings was the kind of group pride and strength instilled by the nineteenth-century European nationalism that called on Jews to re-create their ancient national status in the Land of Israel. Another, frankly was a feeling of shame in the Diaspora Jew (Katz, 310).

This Diaspora Jew was characterized as "weak, physically fit, effeminate, unwilling to fight, useless with serious agriculture, and speaking a dreadful *Zhargon* (Jargon] (Katz, 310) [Yiddish]. As Beit-Hallahmi (1992) writes:

> In its opening position, having no territory in which a nation lives, and lacking a natural connection between people and the land, Zionism had to deliberately develop it. The first generation of Zionist settlers confronted an anomaly. It had to create an attachment to the homeland and a new culture based on it, without any traditions or direct experience with the physical reality of it (Beit-Hallahmi, 1992: 125).

In short, told from a materialist standpoint, there was much to gain by killing Yiddish and establishing Hebrew. Yiddish was put to death for the sake of a political cause of colonizing Palestine (which was still under Ottoman rule when Hertzel wrote his proclamation) – this says much about those early Zionists and the Zionist movement itself: willing to sacrifice both the indigenous Palestinians and the rich Jewish/Yiddish culture.

Yiddish was violently displaced by a version of Hebrew that had never before existed – a modern Hebrew that was expressly 'invented' in order to rationalize the taking of Palestine. Worse, Yiddish was actively campaigned against – mobs burned down printing presses and threatened guest lecturers, etc. The rejection of the Yiddish language by early Zionist ideologues/adherents reflects/contains the core of their national-political philosophy and a sharp break with historic Judaism: paramount among the national-Zionists was the creation of the 'new Jew' – a physical specimen capable of farming and building the 'new' nation of Israel, and was an explicit rejection of the bookish, weak Jew, apparently incapable of defending themselves against aggressors, as witnessed by the Nazi Holocaust. The new Jew was to be unambiguously 'strong' and had a tie to the land, as outlined in the Old Testament, and would therefore need to speak a modernized version of the language of the Old Testament: Hebrew.

This deliberately and artificially manufactured language, which was readily institutionalized in Palestine in order to justify the occupation of a particular territory, sits alongside the equally contrived claim that the State of Israel would be the homeland for all the world's Jews and calls into question the entire Zionist enterprise. In fact, according to Rabkin (2006):

> Zionist ideology claimed to 'own' Hebrew as its exclusive 'national' inheritance. Just as the land, 'language – imagined as a cultural territory – is similarly treated as a matter of exclusive ownership, as if it too needs to be protected and guarded against invasions and repopulation. […] This process of ethnonationalisation of Hebrew intensified after the proclamation of the state in 1948 as part of the general attempt to nationalize Jews (Rabkin, 2010: 130).

==**link to quote**==

In *Israel Without Zionism,* Avneri (1971) notes that:

> [p]erhaps no struggle ever started for more idealistic reasons. Zionist socialism, from the outset, was not content with transferring Jews to Israel, nor with setting up a Jewish national home. "Liberation," to have a real meaning, must also liberate the Jews from their despicable existence as shopkeepers, moneylenders and middlemen, a parasitical existence depicted in Zionist schoolbooks in a way rather reminiscent of anti-Semitic

literature. No, Jews had to become workers. Professors must be turned into farmers, tailors into mechanics, merchants into carpenters, and shopkeepers into dashing guardsmen. This was the "upturning of the social pyramid," designed to give Jewish society in Eretz-Israel a broad base of workers and farmers (Avneri, 1971: 97).

This undertaking was akin to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) that would take place in the PRC in 1969 – 64 or so years later.

"Zionism is the Antithesis of Assimilation:" Early Zionism and its Relationship to the Yiddish Language

Theodore Hertzel, the person most credited with the foundation of modern Zionism , was a second generation assimilated Vienna Jew (Sachar, 1977). A journalist and editor with a degree in law, Hertzel is often described as an atheistic man who abhorred anti-Semitism. His solution to what was labeled `the Jewish Problem` was a dream of a Jewish State. He outlined his plan in a German booklet he published in 1896 titled Der Judenstaat—The Jewish State:

> The idea which I have developed in this pamphlet is a very old one … it is the restoration of the Jewish State. The world resounds with outcries against the Jews, and these outcries have awakened the slumbering idea (Sachar, 1977: 270).

Hertzel viewed the 'restoration' of King David`s former realm, not as a return to a biblical Zion, not as a vehicle to cultivate Jewish nationalism or cultural traditions, but as a restorative to the problem of persistent anti-Semitism in post-Dreyfuss Europe. The suggestion of a Jewish state was hardly a new idea, and had been rejected by the old rabbinate as a notion was in itself, anti-Jewish and anti-religious due to the notion that it would be the height of audacity to effectively 'trump' God and choose to 'return to Zion' as prescribed in the Old Testament. While there is mention of a 'return to Zion' in the Five Books of Moses, these are religious metaphors that refer to the return of the Messiah.[15] But the "corporeal" return of Jews to the biblical 'Promised Land' was most often decried by the vast majority of Jews until the late 19th century. By the middle of the 20th century, it had taken hold of the people. In a 1941 speech to the National Convention of the Zionist Organization of Canada, Horowitz said:

---

[15] The reader will note that the Messiah has yet to appear, and that the Jews should, by all accounts, remain in exile, given that assimilation and the rejection of God is more, not less, prevalent. According to the book of Jeremiah, God *allowed* Nebuchadnezzar's armies to destroy Jerusalem and drive the Jews away – they were explicitly banished from biblical Israel because they ignored Jeremiah's prophecies and had turned away from God (Isaacs, 1964).

> If Zionism is to fulfill its real and true mission, we must return to its real meaning: we must return to its soul. We must make it clear that Zionism is the antithesis to assimilation, that Zionism is the return to ourselves, to our cultural and spiritual heritage as well as to our corporeal national existence. […] American Jewry is then just as much in need of Palestine as Palestine is in need of American Jewry. In other words, Zionism is at one and the same time the rebuilding of our Homeland for the physical and cultural preservation of our people and the rebuilding of our people to make possible the rebuilding of our Homeland and the continuity of our national life in the Golah [i.e. the Jewish diaspora community] (Horowitz, 1979: 374)

We must understand that in over 5,000 *claimed* years of Jewish history, the modern Zionist movement is a relative newcomer – and far from the first of its kind – at barely over 100 years old.[16] Modern Zionism is a *political* movement and an invention which is rooted in the post-Dreyfus trials[17] atmosphere of late 19th century Europe.

In an aside, it is noteworthy that when Theodore Hertzel wrote about a "neutral homeland" for Jews in 1896, he mentioned both Argentina and Palestine as possible locations for a Jewish State; South Africa was also mentioned as an alternative. These possibilities were each given equal weight in Hertzel's journals. (CITE)

This modern version of assimilation eventually developed into a Jewish cultural *nationalism*, rather than maintaining the religious traditions of Judaism, as had been the practice for two thousand years. *This* was the foundation of Zionist cultural revival (from its biblical origins) and contemporary Israeli culture. Ironically, the rise of modern political Zionism and Jewish success under capitalism in economic, political and cultural spheres, led to the gradual decline of traditional, religious Jewry.

The Battle Against Yiddish and the Ashkenazi Jew

Theodore Hertzel was not a proponent of Hebrew, a notion that does not appear in any of his writings. What he does do is to propose a "federation of languages" as could be found in

---

[16] Typically The First Zionist Congress, held in Basel, Switzerland in 1897, is used as the inaugural date of modern Zionism.

[17] Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a young Jewish-French artillery officer was convicted of treason in November 1894 and sentenced to life imprisonment for allegedly secreting French military secrets to the German Embassy in Paris. He was retried twice, in dramatic trials which exposed the fact that he was framed. In 1906, Dreyfus was finally exonerated and reinstated as a major in the French Army. Known as "The Dreyfus affair," this political scandal is viewed as a key moment in French politics, dividing the country into those who supported Dreyfus and those who denounced him as a French traitor. The Dreyfus Affair heralds yet another moment of historic European Anti-Semitism, and threw fear into the hearts of Jews around the world.

Switzerland (Hertzel quoted in Katz, 2004: 235). But Hertzel was no fan of Yiddish either, not even deigning to mention the language by name, but instead referring to it as a "jargon":

> We will rid ourselves of the ugly and stunted Jargons, those ghetto languages that we now make use of. They were the sly languages of prisoners. Our schoolteachers will turn their attention to this matter. Daily life will see to it that one language becomes established as the primary language… (Hertzel as quoted in Katz, 2004: 235).

Hertzel too, would have eliminated Yiddish, but had the task of establishing a language in Palestine been left to him, there would be no Hebrew-speaking people in the Zionist homeland.

In "A Few Words on the Fate of Yiddish" Harshav (1990) seems to agree with Jabotinsky's racist, anti-Semitic views and adds a note of working-class animus, which is not unusual in describing the speakers of Yiddish. Harshav writes:

> In centralized modern societies, speaking Yiddish would have isolated and stigmatized them. Furthermore, the language seemed to symbolize the devious, irrational ways of "Jewish" behavior, the ugly, unaesthetic image of the caricature Jew, and the backward, lower-class existence of most of its Eastern European speakers. The movement of many young, bright, and successful Jews away from Yiddish again left the language mostly with lower-class readers of limited culture and thus strengthened the vicious circle (Harshav, 1990: 85)

As noted earlier, Yiddish was derided by its opponents largely due to the demographic makeup of those who spoke it: working-class Jews lacking formal education – this put the lie to the need to create the 'New Jew' who could toil in the fields and kibbutzim of Palestine. Jews were toiling aplenty in a multiplicity of occupations in Eastern Europe. Working-class European Jews were the majority of those who emigrated to North America and Palestine after 1899, so it is easy to surmise that the motivation for murdering Yiddish must have rested elsewhere.

Post-1947 Zionism and the Effective 'Murder' of Yiddish

Over a half century of persistence, the anti-Yiddish gang campaigns had succeeded in forcibly quashing the publication of Yiddish journals and newspapers, and the use of Yiddish as an academic discipline, a language with which to study history, literature and even Hebrew.

By the time the State of Israel was proclaimed in 1948, just three years after the end of the Holocaust, the language debate was for intents and purposes over and done with in Israel (Katz, 2004: 318). Yiddish represented the antithesis of the 'new' Zionist philosophy of the

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which viewed this language as an inexorable and unwanted tie to European culture and an impediment to the transition to a Zionist state in the Middle East. Some claim that it would have been 'unjust' to ask the Middle Eastern ("Sephardic") Jews who arrived in Israel after 1948 to learn the "Ashkenazic" (Eastern European) language of Yiddish, but this was a myth that may have been served by Orientalism. These Middle Eastern ("Sephardic") Jews were in fact "speakers of Arabic and other languages, not of Hebrew (Katz, 311)."

Proponents of the early Zionist movement viewed the death of the Yiddish language as a necessity in order to erase all ties to two millennia of European Jewish history, eliminate the stereotypical 'bookish' Jew in favour of the Jewish vision of the early Labour Zionists, which needed farmers and kibbutz workers. As Katz (2004) noted "Zionism set out to create a new Jew who would resemble the ancient Israelites far more than modern European Jews (2004: 310)." It was clear that the new Jew would be the antithesis of the traditional, historic Jew; the new Jew would be:

> Another, frankly, was a feeling of shame in the Diaspora Jew. That shame was an integral part of the viewpoint of generations of East European Jews who created the renewed Jewish settlement in Palestine from the late nineteenth century onward. It had various components, including the image of the Diaspora Jews as weak, physically unfit, effeminate, unwilling to fight, useless with serious agriculture, and speaking that dreadful *Zhargon* [jargon]. That linguistic, cultural shame was bound up with a profound fear that the universality of Yiddish would prevent the artificially revived Hebrew dialect of Palestine from ever becoming the natural native language of the Jewish people (Dovid Katz, 2004: 311).

Ben-Gurion's government used numerous licensing laws to obstruct [Mordechai] Tsanin's daily [Yiddish] [news]paper. Tsanin, a journalist who published two newspapers, was told by government officials that "there would *never* be a daily newspaper in Yiddish in the State of Israel" (2004: 319). Tsanin published a daily newspaper anyway and was shut down when the police informed him that an order was given by judicial counsel to the government […] to shut the paper down unless he reverted to publishing three times a week at most (2004: 319-20).

In these ways, the Zionist movement and the Israeli State succeeded in extinguishing the Yiddish language and the rich culture associated with it, in the name of serving a political goal; that of establishing and securing a allegedly Jewish state in the Middle East. According to Rabkin (2010):

> Some believe that the Israeli vernacular owes more to the written Hebrew of the 19th century *maskilim* than to the ancient tongue of the Hebrews (Kuzar, 2001). They argue

that it was not the ancient Hebrew that was revived but, rather, a more recent variety of Hebrew that is the basis of the Israel vernacular. […] This view is hardly apolitical as it dovetails with the post-Zionist trend in Israeli society. Discontinuity is emphasized both with respect to the language and to the nation. *Just as 'the Jewish people' is a nation imagined by the Zionists, modern Hebrew is an artificial language created in order to give a vernacular to this imagined nation.* [my italics] (Rabkin, 2010: 143).

Rabkin goes further still, when he asserts that the symbolic role of Hebrew is key to the beliefs and support of Christian Zionists – the very faction that Hertzel and others needed to convince in order to lay claim on Palestine. However, this very belief is erroneous:

The image of Hebrew as a *resurrected language* [my italics] also plays an important role in building up the legitimacy of the Zionist state among Christians: 'the biblical connection with the language would substantiate the image of antiquity so crucial to modern nationalism', even though 'the correlation of Hebrew with the idealized values of a specific historical period was at least in part artificial (Chaver 2004: 12). Indeed, it was not Hebrew but Aramaic that was spoke in Palestine at the time of Jesus (Rabkin, 2010: 143).

[Expand conclusion]

Conclusion: The Yiddish Language: Birth, Death and Resilience

Can a 'just society' be founded on the injustice done to the Palestinians? Can a good society be built on the ruins of someone else's home? (Beit-Hallahemi, 1992: 106)

Gilead Atzmon (2011) reminds us that the imposition of Hebrew was not the only transgression of the early Zionist ideologues. There were other, more insidious crimes against humanity that were committed by adherents of the Israeli state. He writes:

[…] just three years after the liberation of Auschwitz (1945) the newly-formed Jewish state ethnically-cleansed the vast majority of the indigenous population of Palestine (1948). Just five years after the end of World War Two, the Jewish state brought to life racially-discriminatory return laws in order to prevent the 1948 Palestinian refugees from coming back to their cities, villages, fields and orchards. These laws, still in place today, were not categorically different from the notorious Nazi Nuremberg Laws (2011: 177).

The struggle between assimilated, Yiddish-speaking Jews many of whom were secular, and Hebraist-Zionist Jews, who had felt an urgent need to tie their material, colonial struggle to the

land through the claim that there was an enduring religious and biblical tie to this particular piece of territory is indisputable: we know who won and who lost this particular battle. Zionist-Hebraist Jews were far more ideologically committed than the 'Yiddishists' – secularism and assimilation doesn't engender the nationalistic, ideological fervor that the potent mixture of religious affiliation and land do.

** expand orthodox character of Zionist opposition and link to below

Why would an oppressed people move to the camp of the oppressor class? How is it that Zionists would violently quash the spoken language of Yiddish, just as they currently restrict the symbols of Palestinian culture, such as the display of the Palestinian flag?

[Link and expand] Neumann notes:

> There is a big difference between a minority wanting to be a people and actually boing one. Most of these differences have increased rather than diminished with the evolution of Israel. That most North American Jews are fervent supporters of Israel does not trump the fact that Jews are, for the most part, members of other peoples: American Jews are Americans; Mexican Jews are Mexicans, and so on. They have rights of citizenship in their respective countries; they speak the language of those countries (most don't speak Hebrew or Yiddish); they are increasingly secular and, therefore, lack whatever bond religion might impart. They have no collective institutions, either political or cultural. They have no leaders. The rise of Israel has created not a Jewish people, but an ethnically diverse Israeli people, of whom 20 percent are non-Jewish (Neumann, 2005: 23).

He goes on to note that, by definition, a Jewish state must remain in Jewish hands (2005: 45), which is a singular fact that denies any real democracy or citizenship to the twenty percent of non-Jewish Israeli citizens, or those Palestinians who currently sit in occupied territories. This fact denies any possibility of a democratic state of Israel, but guarantees a theocratic and divided state.

As outlined here the proponents of early Zionism and their present-day successors were and remain ideologically wedded to the path to establishing and maintaining a Zionist State at the expense of those peoples who occupied the territory of Palestine. As Rabkin put it:

> The victory of Hebrew over Yiddish was not the triumph of one language over another, but rather that of an ideology that rejected exile and sought to create a "New Hebrew Man" (Rabkin, 2006: 57).

Bibliography

Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso.

Arnold, Abraham J. 1995. *Judaism: Myth, Legend, History, and Custom, from the Religious to the Secular.* Montreal-Toronto: Robert Davies Publishing.

Atzmon, Gilad. 2011. *The Wandering Who? A Study of Jewish Identity Politics*. Winchester, UK/Washington USA: Zero Books.

Auslander, Shalom. 2007. Foreskin's Lament: A Memoir. NY: Riverhead.

Avnery, Uri. 1971. *Israel Without Zionism: A Plan for Peace in the Middle East.* NY: Collier.

Baltzer, Anna. 2008. *Life in Occupied Palestine: Eyewitness Stories and Photos*. DVD Presentation.

Beit-Hallahmi. 1992. *Original Sins: Reflections on the History of Zionism and Israel*. Concord, MA: Pluto.

Chaver, Yael. 2004. *What Must Be Forgotten: The Survival of Yiddish in Zionist Palestine.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Dieckhoff, Alain. 2003. *The Invention of a Nation: Zionist Thought and the Making of Modern Israel.* NY: Columbia University Press.

Ellis, Marc. H. *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Fishman, David E. 2005. *The Rise of Modern Yiddish Culture.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* NY: International Publishers.

Harel, Amos. 2012 (12 October 2012). *Haaretz.* "With Tal Law expired, IDF to send enlistment notice to 15,000 ultra-Orthodox youths." www.haaretz.com/news/national/with-tal-law-expired-idf-to-send-enlistment-notice-to-15-000-ultra-orthodox-youths-1.469998. Accessed on August 9, 2013.

Harkov, Lahav. 23 July 2013. "Haredi MKs mourn as enlistment bill passes first hurdle." Jerusalem Post. www.jpost.com/National-News/Haredi-enlistment-bill-passes-first-hurdle-in-the-Knesset-320731. Accessed on August 9, 2013.

Harshav, Benjamin. 1990. *The Meaning of Yiddish.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford UP.

Hazony, Yoram. 2001. *The Jewish State: The Struggle for Israel's Soul*. NY: Basic Books.

Hecht, Ben. 1961. *Perfidy.* NY: Julian Messner and Copp Clark.

Helman, Anat. 2012. *Young Tel Aviv: A Tale of Two Cities*. Lebanon, NH: Brandeis.

Horowitz, Aron. 1979. *Striking Roots: Reflections on Five Decades of Jewish Life.* Oakville, ON: Mosaic Press.

Isaacs, Jacob. 1964. *Our People: History of the Jews* (A Text Book of Jewish History for the School and Home), Vol. II. Brooklyn: Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

Katz, Dovid. 2004. *Words on Fire: The Unfinished Story of Yiddish*. NY: Basic Books.

Kaplan, Eran and Derek J. Penslar (Eds.). 2011. *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948: A Documentary History*. Madison: WI.: University of Wisconsin Press.

Kerler, Dov-Ber. 1998. *The Politics of Yiddish: Studies in Language, Literature, and Society*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Lenin, V.I. 1905. *The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination.* www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1915/oct/16.htm. Accessed on August 1, 2013.

Martin, Douglas. 2012. "Benzion Netanyahu, Hawkish Scholar, Dies at 102." *The New York Times.* 30 April 2012. www.nytimes.com/2012/05/01/world/middleeast/benzion-netanyahu-dies-at-102.html?_r=0 . Accessed on August 10, 2013.

Memmi, Albert. 1966. *The Liberation of the Jew.* NY: Orion Press.

Merriam-Webster Online. "Metonymy". www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metonymy. Accessed on August 9, 2013.

Michels, Tony. 2005. *A Fire in their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York.* Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Moore, Carey A. 1977. *Daniel, Esther and Jeremiah: The Additions [The Anchor Bible].* Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Neumann, Michael. 2005. *The Case Against Israel.* Petrolia, CA: Counterpunch / AK Press.

Ostrer, Harry. 2012. *Legacy: A Genetic History of the Jewish People.* NY: Oxford.

Pastis, Stephan. *Pearls Before Swine.* United Feature Syndicate Inc. Feb. 24, 2009.

Pessin, Deborah. 1951. *The Jewish People: Book One.* NY: United Synagogue Commission.

Peters, Joan. 1984. *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine.* Chicago: JKAP Publications.

Rabkin, Yakov M. 2006. *A Threat from Within: A Century of Jewish Opposition to Zionism.* Black Point, NS.: Fernwood / Zed.

Rabkin, Yakov M. 2010. "Language in Nationalism: Modern Hebrew in the Zionist Project." *Holy Land Studies.* (9.2), pp. 129-145. Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press.

Rubinstein, Amnon. 2000. *From Herzl to Rabin: The Changing Image of Zionism.* NY: Holmes & Meier.

Rosten, Leo. 1968. *The Joys of Yiddish.* NY: Simon and Shuster / Pocket Books.

Rosten, Leo. 1982. *Hooray for Yiddish: A Book about English.* NY: Simon and Shuster.

Sachar, Howard Morley. 1977. *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (Updated and Expanded Edition). NY: Dell.

Said, Edward. 1983. "Criticism Between Culture and System."

Said, Edward. 1985. "Orientalism Reconsidered."

Said, Edward. 1986. "Foucault and the Imagination of Power."

Said, Edward. 1993. "Culture and Imperialism."

Said, Edward. 1994 [1979]. *Orientalism [25th Anniversary Edition With a New Preface by the Author]*. Toronto/NY: Random House.

Salkin, Jeffrey. 1999. *Searching for my Brothers: Jewish Men in a Gentile World.* NY: Perigee.

Sand, Shlomo. 2009. *The Invention of the Jewish People*. London: Verso.

Sand, Shlomo and Ernest Renan. 2010. *On the Nation and the 'Jewish People'*. London: Verso.

Saletan, William. 2007. "Jewgenics: Jewish intelligence, Jewish genes, and Jewish values." www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/human_nature/2007/11/jewgenics.single.html. Accessed on August 10, 2013.

Scherman, Nosson (Rabbi), (Ed.). 2012. *Tanach: The Torah/Prophets/Writings: The Twenty-Four Books of the Bible Newly Translated and Annotated [The Stone Edition]*. Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications.

Segev, Tom. 2001. *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate.* NY: Owl Books.

Shaliach in Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaliach_(Chabad). Accessed November 5, 2012).

Shorris, Earl. 1982. *Jews without Mercy: A Lament.* Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday.

Trachtenberg, Barry. 2008. *The Revolutionary Roots of Modern Yiddish, 1903-1917*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP.

True Torah Jews. "Rabbi Mordechai Rottenberg, rabbi of Antwerp (1872-1944)." Accessed August 7, 2013. www.truetorahjews.org/yadmordechai.

Wheatcroft, Geofferey. 1996. *The Controversy of Zion: Jewish Nationalism, the Jewish State, and the Unresolved Jewish Dilemma.* Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley.

White, Jerry. 2012. "Gaelic at the crossroads." Halifax Chronicle-Herald. October 27, 2012. Website: http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/155435-gaelic-at-crossroads. Accessed on October 28, 2012.