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A Place for Palestinians in the *Altneuland:*
Herzl, Anti-semitism, and the Jewish State

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Too often one finds oneself attempting to use *realpolitik* to make sense of Israeli policies towards the Palestinians of Israel and the territories it has occupied since 1967. Here I will argue that such policies, rather than being based on practical political strategies, are founded on an ontological project, operating from the earliest days of the Zionist project, in which the non-Jewish population of a Jewish state is treated, at best, as invisible and, more generally, as an internal enemy which must be contained, controlled, and eventually expelled. I contend that, before we can consider 'matrices of control' or 'states of exception', we need to assess the distinctions on which practices of inclusion and exclusion are based; those between what Giorgio Agamben would term *bios* (human life) and *zoe* (bare or animal life)[1]. In the following paper I will, by examining the work of Theodor Herzl and its legacy to the state it played a key role in generating, show that Israel was initially conceived as a strategy for the extirpation of anti-semitism via the isolation and reformation of a particular category of Jew. In this the local non-Jewish populations were to be extraneous, expelled wherever possible and ghettoized when that proved impossible. In time Herzl's program of producing the 'new Jew' was to backfire, producing in the contemporary times a 'Jewish state' so internally heterodox that the category 'Jewish' can only be given commonality through a politics of fear based on the constant invocation of anti-semitism. It is here, I will contend, that the state's Palestinian population became essential to its functioning, being conceived as an antagonistic interiority whose threat had constantly to be revealed, counteracted and, one might say, provoked.

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One of the founding myths of the Zionist settler project was that it intended the indigenous non-Jewish population to benefit from the economic and cultural development European Jews would bring to the region[2]. Although subsequent phrases such as Golda Meir's 'there were no such thing as Palestinians'[3] (1969), elaborated on by apologists such as Joan Peters in *From Time Immemorial*[4] (1984), might lead one to question how local peoples were to be helped if they weren't to be recognized, there has been an assumption, informing, for instance, Britain's Mandate Period policies, that Zionism was meant not only to provide Jews with a homeland but also to provide a vanguard mechanism for improving the living standards and rights of the resident Arabs.

Often cited as evidence is Theodor Herzl's *Altneuland* (1902), a utopic portrayal of a future Jewish state in Palestine [*sic*]. At one point in that novel Rachid Bey, a Moslem neighbor of David Litwak, the Jew who guides the Prussian aristocrat Kingscourt around Haifa, responds to Kingscourt's query 'what happened to the old inhabitants of the land who possessed nothing -- the tenantry?':

> 'Those who had nothing could only gain. And gain they did: employment, better food, welfare. There was nothing more wretched than an Arab village of *fellaheen* at the end of the nineteenth century. The tenants lived in buildings not fit for cattle. The children were naked and uncared for, their playground the street. Today things are changed indeed....people are far better off than before; they are healthy, they have better food, their children go to school. Nothing has been done to interfere with their customs or their faith - they have only gained by welfare.....The Jews have brought us wealth and health; why should we harbour evil thoughts about them? They live among us like brothers; why should we not

return their kindly feelings?....We Mohammedans have always been better friends with the Jews than you Christians' (Herzl 1960 [orig. 1904]: 95 and 100).

This progressivist portrayal of a Moslem who had studied at the University of Berlin and was a full and active member of the Zionist 'New Society' suggests that Herzl's conception of relations between Jews and Palestinians in the future Zionist state was antithetical to the later vision of those who founded Israel on ethnic cleansing and expropriation and built it into the militaristic, oppressive and racist state it is today. This incommensurability suggests either that Herzl's heirs have radically subverted the legacy of the man popularly known as 'the Father of Zionism' or that *Altneuland* was deceptive in its intent, meant by Herzl to mask his real purpose in launching the Zionist state building project[5].

I want to argue here that the situation is more complicated, and that Herzl's own conception of the Jewish state was fundamentally split, with one trajectory -- perhaps his real *desideratum* -- seeking to give rise to a state which, while nominally Jewish, would promote the rich cosmopolitan modernism of the Vienna he loved and the other -- albeit the dominant one -- leading to a racialist Jews-only state . Understanding this split perspective will involve a critical reading of his life and his writings (in particular his 1895 text *Der Judenstaat*), but in setting forth this reading I intend to do more than simply throw light upon some biographical specificities and textual incompatibilities. In particular, in looking into the relation of Herzl to Vienna, Zionism, and his imaginings of a Jewish state, I intend critically to assess what led the Zionist project to mirror the anti-semitism it was designed to counter. Exposing the contradictions and contingencies which resulted in Herzl's futurisms giving rise to a state in numerous ways opposed to that which he had imagined will, I hope, give support to those, inside and outside the Zionist 'new society', who believe that Israel and the Jewish community it claims to represent do not need to base Jewish rights and security on the destruction of the rights and lives of others.

* * *

There are, of course, methodological problems with treating an individual's life and work as somehow emblematic of the culture of a larger collectivity, but in a number of ways it seems viable to see Herzl -- whose charismatic figure looms over the Zionist Congresses (see Berkowitz 1993) -- as someone who spoke to and for many European Jews: 'Herzl's experience was emblematic of that of a large number of central European Jews, which is why his resolution of his ambivalence through Zionism resonated so powerfully in others of his generation' (Kornberg 1993: 3). That so many identified themselves with the scenarios of identity, antagonism and deliverance sketched by Herzl in his speeches, his journalistic work, and his famed *Der Judenstaat* suggests that this particular interpellation (Althusser 1971: 160-165) played a substantial role in shaping Zionism's earliest forms. Although later articulations of Zionism, for instance those of the Labour and Socialist Zionist movements, diverged from and critiqued Herzl's model, I will argue that Herzl's programme of creating a 'new Jew' to displace the 'ghetto Jew' remained latent in all Zionisms (when it was not overt) and thus that the structure of Herzl's identity discourse is paradigmatic for Zionism as a general movement. For this reason I want first to consider the conflicts and contradictions which gave rise to Herzl's image of Jewish identity and the Zionist project.

Great strides were taken towards the full assimilation of Jews into mainstream European society in the wake of the French Revolution. Although impediments to full integration were frequently encountered on that path there was a generalized optimism throughout central and western European Jewry in the latter half of the nineteenth century that assimilation was the inevitable fate of the Jewish people. Most Jews in Austria, France, Germany and Great Britain were urbanized and had discarded the cultural distinctions which, further to the east, signaled the Jewishness of those confined to ghettos in eastern Europe and in and around the Russian 'Pale of Settlement'. For

assimilating Jews religion was a private affair (if not an atavism which had no hold on them at all) which might be discarded in exchange for the benefits of full incorporation into European civilization. Conversions from Judaism to Christianity had increased significantly in the nineteenth century, either pragmatically or through intermarriage[6]. Heinrich Heine, who in 1825 became Christian so as to be able to qualify for a law degree, called baptism an '*entréebillet zur europäischen Kultur*' [an 'entrance ticket to European civilisation'] and queried 'who would let a mere formality stand between him and European civilisation?' (Laqueur 2003: 9)

Herzl, up until the early 1890s, considered himself primarily a journalist and a playwright and, while aware of his Jewishness, strove for full incorporation into the hegemonic culture of Vienna (to which his family had moved from Budapest when he was eighteen). As a law student ~~at the university~~ he belonged to -- and enthusiastically engaged with -- two radical German nationalist organizations, the *Akademische Lesehalle* (Academic Reading Hall) and the *Albia* fraternity (a dueling club). Later Herzl identified strongly with Vienna's artistic circles, affecting an aristocratic aestheticism as a means of distancing himself from the commercial taint of common journalism. Jacques Kornberg, in a powerful study of Herzl's ambivalent relation to his Jewishness, argues that these were attempts to 'distance himself from his Jewish Hungarian origins' (Kornberg 1993: 49) by shedding Jewish traits and becoming part of the 'Germandom' of the surrounding culture[7]. Viennese culture, until the rise of racial nationalism in the 1890s, was both assimilationist and anti-semitic; a Jew could 'pass' as a full member of European (Christian) society precisely by showing no evidence of what Christian Europeans saw as stereotypical 'Jewishness'. Herzl identified with the values of that environment, aspiring to be the 'new man' of the Enlightenment while sharing its disdain for the stereotypical ghetto Jew whose atavistic religiosity and provincialism was antithetical to enlightened cosmopolitanism.

Herzl's struggle through the 1880s to gain recognition as a literary artist coincided

with an increase in populist anti-semitism sparked by financial crisis and fueled by accusations that Jewish financiers had corrupted the market. This found resonance in the anti-Enlightenment *völkisch* racial nationalism which was simultaneously emerging (Laqueur 2003: 28-30 and Zimmerman 2001: 137-146). Between 1883 -- when he withdrew from the *Albia* association because of its policy shift from promoting the assimilation of Jews into the German nation to advocating excluding them as racially alien -- and 1895 -- when the election of the anti-semitic Christian Socials to power in the Vienna City Council spurred his realization that Jewish emancipation could only take place in a Jewish polity -- Herzl worked for recognition as a fully assimilated and successful individual against the prejudices which saw him not as a man and an artist but as a 'Jew'.

Part of his strategy for overcoming prejudice was a discursive splitting of the Jew into two distinct personifications. One type of Jew, with which he identified, was the enlightened cosmopolitan who carried his Jewishness in the same way an Austrian or a Frenchman bore his national origins -- as an evident yet fundamentally irrelevant aspect of an all-round educated person deporting himself with grace and self-possession. The other Jew, who he loathed and in whom he believed anti-Semites found the font of their stereotypes of the Jew, was the *Ostjude* ('eastern Jew') who dwelled in and had been shaped by the ghetto. For Herzl the ghetto Jew -- isolated from participation in European national movements as well as from modernization and enlightenment -- had developed a self-serving mentality focussed on economic gain and manifest in an obsessive money hunger and a self-debasing humility behind which lurked a crafty arrogance. Herzl, like Freud and other assimilated western Jews[8], looked with repulsion upon this Jew who they called *mauschel* (usually rendered into English as 'yid'):

> 'We've known him for a long time, and just merely to look at him,
> let alone approach or, heaven forbid, touch him was enough to
> make us feel sick. But our disgust, until now, was moderated by

pity; we sought extenuating, historical explanations for his being so

crooked, sleazy, and shabby a specimen. Moreover, we told ourselves

that he was, after all, our fellow tribesman, though we had no cause

to be proud of his fellowship . . . . who is this Yid, anyway? A type,

my dear friends, a figure that pops up time and again, the dreadful

companion of the Jew, and so inseparable from him that they have

always been mistaken for one for the other. The Jew is a human

being like any other, no better and no worse .... The Yid, on the

other hand, is a hideous distortion of the human character,

something unspeakably low and repulsive'[9].

The *mauschel* was, however, more than a Jewish other for Herzl; it was an antagonist --
something which endangered the very ground of his identity by its presence[10]. The eastern
Jew, by providing the bases for the stereotypical images with which anti-semites
legitimated excluding and persecuting all Jews, not only put at risk Herzl's social identity
and status but also, by sharing a 'tribal' identity with him, subverted at its foundations his
laboriously achieved sense of self. This dual threat devolved from Herzl's anxiety that
others, to whom he would present himself as a European, might reject his self-
presentation and reduce him to the Jew he and they despised ('you may think that you are
like everybody else but you're just a Jew').

Herzl responded to this threat by throwing up barriers - both ontological and
social - between himself and the *mauschel*. He rendered foreign the bloodline he saw as
spawning the *mauschel*, suggesting that 'at some dark moment in our history some inferior
human material got into our unfortunate people and blended with it'[11]. In order to protect
western Jews from the stigmas arising from being associated with the eastern Jew, Herzl,
in 1893, proposed to cut the ties of name and religion that associated them. He argued in
his journalistic work for a mass enlistment of Jews in the project of Austrian socialism

which -- nominally anti-semitic in its hostility to Jewish distinctiveness -- would eradicate that distinctiveness by making Jewish socialists an integral part of the German culture it promoted as a norm for all of Central Europe. He later proposed an even more explicit cessation of the stigma of Jewishness by suggesting an orchestrated mass baptism of Austrian Jews into the Catholic church (see Pawel 1989: 186-188). The self-deputed last generation of Jewish fathers would accompany its sons to the city cathedral where a great collective baptism of the latter would take place. In this manner the last Austrian Jews would gain the respect of the gentiles as they proudly extinguished their community by transforming their sons into full Europeans. The threat posed to the western Jew by the *mauschel* would be obviated by denying the Jewish religion which bound one to the other.

Herzl was finally forced to abandon strategies grounded on confidence that Enlightenment Europe would welcome Jews into its community if Jews discarded the Jewishness that rendered them distinct when -- after three decades of Liberal rule -- the Christian Socials, an overtly anti-semitic party which had begun its climb to power in the previous decade, won a firm majority in the 1895 Vienna city council elections. The Christian Socials instituted policies of Catholic revivalism and Jewish exclusion, and Herzl (already sensitized by the Dreyfus affair to the resurgent appeal of anti-semitism in Europe) was forced to acknowledge that no matter how un-Jewish or un-*Mauschel* he and other Jews would become -- no matter how much they worked to transform themselves to effect assimilation -- they would never be allowed to co-exist within European society except as ghettoised others barred from entry into the institutions of the dominant culture. In the new racial discourse a Jew was a Jew, even when he was a Christian.

Herzl responded quickly with an elaboration of the fundamentals of the program he called Zionism. The speed of invention seems less surprising when it is recognized that all Herzl did was to displace the policies of Jewish transformation he'd already developed to a site -- any site -- outside of the bounds of a Europe which would not accept them.

Herzl's Zionist state was not a state informed by the Jewish religion but a state in which Jewish citizens could function as full citizens without suffering exclusionary discrimination in any domain of social activity. Herzl in effect argued that as Jews were made 'Jewish' by exclusion and Europeans could only see Jewishness when it saw Jews (henceforth insisting on maintaining the exclusionary policies that made Jews 'Jewish'), Jews would have to leave Europe in order to stop being 'Jewish' and reveal themselves as European. The Zionist state, wherever it was to be established, would be a place where Jews could act just like -- and thus become just like -- other Europeans[12]. In the wake of the election which tolled the death knell of his ambitions of direct assimilation, Herzl -- still at heart an assimilationist -- announced a program for establishing a European state outside of Europe: 'In the election the majority of non-Jewish citizens -- no, all of them -- declare that they do not recognize us as Austro-Germans. All right, we shall move away; but over there too we shall only be Austrians' (Patai 1960: I, 246-247).

The Jewish state Herzl had in mind was a reconstitution in another place of the best elements of pre-Christian Social Viennese society, with Jews making up the citizenry and anti-semitism rendered unviable by Jewish 'normalisation'. The geographical displacement envisioned in his diaries and his journalism becomes, in the 'New Society' of the future, not only spatial but also temporal. Nonetheless, the 'doubling' of pre-1890s Vienna evident in his earlier writings continues to be played out in the novel; Herzl's image of the New Society of *Altneuland* is one of idealized pre-anti-semitic Vienna projected into a future in which an intellectual vanguard opens the way to prosperity and security for all members of a multi-ethnic society. Herzl presents *Altneuland* as an opportunity to try again to create the cosmopolitan enlightenment which the Christian Socials and the forces of anti-semitic intolerance sabotaged[13]. It monumentalizes the assimilationist aspiration which drove Herzl's early attempts to dissolve Western Jews into the Enlightenment European society which surrounded them. Here the new Jew, modeled

on the enlightened Christian European, provides the norm for a social order mirroring Europe, if Europe could be imagined as being without anti-semitism. However, although in *Altneuland* anti-semitism is 'left outside' in old Europe, the concept of normalization, so central to Herzl's earlier drive towards Jewish assimiliation, internalizes an equivalent malignancy in his *Der Judenstaat* and in so doing introduces a fatal fissure into the conception -- and future -- of the Jewish state. The *mauschel*, haunting and threatening Herzl's conception of Jewish assimilation, proves foundational to his idea of a Jewish state and, in playing such a fundamental role, divides his concept of the state in two[14], sowing the seeds for its eventual realisation as a racist ethnocracy.

* * *

A careful reading of *Der Judenstaat* reveals -- behind the rhetoric predicting 'a great upward tendency [which] will pass through our people' (Herzl 1993: 70) providing 'ambitious young men...a bright prospect of freedom, happiness and honours' (Herzl 1993: 9) -- an accompanying scenario intended to overcome the antagonism the eastern Jew posed to Herzl and, in his eyes, to Jews in general. For Herzl the exposure of 'Christian citizens' (Herzl 1993: 18) to 'wandering Jews' (Ibid), displaced from the ghettos and emigrating into countries in which assimilated Jews already peacefully co-exist, 'either introduce[s] Anti-Semitism where it does not exist, or intensif[ies] it where it does' (Ibid). A Jewish state would eradicate anti-semitism by gathering in and settling these 'faithful' (Ibid) and 'foreign' (Ibid) Jews. It would isolate eastern Jews -- those provokers and amplifiers of anti-semitic feeling -- and, through a carefully rationalized program of 'relief by labor', use their unremunerated work both to transform them from 'good for nothing beggar[s] into...honest bread winner[s]' (Herzl 1993: 39)[15] and to render the country habitable. Only after that hard labor of dual transformation had been carried out would other Jews even consider leaving Europe and emigrating to Palestine:

'We shall not leave our old home before the new one is prepared for

us. Those only will depart who are sure thereby to improve their

position; those who are now desperate will go first, after them the

poor, next the prosperous, and, last of all, the wealthy. Those who

go in advance will raise themselves to a higher grade, equal to that

whose representatives will shortly follow. Thus the exodus will be at

the same time an ascent of the classes' (Herzl 1993: 20).

The plan for a Jewish state was thus a plan to quarantine eastern Jews from their nominal

western 'brethren' and, through that isolation and a well-regimented regime of work and

social engineering, to raise them gradually to the 'level' of assimilated western Jews. This

process would sweat from them, and later from the Jewish *parvenu* who had brought the

stench of the market into the drawing rooms of the western Jewish 'aristocracy' (see

Kornberg 1993: 71-76), all traces of the ghetto.

It is indicative that this labor of human and spatial transformation is elided in

Altneuland, where a twenty year gap falls between Kingscourt's and Loewenberg's first

viewing of 'the ancient land of the Jews' -- 'dirty and neglected, full of motley oriental

misery [where] [p]oor Turks, dirty Arabs and shy Jews lounged around' (Herzl 1960: 30)

and their return to a 'marvellously changed' (Ibid: 42) Palestine filled with people 'more

civilized' (Ibid) than they. The masking of this immense labor -- which Herzl is at pains

to detail in the earlier *Der Judenstaat* -- suggests that the Palestine of the state building

project of that text, and that of *Altneuland*, may not at all be the same country. The utopic

character of the 'New Society' of *Altneuland* is implied in *Der Judenstaat*'s indication that

Western Jews will, in effect, have no reason to emigrate to the redeemed Palestine:

'The movement towards the organisation of the State I am

proposing would, of course, harm Jewish Frenchmen no more than

it would harm the "assimilated" of other countries. It would, on the

contrary, be distinctly to their advantage. For they would no longer

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be disturbed in their "chromatic function"[16], as Darwin puts it, but would be able to assimilate in peace, because the present Anti-semitism would have been stopped for ever....They would be rid of the disquieting, incalculable, and unavoidable rivalry of a Jewish proletariat, driven by poverty and political pressure from place to place, from land to land. This floating proletariat would become stationary' (Ibid).

The future Jewish state would not affect fully assimilated Jews at all, except to free them from the curse of anti-semitism; some might choose, as members of a wealthy elite, to emigrate to Palestine once it had been fully developed while others, like the 'Jewish Frenchmen' described above, 'would certainly be credited with being assimilated to the very depths of their souls if they stayed where they were after the new Jewish state, with its superior institutions, had become a reality' (Herzl 1993: 18). After all, anti-semitism would, in Herzl's scenario, disappear with the disappearance of that which provoked it. Herzl's project would eliminate the last barrier to Jewish emancipation and assimilation by exterminating the *mauschel*, by transformation or worse:

'In our own day, even a flight from religion can no longer rid the Jew of the Yid. Race is now the issue - as if the Jew and the Yid belonged to the same race. But go and prove that to the anti-Semite. To him, the two are always and inextricably linked....And then came Zionism!....We'll breathe more easily, having got rid once and for all of these people whom, with furtive shame, we were obliged to treat as our fellow tribesmen....Watch out, Yid. Zionism might proceed like Wilhelm Tell...and keep a second arrow in reserve. Should the first shot miss, the second will serve the cause of

vengeance. Friends, Zionism's second arrow will pierce the Yid's chest'[17].

Herzl's plan to establish a Jewish state outside of Europe seems, at first glance, to promise Jews -- blocked within Europe from becoming fully European by the racism of the new nationalist anti-semitisms -- a place in which they can develop their full *human* (read 'European') potential without impediment. A closer reading reveals that while it appears to be a design for the eventual abolition of anti-semitism, it is in itself profoundly anti-semitic, blaming the 'Jewish' characteristics of one sector of the 'Jewish' population for the hatred of the Jews felt by non-Jews. Not only does Herzl see Jewishness through the eyes of the anti-semitic non-Jew[18], but he also contends that anti-semitism can only be extinguished by exterminating those Jewish characteristics (and if necessary their bearers) which provoke it. Behind the abstract image of the Jewish state as a machinery for constructing a new humanity via an 'ascent of the classes' lurks a concrete plan for a detention camp which, via the forced labor of draining the malarial swamps and otherwise redeeming the land[19], might bio-engineer a new Jew out of the coarse old Jew of the *shtetls* of Eastern Europe and the slums of the West.

Herzl was an Austrian who wanted to remain Austrian in Austria and conceived, in the face of rising anti-semitism, that the only way of so doing was to abolish anti-semitism. Instead, however, of challenging anti-semitism at the core of its logic (as, for instance, Sartre does in *Anti-Semite and Jew*), Herzl accepted that anti-semites were justified in their loathing of the 'all-too-Jewish' *ostjude* (a loathing he himself, like many assimilated Western Jews, shared) and proposed to end anti-semitism by disappearing the *ostjude*. In at least the short term the purpose of the state he proposed to establish was to gather, hold, and remake the *mauschel*. The New Society envisaged in *Altneuland* would have to wait until that work of reformation was completed, if it were not in fact to take shape back in Europe, led by a vanguard of assimilated Jews.

* * *

Herzl's charisma, and the appeal to both Western and Eastern European Jews of his vision of an extra-European Jewish state untroubled by anti-semitism, enabled him to play a leading role in the articulation of the Zionist program which would evolve into the Labor Zionism of the founding fathers of the state of Israel. Insofar as the activists of the Zionist Congresses were not looking to practice their 'chromatic function' in Europe but were anxious to lay the foundations both of a new state and a new Jewry, they enthusiastically adopted the project of *aliyah* and the colonial settlement of Palestine. Herzl, although profoundly disappointed by a visit to Palestine in 1898 (Laqueur 2003: 110), fervently embraced the leadership of the movement despite its goals being somewhat disjunct from his own[20]. In part because of the significant and increasing contribution of Russian Jews to the early Zionist congresses[21], the explicit focus on the *ostjude* was dropped, but what remained central to the project was the extirpation of the 'Old Jew' and the creation, through manual labor and secular education, of the muscular 'New Zionist Man' (Berkowitz 1993: 99-118).

Zionism, as elaborated by Herzl and adopted by the Zionist movement, grounded modern Jewish identity on two platforms: one was recognition of the anti-semitism which prevented Jewish assimilation into the European mainstream and the other was the project of abolishing the pre-modern 'Jewishness' which spurred that anti-semitism. Both of those supports to identity were imported into the Jewish state founded in Israel although, as in Herzl's own program, the policy of rooting out of the 'old Jew' took precedence. The pre-state Zionist cadres that settled in Palestine before 1948 fervently worked to dig out the remnants of 'atavistic' practices, beliefs and deportment. Contemporaneously the Nazis and their sympathizers exterminated most of remaining *ostjuden* practices by the systematic genocide of Jewish populations in Poland, Russian and other regions of Eastern and Central Europe. While to a large degree the original focus of the program had disappeared

by the time Israel was founded, modernization remained a central platform of the new state. This was manifest in educational policies such as the *ulpan*s' program of eradicating Yiddish and replacing it with Hebrew, but it was most evident in policies towards communities that came to be seen as equivalent to the *ostjuden* -- those of the Jews of the Arab world.

Israel, in the early years of its existence, endeavored to 'gather' Jews from their worldwide diaspora, but particular attention was paid to Jews who had lived - in some cases for millennia - in the countries of the Middle East. Some of these were *Sephardim* - Jews originally from Spain who, after its fifteenth century *reconquesta* and its attendant religious 'purification', had been scattered throughout North Africa - while others were *Mizrachim* - Jews who had, in many cases since the time of the Babylonian exile, lived in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, and as far afield as Ethiopia. Israel worked out various ways of bringing these 'eastern Jews' out of their natal countries and into the new world in which they were to be transformed into Israelis; in some cases it negotiated population transfers by economic and political trade and in others, as with Iran and Iraq, it organized covert activities to promote emigration amongst communities loathe to leave[22]. When these people arrived in Israel, often in mass population transfers, they were treated as *mauschel* - Jews with no sense of modernity, of identity, of civilisation - and the state immediately set in train processes of remaking them over as 'modern' Jews[23]. Yet they were not what modernizing Zionism needed them to be. Wrenched out of societies in which they had often belonged to well-integrated, sophisticated and relatively wealthy urban elites, they were plunged into state-orchestrated collective projects designed to transform them into something approximating the pathetic, unsophisticated and uncivilised anachronisms the modernizing project needed as raw material. Giladi provides a transcript of an interview with an Iraqi woman brought to Israel in 1948 which expresses this process, and the violence it entailed, succinctly:

'We were wearing our Sabbath clothing. We thought as the plane

landed that Israel would welcome us warmly. But goodness how

wrong we were. When the plane had landed at Lod airport, a

worker approached us and sprayed us all over with DDT, as if we

were lice-infested. What sort of welcome was that? We thought

they were spitting in our faces. When we disembarked from the

plane, they herded us into a train, which was so crowded that we

were stepping on each other and our fine clothes were dirtied. My

husband was crying and so was I. Then the children started crying

and our sobs went up to heaven and cast a pall over the train. Since

it was a freight train it had no electric light, but as it sped along we

thought of the death trains which had taken European Jews to the

Nazi camps. Finally we reached the "Sha'ar Ha'aliya" camp and we

were taken in with other families, then they wrote down our names

and "gave" us new Hebrew names. "Said" became "Hayyim", "Su'ad"

became "Tamar", and I was renamed "Ahuva" and so on' (Giladi

1990: 103)[24].

This treatment of non-*Ashkenazi* Jews would eventually backfire, producing political and

communal solidarities around the rage non-European Jews felt at being discriminated

against and denigrated on the grounds of their cultural and religious beliefs and practices.

The growing influence of such alliances has not only led to very different politics after

Labor lost power in 1977 but has also placed 'Israeli identity' in question, revealing the

state as composed of a series of discrete, often mutually antagonistic, constituencies.

The problematic fragmentation of Jewish identity in the wake of the politicisation

of non-*Ashkenazi* Israelis, in particular immigrants from Morocco, not only curtailed the

project of Jewish transformation which was so central to Herzl's project but also raised real

questions about, to borrow a phrase from Israeli discourse, 'who is a Jew?' If Israel was to be made up, on the one hand, of secularized Jews who, in abandoning traditional culture (including all but the formal vestiges of religion) had become indistinguishable from Europeans (and Americans) and, on the other, of others whose powerful assertions of distinct cultural and religious identities rendered them antagonistic to the core tenets of the Zionist project, then the meaning of the 'Jewish' in 'Jewish state' was thrown into radical contention[25]. Friedland and Hecht's ethnography of the 'civil war' between Orthodox and secular Jews in Jerusalem shows that what is at stake in this dispute over the meaning of Jewish might be the survival of a collectivity called 'Jewish' (Friedland, 1996).

The 'solution' adopted has proved to be a shift of focus from the creation of the 'new Jew' to an emphasis on anti-semitism as the negativity which, in effect, constitutes a Jewish positivity. While Zionism's initial project had at its core a problematic internalization of Austro-Hungarian racism, it nonetheless attempted to counter anti-semitism with a work of communal modernization meant to make possible eventual assimilation into the Enlightenment project. The contemporary enactment of Zionism abandons that transformative project, essentializing Jewishness as 'that which suffers anti-semitism' and establishing as its central project the proof of a omnipresent and threatening antagonism. In part this is evidenced in the increasing amplification of public assertions by the state and its agencies that Jews, wherever they live in the modern world, are subject to an ever rising tide of anti-semitic persecution which can only be countered by a retreat behind the protective walls of the Jewish state (see Bowman 2009: 300-302). More virulent, and more salient to the topic of this book, is the escalating demonization -- and provocation -- of Palestinians within Israel and the Occupied Territories and Arab populations in the surrounding nations.

* * *

It is interesting, and symptomatic, that despite *Altneuland's* wonderfully civilised

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Rachid Bey there was never any real attempt, in the realized Zionist state, to assimilate Palestinian Arabs into the New Society. From the earliest days of the Zionist project Palestinians were meant to exist outside the Jewish collectivity, even if they were allowed to remain within the erstwhile (though never declared) borders of the state[26]. Thus, for instance, Ben Gurion's policy of *avodah ivrit* ('Hebrew labor'), elaborated early in the second *aliyah,* that demanded that Jewish property not be worked by non-Jews (despite this the Israeli economy was dependent on Palestinian labour right up until the Oslo Accords)[27]. Thus too the uncanny phantom position after 1948 of *nokhehim nifkadim* or 'present absentees' (Piterberg 2001: 42-43), who were Palestinians living within Israel without legal status (or rights). Debates within the Foreign Office, which dealt with 'Internal Refugees', centered in the early 1950s on whether these 'phantoms' should simply be forced to emigrate or subjected to what Alexander Dotan, chair of the Advisory Committee on Refugees, described as 'a secular Jewish cultural mission' (quoted by Piterberg 2001: 45) to make them over as non-Jewish Jews, obliterating any Palestinian identity and rendering them culturally, but not juridically, assimilable. Although Dotan rhetorically linked his plan to the policies of assimilation employed with Jewish newcomers -- talking of using education policies like those of the *ma'abarot* or transition camps built for Jewish immigrants -- it was in fact designed not to assimilate Palestinians but to neutralize and render them invisible. It was nonetheless overruled by Josh Palmon, Ben-Gurion's advisor on Arab affairs, who, with the aim of impelling 'Arabs' to emigrate, perpetuated the harsh military regime established after the war until 1966.

While anyone who could be considered 'Jewish' was grist for the modernizing mill of the Jewish state, Herzl's and the founding fathers' conceptions of the Jew -- which vacillated between being defined as a racially distinct entity and one constituted by anti-semitism -- meant that in the early decades of the state non-Jews within it were in effect incidental and, functionally, invisible. Palestinians were quarantined outside the national

project, kept before 1967 in what were in militarily sealed village ghettos from whence they might get permission to exit to provide labor for Jewish businesses and *kibbutzim* (see Lustick 1980). After the 1967 war and the consolidation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation under the leadership of *Fatah* Palestinians -- on the outside -- began to play a more significant role as an external antagonism which could be shown to be, in large part for external international consumption, a threat to the survival of the Jewish state and thus a reason it should receive substantial international and diasporic support (Israel, before the first *intifada*, shared the PLO's disdain of the 'inside', monitoring it for dissent while mining it for markets and labor).

It is only in the wake of the 1977 elections and the burgeoning of the identity politics of Israel's newly politicized Jewish constituencies that the Palestinians within the borders of the territories Israel claims as its own have come to play a significant role in the nation's conception of its self. The collapse of the Zionist project of making the 'new Jew' (a collapse brought about in part by its success and in part by its generation of antagonistic 'other' identities) threatened Israeli Jewish identity itself with collapse -- a collapse which could render the national project unviable. The solution has been to draw Jews within the borders of Israel as well as in the Diaspora together defensively in the face of what they are told are ever present threats to their personal and collective survival as Jews. In the absence of a convincing external enemy (with European and American anti-semitism in serious decline, the PLO driven out of Jordan and Lebanon, and the surrounding Arab states stilled by treaty or internal crisis) the Palestinians 'inside' had to be demonized. The first *intifada*, in which the Israeli military was unable successfully to repress a popular uprising, revealed the 'phantom' Palestinian population as more powerful than had been assumed and led to ~~the first~~ moves -- initially effected by Oslo -- to bring all Palestinians, including the PLO cadres who 'returned' from Tunisia and Yemen, together behind checkpoints within Gaza and the West Bank. Subsequent policies have in

large part functioned as provocations -- increased land confiscations and house demolitions, massively expanded settlement programs, targeted assassinations and widescale arrests, desecrations of religious sites (the Ibrahimi Mosque and the Haram es-Sharif), failure to fulfill treaty obligations, etc. -- meant to ensure that Jews are constantly aware of the rage of Palestinians and their non-Palestinian supporters -- a rage that, by being defined as anti-semitic, clearly defines a Jewish 'us' opposed by an ever-expanding field of 'them'.

I am arguing, perhaps counter-intuitively, that current Israeli practices of surveillance, control and walling are not meant to protect the Jewish civilians and state institutions from attack by a hostile non-Jewish population, but more vitally to protect Jewish identity, and the state which has founded itself on it, from dissolution from within. By 'encysting' Palestinians -- quarantining them in enclaves as '"matter" held to put the surrounding social body at risk' (Bowman 2009: 295) -- Israel stages for its own population a continuous performance of threat on their own doorsteps, forcing that population to huddle defensively together despite its own radical heterogeneity, while simultaneously guaranteeing that the contained and curtailed Palestinians (and their supporters) produce dramatic yet relatively impotent gestures of resistance. Any questioning of state policies, and of the politics of fear, from within the Jewish community is deemed treasonous because suicidal, and can only be the result of Jewish self-hatred; criticizing Israel from 'outside' is viewed as simply and purely anti-semitic. All of these attacks serve to fortify further the walls the Jewish state and its 'supporters' have thrown up around an essentialized, and finally incohesive, Jewish community. Herzl might be shocked to see that his *Altneuland* has become, to borrow the title of another of his works, *Das Neue Ghetto* (*The New Ghetto*), but he is not absolved of culpability.

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[1]. On matrices of control see Halper 2000. On states of exception, *bios,* and *zoe* see Agamben 1998 and 2005.

2. 'It was one of the most strongly held beliefs of early Zionists that Jewish settlement in Palestine, regardless of the dispossession, would be to the benefit of Jews and Arabs alike' (Rose 2005: 61).

3. *Sunday Times*, 1969-06-15

4. Peters 1984, see for a critique Finkelstein 1988.

5. Leonhard wrote that '*Altneuland* was written primarily for the world, not for Zionists. It had propagandistic aims; Herzl wanted to win over non-Jewish opinion for Zionism' (Leonhard 1971 [orig. 1960]: 119).

6. See Laqueur 2003: 3-39 on intermarriage and integration in western and central Europe.

7. see Kornberg 1993: 46-51 on German nationalism and 60-66 on aesthetic culture.

8. Freud, in a letter to Fluss of 18 September 1872, described an a family of *ostjude* he'd recently seen (he refers to their accent as *mauscheln*): 'he was cut from the cloth which fate makes swindlers when the time is ripe: cunning, mendacious, kept by his adoring relatives in the belief that he is a great talent, but unprincipled and without character....I have enough of this lot. Madame Jewess and family hailed from Meseritsch: the proper compost heap for this sort of weed' (quoted in Gilman 1993: 13, see also Laqueur 2003: 56-61 and Kornberg 1993: 22-24). Even Bernard Lazare, who subsequently was to take a stance against the Jewish state project, referred in 1894 in *L'Antisémitisme* to 'these coarse and dirty, pillaging Tatars, who come to feed upon a country which does not belong to them' (quoted in Piterberg 2008: 6).

9. Herzl, "Mauschel" in *Die Welt*, 15 October 1897, quoted by Pawel 1989: 345.

10. The concept of antagonism, drawn originally from Hegel, is productively developed by Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985: 95-148).

11. Herzl, "Mauschel" in *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, Vol. I, pp. 163-165; quoted by Kornberg 1993: 164).

12. As opposed to Russian movements, which contended that when Jews gathered together as self-sustaining groups a real and undistorted Jewish spirit would emerge, Herzl's Zionism contended that the state -- operating according to principles mapped out for it by an enlightened minority -- would shape a new Jew: 'the notion that Jewish faults stemmed from their exclusion from the political sphere and could be cured by full citizenship was a keystone of this ideology' (Kornberg 1993: 161).

13. That the Jewish nationalist Geyer brings anti-semitism (directed at that other semitic population -- the Palestinians) back onto the scene as a threat to the well-being of the community emphasizes the parallels between Vienna in the 1880s and the future Jewish state (as in fact does the oxymoronic title 'Old New Land').

14. The play of meaning between the two possible translations of *Der Judenstaat* -- 'the Jewish state' and 'the state of the Jews' -- may here have unintentional significance.

15. The policy of unpaid labor of the Jewish Company (that agency charged with developing the infrastructure of the coming state) ensures that the worst traits of the *mauschel* will be extinguished: 'The company will thus make it impossible from the outset for those of our people, who are perforce hawkers and pedlars here, to re-establish themselves in the same trades over there. And the company will also keep back drunkards and dissolute men' (Herzl 1993: 37). 'Redemption through labor' was a major plank of Zionism evident, for instance, in the central tenet of *Poale Zion*, the Russian Zionist movement that only a return to the soil could redeem the Jewish people. For the Jews of the Second *Aliya*, the first Zionist emigration to Palestine (1904-1906), 'manual labour...was not a necessary evil but an absolute moral value, a remedy to cure the Jewish people of its social and national ills' (Laqueur 2003: 281).

16. 'Chromatic function', the Darwinian conception of adaptive mimicry, was a topic of contemporary debate and discussion; Nietzsche in 1881 writes of how 'animals learn to master themselves and alter their form, so that many, for example, adapt their colouring to

the colouring of their surroundings (by virtue of the so-called "chromatic function"), pretend to be dead or assume the forms and colours of another animal or of sand, leaves, lichen, fungus (what English researchers designate "mimicry"). Thus the individual hides himself in the general concept "man", or in society' (Nietzsche 1982: 20).

17. Herzl, "Mauschel" in *Die Welt*, 15 October 1897, quoted by Pawel 1989: 346.

18. Here mimicking the anti-semitic attitude to Jews to the extent of racially othering the *ostjuden* by attributing their negative qualities to the result of miscegenation with some 'inferior human material'. He also, as his comments on 'chromatic function' make clear, accepts that Jews, as an integral entirety, are racially distinct from other Europeans.

19. See Sufian's *Healing the Land and the Nation* (Sufian 2007) for a richly researched study of this dually redemptive process.

20. Laqueur, following Schorske, believes that 'the narcissistic streak in his character played a great part in it. Herzl relished the role of Messiah-King which he was to assume in the years to come' (Laqueur 2003: 97). Max Nordau's insistence on the democratic assemblies of the Zionist Congresses weakened the impact of his specific programmatic positions without reducing his role as figurehead of the movement.

21. 'Of great importance for the future of the movement was his meeting with the representatives of Russian Jewry, who with seventy delegates had constituted the strongest contingent [of the First Zionist Congress of 1897] in Basle. Herzl was impressed by the calibre of these men, of whose existence, with very few exceptions, he had been only dimly aware' (Laqueur 2003: 107 , see also 112-113 on the growth of the Russian Zionist movement by the Fourth Congress of August 1900).

22. See Giladi 1990 and Gat 2000 for differing views on the character of this activity.

23. See, on these communities and their treatment on arrival in Israel, Alcalay 1993: 37-59, Bowman 2002: 461-463, Giladi 1990, and Swirski 1989.

[24]. Compare Herzl from *Der Judenstaat* on the reception into the Jewish state of new immigrants: 'Clothing, underlinen, and shoes will first of all be manufactured for our own poor emigrants, who will be provided with new suits of clothing at the various European emigration centres....Even the new clothing of the poor settlers will have a symbolic meaning. "You are now entering on a new life"' (Herzl 1993: 46).

[25]. see Golden on dilemmas raised in representing Israel in Tel Aviv's Museum of the Jewish Diaspora: 'how many "facets" can be contained within one culture before it becomes two or three or indeed as many cultures as the "facets" themselves?' (Golden, 1996: 237).

[26] As early as June 1895 Theodor Herzl wrote in his diary regarding the indigenous population: 'The private lands in the territories granted us we must gradually take out of the hands of the owners. The poorer amongst the population we try to transfer quietly outside our borders by providing them with work in the transit countries, but in our country we deny them all work. Those with property will join us. The transfer of land and the displacement of the poor must be done gently and carefully. Let the landowners believe they are exploiting us by getting overvalued prices. But no lands shall be sold back to their owners' (cited by Hanegbi, Machover and Orr 1971: 14)

[27]. Initially (1907) this exclusionary labor policy was meant to apply only to lands owned by the Jewish National Fund, but by 1920 Ben Gurion was calling for its extension to the entire economy (see Shafir 1996: 78-90).